THE LITTLE SEAGULL HANDBOOK

with exercises

WRITE

RESEARCH

EDIT

EXERCISE

5E

Richard Bullock * Michal Brody
* Francine Weinberg *

Publisher's Notice

Please note that this version of the ebook does not include access to any media or print supplements that are sold packaged with the printed book.

Editing the Details That Matter

In writing, as in life, we make mistakes. Some are no big deal, barely worth mentioning. Others, however, are more serious, and we try hard to avoid them to keep our writing and our credibility as writers, clear as can be. You'll find help in the *Little Seagull* for dealing with the following details that matter — for attending to them in a draft, understanding why they're important, and editing them.

Go to **digital.wwnorton.com/littleseagull5** for sentence-editing exercises on these and other common issues.

Model Student Essays

In the *Little Seagull*, you'll find models demonstrating the following kinds of writing:

1. MLA STYLE 64, 73, 89, 95, 200
2. APA STYLE 243
3. CHICAGO STYLE 292
4. CSE STYLE 314

Find additional models of these kinds of writing at **digital.wwnorton.com/littleseagull5**. There you'll also find complete model student essays demonstrating these common genres:

- Evaluation
- Lab report
- Literacy narrative
- Memoir
- Personal narrative
- Profile
- Presentation
- Proposal
- Reflection
- Report
- Textual analysis

Brief Menu

FIFTH EDITION

The Little Seagull Handbook *with Exercises*

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Francine Weinberg

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EXERCISE

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY
Celebrating a Century of Independent Publishing

Preface

This book began as an attempt to create a small handbook that would provide help with the specific kinds of writing college students are assigned to do and to make it as user-friendly as possible. It's been more successful than we had hoped: much to our surprise, it's been adopted by many instructors who had been using much larger handbooks. These teachers tell us they like it because it has "just enough detail," it's easy to use, and it costs less than half what their former books cost.

From our own experience as teachers, we've seen how much students prefer smaller books, and so, to paraphrase crime writer Elmore Leonard, we've tried to give the information college writers need—and to leave out the details they skip. We've also seen how important it is that a handbook be easy to use. To that end, the book is organized around four familiar categories of Write, Research, Edit, and Exercise, and it includes menus, directories, a glossary / index, and more to help students find the help they need.

In order to preserve the handbook for easy reference, the exercises are in the back of the book, with links in the margins to make it easy to navigate between the handbook and the exercises. To enable students to check some of their work, we've included answers to even-numbered items after the exercises.

We're pleased now to offer a fifth edition, revised with developing writers especially in mind. Additions include two new chapters on composing "Parts of the Essay" and "Building Up Academic Habits of Mind"; expanded guidance on using inclusive language; new tips on conducting peer review, reflecting on your work, and compiling a portfolio; new complete model papers for APA style and literary analysis; revised exercises that reflect students' diverse experiences and backgrounds; and new videos, InQuizitive activities, and instructor support.

Highlights

Help with the kinds of writing students are assigned, including arguments, analyses, narratives, summary / response essays, and more. Brief chapters cover ten common genres, with annotated model student essays included for the five most-assigned genres and thirty additional models offered online.

Easy to use. Menus, directories, a glossary / index, color-coded parts, search features, and pop-up definitions in the ebook help students find the information they need. A simple four-part organization—Write, Research, Edit, Exercise—makes it easy for them to know where to look, and an activity on "How to Make the Most of *The Little Seagull Handbook*" introduces them to effective navigation and reference strategies for when they're writing.

Just enough detail, but with color-coded links that refer students to the glossary / index for more information if they need it. Callouts show when InQuizitive for Writers activities are available for extra practice.

User-friendly documentation guidelines for MLA, APA, Chicago, and CSE styles. Documentation directories lead students to the examples they need, color-coded templates show what information to include, and documentation maps show where to find the required detail. Model papers demonstrate each style, with complete MLA and APA papers and brief examples of the other two styles in the book with complete papers available online. InQuizitive activities offer practice with documenting sources using MLA and APA.

An emphasis on using rhetorical contexts to make decisions while writing, instead of following rules for what's "right" or "wrong," comes at the start of the handbook [W-1] and informs the advice throughout. And a chapter on Englishes provides advice for making the most of the languages students know, with tips for mixing languages and dialects in academic writing [L-11].

A section on "Editing the Details That Matter." Covering fourteen issues that teachers identified as undermining a writer's credibility, this section explains why each of these issues matters, describes how to spot them in a draft, and walks students through some ways of editing them out [E-1 to E-6]. A comprehensive sentence-editing activity covering the same topics in InQuizitive allows students to assess their skills and practice the ones they need help with.

Uniquely helpful guidance for multilingual students, including chapters on idioms [L-3] and prepositions [L-5] and additional detail on articles, phrasal verbs, and modal verbs—with more resources and exercises provided online.

Engaging, interactive resources meet every student where they are, with a collection of more than twenty short animated videos; adaptive low-stakes InQuizitive for Writers activities for practice with topics spanning the breadth of the handbook; and a searchable, accessible ebook that makes it easy to read, reference, and navigate the *Little Seagull*. **Four years of access to the ebook, videos, and InQuizitive is included with all new copies of *The Little Seagull Handbook* or can be accessed at digital.wwnorton.com/littleseagull5.**

Customizable. Add your own materials to the book: outcomes statements, syllabi, student writing, and so on. You can even customize the title and cover to replace our little seagull with your school mascot. Norton's Resources for Your LMS, with integrated links to all Norton materials for seamless sign-on and grade book reporting, can also be customized to fit your course with the optional addition of dozens of quizzes on sentence-editing topics not already covered in InQuizitive for Writers.

Support for your evolving course, including tips on navigating generative AI. For information on using generative AI with your students and other timely topics, see the instructor resources at **digital.wwnorton.com/littleseagull5.** And visit the ebook (available at the same link) to see the evolving advice we're giving students on making the most of these tools themselves.

What's New?

A new chapter on composing parts of the essay covers beginnings, endings, thesis statements, and titles—the basic elements students will craft while writing in college [W-5].

A new chapter on building up academic habits of mind offers strategies for succeeding in college [W-8].

New advice on peer review, in the writing processes chapter, offers guidance on both giving and getting feedback from fellow writers. Tips for reflecting on writing and compiling a portfolio are also new [W-4c, f, h].

Expanded advice on using inclusive language suggests writers ask themselves if a word is relevant, precise, and respectful before using it to describe others—and provides information to consider when using some common terms to describe people and groups [L-10].

A complete model student paper in APA style, plus three additional complete student essays: an MLA essay, a literary analysis, and an argument [APA-e; MLA-e; W-13; W-9].

Updated exercises at the back of the book, one-quarter new, reflect students' diverse experiences and backgrounds.

New animated videos offer students extra help with rhetorical concepts and processes, from thinking rhetorically to reading scholarly articles to organizing and synthesizing ideas—and more.

Six new InQuizitive for Writers activities on situations, processes, and genres, including one to accompany the advice on using inclusive language, complement the sentence-editing and research activities that have been revised for the Fifth Edition.

A new instructor training module offers strategies for supporting developing writers and language-learning students, created by developmental reading and writing specialist Emily Kyung Jin Suh (Texas State University).

Acknowledgments

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We are especially grateful to the more than 350 students who reviewed the Fourth Edition. They affirmed what we already suspected—that *The Little Seagull Handbook* meets their needs as writers—and they offered comments describing the handbook as "a great pocket guide for writing and editing," "the most helpful writing partner you'll ever have," and (our favorite) "basically a book, but it's got a teacher inside."

We owe a big thank-you to all our friends at Norton. Claire Wallace and Erica Wnek led the editorial effort on this new edition, capably assisted by Serin Lee. Thanks to their hard work and perceptive reading of the book, this edition is arguably the best one yet. A deep bow goes to Joy Cranshaw for all her work on InQuizitive, the LMS resources, instructor materials, and the ebook—and to Juliet Godwin as well. We are once again grateful to Carin Berger and Debra Morton Hoyt for yet another charming cover design. And we thank Michele Dobbins, Sarah Purnell, Heidi Balas, Ryan Schwab, and Emily Frankenberger for their work getting the word out about this book.

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Hats off to you all.

Richard Bullock

Michal Brody

Francine Weinberg

How to Use This Book

Write. Research. Edit. Perhaps you've been assigned to write a paper arguing that parking on campus should be free. Maybe you need to find sources for a report on organic farming in your state. Or you may want to make sure that the punctuation in your cover letter is perfect. Whether you need to write, research, edit—or all three—this little handbook can help.

More than anything else, the *Little Seagull* is a reference work. Other reference works include dictionaries, encyclopedias, and almanacs. What do all these have in common? You wouldn't read one from start to finish; instead, you would use it to find specific information. If you know how a reference work is organized, you can go directly to the information you need. In a dictionary, for example, the organization is alphabetical; if you know that *J* follows *I* and that *Q* follows *P*, then you'll know how to find what you're looking for. This section—and the InQuizitive activity "How to Make the Most of *The Little Seagull Handbook*"—will help you learn your way around this book so that you'll be able to quickly find the information you need.

Ways of Navigating the Book

Menus. If you're looking for a specific chapter, start with the Brief Menu on the inside front cover; if you're looking for a specific section in a chapter, start with the Detailed Menu on the inside back cover. If you're looking for a specific exercise, turn to the Menu of Exercises at the back of the book.

Glossary / index. If you're looking for definitions of key terms and concepts, turn to the combined glossary and index at the back of the book. Words highlighted in **TAN** throughout the book are defined in the glossary / index. Check the glossary / index when you aren't sure which chapter covers a topic you're looking for.

Color-coded organization. The parts of this book are color-coded for easy reference: red for **WRITE**, blue for **RESEARCH**, yellow for **EDIT**, and green for **EXERCISE**.

Guidelines for common writing assignments. Chapters W-9 to W-18 cover ten kinds of writing you'll probably be expected to do in many college classes. The Menu for Model Student Essays lists them by genre and where to find them.

Checklist for revising and editing. On page 612 is a list of prompts to guide you as you revise and edit a draft—and that lead you to pages in the book where you'll find help.

Help editing the details that matter. The Menu for Editing the Details That Matter lists some of the sentence issues that matter most to readers and leads you to advice for spotting and editing them in your writing.

MLA, APA, Chicago, and CSE guidelines. Color-coded chapters cover each style, with directories in the back of the book that lead to the specific examples you need. Color-coded

templates show what information to include, and documentation maps show you where to find the information required. You'll find an MLA-style paper on pages 200–210, an APA-style paper on pages 243–57, and papers using each of the other styles online at **digital.wwnorton.com/essays-littleseagull5**.

Exercise. If you're looking for an exercise on a specific topic, turn to the Menu of Exercises at the back of the book—or look for links to exercises in the margins of the Edit chapter. Find answers to even-numbered exercises on pages 553–572.

Scanning for information. Sometimes you may turn to a part of the book where you know that information you're looking for is located. You could scan the red headings where the topic is explained. Or if you just want to find an example showing you what to do, look for little red pointers (‣) that make examples easy to spot.

Write

I think I did pretty well, considering I started out with nothing but a bunch of blank paper.

—STEVE MARTIN

W-1 Rhetorical Contexts

Whenever we write, whether it's an email to a friend, a toast at a wedding, or an essay, we do so within some kind of context—a rhetorical context that helps shape our choices as writers. Whatever our topic, we have a purpose, a certain audience, a particular stance, a genre, and a medium to consider—and often as not, a design. This chapter discusses each of these elements and provides some questions that can help you think about some of the choices you have to make as you write.

W-1a Purpose

All writing has a purpose. We write to explore our thoughts, express ourselves, and entertain; to record words and events; to communicate with others; to persuade others to think or behave in certain ways. Here are some questions to help you think about your purpose(s) as you write:

- What is the primary purpose of the writing task—to entertain? inform? persuade? demonstrate knowledge? something else?
- What are your own goals?
- What do you want your AUDIENCE to do, think, or feel? How will they use what you tell them?
- What does this writing task call on you to do? Do you have an assignment that specifies a certain GENRE or strategy—to argue a position? report on an event? compare two texts?
- What are the best ways to achieve your purpose? Should you take a particular STANCE? write in a particular MEDIUM? use certain DESIGN elements?

Glossary

AUDIENCE
: Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text.

GENRE
: A kind of writing marked by and expected to have certain key features and to follow certain conventions of style and presentation. In literary texts, readers recognize such genres as the short story and the novel and the poem; in academic and workplace settings, readers and writers focus on such genres as ABSTRACTS, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES, APPLICATION LETTERS, ARGUMENTS, EVALUATIONS, LAB REPORTS, LITERARY ANALYSES, PERSONAL NARRATIVES, PROFILES, PROPOSALS, REFLECTIONS, REPORTS, RÉSUMÉS, RHETORICAL ANALYSES, and SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAYS.

STANCE
: A writer's attitude toward the subject being discussed—for example, reasonable, neutral, angry, curious. Stance is conveyed through TONE and word choice.

MEDIUM
: A way that a text is delivered—for example, in print, with speech, or online.

DESIGN
: The way a text is arranged and presented visually. Elements of design include typeface, color, illustration, layout, and white space.

W-1b Audience

What you write, how much you write, and how you phrase it are all influenced by the audience you envision. For example, as a student writing an essay for an instructor, you will be expected to produce a text with few or no errors, something you may worry less about in a text to a friend.

- What audience do you want to reach? What expectations do they have from you? What's your relationship with them, and how does it affect your TONE?
- What is your audience's background—their education and life experiences?
- What are their interests? What motivates them? Do they have any political attitudes or interests that may affect the way they read your piece?
- Is there any demographic information that you should keep in mind, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or economic status?
- What does your audience already know—or believe—about your topic? What do you need to tell them?
- What kind of response do you want from your audience? Do you want them to do or believe something? accept what you say? something else?
- How can you best appeal to your audience? What kind of information will they find interesting or persuasive? Are there any design elements that will appeal to them?

Glossary

TONE
: The way a writer's or speaker's STANCE toward the readers and subject is reflected in the text.

W-1c Genre

Genres are kinds of writing. Reports, position papers, poems, letters, instructions—even jokes—are genres. Each one has certain features and follows particular conventions of style and presentation. Academic assignments generally specify the genre, but if it isn't clear, ask your instructor. Then consider these issues:

- What are the key elements and conventions of your genre? How do they affect the type of content you should include?
- Does your genre require a certain organization or MEDIUM? Does it have any DESIGN requirements?
- How does your genre affect your TONE, if at all?
- Does the genre require formal (or informal) language?

Glossary

MEDIUM
: A way that a text is delivered—for example, in print, with speech, or online.

DESIGN
: The way a text is arranged and presented visually. Elements of design include typeface, color, illustration, layout, and white space.

TONE
: The way a writer's or speaker's STANCE toward the readers and subject is reflected in the text.

W-1d Topic

An important part of any writing context is the topic—what you are writing about. As you choose a topic, keep in mind your rhetorical situation and any requirements specified by your assignments.

- If your topic is assigned, what do the verbs in the assignment ask you to do: ANALYZE? COMPARE? SUMMARIZE? Something else?
- Does the assignment offer a broad subject area (such as the environment) that allows you to choose a limited topic within it (such as a particular environmental issue)?
- What do you need to do to complete the assignment? Do you need to do research? find illustrations?
- If you can choose a topic, think about what you are interested in. What do you want to learn more about? What topics from your courses have you found intriguing? What local, national, or global issues do you care about?
- Do you need to limit your topic to fit a specified time or length?

Glossary

ANALYZING
: A writing GENRE that methodically examines something by breaking it into its parts and noting how they work in relation to one another. *See also* literary analysis; rhetorical analysis

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST
: A STRATEGY that highlights the similarities and differences between items. Using the *block method* of comparison-contrast, a writer discusses all the points about one item and then all the same points about the other item; using the *point-by-point method,* a writer discusses one point for both items before going on to discuss the next point for both items, and so on. Sometimes comparison and/or contrast serves as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

SUMMARY
: The use of one's own words and sentence structure to condense someone else's text into a briefer version that gives the main ideas of the original. As with PARAPHRASING and QUOTATION, summarizing requires DOCUMENTATION.

W-1e Stance and Tone

Whenever you write, you have a certain stance, an attitude toward your topic. For example, you might be objective, critical, passionate, or indifferent. You express (or downplay) that stance through your tone—the words you use and the other ways your text conveys an attitude toward your subject and audience. Just as you are likely to alter what you say depending on whether you're speaking to a boss or a close friend, you need to make similar adjustments as a writer too. Ask yourself these questions:

- What is your stance, and how can you best present it to achieve your purpose?
- How should your stance be reflected in your tone? Do you want to be seen as reasonable? angry? thoughtful? ironic? something else? Be sure that your language—and even your typeface—conveys that tone.
- How is your stance likely to be received by your AUDIENCE? Should you openly reveal it, or would it be better to tone it down?

Glossary

AUDIENCE
: Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text.

W-1f Media/Design

We might communicate through many media, both verbal and nonverbal: our bodies (we wink), our voices (we shout), and various technologies (we write with a pen, send texts, tweet). No matter what the medium, a text's design affects the way it is received and understood. Consider these questions:

- Does your assignment call for a certain medium or media—a printed essay? an oral report with visual aids? a website?
- How does your medium affect the way you write and organize your text? For example, long paragraphs may be fine on paper, but bulleted phrases work better on slides.
- How does your medium affect your language? Do you need to be more FORMAL or INFORMAL?
- What's the appropriate look for your writing situation? Should it look serious? whimsical? personal? something else?
- What typefaces and other design elements suit your writing context? Is there anything you should highlight by putting it in a box or italics?
- Would headings help you organize your material and help readers follow the text? Does your genre or medium require them?
- Will your audience expect or need any illustrations? Is there any information that would be easier to understand as a chart?

» Go to INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS for an interactive activity on Rhetorical Situations, and practice your skills before applying them in your writing.

Glossary

FORMAL WRITING
: Writing intended to be evaluated by someone such as an instructor or read by an AUDIENCE expecting academic or businesslike argument and presentation. Formal writing should be carefully REVISED, EDITED, and PROOFREAD. *See also* informal writing

INFORMAL WRITING
: Writing not intended to be evaluated, sometimes not even to be read by others. Informal writing is produced primarily to explore ideas or to communicate casually with friends and acquaintances. *See also* formal writing

INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS
: An adaptive learning tool linked to this book that lets you practice writing, editing, and research skills before you apply them to your own writing. Explanatory feedback provides advice exactly when you need it and includes links to the handbook. For more information, ask your instructor or see the access card at the front of your book.

W-2 Academic Contexts

An ARGUMENT on a psychology exam debating whether genes or environment do more to determine people's intelligence, an ANALYSIS of a short story for a literature course, a PROPOSAL for a multimedia sales campaign in a marketing course—all these are kinds of writing that you might be assigned to do in college classes. This chapter describes some of the elements commonly expected in academic writing.

Glossary

ARGUMENT
: A writing GENRE and STRATEGY that uses REASONS and EVIDENCE to support a CLAIM or POSITION and, sometimes, to persuade an AUDIENCE to accept that position. Key Features: clear and arguable position • necessary background • good reasons • convincing evidence • appeal to readers' values • trustworthy TONE • careful consideration of other positions

ANALYZING
: A writing GENRE that methodically examines something by breaking it into its parts and noting how they work in relation to one another. *See also* literary analysis; rhetorical analysis

PROPOSAL
: A GENRE that argues for a solution to a problem or suggests some action. Key Features: well-defined problem • recommended solution • answers to anticipated questions • call to action • appropriate TONE

W-2a Key Elements of Academic Writing

Evidence that you've carefully considered the subject. You can use a variety of ways to show that you've thought seriously about the subject and done any necessary research, from citing authoritative sources to incorporating information you learned in class to pointing out connections among ideas.

A clear, qualified thesis. In academic writing, you're expected to state your main point explicitly, often in a THESIS statement, as MIT student Joanna MacKay does in an essay about selling human organs: "Governments should not ban the sale of human organs; they should regulate it."

Often you'll need to qualify your thesis statement to acknowledge exceptions or other perspectives. Here's a qualified thesis from an essay by Michaela Cullington, a student at Marywood University: "Although some believe that texting has either a positive or negative effect on writing, it in fact seems likely that texting has no significant effect on student writing." By adding QUALIFYING WORDS like "seems likely" and "significant," the writer indicates that she's not making a definitive claim about texting's influence on student writing.

A response to what others have said. Whatever your topic, it's likely that others have written or spoken about it. It's almost always best to present your ideas as a response to what others have said—QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, or SUMMARIZING their ideas and then agreeing, disagreeing, or both.

For example, in an essay arguing that the American Dream is alive and well, University of Cincinnati student Brandon King presents the views of two economists who say that because wealth is concentrated in the hands "of a rich minority," "the American Dream is no longer possible for most Americans." He then responds by disagreeing, arguing that "the American Dream . . . is based on perception, on the way someone *imagines* how to be successful."

Good reasons supported by evidence. You need to provide valid REASONS for your thesis and EVIDENCE to support those reasons. Joanna MacKay offers several reasons that sales of human kidneys should be legalized: a surplus exists; the risk to the donor is not great; and legalization would enable the trade in kidneys to be regulated, thereby helping many patients and donors. For that third reason, her evidence includes statistics about death from renal failure.

Acknowledgment of multiple perspectives. In any academic writing, you need to investigate and represent fairly the range of perspectives on your topic—to avoid considering issues in an overly simple "pro/con" way and, instead, to explore multiple positions as you research and write. Brandon King, for instance, looks at the American Dream from several angles: the ways it is defined, the effects of government policies on achieving it, the role of education, and so on.

Carefully documented sources. Clearly acknowledging sources and DOCUMENTING them correctly both in your text and in a list of WORKS CITED or REFERENCES at the end is a basic requirement of academic writing. If your text will appear online, you can direct readers to online sources by using hyperlinks, but your instructor may want you to document them formally as well.

A confident and authoritative STANCE. Your TONE should convey confidence and establish your authority to write about your topic. To do so, use active verbs ("X claims," "Y and Z have found"), avoid such phrases as "I think," and write in a direct style. Michaela Cullington establishes an authoritative stance in her essay on texting this way: "On the basis of my own research, expert research, and personal observations, I can confidently state that texting is not interfering with students' use of standard written English and has no effect on their writing abilities in general." Her simple, declarative sentences and strong, unequivocal language ("I can confidently state," "has no effect") send the message that she knows what she's talking about.

An indication of why your topic matters. Help your readers understand why your topic is worth exploring—and why your writing is worth reading. In an essay called "Throwing Like a Girl," James Fallows explains why that topic matters, noting that his title reflects attitudes about gender that have potentially serious consequences.

Careful attention to style expectations. In academic contexts, your audience will almost always expect you to write in complete sentences, use capitalization and punctuation as recommended in this handbook and other guides, use correct spelling by consulting a dictionary—and avoid any abbreviations used in texting and other informal writing. Grammar conventions are helpful, and it's a good idea to follow them, especially in academic writing. Still, the primary goals of your writing are clarity and reaching your audience and not simply strict adherence to convention for its own sake.

Glossary

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

QUALIFYING WORD
: A word such as "frequently," "often," "generally," "sometimes," or "rarely" that limits a CLAIM in some way.

QUOTATION
: The use of someone else's words exactly as they were spoken or written. Quoting is most effective when wording is worth repeating or makes a point so well that no rewording will do it justice. Quotations need to be acknowledged with DOCUMENTATION.

PARAPHRASE
: To reword someone else's text using about the same number of words but not the phrasing or sentence structure of the original. Paraphrasing is generally called for when a writer wants to include the details of a passage but does not need to quote it word for word. Like a QUOTATION or SUMMARY, a paraphrase requires DOCUMENTATION.

SUMMARY

The use of one's own words and sentence structure to condense someone else's text into a briefer version that gives the main ideas of the original. As with PARAPHRASING and QUOTATION, summarizing requires DOCUMENTATION.

REASON

Support for a CLAIM or POSITION. A reason, in turn, requires its own support in the form of EVIDENCE.

EVIDENCE

In ARGUMENT, the data you present to support your REASONS. Such data may include statistics, calculations, examples, ANECDOTES, QUOTATIONS, case studies, or anything else that will convince your reader that your reasons are compelling. Evidence should be sufficient (enough to show that the reasons have merit) and relevant (appropriate to the argument you're making).

DOCUMENTATION

Publication information about the sources cited in a text. The documentation usually appears in an abbreviated form in parentheses at the point of CITATION or in an endnote or a footnote. Complete documentation usually appears as a BIBLIOGRAPHY, list of WORKS CITED, or REFERENCES at the end of the text. Styles vary by discipline. *See also* APA style; Chicago style; CSE style; MLA style

WORKS CITED

A list at the end of a researched text prepared in MLA STYLE or CHICAGO STYLE that contains full bibliographic information for all the sources cited in the text.

REFERENCES

The list of sources at the end of a text prepared in APA STYLE or CSE STYLE.

STANCE

A writer's attitude toward the subject being discussed—for example, reasonable, neutral, angry, curious. Stance is conveyed through TONE and word choice.

TONE

The way a writer's or speaker's STANCE toward the readers and subject is reflected in the text.

W-2b Thinking about the Writing Context

- What GENRE does the assignment suggest—or require?
- What is your instructor's PURPOSE for this assignment? What is your purpose, apart from fulfilling those expectations?
- Who is your AUDIENCE?
- How can you convey a confident, authoritative STANCE?
- What MEDIA are available, permitted, and appropriate? Are any required?
- What DESIGN issues need to be considered?

In what contexts can AI tools help? See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for advice.

» To read the student essays cited in this chapter, go to digital.wwnorton.com/essays-littleseagull5.

Glossary

GENRE
: A kind of writing marked by and expected to have certain key features and to follow certain conventions of style and presentation. In literary texts, readers recognize such genres as the short story and the novel and the poem; in academic and workplace settings, readers and writers focus on such genres as ABSTRACTS, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES, APPLICATION LETTERS, ARGUMENTS, EVALUATIONS, LAB REPORTS, LITERARY ANALYSES, PERSONAL NARRATIVES, PROFILES, PROPOSALS, REFLECTIONS, REPORTS, RÉSUMÉS, RHETORICAL ANALYSES, and SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAYS.

PURPOSE
: A writer's goal: to explore ideas; to express oneself; to entertain; to demonstrate learning; to inform; to persuade; and so on. Purpose is one element of the RHETORICAL SITUATION.

AUDIENCE
: Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text.

STANCE
: A writer's attitude toward the subject being discussed—for example, reasonable, neutral, angry, curious. Stance is conveyed through TONE and word choice.

MEDIUM
: A way that a text is delivered—for example, in print, with speech, or online.

DESIGN
: The way a text is arranged and presented visually. Elements of design include typeface, color, illustration, layout, and white space.

W-3 Reading Strategies

We read for many different purposes, and as an experienced reader, you may not realize how much your purpose influences the ways you read. We read textbooks carefully to learn about history, biology, and other academic topics. We skim social media to find out what people think of the events of the day. We read what other people write, but we also read our own drafts to make sure they say what we intend them to say. This chapter offers strategies for reading both your own and other people's texts actively and strategically—and with a critical eye.

W-3a Reading Actively and Strategically

Academic reading can be challenging; it presents new vocabulary and new concepts, and scholarly articles and books often assume that readers already know key ideas, vocabulary, and background information. As you progress in an academic major, reading will become easier, but the following tactics will help you understand and remember what you read now—and ultimately save you time.

Read with your purpose in mind. There are many reasons to read a text—to learn a new concept, to understand a writer's argument, to see how the text works, and so on. Choose strategies that will help you achieve your goals as you read.

Look for organizational cues. As you read, look for hints that signal the way the text's ideas are organized and how each part relates to those around it. Introductory paragraphs and the THESIS usually offer a preview of the topics to be discussed and the order in which they will be addressed. TRANSITIONS guide readers in following the direction of the writer's thinking from idea to idea. And headings identify a text's major and minor sections.

Adjust your reading speed. Different texts require different amounts of effort. Simple, straightforward texts can be skimmed fairly quickly, but academic texts usually require a slower, more careful reading—and may require more than one. As you read, pay attention to your understanding; if you have no idea what you just read, take a break, focus your attention, and then try again, keeping your purpose for reading in mind and adjusting your method: Should you slow down, skim, summarize key points and supporting details?

Be persistent with difficult texts. For texts that are especially challenging or uninteresting, first try skimming the abstract or introduction, the headings, and the conclusion to look for something that relates to knowledge you already have. Then read through the text once just to understand what it's saying and again to look for parts that relate to other parts, to other texts or course information, or to other knowledge you have. Treat such a text as a challenge: "I'm going to keep working on this until I make sense of it."

Glossary

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

TRANSITION
: A word or PHRASE that helps to connect sentences and paragraphs and to guide readers through a text. Transitions can help to show comparisons (also, similarly); contrasts (but, instead); examples (for instance, in fact); sequence (finally, next); time (at first, meanwhile); and more.

W-3b Reading Efficiently, Annotating, and Summarizing

Following these steps can help you understand and remember what you read.

Think about what you already know about the topic—and your purpose for reading the text. It always helps to approach new information in the context of what you already know. Before you begin reading, BRAINSTORM what you already know about the topic. List any terms or phrases that come to mind, and group them into categories. Then read the first few paragraphs, list any questions that you expect or hope to be answered as you read, and number them according to their importance to you. Finally, after you read the whole text, list what you learned from it. Compare your lists to see what you still want or need to know—and what you learned that you didn't expect.

Preview the text and think about your initial response. Skim the text to get its basic ideas: read the title and subtitle, any headings, the first and last paragraphs, and the first sentences of all the other paragraphs. Study any visuals. Then jot down brief notes about your initial reaction, and think about why you reacted as you did. What aspects of the text account for this reaction?

Annotate. To better understand a text, annotate it by underlining or highlighting key words and phrases, connecting ideas with lines or symbols, and writing comments and questions in the margins:

- ***Ask questions and find connections.*** Summarize connections to other ideas in the text, your previous knowledge, and your purpose for reading.
- ***Have a conversation with the author.*** Assume that the author is someone you take seriously but whose words and ideas you don't accept without question. Respond, ask questions, make comments, talk back.
- ***Summarize.*** Restate key points in your own words in the margin. When you're done, write a single paragraph that sums up the text's main ideas to help you understand those ideas and how they relate—and to help you remember the text better later.
- ***Note definitions.*** Circle words you don't know. If part of the surrounding text gives you a clue to the meaning, underline it. If not, either look up the word and briefly define it in the margin—or look it up after you've finished reading the text the first time.
- ***Don't forget visuals.*** Summarize a chart's or figure's important points or the dominant theme in a piece of art.
- ***Use sticky notes or an annotation tool.*** If you can't write in a book, write your annotations on sticky notes and place them in the margins. If you're reading a text online, use digital annotation tools to underline, highlight, and add text boxes—or take notes in a separate document.
- ***Annotate to help you understand the author's purpose.*** If you are reading a text that makes an argument, for example, underline the thesis, the reasons, and the evidence that

support that thesis—maybe each in a different color—and restate or outline them in your own words in the margin.

A Sample Annotated Text

Here is an excerpt from Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*, a book by Harvard professor Michael J. Sandel, annotated by a writer doing research for a report on the awarding of military medals:*

What Wounds Deserve the Purple Heart?

Purple Heart given for wounding or death in battle.

On some issues, questions of virtue and honor are too obvious to deny. Consider the recent debate over who should qualify for the Purple Heart. Since 1932, the U.S. military has awarded the medal to soldiers wounded or killed in battle by enemy action. In addition to the honor, the medal entitles recipients to special privileges in veterans' hospitals.

PTSD increasingly common among veterans.

300,000! That's a lot!How many veterans are there total?

Argument: Vets with PTSD should be eligible for PH because psych. injuries are as serious as physical.

2009: Military says no: PTSD injuries are accidental and hard to diagnose.

Since the beginning of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, growing numbers of veterans have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and treated for the condition. Symptoms include recurring nightmares, severe depression, and suicide. At least three hundred thousand veterans reportedly suffer from traumatic stress or major depression. Advocates for these veterans have proposed that they, too, should qualify for the Purple Heart. Since psychological injuries can be at least as debilitating as physical ones, they argue, soldiers who suffer these wounds should receive the medal.

After a Pentagon advisory group studied the question, the Pentagon announced, in 2009, that the Purple Heart would be reserved for soldiers with physical injuries. Veterans suffering from mental disorders and psychological trauma would not be eligible, even though they qualify for government-supported medical treatment and disability payments. The Pentagon offered two reasons for its decision: traumatic stress disorders are not intentionally caused by enemy action, and they are difficult to diagnose objectively.

Glossary

BRAINSTORMING

A process for GENERATING IDEAS AND TEXT by writing down everything that comes to mind about a topic, then looking for patterns or connections among the ideas.

W-3c Reading Analytically

Sometimes you'll need to think about a text in greater depth, engaging with it to understand not only what it says but also what it means and how it works. The following strategies can help you read texts in order to analyze them.

Read rhetorically. Texts are part of ongoing conversations with other texts and respond to ideas and events. As you read, ask yourself: What is the PURPOSE of the text—to inform? persuade? entertain? What arguments or events are prompting the writer's response? What sources does the writer cite? Who is the intended AUDIENCE? If you're not a member of that group, are there terms or concepts you'll need to look up? What is the GENRE? A report? An analysis? What do you know about the writer, and what is the writer's STANCE? Critical? Objective? Something else? How does the text's MEDIUM affect what it says?

Identify patterns. Look for notable patterns in the text: recurring words and their synonyms, repeated phrases and metaphors, and types of sentences. Does the author rely on particular writing strategies? Is the evidence offered more opinion than fact? nothing but statistics? Is there a pattern to how sources are presented? As quotations? paraphrases? summaries? In visual texts, are there any patterns of color, shape, and line? What *isn't* there that you would expect to find? Is there anything that doesn't fit?

Play the believing and doubting game. Regardless of how you actually feel about what the writer says, LIST or FREEWRITE as many reasons as you can think of for believing it, given the writer's perspective, and then as many as you can for doubting it. This exercise helps you consider new ideas and question your current ideas—as well as clarify where you stand in relation to the ideas in the text.

Analyze how the text works. Outline the text paragraph by paragraph. If you're interested in analyzing its ideas, identify what each paragraph *says*. Are there any patterns in the topics the writer addresses? How has the writer arranged ideas, and how does that arrangement develop the topic? If, however, you're concerned with the way the ideas are presented, pay attention to what each paragraph *does*: does it introduce a topic? provide background? describe something? entice you to read further?

 Go to INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS for an interactive activity on Critical Reading Strategies, and practice your skills before applying them in your writing.

Glossary

PURPOSE
: A writer's goal: to explore ideas; to express oneself; to entertain; to demonstrate learning; to inform; to persuade; and so on. Purpose is one element of the RHETORICAL SITUATION.

AUDIENCE
: Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text.

GENRE

A kind of writing marked by and expected to have certain key features and to follow certain conventions of style and presentation. In literary texts, readers recognize such genres as the short story and the novel and the poem; in academic and workplace settings, readers and writers focus on such genres as ABSTRACTS, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES, APPLICATION LETTERS, ARGUMENTS, EVALUATIONS, LAB REPORTS, LITERARY ANALYSES, PERSONAL NARRATIVES, PROFILES, PROPOSALS, REFLECTIONS, REPORTS, RÉSUMÉS, RHETORICAL ANALYSES, and SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAYS.

STANCE

A writer's attitude toward the subject being discussed—for example, reasonable, neutral, angry, curious. Stance is conveyed through TONE and word choice.

MEDIUM

A way that a text is delivered—for example, in print, with speech, or online.

LISTING

A process for GENERATING IDEAS AND TEXT by making lists while thinking about a topic, finding relationships among the notes, and arranging the notes as an OUTLINE.

FREEWRITING

A process for GENERATING IDEAS AND TEXT by writing continuously for several minutes without pausing to read what you have written.

INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS

An adaptive learning tool linked to this book that lets you practice writing, editing, and research skills before you apply them to your own writing. Explanatory feedback provides advice exactly when you need it and includes links to the handbook. For more information, ask your instructor or see the access card at the front of your book.

W-3d Analyzing an Argument

All texts make some kind of argument, claiming something and then offering reasons and evidence as support for the claim. The goal of reading critically is not to find fault with the text or its author but to analyze it; you might end up agreeing with all or some of the writer's argument. Look closely at the argument by asking the following questions:

- ***What is the claim or main point the writer is trying to make?*** Is there a clearly stated THESIS, or is it merely implied?
- ***What support does the writer offer for the claim?*** What REASONS are given to support the claim, and what EVIDENCE backs up those reasons? Are the reasons plausible and sufficient?
- ***Is the argument logically sound?*** Are there FALLACIES in the reasoning? Such arguments can be persuasive—but they're misleading.
- ***How evenhandedly does the writer present the issues?*** Are the arguments appropriately qualified? Is there any mention of COUNTER-ARGUMENTS? And if so, how does the writer deal with them?
- ***What authorities or other sources of information are cited?*** How credible and current are they?
- ***How does the writer address you as the reader?*** Does the writer assume that you know something about what's being discussed? Does the writer's language include you, or not? If you see the word "we," do you feel included?

Glossary

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

REASON
: Support for a CLAIM or POSITION. A reason, in turn, requires its own support in the form of EVIDENCE.

EVIDENCE
: In ARGUMENT, the data you present to support your REASONS. Such data may include statistics, calculations, examples, ANECDOTES, QUOTATIONS, case studies, or anything else that will convince your reader that your reasons are compelling. Evidence should be sufficient (enough to show that the reasons have merit) and relevant (appropriate to the argument you're making).

FALLACY
: Faulty reasoning that can mislead an AUDIENCE. Fallacies include *ad hominem*, BANDWAGON APPEAL, BEGGING THE QUESTION, EITHER-OR ARGUMENT (also called false dilemma), FALSE ANALOGY, FAULTY CAUSALITY (also called *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*), HASTY GENERALIZATION, and SLIPPERY SLOPE.

COUNTERARGUMENT

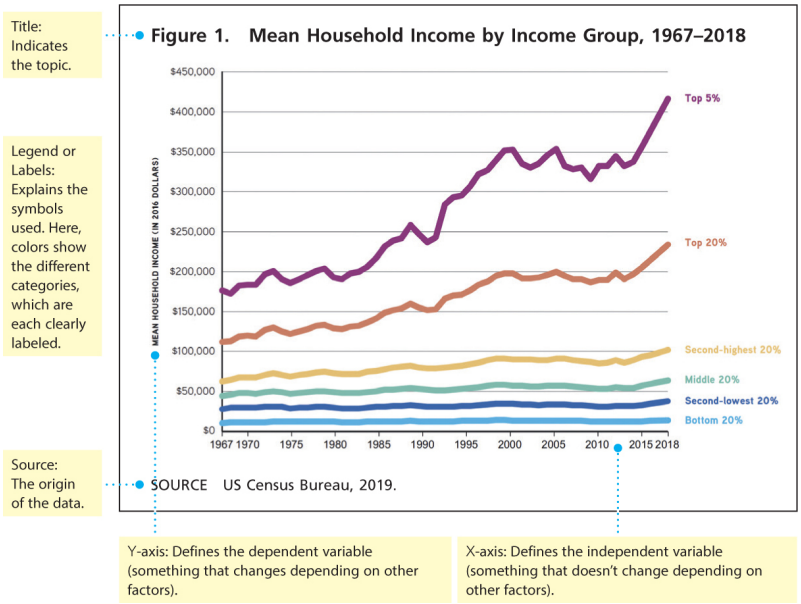
In ARGUMENT, an alternative POSITION or an objection to the writer's position. The writer of an argument should not only acknowledge counterarguments but also, if at all possible, accept, accommodate, or refute each one.

W-3e Reading Visual Texts

As you know from looking at ads and social media posts every day, photos, drawings, graphs, diagrams, and charts are often used to help convey important information and can make powerful arguments. So paying attention to visual texts—reading and interpreting them—is just as necessary as it is for written texts.

Take visuals seriously. Remember that VISUALS are texts themselves. They may introduce information not discussed elsewhere in the text or illustrate concepts hard to grasp from words alone. Looking at any title, caption, or other written text that's part of a visual will help you understand its main idea. It might also help to think about its purpose: Why did the writer include it? What information does it add or emphasize? What argument is it making?

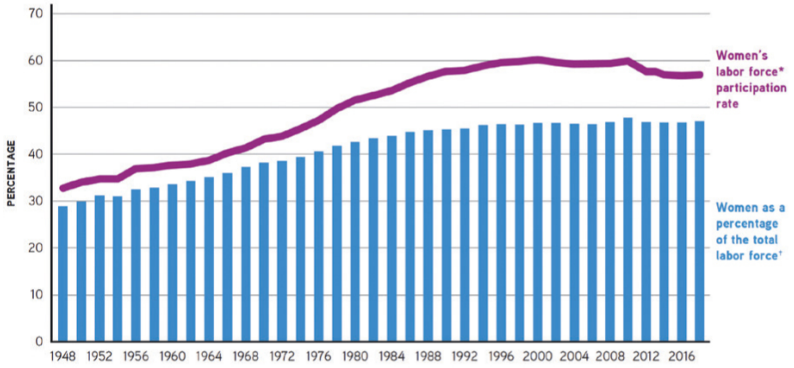
How to read charts and graphs. To read the information in charts and graphs, you need to look for different things depending on your purpose for reading and what type of chart or graph you're considering. A line graph, for example, usually contains certain elements: title, legend and labels, *x*-axis, *y*-axis, and source information. Figure 1 shows one such graph taken from a sociology textbook.



Annotations to indicate key elements of the graph point to the title, the legend or labels, the source, the y axis, and the x axis. The annotation pointing to the title says, "Title: Indicates the topic." An annotation next to the graph says, "Legend or Labels: Explains the symbols used. Here, colors show the different categories, which are each clearly labeled." In this line graph, the color of each of the six data lines indicates income group. From top to bottom, the purple line represents the top 5%, the orange line preresents the top

20%, the yellow line represents the second highest 20%, the green line represents the middle 20%, the dark blue line represents the second-lowest 20%, and the light blue line represents the bottom 20%. None of these lines overlap with each other. The annotation pointing to the source says, "Source: The origin of the data." The source of this graph is US Census Bureau, 2019. The annotation pointing to the y axis (or vertical axis) says, "Y-axis: Defines the dependent variable (something that changes depending on other factors)." The y axis of this graph presents mean household income in 2016 dollars. The annotation pointing to the x axis (horizontal axis) says, "X-axis: Defines the independent variable (something doesn't change depending on other factors)." The x axis of this graph presents year.

Figure 2. Women's Participation in the Labor Force in the United States



*Women in the labor force as a percentage of all civilian women age sixteen and over.

†Women in the labor force as a percentage of the total workforce (both men and women) age sixteen and over.

The y axis presents percentage in increasing increments of ten from 0 to 70, and the x axis shows a range of years in increasing increments of four from 1948 to 2016. A magenta data line shows women's labor force participation rates from 1948 to 2016, and blue bars show women as a percentage of the total labor force over the same time period. Further information below the graph specifies that "women as a percentage of the total labor force" means "women in the labor force as a percentage of civilian woman age sixteen and over and that "women as a percentage of the total labor force" means "women in the labor force as a percentage of the total workforce (both mn and women) age sixteen and over. The magenta line shows that women's labor force participation rates increased from about 33% in 1948 to 60% in 2000, stayed there until 2010, then began to trend

downward, reaching 57% in 2014 and staying there until 2018. The blue bars show that women as a percentage of the total labor force similarly increased over time from about 29% in 1948 to 48% in 2010, then also trended downward to 47% in 2012, and increased slightly to 48% in 2018. Below the graph, the source is listed as US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

SOURCE US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

Other types of charts and graphs include some of these same elements. But the specific elements vary according to the different kinds of information being presented, and some charts and graphs can be challenging to read. For example, the chart in Figure 2, from the same textbook, includes elements of both bar and line graphs to depict two trends at once: the purple line shows the percentage of women who were in the US labor force from 1948 to 2018, and the blue bars show the percentage of US workers who were women during that same period. Both trends are shown in two-year increments. To make sense of this chart, you need to read the title, the source information, the general directional change in the graphs, the *x*-axis and *y*-axis labels, and their definitions. As you read graphs or other visuals, ask yourself how these images support the writer's position.

Glossary

VISUAL
: A photograph, chart, graph, table, video, or similar item used as part of a writer's text.

W-4 Writing Processes

To create anything, we generally break the work down into a series of steps. We follow a recipe to bake a cake; we divide a piece of music into singing parts to arrange it for a choir. So it is when we write. We rely on various processes to get from a blank page to a finished product. This chapter offers advice on some of these processes—from generating ideas to drafting to revising and editing.

W-4a Generating Ideas

The activities that follow can help you explore a topic—what you already know about it or how you might look at it in new ways.

- ***Brainstorming.*** Jot down everything that comes to mind about your topic, working either alone or with others. Look over your list, and try to identify connections or patterns.
- ***Freewriting.*** Write as quickly as you can without stopping for five to ten minutes. Then underline interesting passages. Write more, using an underlined passage as your new topic.
- ***Looping.*** Write for five to ten minutes, jotting down whatever you know about your subject. Then write a one-sentence summary of the most important idea. Use this summary to start another loop. Keep looping until you have a tentative focus.
- ***Clustering.*** Clustering is a way of connecting ideas visually. Write your topic in the middle of a page, and write subtopics and other ideas around it. Circle each item, and draw lines to connect related ideas.
- ***Questioning.*** You might start by asking "who," "what," "where," "why," and "how" questions. You could also ask questions as if the topic were a play: What happens? Who are the participants? When does the action take place? How? Where? Why does this happen?
- ***Keeping a journal.*** A journal is a place to explore why you think as you do. Jotting down ideas, feelings, or the events of your day in a journal is a useful way to generate ideas.
- ***Reading.*** Depending on your topic and purpose, you might do some preliminary research to get basic information and help you discover paths you might follow.

Next you'll develop a tentative THESIS: a statement that indicates your main point, identifying your topic and the CLAIM you're making about it. See **W-5b** for advice on developing a working thesis.

See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for tips on using AI to help generate ideas.

Glossary

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

CLAIM
: A statement that asserts a belief or position. In an ARGUMENT, a claim needs to be stated in a THESIS or clearly implied, and it requires support by REASONS and EVIDENCE.

W-4b Organizing and Drafting

Organizing. You may want to use an outline to organize your ideas before you begin to draft. You can create an informal outline by simply listing your ideas in the order in which you want to write about them.

Background and context

Thesis statement

First main idea

Supporting evidence or detail

Supporting evidence or detail

Second main idea

Supporting evidence or detail

Supporting evidence or detail

An outline can help you organize your thoughts and see where more research is needed. As you draft and revise, though, stay flexible—and be ready to change direction as your topic develops.

Drafting. At some point, you need to write out a draft. As you draft, you may need to get more information, rethink your thesis, or explore some new ideas. But first, you just need to get started.

- ***Write quickly in spurts.*** Try to write a complete draft, or a complete section of a longer draft, in one sitting. If you need to stop in the middle, jot down some notes about where you're headed so that you can pick up your train of thought when you begin again.
- ***Expect surprises.*** Writing is a form of thinking; you may end up somewhere you didn't anticipate. That can be a good thing—but if not, it's OK to double back or follow a new path.
- ***Expect to write more than one draft.*** Parts of your first draft may not achieve your goals. That's OK—as you revise, you can fill in gaps and improve your writing.
- ***Don't worry about correctness.*** You can check words, dates, and spelling at a later stage. For now, just write.

See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for tips on using AI to help organize and draft.

W-4c Giving and Getting Response

As writers, we need to be able to look at our work with a critical eye, to see if our writing is doing what we want it to do. Additionally, reading someone else's writing with an eye toward what can be improved helps us grow as writers. We also need to get feedback from other readers, either in pairs or small groups, to help us improve our work. Here are some guidelines for responding to the writing of others and gathering feedback on your writing:

Respond to someone else's writing. The key to responding effectively is to be as specific as possible while avoiding being too harsh or too gentle.

- ***Read your peer review partner's draft from beginning to end,*** trying to understand the information, argument, and ideas. Don't look for problems; read the draft with an open mind, as you want yours to be read.
- ***Ask your partner what questions they want you to answer*** about the draft or if you should focus on a particular aspect or part.
- ***As you read the draft again, make notes.*** Offer comments on strengths ("I like the way you . . ."), areas for improvement ("This sentence seems out of place . . ."; "_____ doesn't seem like the best word to use"), and questions ("I'm not sure what you mean here"; "Would this paragraph work better on p. 2?").
- ***When you can, offer suggestions*** or possible alternatives instead of only identifying issues. If you're unsure where to begin, use the next list of questions as a guide. Focus on helping improve the writer's argument, organization, and clarity instead of just marking grammar or other minor issues.

Generate feedback on your own writing. Here is a list of questions for both your readers and you to consider when reading a draft and considering how it could be revised. You can rely on these questions, too, when responding to someone else's writing via peer review.

- Is the title interesting? informative? appropriate? Will it attract readers' attention?
- Will the beginning grab readers' attention? If so, how does it do so? If not, how else might the piece begin?
- Is there a clear THESIS, if the kind of writing calls for it? What is it?
- Is there enough support for the thesis—good REASONS and sufficient EVIDENCE? Is there anywhere you'd like to have more detail?
- Do sources have appropriate DOCUMENTATION?
- Is there a clear pattern of organization? Does each part relate to the thesis or main idea? Does anything seem out of place? Are there appropriate TRANSITIONS to help readers follow your train of thought? Are there headings that make the structure of the text clear—and if not, should there be?
- Does the text meet the needs and expectations of its AUDIENCE? Where might they need more information or guidance?
- Is your STANCE on the topic clear and consistent throughout? Is the TONE appropriate for your audience and purpose?

- Are all QUOTATIONS, PARAPHRASES, and SUMMARIES introduced with a SIGNAL PHRASE and documented? Are sources accurately quoted or summarized? Have any changes and omissions been indicated with brackets and ellipses?
- Is the ending satisfying? What does it leave readers thinking? How else might the text end?
- Do any terms need DEFINING? Would examples, additional detail, explanations, or dialogue make the text easier to understand?
- Is language that refers to others respectful and inclusive?
- Are sentences complete and clear? Can any words or phrases be sharpened? Are verbs mostly active? Is the punctuation correct? Are all words spelled correctly?
- Are there any VISUALS—tables, charts, photos? If so, are they clearly labeled with captions? Is ALTERNATIVE TEXT provided for visuals in a digital text? If you did not create the visuals yourself, have you cited your sources?

When receiving feedback, read or listen carefully to your partner's responses, take notes, and ask for clarification if you don't understand. If your reader has trouble grasping something, it's worth taking a second look, even if it's clear to you. They likely won't be the only reader to get tripped up.

Glossary

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

REASON
: Support for a CLAIM or POSITION. A reason, in turn, requires its own support in the form of EVIDENCE.

EVIDENCE
: In ARGUMENT, the data you present to support your REASONS. Such data may include statistics, calculations, examples, ANECDOTES, QUOTATIONS, case studies, or anything else that will convince your reader that your reasons are compelling. Evidence should be sufficient (enough to show that the reasons have merit) and relevant (appropriate to the argument you're making).

DOCUMENTATION
: Publication information about the sources cited in a text. The documentation usually appears in an abbreviated form in parentheses at the point of CITATION or in an endnote or a footnote. Complete documentation usually appears as a BIBLIOGRAPHY, list of WORKS CITED, or REFERENCES at the end of the text. Styles vary by discipline. *See also* APA style; Chicago style; CSE style; MLA style

TRANSITION
: A word or PHRASE that helps to connect sentences and paragraphs and to guide readers through a text. Transitions can help to show comparisons (also, similarly); contrasts (but, instead); examples (for instance, in fact); sequence (finally, next); time (at first, meanwhile); and more.

AUDIENCE
: Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text.

STANCE

A writer's attitude toward the subject being discussed—for example, reasonable, neutral, angry, curious. Stance is conveyed through TONE and word choice.

TONE

The way a writer's or speaker's STANCE toward the readers and subject is reflected in the text.

QUOTATION

The use of someone else's words exactly as they were spoken or written. Quoting is most effective when wording is worth repeating or makes a point so well that no rewording will do it justice. Quotations need to be acknowledged with DOCUMENTATION.

PARAPHRASE

To reword someone else's text using about the same number of words but not the phrasing or sentence structure of the original. Paraphrasing is generally called for when a writer wants to include the details of a passage but does not need to quote it word for word. Like a QUOTATION or SUMMARY, a paraphrase requires DOCUMENTATION.

SUMMARY

The use of one's own words and sentence structure to condense someone else's text into a briefer version that gives the main ideas of the original. As with PARAPHRASING and QUOTATION, summarizing requires DOCUMENTATION.

SIGNAL PHRASE

A phrase used to attribute quoted, paraphrased, or summarized material to a source, such as "she said" or "he claimed."

DEFINITION

A STRATEGY that says what something is. *Formal definitions* identify the category that something belongs to and tell what distinguishes it from other things in that category: a worm as an invertebrate (a category) with a long, rounded body and no appendages (distinguishing features); *extended definitions* go into more detail: a paragraph or even an essay explaining why a character in a story is tragic; *stipulative definitions* give a writer's own use of a term, one not found in a dictionary. Definition can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

VISUAL

A photograph, chart, graph, table, video, or similar item used as part of a writer's text.

ALTERNATIVE TEXT (ALT TEXT)

A short description of an image that gets read aloud by screen-reading software to ensure that users with visual or some cognitive impairments can understand the image.

W-4d Taking Stock and Revising

Once you've gotten response from others, it's time to take stock of what you've drafted and what readers have said about it. Revision may feel daunting, but it will improve your finished work. Also, knowing that you're going to revise could reduce writer's block when you sit down to write the first draft. Since you know you'll be making changes later, you can think of your first draft as a rehearsal, a warm-up.

Revising also gives you a chance to try out words and ideas and weigh different options for expressing the points that you've already written. Here are some tips for taking stock of your draft and planning your next moves:

- ***Summarize from memory.*** Before you read any comments on your draft—and without looking at the draft, your notes, or any of your sources—sit down and write a brief SUMMARY of your whole draft. You probably won't remember everything, but it will be useful to know what sticks with you and what doesn't. Mention which parts you remember struggling with and what you thought about writing but didn't.
- ***Imagine how others might understand your draft.*** Imagine you're someone who knows nothing about your topic and read your first draft the way they might. (Try reading out loud.) Did it read smoothly? Note any parts that didn't. What questions might your reader ask? Where might they stop and say "Wow!"? Next, read your draft again, imagining you are someone who has an *opposing* opinion on your topic. Where might they question or challenge you? Make a note of your imagined readers' questions or comments.
- ***Consider the feedback you've received.*** Trust that any feedback has been given in a spirit of helpfulness; read it calmly and in good faith. Evaluate all the comments with an open mind. Which ones make the most sense, are the most important? Which ones can you disregard?
- ***Put it all together.*** Look again at the summary you wrote from memory, your notes about the responses of your imagined readers, and the feedback you've received. Where do they coincide? Where do they differ? Considering those three angles will give you an idea of what to work on. Keep in mind that the goals of a revision, in general, are to sharpen and polish what you've already done. Having a grasp of the whole task ahead of you will help you focus and get it done.

Set your goals for revising. Remember what you are trying to accomplish with your revision:

- First, sharpen your focus. Find your THESIS ; does it clearly articulate your main point? Have you provided the necessary contextual information in the opening paragraph? Does your ending provide a satisfactory conclusion?
- Next, strengthen your argument. Check every key idea to make sure each one is fully explained. You may need to qualify some of your CLAIMS—or provide more REASONS or EVIDENCE to support them.
- Third, make sure each paragraph follows from the one before. Check to see if you've included transitions or headings to help readers move through the text; add them as

needed.
- Finally, check to make sure that everything is understandable and clear. Is every new or unfamiliar term defined? Does your title give readers a good sense of what your text is about? Will readers recognize your main point?

Plan and execute. Make a realistic estimate of the time (and energy) you have available for doing the work and assess what can reasonably be accomplished in that available time. Set yourself step-by-step deadlines and try not to do it all at once.

Use your main revising tools: cut, add, and reorder. Now that you have a better understanding of the scope of your revision, you can classify the tasks involved into three categories: cutting existing material that may be repetitive or unnecessary; adding new material; and reorganizing existing material.

- ***Changing the sequence of sections or paragraphs*** (or even sentences within a paragraph) can help your work flow more smoothly. Try it the old-school way: print your draft, cut the paragraphs apart with scissors, mix up the slips of paper, and arrange them in a logical order. Does everything end up in the same order as the original draft? (Hint: It often doesn't.)
- ***Cutting whole paragraphs or just sentences and phrases*** can sharpen your focus. Don't just delete material; save it in a separate "outtakes" document with any related notes or comments. Dropped pieces might be useful later.
- ***Adding material***—details, supporting evidence, examples, and so on—can strengthen a point or clarify information. And don't forget to add TRANSITIONS to tie your ideas together.

See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for tips on using AI to help revise.

Glossary

SUMMARY
: The use of one's own words and sentence structure to condense someone else's text into a briefer version that gives the main ideas of the original. As with PARAPHRASING and QUOTATION, summarizing requires DOCUMENTATION.

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

CLAIM
: A statement that asserts a belief or position. In an ARGUMENT, a claim needs to be stated in a THESIS or clearly implied, and it requires support by REASONS and EVIDENCE.

REASON
: Support for a CLAIM or POSITION. A reason, in turn, requires its own support in the form of EVIDENCE.

EVIDENCE
: In ARGUMENT, the data you present to support your REASONS. Such data may include statistics, calculations, examples, ANECDOTES, QUOTATIONS, case studies, or anything else that will convince your reader that your reasons are compelling. Evidence should be

sufficient (enough to show that the reasons have merit) and relevant (appropriate to the argument you're making).

TRANSITION

A word or PHRASE that helps to connect sentences and paragraphs and to guide readers through a text. Transitions can help to show comparisons (also, similarly); contrasts (but, instead); examples (for instance, in fact); sequence (finally, next); time (at first, meanwhile); and more.

W-4e Editing and Proofreading

Your ability to produce clear, error-free writing shows something about your skill as a writer, so you should be sure to edit and proofread your work carefully. Editing is the stage at which you work on the details of your paragraphs, sentences, language, and punctuation to make your writing as clear and precise as possible. The following guidelines can help you check the paragraphs, sentences, and words in your drafts.

Editing paragraphs

- Does each paragraph focus on one point and have a TOPIC SENTENCE that announces that point? Does every sentence in the paragraph relate to that point?
- Where is the most important information in each paragraph—at the beginning? at the end? in the middle?
- Check to see how your paragraphs fit together. Does each one follow smoothly from the one before it? Do you need to add TRANSITIONS?
- How does the OPENING paragraph catch readers' attention? How else might you begin?
- Does the CONCLUSION provide a satisfactory ending? How else might you conclude?

For more help with paragraphs, see **W-6**.

Editing sentences

- Check to see that each sentence is complete, with a SUBJECT and a VERB, and that it begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.
- Are your sentences varied? If they all start with the subject or are all the same length, try varying them by adding TRANSITIONS or introductory phrases—or by combining some sentences.
- Be sure that lists or series are PARALLEL in form—all nouns (lions, tigers, bears), all verbs (hop, skip, jump), and so on.
- Do many of your sentences begin with "It" or "There"? Sometimes these words help introduce a topic, but often they make a text vague.

For more help with sentences, see **S-1** through **S-9**.

Editing language

- Are you sure of the meaning of every word?
- Do your words all convey your intended TONE?
- Is any of your language too general? For example, do you need to replace verbs like "be" or "do" with more specific VERBS?
- Check all PRONOUNS to see that they have clear ANTECEDENTS.

- Have you used any CLICHÉS? Academic writing in the US tends to avoid clichés.
- Check language that refers to others to be sure you're using relevant, precise, and inclusive terms. Edit out language that might be considered SEXIST or would otherwise stereotype any individual or group.
- Check for "it's" and "its." Use "it's" to mean "it is" or "it has" and "its" to mean "belonging to it."
- If your essay includes quotations, are they enclosed by quotation marks? Is the author referred to by last name? Is the author's name capitalized?

For more help with language, see "Editing the Details That Matter" (**E-1** through **E-6**) and **L-1** through **L-11**.

Proofreading

This is the final stage of the writing process, when you check for misspelled words, mixed-up typefaces, missing pages, and so on. Remember that reading to proofread is different from reading to understand—here, you focus on the words and structure of sentences, not the meaning of the text overall.

- Use your computer's grammar and spelling checkers, but be aware that they're not foolproof. Computer programs rely on formulas and banks of words—so what they flag (or not) as mistakes may not be accurate.
- Place a ruler or piece of paper under each line as you read. Use your finger or a pencil as a pointer.
- Focus on each sentence, one at a time, looking for anything that needs to be changed. Try beginning with the last sentence and working backward.
- Read your text out loud. Ask someone else to read your text aloud to you. Listen for areas that could be clearer.

See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for tips on using AI to help proofread.

Glossary

TOPIC SENTENCE
: A sentence, often at the beginning of a paragraph, that states the paragraph's main point. The details in the rest of the paragraph should support the topic sentence.

TRANSITION
: A word or PHRASE that helps to connect sentences and paragraphs and to guide readers through a text. Transitions can help to show comparisons (also, similarly); contrasts (but, instead); examples (for instance, in fact); sequence (finally, next); time (at first, meanwhile); and more.

OPENING
: The way a text begins, which plays an important role in drawing an AUDIENCE in. Some ways of opening a college essay: with a dramatic statement, a vivid image, a provocative question, an ANECDOTE, or a startling CLAIM.

CONCLUSION

The way a text ends, a chance to leave an AUDIENCE thinking about what's been said. Five ways of concluding a college essay: reiterating your point, discussing the implications of your ARGUMENT, asking a question, referring back to your OPENING, or proposing some kind of action.

SUBJECT

The NOUN or PRONOUN plus any MODIFIERS that tell who or what a sentence or CLAUSE is about. A simple subject is a single noun or pronoun. A complete subject is the simple subject plus any modifiers. In the sentence "Ten commuters waited for the late bus," the complete subject is "Ten commuters" and the simple subject is "commuters." *See also* subject-verb agreement

VERB

A word that expresses an action (dance, talk) or a state of being (be, seem). A verb is an essential element of a sentence or CLAUSE. Verbs have four forms: base form (smile), past tense (smiled), PAST PARTICIPLE (smiled), and PRESENT PARTICIPLE (smiling). *See also* base form

TRANSITION

A word or PHRASE that helps to connect sentences and paragraphs and to guide readers through a text. Transitions can help to show comparisons (also, similarly); contrasts (but, instead); examples (for instance, in fact); sequence (finally, next); time (at first, meanwhile); and more.

PARALLELISM

A writing technique that puts similar items into the same grammatical structure. For example, every item on a to-do list might begin with a command: clean, wash, buy; or a discussion of favorite hobbies might name each as a GERUND: running, playing basketball, writing poetry.

TONE

The way a writer's or speaker's STANCE toward the readers and subject is reflected in the text.

VERB

A word that expresses an action (dance, talk) or a state of being (be, seem). A verb is an essential element of a sentence or CLAUSE. Verbs have four forms: base form (smile), past tense (smiled), PAST PARTICIPLE (smiled), and PRESENT PARTICIPLE (smiling). *See also* base form

PRONOUN

A word that takes the place of a NOUN, such as "she," "anyone," "whoever."

ANTECEDENT

The NOUN or PRONOUN to which a pronoun refers. In "Maya lost her wallet," "Maya" is the antecedent of "her."

CLICHÉ

An expression used so frequently that it is no longer fresh: busy as a bee.

SEXIST LANGUAGE

Language that stereotypes or ignores women or men or needlessly calls attention to gender.

W-4f Reflecting on Your Work

After you've finished a writing project, spend some time reflecting on the work you've done to decide what you did well, what didn't work, which strategies helped you write, and what you learned in the process. Having an understanding of how you did in one project can then help you transfer those skills and experiences to other projects, other courses. Here are some questions to consider:

- What did you do well in this text? What could still be improved?
- What STRATEGIES did you use? How effectively did you use them?
- What aspects of this kind of writing were you familiar with? What was new? How did you deal with the unfamiliar aspects?
- Did you read other texts or sources in order to write this text? If you found them challenging, how did you deal with the difficulty?
- How much time did you spend on this project? How did you organize that time? Did you have enough time?
- Did you use any VISUALS? If so, what did they add to your text? If not, what visuals might you have used?
- What did you do to keep engaged, to persist as you worked on this project? If you weren't engaged, how could you improve in the future?
- All in all, what was challenging about this project? What was rewarding?

See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for tips on reflecting on your AI use.

Glossary

STRATEGY
: A pattern for organizing text to analyze CAUSE AND EFFECT, CLASSIFY AND DIVIDE, COMPARE AND CONTRAST, DEFINE, DESCRIBE, EXPLAIN A PROCESS, give EXAMPLES, and NARRATE.

VISUAL
: A photograph, chart, graph, table, video, or similar item used as part of a writer's text.

W-4g Collaborating

Even if you do much of your writing alone, you probably spend a lot of time working with others, either face-to-face or online. Here are some guidelines for collaborating successfully.

Working in a group

- For face-to-face meetings, make sure everyone is facing one another and is physically part of the group.
- Be respectful and tactful, and treat others and their work as you'd like to be treated.
- Each meeting needs an agenda—and careful attention to the clock. Appoint one person as timekeeper and another person as group leader; a third member should keep a record of the discussion and send around a summary afterward.

Working on a group writing project

- Define the overall project as clearly as possible, and divide the work into parts.
- Assign each group member specific tasks with deadlines.
- Try to accommodate everyone's style of working, but make sure everyone performs.
- Work for consensus, if not necessarily total agreement.

W-4h Compiling a Portfolio

For a writing class, you may compile a portfolio that includes your best work and, sometimes, preliminary and revised drafts, along with a statement assessing your strengths and weaknesses as a writer. This chapter offers guidelines to help you compile a writing portfolio.

What to include. A portfolio for a writing course typically contains examples of your best work, including any notes, outlines, preliminary drafts, and so on, along with your own assessment of your performance and growth.

Organizing a portfolio. Whether paper or digital, it should be neat, well organized, and easy to navigate. Your instructor may provide guidelines for organizing your portfolio. If not, use these suggestions. For paper portfolios, choose something in which to gather your work: a folder, a binder, or a box, basket, or some other container to hold bulky or odd-shaped items. Electronic portfolios, or e-portfolios, usually include a homepage with links to the contents. Your school's learning management system likely allows you to create an e-portfolio, but if not, several websites offer free tools to help you create one, or you can use word processing, spreadsheet, or presentation software. Label everything, specifying the assignment, the draft, and the date: "Argument, Draft 1, 9/12/23"; "Text Analysis, Final Draft, 10/10/23"; and so on. For each assignment, arrange your materials in chronological order so readers can see how your writing changed.

Assessing your portfolio. Your written self-assessment is an opportunity to look at your work with a critical eye and to think about what you're most proud of, what you most enjoyed doing, what you want to improve, and what you've learned. Some instructors may ask you to write out your assessment as a formal essay; others will want you to write a letter. Regardless, your statement should include:

- ***An*** EVALUATION ***of each piece of writing in your portfolio.*** Consider both strengths and weaknesses and give examples from your writing to support what you say. What would you change if you had more time? Which are your favorite and least favorite pieces? Why?
- ***An assessment of your overall writing performance.*** What do you do well? What do you want to improve? What do you *want* your work to say about you? What *does* your work say about you?
- ***A discussion of how the writing you did in this course has affected your growth as a writer.*** How does the writing in your portfolio compare with writing you did in the past? What do you know now that you didn't know before? What can you do that you couldn't do before?
- ***A*** DESCRIPTION ***of your writing habits and process.*** What do you usually do? How well does it work? What techniques seem to help you most, and why? Which seem less helpful? Cite passages from your drafts that support your conclusions.
- ***An*** ANALYSIS ***of your performance in the course.*** How did you spend your time? Did you collaborate with others? Did you have any conferences with your instructor? Did

you visit the writing center? Consider how these or any other activities contributed to your success.

Glossary

EVALUATION
: A writing GENRE that makes a judgment about something—a source, poem, film, restaurant, whatever—based on certain CRITERIA. Key Features: description of the subject • clearly defined criteria • knowledgeable discussion of the subject • balanced and fair assessment

DESCRIPTION
: A STRATEGY that tells how something looks, sounds, smells, feels, or tastes. Effective description creates a clear DOMINANT IMPRESSION built from specific details. Description can be *objective*, *subjective*, or both. Description can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

ANALYZING
: A writing GENRE that methodically examines something by breaking it into its parts and noting how they work in relation to one another. *See also* literary analysis; rhetorical analysis

W-5 Parts of the Essay: Beginnings, Endings, Theses & Titles

When you write, you need to organize your ideas and provide cues to help readers navigate your text and understand your main points. The beginning and ending of your essay and your essay's thesis help readers move through your text and understand how your ideas fit together.

W-5a Beginning

Beginnings help readers decide whether or not to keep reading and give them information about what's to come. Strong openings grab readers' attention by connecting to their interests—through shared experiences, anecdotes, or some other attention-getting device. Academic audiences also expect a text's introduction to establish a CONTEXT—how it fits into a larger conversation, addresses certain questions, or explores an aspect of the subject. Ways of beginning include:

- Explaining the larger context of your topic by describing how it fits into ongoing conversations
- Forecasting what's to come by briefly SUMMARIZING the way your text is organized
- Offering background information to help readers who may not know as much as you do about your topic and defining key terms or concepts
- Connecting your subject to your readers' interests or values to establish COMMON GROUND
- Telling a brief story or ANECDOTE
- Posing a question about the topic your text will explore
- Jumping right into a NARRATIVE, starting as close to the main action as possible

Here is an example of the beginning of an essay reviewing a book. The author provokes readers' interest by presenting several familiar "triumphs" of weight loss as the context for her thesis: that this memoir doesn't share in that triumph.

> What is often deemed the most intoxicating part of weight-loss stories is the moment of triumph. Think a newly svelte celebrity swimming inside their "fat" jeans, or Oprah underscoring that she can, in fact, eat bread every day. At a time when there is no shortage of recommendations for women on how to discipline their bodies, Roxane Gay's book *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* stands out because she begins it by declaring that she hasn't overcome her "unruly body and unruly appetites."
>
> —Adrienne Green, "The Boldness of Roxane Gay's *Hunger*"

Glossary

CONTEXT
: Part of any RHETORICAL SITUATION, conditions affecting the text such as what else has been said about a topic; social, economic, and other factors; and constraints such as due date and length.

SUMMARY
: The use of one's own words and sentence structure to condense someone else's text into a briefer version that gives the main ideas of the original. As with PARAPHRASING and QUOTATION, summarizing requires DOCUMENTATION.

COMMON GROUND

Shared values. Writers build common ground with AUDIENCES by acknowledging others' POINTS OF VIEW, seeking areas of compromise, and using language that includes, rather than excludes, those they aim to reach.

ANECDOTE

A brief NARRATIVE used to illustrate a point.

NARRATION

A STRATEGY for presenting information as a story, for telling "what happened." It is a pattern most often associated with fiction, but it shows up in all kinds of writing. When used in an essay, a REPORT, or another academic GENRE, narration is used to support a point—not merely to tell an interesting story for its own sake. It must also present events in some kind of sequence and include only pertinent detail. Narration can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

W-5b Crafting a Thesis Statement

No matter how your text begins, you need to provide a strong thesis, a statement of your main point. A thesis identifies your topic and the claim you're making about it. A good thesis helps readers understand an essay—and can help you focus your thinking about your topic. Here are five steps for developing a THESIS STATEMENT:

1. ***State your topic as a question.*** You may have a topic, such as "gasoline prices." But that doesn't make a statement. To move from a topic to a thesis statement, start by turning your topic into a question: "What causes fluctuations in gasoline prices?"
2. ***Then turn your question into a position.*** A thesis statement is an assertion—it takes a stand or makes a claim. One way to establish a thesis is to answer your own question: "Gasoline prices fluctuate for several reasons."
3. ***Narrow your thesis.*** A strong thesis is specific, telling your audience exactly what your essay will cover: "Gasoline prices fluctuate because of production procedures, consumer demand, international politics, and oil companies' policies."
4. ***Qualify your thesis.*** Though you may sometimes want to state your thesis strongly and bluntly, often you need to acknowledge that your assertion may not be unconditionally true. In such cases, consider adding QUALIFYING WORDS such as "may," "very," "likely," and "often" to qualify your statement: "Gasoline prices very likely fluctuate because of production procedures, consumer demand, international politics, and oil companies' policies."
5. ***Say why it matters.*** You may be interested in your topic, but why should readers care? Indicate why this topic is worth your audience's time: "We all feel the effects when a necessity costs us more; gasoline prices very likely fluctuate because of production procedures, consumer demand, international politics, and oil companies' policies."

Whatever tentative thesis you start with, keep in mind that you may modify it as you learn more. Remember, too, that some kinds of writing, such as personal narratives and reflections, may not include explicit thesis statements.

See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for tips on using AI to help develop a thesis statement.

» Go to INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS for an interactive activity on Thesis Statements, and practice your skills before applying them in your writing.

Glossary

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

QUALIFYING WORD

A word such as “frequently,” “often,” “generally,” “sometimes,” or “rarely” that limits a CLAIM in some way.

INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS

An adaptive learning tool linked to this book that lets you practice writing, editing, and research skills before you apply them to your own writing. Explanatory feedback provides advice exactly when you need it and includes links to the handbook. For more information, ask your instructor or see the access card at the front of your book.

W-5c Ending

Endings are important because they're the last words readers read. You may end by wrapping up loose ends or giving readers something to think about. Here are some ways you might conclude:

- Restate your main point, SUMMARIZING your central idea.
- Discuss the implications of your argument.
- Offer an ANECDOTE that illustrates your main point or finish a narrative that you started earlier in the text.
- Refer to the beginning, adding to or even changing the original meaning.
- Propose some action or solution to a problem identified in the text.

In this example, the writer ends by repeating their main point and then proposes action:

> The bottom line is that drastically reducing both crime rates and the number of people behind bars is technically feasible. Whether it is politically and organizationally feasible to achieve this remains an open question. It would be tragic if the politics proved prohibitive, but it would be genuinely criminal if we didn't even try.
>
> —Mark A. R. Kleiman, "The Outpatient Prison"

See **Appendix: Writing with Generative AI** for tips on using AI for help developing a conclusion.

Glossary

SUMMARY
: The use of one's own words and sentence structure to condense someone else's text into a briefer version that gives the main ideas of the original. As with PARAPHRASING and QUOTATION, summarizing requires DOCUMENTATION.

ANECDOTE
: A brief NARRATIVE used to illustrate a point.

W-5d Choosing a Title

Titles serve many purposes: naming a text, providing clues to the content, and helping readers decide whether or not to read on. So it's worth your while to come up with a title that attracts interest.

- Some titles simply announce the subject of the text: "Black Men and Public Space"; "Why College Costs So Much."
- Some titles provoke readers or entice them to want to know more: "Thank God for the Atom Bomb"; "Just How Dishonest Are Most Students?"
- Sometimes writers add a subtitle to explain or illuminate the title: "It's in Our Genes: The Biological Basis of Human Mating Behavior"; "From Realism to Virtual Reality: Images of America's Wars."

When you're just starting to write, sometimes you'll think of a title that helps you generate ideas and write more. More often, though, a title is one of the last things you'll compose, when you know what you've written and can craft a suitable name for your text. Think about what you most need your title to do, given your PURPOSE and AUDIENCE. Get creative and jot down lots of ideas before settling on one.

Glossary

PURPOSE
: A writer's goal: to explore ideas; to express oneself; to entertain; to demonstrate learning; to inform; to persuade; and so on. Purpose is one element of the RHETORICAL SITUATION.

AUDIENCE
: Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text.

W-6 Developing Paragraphs

Paragraphs help us organize our writing for our readers by breaking it into manageable "chunks." Each paragraph arranges sentences into groups that address a common topic. This chapter offers tips and examples for composing strong paragraphs.

W-6a Focusing on the Main Point

Paragraphs are groups of sentences—sometimes just a single sentence—that relate to one main idea. In English, we show paragraphs by indenting the first word. In academic writing, paragraphs usually contain a TOPIC SENTENCE that defines the main idea, followed by details that develop that main idea using various patterns of development.

Paragraph length depends on what you need to say. Since they signal that groups of sentences are related, paragraphs help readers make sense of those connections. For that reason, too many brief paragraphs or a single, long paragraph can make a text hard to read because they force readers to try to group related ideas together themselves.

Topic sentences. Just as a THESIS statement announces the topic of an essay, a topic sentence states the subject and focus of a paragraph. Good paragraphs focus on a single point, summarized in a topic sentence, as in this paragraph from a book about using trust to combat the challenges society will face in the coming decades.

> I believe events have primed the 2020s to be a decade that determines our future. It will be in these years that we succeed or fail in advancing racial and economic justice, in stopping the worst effects of climate change, and in repairing the standing of our country around the world. The choices we are about to make will reverberate for the balance of the century. These years will either generate a vision for a new American social democracy as wide-ranging and imaginative as the work of the New Deal and the Civil Rights Era combined, or solidify the trajectory of an American decline that would itself be the story of the century, almost certainly to the detriment of liberal democracy throughout the world.
>
> —Pete Buttigieg, *Trust: America's Best Chance*

Sometimes the topic sentence may come at the end of the paragraph or even at the end of the preceding paragraph. At other times, a topic sentence will summarize or restate a point made in the previous paragraph, helping readers understand what they've just read as they move on to the next point. For example, in a book exploring the effect of night on humanity, a paragraph describing the age-old fear of the dark ends with its topic sentence: "In short, terror of the dark was timeless." The next paragraph then continues with its topic sentence.

> One can only speculate about when an inherent fear of darkness might first have taken root in the human psyche.
>
> —A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*

Occasionally, the main point is so obvious that you don't need a topic sentence. Especially in NARRATIVE writing, you may choose only to imply—not state—the main idea, as in this paragraph from an essay describing a young man's realization about his cousin's life choices.

> College Point, Queens. They called it "Garbage Point." I didn't agree with that for a while because it was home, but when I turned sixteen, I looked at College Point differently. Sure, it wasn't Compton or Chicago, but as in any city, it was easy to slip up if you hung out in the wrong places. I was still sixteen when a family member I'll call "T" shot up heroin right in front of me. He was driving, and I was unlucky enough to be in the passenger seat beside him; I was in for a rough ride.
>
> —Mohammed Masoom Shah, "One Last Ride"

Sticking to the main point. Whether or not you announce the main point in a topic sentence, be sure that every sentence in a paragraph relates to that point. Edit out any sentences that stray off topic.

Glossary

TOPIC SENTENCE
: A sentence, often at the beginning of a paragraph, that states the paragraph's main point. The details in the rest of the paragraph should support the topic sentence.

THESIS
: A statement that identifies the TOPIC and main point of a piece of writing, giving readers an idea of what the text will cover.

NARRATION
: A STRATEGY for presenting information as a story, for telling "what happened." It is a pattern most often associated with fiction, but it shows up in all kinds of writing. When used in an essay, a REPORT, or another academic GENRE, narration is used to support a point—not merely to tell an interesting story for its own sake. It must also present events in some kind of sequence and include only pertinent detail. Narration can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

W-6b Developing the Main Point

A strong paragraph provides enough relevant details to develop its main point—to fill out and support that point. Following are some common strategies you may recognize for fleshing out and organizing paragraphs—and sometimes even for organizing an entire essay.

Analyzing cause and effect. Sometimes you can develop a paragraph on a topic by analyzing what CAUSES it—or what its EFFECTS might be. The following paragraph about air turbulence identifies some of its causes.

> A variety of factors can cause turbulence, which is essentially a disturbance in the movement of air. Thunderstorms, the jet stream, and mountains are some of the more common natural culprits, while what is known as wake turbulence is created by another plane. "Clear air turbulence" is the kind that comes up unexpectedly.
>
> —Susan Stellin, "The Inevitability of Bumps"

Classifying and dividing. When we CLASSIFY something, we group it with things that share similar characteristics. The following paragraph uses classification to describe the various features formed by hydrothermal vents, cracks in Earth's surface through which heated water is released.

> Under the sea, hydrothermal vents can form features called black smokers and white smokers. The colour depends on the minerals present in the water. On land these cracks form land hot springs, fumaroles (holes in a volcanic area from which hot smoke and gases escape) and geysers.
>
> —Peter Biro, "Questions and Answers about Hydrothermal Vents"

As a writing strategy, DIVISION is a way of separating something into parts. See how the following paragraph divides the concept of pressure into four kinds.

> I see four kinds of pressure working on college students today: economic pressure, parental pressure, peer pressure, and self-induced pressure. It is easy to look around for villains—to blame the colleges for charging too much money, the professors for assigning too much work, the parents for pushing their children too far, the students for driving themselves too hard. But there are no villains, only victims.
>
> —William Zinsser, "College Pressures"

Comparing and contrasting. Comparing things looks at their similarities; contrasting them focuses on their differences—though often we use the word "comparison" to refer to both strategies. You can structure a paragraph that COMPARES AND CONTRASTS in two ways. One is to shift back and forth between each item point by point, as in this paragraph contrasting the ways men and women "cyberloaf," or use the internet at work for non-work activities.

> Although the consequences of cyberloafing are similar across different populations, Lim and Chen's 2012 study demonstrated there are some meaningful differences based on gender. Men are more likely to cyberloaf than women, but when it comes to switching back to work, women take around eight minutes, while men take only four (pp. 346–347). There are differences, too, in how men and women think cyberloafing affects their work: men are more likely to say cyberloafing activities have a positive impact while women tend to say they have a negative impact (p. 347). However, Kim and Chen's results also show overall that many workers—men and women—believe there are some positive effects: 75% of participants say that cyberloafing increases their engagement at work, and 49% say that cyberloafing helps them to solve problems at work (p. 348). And most respondents believe it's not breaking any rules to browse the internet for personal reasons while at work (p. 346).
>
> —Rocio Celeste Mejia Avila, "Cyberloafing: Distraction or Motivation?"

Another way to compare and contrast two items is to use the "block method," covering all the details about one and then all the details about the other. See how this approach works in the following example, which contrasts photographs of Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton on the opening day of the 1994 baseball season.

> The next day photos of the Clintons in action appeared in newspapers around the country. Many papers, including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, chose the same two photos to run. The one of Bill Clinton showed him wearing an Indians cap and warm-up jacket. The President, throwing lefty, had turned his shoulders sideways to the plate in preparation for delivery. He was bringing the ball forward from behind his head in a clean-looking throwing action as the photo was snapped. Hillary Clinton was pictured wearing a dark jacket, a scarf, and an oversized Cubs hat. In preparation for her throw she was standing directly facing the plate. A right-hander, she had the elbow of her throwing arm pointed out in front of her. Her forearm was tilted back, toward her shoulder. The ball rested on her upturned palm. As the picture was taken, she was in the middle of an action that can only be described as throwing like a girl.
>
> —James Fallows, "Throwing Like a Girl"

Another way to make a comparison is with an ANALOGY, explaining something unfamiliar by comparing it with something familiar. See how one writer uses analogy to explain the way DNA encodes genetic information.

> Although the complexity of cells, tissues, and whole organisms is breathtaking, the way in which the basic DNA instructions are written is astonishingly simple. Like more familiar instruction systems such as language, numbers, or computer binary code, what matters is not so much the symbols themselves but the order in which they appear. Anagrams, for example, "derail" and "redial," contain exactly the same letters but in a different order, and so the words they spell out have completely different meanings. . . . In exactly the same way the order of the four chemical symbols in DNA embodies the message. "ACGGTA" and "GACAGT" are DNA anagrams that

mean completely different things to a cell, just as "derail" and "redial" have different meanings for us.

—Bryan Sykes, "So, What Is DNA and What Does It Do?"

Defining. When you DEFINE something, you put it in a general category and then add characteristics that distinguish it from others in that group. The following paragraph provides a definition of anhydrobiosis, one way that desert organisms stay alive during droughts.

Anhydrobiosis is dehydrated life—life shrunk down to its most primary aspects. No energy is spent on what would normally be considered to be living. The participants become sealed containers against the world, cells turning from living structures into reinforcement material. Sensitive organs are tucked away into specialized membranes, like wine glasses wrapped in newspaper for a move. Molecules, mostly a disaccharide called trehalose, are produced to shore up the shriveling internal structures. The organism's insides become crystalline, a material very similar to the liquid crystal in digital watches. A dehydrating roundworm converts a quarter of its body weight into this trehalose material before going completely dry, coiling into a compact circle and reducing its surface area to a hardened bulb about seven percent of the original size.

—Craig Childs, *The Secret Knowledge of Water*

Describing. A DESCRIPTIVE paragraph provides specific details to show what something looks like—and perhaps how it sounds, feels, smells, and tastes. Here a paragraph weaves together details of background, appearance, and speech to create a vivid impression of Chuck Yeager, the first pilot to break the sound barrier.

Yeager grew up in Hamlin, West Virginia, a town on the Mud River. His father was a gas driller (drilling for natural gas in the coalfields), his older brother was a gas driller, and he would have been a gas driller had he not enlisted in the Army Air Force in 1941 at the age of eighteen. In 1943, at twenty, he became a flight officer and went to England to fly fighter planes over France and Germany. Even in the tumult of the war Yeager was somewhat puzzling to a lot of other pilots. He was a short, wiry, but muscular little guy with dark curly hair and a tough-looking face that seemed (to strangers) to be saying: "You best not be lookin' me in the eye, you peckerwood, or I'll put four more holes in your nose." But that wasn't what was puzzling. What was puzzling was the way Yeager talked. He seemed to talk with some older forms of English elocution, syntax, and conjugation that had been preserved uphollow in the Appalachians. There were people up there who never said they disapproved of anything, they said: "I don't hold with it." In the present tense they were willing to *help* out, like anyone else; but in the past tense they only *holped*. "H'it weren't nothin' I hold with, but I holped him out with it, anyways."

—Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff*

Explaining a process. Sometimes you might write a paragraph that explains a process—telling someone how to do something, such as how to parallel park—or how something is

done, such as how bees make honey. Cookbooks explain many processes step-by-step, as in this explanation of how to pit a mango.

> The simplest method for pitting a mango is to hold it horizontally, then cut it in two lengthwise, slightly off-center, so the knife just misses the pit. Repeat the cut on the other side so a thin layer of flesh remains around the flat pit. Holding a half, flesh-side up, in the palm of your hand, slash the flesh into a lattice, cutting down to, but not through, the peel. Carefully push the center of the peel upward with your thumbs to turn it inside out, opening the cuts of the flesh. Then cut the mango cubes from the peel.
>
> —Paulette Mitchell, *Vegetarian Appetizers*

Narrating. When you write a NARRATIVE paragraph in an essay, you tell a story to support a point. In the following paragraph, one author tells about being mistaken for a waitress and how that incident of stereotyping served "as a challenge" that provoked her to read her poetry with new confidence.

> One such incident . . . happened on the day of my first public poetry reading. It took place in Miami in a boat-restaurant where we were having lunch before the event. I was nervous and excited as I walked in with my notebook in my hand. An older woman motioned me to her table. Thinking (foolish me) that she wanted me to autograph a copy of my brand-new slender volume of verse, I went over. She ordered a cup of coffee from me, assuming that I was the waitress. Easy enough to mistake my poems for menus, I suppose. I know that it wasn't an intentional act of cruelty, yet of all the good things that happened that day, I remember that scene most clearly, because it reminded me of what I had to overcome before anyone would take me seriously. In retrospect, I understand that my anger gave my reading fire, that I have almost always taken doubts in my abilities as a challenge—and that the result is, most times, a feeling of satisfaction at having won a convert when I see the cold, appraising eyes warm to my words, the body language change, the smile that indicates that I have opened some avenue for communication.
>
> —Judith Ortiz Cofer, *The Latin Deli*

Using examples. Illustrating a point with one or more examples is a common way to develop a paragraph, like the following one, which presents several examples of country musicians whose music includes elements of pop, rock, and rap to make a point about the exclusion of "Old Town Road," a rap/country song by rapper Lil Nas X, from the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart.

> Country music gatekeepers are selective about how they use this muscle. Universal Nashville's (white) hip-pop raconteur Sam Hunt is embraced by Billboard's Hot Country Songs, and "Meant to Be," a pop-leaning ballad by Bebe Rexha with Florida Georgia Line is played ad nauseam. Taylor Swift could also lasso the country albums top spot for 16 weeks with her career-realigning pop-rock masterpiece *Red*. White country artists' rap collaborations also tend to get a pass. Jason Aldean tapped Ludacris for a remix of his country No 1 "Dirt Road Anthem"; Nelly's feature on

> Florida Georgia Line's bro-country classic "Cruise" helped it become country music's best selling US single of the digital era. Yet when black rappers draw from country styles . . . they are denied a seat at the table.
>
> —Owen Myers, "Fight for Your Right to Yeehaw: Lil Nas X and Country's Race Problem"

Glossary

CAUSE AND EFFECT
: A STRATEGY for analyzing why something occurred or speculating about what its consequences will be. Cause and effect can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

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CLASSIFICATION AND DIVISION
: A STRATEGY that either groups (classifies) numerous individual items by their similarities (for example, classifying cereal, bread, butter, chicken, cheese, cream, eggs, and oil as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats) or breaks (divides) one large category into small categories (for example, dividing food into carbohydrates, proteins, and fats). Classification and/or division can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

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COMPARISON AND CONTRAST
: A STRATEGY that highlights the similarities and differences between items. Using the *block method* of comparison-contrast, a writer discusses all the points about one item and then all the same points about the other item; using the *point-by-point method,* a writer discusses one point for both items before going on to discuss the next point for both items, and so on. Sometimes comparison and/or contrast serves as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

ANALOGY
: A STRATEGY for COMPARISON that explains something unfamiliar in terms of something familiar.

DEFINITION
: A STRATEGY that says what something is. *Formal definitions* identify the category that something belongs to and tell what distinguishes it from other things in that category: a worm as an invertebrate (a category) with a long, rounded body and no appendages (distinguishing features); *extended definitions* go into more detail: a paragraph or even an essay explaining why a character in a story is tragic; *stipulative definitions* give a writer's

own use of a term, one not found in a dictionary. Definition can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

DESCRIPTIVE

A STRATEGY that tells how something looks, sounds, smells, feels, or tastes. Effective description creates a clear DOMINANT IMPRESSION built from specific details. Description can be *objective, subjective,* or both. Description can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

NARRATION

A STRATEGY for presenting information as a story, for telling "what happened." It is a pattern most often associated with fiction, but it shows up in all kinds of writing. When used in an essay, a REPORT, or another academic GENRE, narration is used to support a point—not merely to tell an interesting story for its own sake. It must also present events in some kind of sequence and include only pertinent detail. Narration can serve as the organizing principle for a paragraph or a whole text.

W-6c Making Paragraphs Flow

There are several ways to make your paragraphs COHERENT so that readers can follow your train of thought. Repetition, parallelism, and transitions are three strategies for making paragraphs flow.

Repetition. One way to help readers follow your train of thought is to repeat key words and phrases, as well as pronouns referring to those words.

> Not that long ago, blogs were one of those annoying buzz words that you could safely get away with ignoring. The word "blog"—it works as both noun and verb—is short for "Web log." It was coined in 1997 to describe a website where you could post daily scribblings, journal-style, about whatever you like—mostly critiquing and linking to other articles online that may have sparked your thinking. Unlike a big media outlet, bloggers focus their efforts on narrow topics, often rising to become de facto watchdogs and self-proclaimed experts. Blogs can be about anything: politics, sex, baseball, haiku, car repair. There are blogs about blogs.
>
> —Lev Grossman, "Meet Joe Blog"

Instead of repeating one word, you can use synonyms.

> Predictably, the love of cinema has waned. People still like going to the movies, and some people still care about and expect something special, necessary from a film. And wonderful films are still being made. . . . But one hardly finds anymore, at least among the young, the distinctive cinephilic love of movies, which is not simply love of but a certain *taste* in films.
>
> —Susan Sontag, "A Century of Cinema"

Parallel structures. Putting similar items into the same grammatical structure helps readers see the connection among those elements and follow your sentences—and your thoughts.

> The disease was bubonic plague, present in two forms: one that infected the bloodstream, causing the buboes and internal bleeding and was spread by contact; and a second, more virulent pneumonic type that infected the lungs and was spread by respiratory infection. The presence of both at once caused the high mortality and speed of contagion. So lethal was the disease that cases were known of persons going to bed well and dying before they woke, of doctors catching the illness at a bedside and dying before the patient. So rapidly did it spread from one to another that to a French physician, Simon de Covino, it seemed as if one sick person "could infect the whole world."
>
> —Barbara Tuchman, "'This Is the End of the World': The Black Death"

Transitions help readers follow your train of thought—and move from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph. Here are some common ones:

- ***To show causes and effects:*** accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, hence, so, then, therefore, thus
- ***To show comparison:*** along the same lines, also, in the same way, like, likewise, similarly
- ***To show contrasts or exceptions:*** although, but, even though, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the one hand . . . on the other hand, still, yet
- ***To show examples:*** for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, of course, such as
- ***To show place or position:*** above, adjacent to, below, beyond, elsewhere, here, inside, near, outside, there
- ***To show sequence:*** again, also, and, and then, besides, finally, first, furthermore, last, moreover, next, too
- ***To show time:*** after, as soon as, at first, at last, at the same time, before, eventually, finally, immediately, later, meanwhile, next, simultaneously, so far, soon, then, thereafter
- ***To signal a summary or conclusion:*** as a result, as we have seen, finally, in a word, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in short, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, therefore, thus, to summarize

See how Julia Alvarez uses several transitions to show time and to move her ideas along.

> Yolanda, the third of the four girls, became a schoolteacher but not on purpose. For years after graduate school, she wrote down *poet* under profession in questionnaires and income tax forms, and later amended it to *writer*-slash-*teacher*. Finally, acknowledging that she had not written much of anything in years, she announced to her family that she was not a poet anymore.
>
> —Julia Alvarez, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*

Transitions can also help readers move from paragraph to paragraph and, by summing up the previous paragraph's main point, show how the paragraphs are connected. A common way to summarize is to use phrases like "this/these ____" and "such ____." Here's an example, from an anthropologist's study of American college students:

> When I asked students in interviews whether they felt they had a "community" at AnyU, most said yes. But what they meant by community were these personal networks of friends that some referred to as my "homeys." It was these small, ego-centered groups that were the backbone of most students' social experience in the university.
>
> On a daily basis these personal networks were easily recognizable within the dorm and on campus. "Where are you now?" says the cell phone caller walking back to the dorm from class. "I'm on my way home, so ask Jeffrey and Mark to come, and I'll meet you at my room at 8." Such conversations are everywhere.
>
> —Rebekah Nathan, *My Freshman Year*

» Go to INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS for an interactive activity on Paragraph Development, and practice your skills before applying them in your writing.

Glossary

COHERENCE
: The quality that enables an AUDIENCE to follow a text and to see the connections among ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. Elements that can help to achieve coherence include the title, a clearly stated or implied THESIS, TOPIC SENTENCES, an easy-to-follow organization with clear TRANSITIONS, and PARALLELISM among comparable ideas.

INQUIZITIVE FOR WRITERS
: An adaptive learning tool linked to this book that lets you practice writing, editing, and research skills before you apply them to your own writing. Explanatory feedback provides advice exactly when you need it and includes links to the handbook. For more information, ask your instructor or see the access card at the front of your book.

W-6d Starting a New Paragraph

Paragraphs may be long or short, and there are no strict rules about how many sentences are necessary for a well-developed paragraph. But while a brief, one- or two-sentence paragraph can be used to set off an idea you want to emphasize, too many short paragraphs can make your writing choppy. Here are some reasons for beginning a new paragraph:

- to introduce a new subject or idea
- to signal a new speaker (in dialogue)
- to emphasize an idea
- to give readers a needed pause

SEE W-4e for help editing paragraphs and **W-5** for advice on writing opening and closing paragraphs.

W-7 Designing What You Write

Whether you're putting together your résumé, creating a website for your intramural soccer league, or writing a research essay for a class, you need to think about how to design what you write. Sometimes you can rely on established design conventions: in academic writing, there are specific guidelines for headings, margins, and line spacing. (This book includes guidelines for **MLA**, **APA**, **Chicago**, and **CSE** styles. If you're unsure what specific style is required for your discipline, check with your instructor.)

But often you'll have the freedom to make design decisions on your own—and not just about words and spacing but also about integrating your written text with visuals (and sometimes video and audio clips and hyperlinks) in the most attractive, effective, and accessible way. No matter what your text includes, its design will influence how your audience responds to it and therefore how well it achieves your purpose. Use the tips in this chapter to design print and online texts to suit your PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, and the rest of your rhetorical CONTEXT.

Glossary

MLA STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION used in the humanities. MLA stands for the Modern Language Association.

APA STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION used in the social sciences. APA stands for the American Psychological Association.

CHICAGO STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION for papers in history and other subject areas in the humanities. "Chicago" is short for *The Chicago Manual of Style,* which is published by the University of Chicago Press.

CSE STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION used in the physical sciences, life sciences, and mathematics. CSE is short for Council of Science Editors.

PURPOSE
: A writer's goal: to explore ideas; to express oneself; to entertain; to demonstrate learning; to inform; to persuade; and so on. Purpose is one element of the RHETORICAL SITUATION.

AUDIENCE
: Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text.

CONTEXT
: Part of any RHETORICAL SITUATION, conditions affecting the text such as what else has been said about a topic; social, economic, and other factors; and constraints such as due date and length.

W-7a Some Basic Principles of Design

Be consistent. To keep readers oriented as they browse multipage documents or websites, use design elements consistently. In a print academic essay, choose a single typeface (Arial or Times New Roman) for your main text and use boldface or italics for headings. In writing for the web, place navigation buttons and other major elements in the same place on every page. In a presentation, use the same background and typeface for each slide unless there's a good reason for differences.

Keep it simple. Help readers see quickly—even intuitively—what's in your text and where to find specific information. Add headings to help them see the parts, use consistent colors and typefaces to help them recognize key elements, set off steps in lists, and use white space to set off blocks of text or highlight certain elements. Resist the temptation to fill pages with unnecessary graphics or animations.

Aim for balance. Create balance through the use of margins, images, headings, and spacing. **MLA**, **APA**, **Chicago**, and **CSE** styles have specific design guidelines for academic research papers that cover these elements. A website or magazine might balance a large image with a narrow column of text or use PULL QUOTES and illustrations to break up columns of dense vertical text.

Use color and contrast carefully. Academic readers usually expect black text on a white background, with perhaps one other color for headings. Presentation slides and webpages are most readable with dark text on a plain, light-colored background. Make sure your audience will be able to distinguish any color variations in your text well enough to grasp your meaning. Remember that an online text with several colors might be printed out and read in black and white and that not everyone can see all colors; red-green contrasts can be particularly challenging for some people.

Use available templates. To save time and simplify design decisions, take advantage of templates. In *Microsoft Word*, for example, you can customize typeface, spacing, indents, and other features that will automatically be applied to your document. Websites that host personal webpages and presentation software also offer templates that you can use or modify.

Glossary

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CSE STYLE

A system of DOCUMENTATION used in the physical sciences, life sciences, and mathematics. CSE is short for Council of Science Editors.

PULL QUOTE

A brief excerpt set off within a text in order to highlight certain information. Pull quotes are often set in a different typeface, style, or color.

W-7b Some Elements of Design

Whatever your text, you have various design decisions to make. The following guidelines will help you make those decisions.

Typefaces and fonts. The TYPEFACES you choose will affect how well readers can read your text. For most academic writing, you'll want to use 10- or 11- or 12-point type. It's usually a good idea to use a serif typeface (such as Times New Roman or Bookman) for your main text, reserving sans serif (such as Calibri, Verdana, or Century Gothic) for headings and parts you want to highlight. Decorative typefaces (such as Chiller) should be used sparingly. If you use more than one typeface, use each one consistently: one for headings, one for captions, one for the main body of your text. You won't often need more than two or three typefaces in any one text.

Every common typeface has regular, **bold**, and *italic* fonts. In general, use regular for the main text, bold for major headings, and italic for titles of books and other long works. If, however, you are following a specific discipline's style, be sure you conform to its requirements.

Layout. Layout is the way text is arranged on a page. An academic essay, for example, will usually have a title centered at the top and one-inch margins all around. Items such as lists, tables, headings, and images should be arranged consistently.

Line spacing. Generally, academic writing is double-spaced, whereas letters and résumés are usually single-spaced. In addition, you'll often need to add an extra space to set off parts of a text—lists, for instance, or headings.

Paragraphs. In general, indent paragraphs five spaces when your text is double-spaced; either indent or skip a line between paragraphs that are single-spaced. When preparing a text intended for online use, single-space your document, skip a line between paragraphs, and begin each paragraph flush left (no indent).

Lists. Use a list format for information that you want to set off and make easily accessible. Number the items when the sequence matters (in instructions, for example); use bullets when the order is not important. Set off lists with an extra line of space above and below, and add extra space between the items on a list if necessary for legibility.

White space and margins. To make your text attractive and readable, use white space to separate its various parts. In general, use one-inch margins for the text of an essay or report. Unless you're following a format that has specific guidelines (such as APA), include space above headings, above and below lists, and around photos, graphs, and other visuals.

Headings. Headings make the structure of a text easier to follow and help readers find specific information. Some academic fields require standard headings—announcing a list of WORKS

CITED, for example, to follow MLA format. Whenever you include headings, you need to decide how to phrase them, what typefaces to use, and where to position them.

Phrase headings consistently. Make your headings succinct and parallel in structure. For example, you might make all the headings nouns (Mushrooms), noun phrases (Kinds of Mushrooms), gerund phrases (Recognizing Kinds of Mushrooms), or questions (How Do I Identify Mushrooms?). Whatever form you decide on, use it consistently.

Make headings visible. Consider setting headings in bold or italics, or with an underline—or in a different, or slightly larger, typeface. When you have several levels of headings, use capitalization, bold, and italics to distinguish among the various levels:

First-Level Head

Second-Level Head

Third-level head

Some academic fields have specific requirements about formatting headings; see the **MLA**, **APA**, **Chicago**, and **CSE** chapters for details.

Position headings appropriately. If you're following MLA style, position headings flush with the left margin. Center first-level headings if you're following APA style. If you are not following a prescribed format, you get to decide where to position the headings: centered, flush with the left margin, or even alongside the text, in a wide left-hand margin. Position each level of head consistently.

Glossary

TYPEFACE
: A style of text, such as Calibri or Times New Roman.

WORKS CITED
: A list at the end of a researched text prepared in MLA STYLE or CHICAGO STYLE that contains full bibliographic information for all the sources cited in the text.

MLA STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION used in the humanities. MLA stands for the Modern Language Association.

APA STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION used in the social sciences. APA stands for the American Psychological Association.

CHICAGO STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION for papers in history and other subject areas in the humanities. "Chicago" is short for *The Chicago Manual of Style,* which is published by the University of Chicago Press.

CSE STYLE
: A system of DOCUMENTATION used in the physical sciences, life sciences, and mathematics. CSE is short for Council of Science Editors.

W-7c Visuals

Visuals (including video) can help make a point in ways that written words alone cannot. In print documents, you can often use photos, charts, graphs, and diagrams. Online or in spoken presentations, your options expand to include video and printed handouts. But choose carefully—and be sure that any items you incorporate contribute to your point and are effective for your purpose and audience.

Photographs can support an argument, illustrate events and processes, present other points of view, and help readers place your information in time and space. When including photos of people, strive for diversity (in race, age, ability, and gender) whenever possible. A discussion of the Nintendo Switch might be clearer when accompanied by this photo.

ECONOMY WATCH

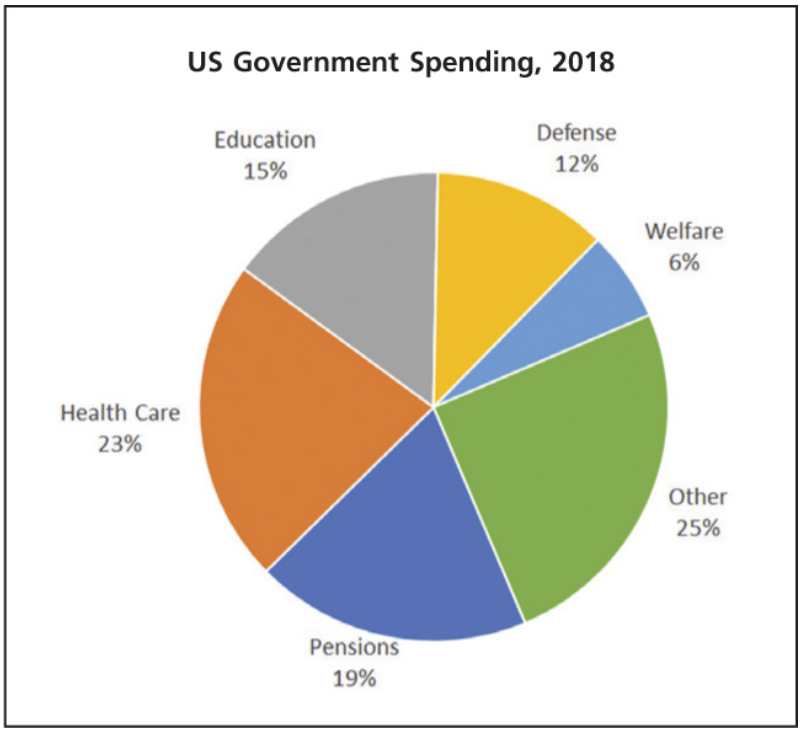
A snapshot of key figures for the world's largest economies.

COUNTRY	GDP in billions in 2010	GDP GROWTH Y/year (%)	CURRENT ACC'T/GDP in 2010 (%)	INFLATION Year over year (%)	JOBLESS (%)
U.S.	$14,658	2.0‡	-3.2	3.5	8.6
Euro zone	12,474*	1.4	-0.2*	3.0	10.3
China	5,878	9.1	5.2	5.5	4.1§
Japan	5,459	5.6‡	3.6	-0.1	4.5
Germany	3,316	2.5	5.3	2.8†	6.9
France	2,583	1.7	-2.1	2.5†	9.7
Britain	2,247	0.5	-2.5	5.0	8.3
Italy	2,055	0.8	-2.1*	3.7†	8.5
Brazil	1,601*	2.1	-1.5*	6.6	5.8
Canada	1,574	3.5‡	-3.1	2.9	7.4
India	1,538	6.9	-3.2	9.7	n.a.
Russia	1,222*	4.8	4.1*	6.8	6.4
Mexico	1,039	4.5	-0.7*	3.5	5.0
South Korea	833*	3.5	3.9*	4.2	3.1

*Actual figures of 2009 **Harmonized figures †Quarter on quarter annualized ‡Urban end September

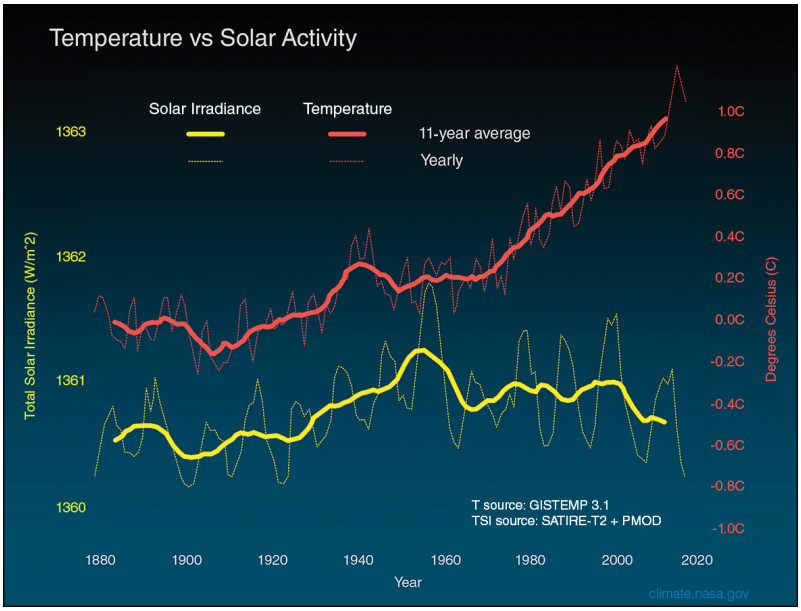
The headings of the columns include (from left to right) Country, GDP in billions in 2010, GDP growth, Current Acc't/GDP, Inflation, and Jobless.

Tables are useful for displaying numerical information concisely, especially when several items are being compared. Presenting information in columns and rows permits readers to find data and identify relationships among the items.



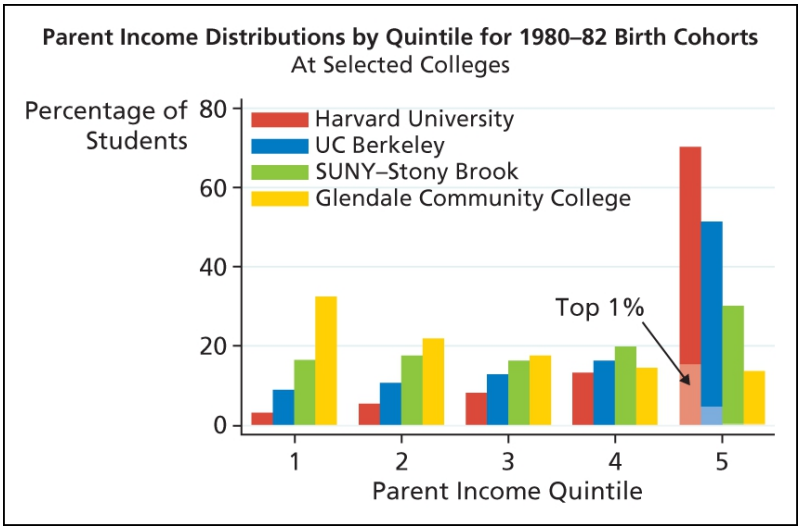
The six slices of the pie graph show the following data, from smallest to largest: 6 percent of US government spending in 2018 went to welfare (light blue), 12 percent went to defense (yellow), 15 percent went to education (gray), 19 percent went to pensions (daek blue), 23 percent went to health care (orange), and 25 percent went to other areas (green).

Pie charts can be used to show how a whole is divided into parts or how parts of a whole relate to one another. Percentages in a pie chart should always add up to 100. Each segment should be labeled clearly, as in this chart showing US government spending.



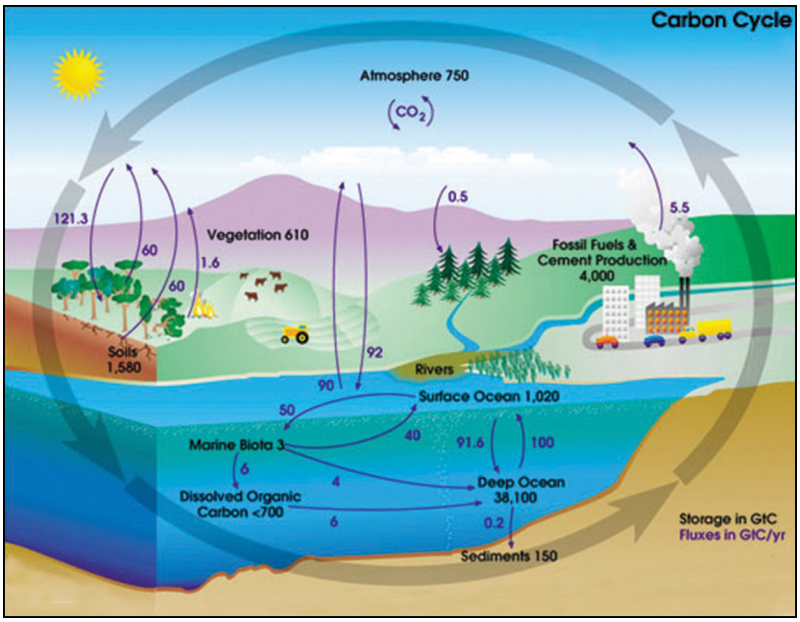
The y axis measures total solar irradiance in W/m^2 while the x axis shows the year. The line measuring temperature trends upward, increasing steeply from .2 degrees Celsius in 1960 to 1 degree Celsius in 2020. The line measuring solar irradiance does not increase as much and includes more peaks and valleys. It peaks in 1950 at -.2 degrees Celsius and is trending downward in 2020.

Line graphs are a good way of showing changes in data over time. One line here represents solar activity and the other temperature changes on Earth. Plotting the lines together enables readers to compare the data at different points in time. Be sure to label the *x*- and *y*-axes.



This bar graph measures percentage of students with parents in each income quintile at Harvard University, UC Berkeley, SUNY-Stony Brook, and Glendale Community College. The y axis measures percentage of students, and the x axis shows parent income quintile. Each quintile has a cluster of colored bars, each color representing a school. Harvard's bars trend upward, with only 1% of students in the first quintile and an overwhelming majority of students in the fifth quintile. UC Berkeley also trends upwards, with about 7% of students in the first quintile and 50% of students in the fifth quintile. SUNY-Stony Brook is pretty evenly distributed across the first four quintiles, each of which shows 15 to 20% of students, and about 30% of students in the fifth quintile. Glendale Community College trends downwards, with about 35% of students in the first quintile and about 15% in the fifth quintile.

Bar graphs are useful for comparing quantitative data—measurements of how much or how many. Bars can be horizontal or vertical; this one uses vertical bars to show family income distribution at several colleges. Some software offer 3-D and other special effects, but simple graphs are often easier to read.



An illustration of a landscape shows all the places carbon is stored and released. There is a blue sky with the sun in the corner, a mountain in the background, a forest of evergreen trees, a small farm, a large body of water and rivers branching off it, the earth beneath the ocean, and a small urban center with buildings and cars. Large arrows in a

circular pattern show the movement of carbon from the atmosphere to vegetation to soil to various layers of the ocean to the earth through sediments and back into the atmosphere. Several smaller arrows demonstrate the relationships between soils and vegetation, the layers of the ocean, the ocean and the atmosphere, fossil fuels and the atmosphere.

Diagrams and flowcharts are ways of showing relationships and processes. This diagram shows how carbon moves between Earth and its atmosphere. Flowcharts can be made by using widely available templates; diagrams, on the other hand, can range from simple drawings to works of art.

SOME TIPS FOR USING VISUALS

- ***Choose visuals that relate directly to your subject,*** support your assertions, and add information that words alone can't provide as clearly or easily. Avoid clip art.
- ***In academic writing, number each image,*** using separate sequences for FIGURES and tables: Fig. 1, Table 1.
- ***Refer to the visual before it appears.*** Position images as close as possible to the relevant discussion. Explain the information you're presenting—don't expect it to speak for itself: "As Table 1 shows, Italy's economic growth rate declined for twenty years."
- ***Provide a title or caption for each image*** to identify it and explain its significance for your text: "Table 1. Italian Economic Growth Rate, 2000–2022."
- ***Label the parts of charts, graphs, and diagrams clearly***—sections of a pie chart, colors in a line graph, items in a diagram—to ensure that your audience will understand what they show.
- ***Provide*** ALTERNATIVE TEXT ***for visuals in a digital text.*** This information ensures that those using screen-reader software can understand the important visual elements in your text.
- DOCUMENT ***any visual you found or adapted from another source.*** If you use data to create a graph or chart, include source information directly below and document it in your list of works cited or bibliography as you would any source.
- ***Consider linking to a file rather than embedding it.*** Large files may be hard to upload without altering quality and can clog email inboxes. Linking also allows readers to see the original context.
- ***Integrate a video clip*** by pasting its URL into your text or adding an image from the video that you've hyperlinked to the source.
- ***Obtain permission*** if you publish a visual in any form, including on the web. If you're in doubt about whether or not you can use an item, check "fair use" guidelines online.

If you alter a visual in some way—such as darkening a photo or cropping to include only a portion of it—tell readers what you've changed and why. Be sure to represent the original content accurately, and provide relevant information about the source. Be careful with charts and graphs as well—changing the scale on a bar graph, for example, may mislead readers.

Glossary

FIGURE
: A photograph, graph, chart, diagram, or drawing. Used by writers to help make a point in ways that words alone cannot. *See also* visual

ALTERNATIVE TEXT (ALT TEXT)
: A short description of an image that gets read aloud by screen-reading software to ensure that users with visual or some cognitive impairments can understand the image.

DOCUMENTATION
: Publication information about the sources cited in a text. The documentation usually appears in an abbreviated form in parentheses at the point of CITATION or in an endnote or a footnote. Complete documentation usually appears as a BIBLIOGRAPHY, list of WORKS CITED, or REFERENCES at the end of the text. Styles vary by discipline. *See also* APA style; Chicago style; CSE style; MLA style

W-7d Accessibility

As you weigh design choices, consider which features will make your text accessible to all readers—including those with differing visual, speech, auditory, physical, or cognitive abilities. The following suggestions will help you create accessible texts:

- ***Consider typeface size in print texts.*** Many readers require or prefer large type, so for printed texts, choose a typeface that's easy to read. When in doubt, choose a large font size or provide large-print copies. Large print is 18 point or higher.
- ***Provide*** ALTERNATIVE TEXT ***(alt text) for all essential images and visuals in digital texts.*** Alt text describes the content or meaning of a visual. People using screen-reader software to read your text will understand visuals only if you provide alt text for the software to read out. Complex charts and graphs need not be described in detail; instead, provide alt text summarizing the main point: "A line chart shows that revenue grew incrementally from 20 percent to 60 percent between 2015 and 2020." If a visual is just decorative, you do not need to provide alt text.
- ***Choose colors with high contrast.*** When using multiple colors, choose ones that have a dramatic contrast (such as light blue against deep maroon) so that they are legible. And remember that some people cannot see the difference between certain colors (red and green, for example). Don't use color as the only means of conveying information. For example, underline URLs in addition to setting them in a contrasting color.
- ***When giving a presentation, face the audience so lip-readers can see your face clearly, and keep your hands from blocking your face.*** Provide a printout of your talk in a large font size as well as print copies of any visual aids. If your slides include important images or visuals, describe them out loud for those who may not be able to see them.

Glossary

ALTERNATIVE TEXT (ALT TEXT)
: A short description of an image that gets read aloud by screen-reading software to ensure that users with visual or some cognitive impairments can understand the image.