WRITING PAPERS

A Handbook for
Students at Smith College
5th Revised Edition

A publication of the Jacobson Center for
Writing, Teaching and Learning

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In memory of
Marian and Ron
Macdonald

WRITING PAPERS

PREFACE

Some four decades ago, an inspired group of English faculty set out to create a handbook for writing papers at Smith. As writers, they knew the hard work writing entails; as instructors and former students, they recognized the challenges that students face. They composed their contributions in longhand, typed drafts on typewriters, and submitted their writing to their colleagues for review. In 1980, the original *Writing Papers* arrived for distribution to the first-year class.

Although typewriters have given way to desktop computers, which have themselves given way to laptops, tablets, and smartphones, the goals and importance of good writing haven't changed. Students still need to be able to reason clearly and to express themselves in concise, correct, even elegant prose, making *Writing Papers* as relevant today as it was in 1980.

Like the technologies of writing, the teaching of writing at Smith has evolved considerably since the original publication of *Writing Papers*. No longer the exclusive responsibility of the English department, writing is now taught by faculty in all the disciplines, including the sciences and engineering, an inconceivable notion for many when the book first appeared. Consequently, a greater emphasis has been given throughout the book to writing in the STEM disciplines.

While some sections of the book have been substantially expanded or rewritten, this new edition of *Writing Papers* builds on the wisdom of the various generations of contributors, preserving passages from all four previous editions. As before, the new edition is the work of the staff of the Jacobson Center in collaboration with our librarian colleagues, who originally wrote and have since updated the section titled "Researching a Topic."

We continue to be grateful to Joan Leiman Jacobson, class of 1947, whose generous gift makes possible this and many other efforts to help Smith students become more effective, articulate, graceful writers.

Julio Alves
Director, Jacobson Center for Writing, Teaching and Learning
& Coordinator of the Writing Program
Spring, 2016

GETTING STARTED

PRE-WRITING

You may think of writing a paper as simply the act of sitting down in front of a computer and bashing it out, first word to last word. It's probably more productive to think of writing a paper as including all the work you do before that first word hits the page. These activities are sometimes called pre-writing, and they can include reading, questioning, note-taking, list-making, free writing, outlining, and drafting. Rather than complicating the process, these techniques can make writing smoother, easier, and ultimately more effective.

Read Your Assignment Carefully and Determine Your Rhetorical Purpose

If there is a specific assigned topic, what is it asking you to do? Summarize? Narrate? Explain? Analyze? Argue? Having a good grasp of your instructor's expectations will allow you to decide on the approach you need to take with your paper.

Although most writing assignments will ask you to develop a thesis, not all papers require one:

- **Summaries** require you to grasp and convey the main point of an issue or idea. In a psychology class, you might be asked to read an article reporting on the results of an author's research and summarize the author's main findings.
- **Narratives** ask you to relate an event or tell a story, but such a paper still has a point—a controlling idea. In a narrative for a writing class, you might write about how a significant life event shaped your career ambitions.
- **Explanatory/Expository essays** educate an audience. In a neuroscience class, you might be asked to describe the distinctions between morphine and heroin, how they act in the human body, and how people become addicted.

Other types of essays require a thesis:

- **Explanatory/Analytical essays** divide an idea or issue into its central parts and evaluate that idea or issue. In a government class, you could be asked to describe the main provisions of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and analyze why the Act has been politically polarizing.
- **Argumentative essays** ask you to make a claim, advance a position. They're built on careful analysis. In a history class, your instructor could ask you to analyze and argue for your position on the role of Christianity in the fall of the Roman Empire. In such a paper, you would prove how and why Christianity affected—or did not affect—the decline of the Roman Empire.

If you are unsure about whether your assignment requires you to develop a thesis, always consult with your instructor.

Ask Questions, Especially When Your Assignment is Open-Ended
Good papers usually begin with good questions. As you're doing the reading and research for a paper, write down your versions of these questions:

- What has particularly interested me about this subject?
- What passages in the text have I underlined in my first reading, and is there anything that connects them? (Look especially for patterns of related ideas widely separated in the text.)
- What has my instructor, someone else in the class, the textbook, or a secondary source said about this topic that I disagree with, or at least find questionable? (Where there's disagreement, there's often a paper topic.)

As you answer these questions, try to make your subsequent questions increasingly specific and focused. Stop taking notes once in a while and ask: How have my questions changed? What will probably be my main question? How will the reading I'm doing now help me answer that question?

Try Free Writing

Some writers find the technique of free writing a useful way to get started. In *Writing Without Teachers*, Peter Elbow has some interesting ideas about free writing as a way to find out what you really have to say. In his free writing exercises, you write for ten minutes without stopping, without lifting your pen from the paper (or your fingers from the keyboard), without stopping to agonize over word choice or spelling or coherence, just letting the ideas flow out. Then you stop and sift the good from the bad, the useful from the useless. Next you repeat the free writing, basing it on what you've salvaged from the first attempt. You repeat the process until you have something you can use to begin your paper. For some people, this process may take as many as five increasingly coherent versions; for other people it may never work at all. But it's worth trying when you're having difficulty getting started.

Consider Lists and Outlines

Consider making a list—of ideas that interest you, of passages in the text that catch your eye. In the opening stages, a list seems less daunting than an outline, yet often, even when you begin your list with no central idea or direction, you'll find that one begins gradually to take shape. The passages that strike you all deal with a particular character or theme or image; the ideas that interest you begin to organize themselves into two or three related categories. An outline might be your next step, although some writers seem allergic to outlines and may benefit more by beginning to draft the paper at this stage.

If you have some conception of your general idea and of the evidence you can give for it, an outline is a classic device for getting started. It can give you a framework for your first groupings and can help you organize the material on which your paper will be based.

We wrote this handbook, for example, from a rather simple topic or phrase outline, an early version of the Table of Contents on pages i-iii. A more elaborate outline would have more sub-headings:

> II. Writing a Draft
>> A.   The First Draft
>>> 1. Assessing Your Audience
>>>> a. Who is reading the paper?
>>>> b. What should be included/avoided?
>>> 2. Refining Your Topic

Notice that in the excerpt from the detailed outline above, you show the relative significance of items by their number or letter and by indentation—the more important or general closest to the left-hand margin, the less important or more specific farthest from it.

Sometimes a sentence outline is more helpful. When we discussed this project, we didn't just list the topics we were covering. We explained them in detail. For example, "In the first section, we'll discuss how to start writing and offer different techniques that will enable writers to generate ideas for papers. In the second section, we'll discuss the first draft, developing an argument, introductions and conclusions." For a short paper, you might want to write a sentence about what each paragraph will do; for a longer paper, you would probably write one sentence for each section.

In an assertion outline, you write a sentence summarizing the point of each paragraph or section. This forces you to think carefully about the course your argument is going to take, and to develop each paragraph or section logically in relation to the others. We could have described what we were doing by saying, "The first section, Pre-Writing, explains that although beginning a paper can be challenging, there are techniques and practices that can make it easier. The second section, Writing a Draft, discusses how to shape your topic and thesis."

Sometimes a question outline, a tentative design for your paper based on the questions you're trying to answer, will be more useful: What techniques enable writers to begin their writing assignments? How does a thesis differ from a topic?

An outline, like a first draft, can always be changed and usually should be. Though we knew approximately what subjects we wanted to cover in this handbook, for example, their order changed somewhat as we worked. However, an outline is always a useful point of reference, even as it changes.

Write Multiple Drafts

Even if you believe that you can write a good paper in one intense, creative session, you may find it hard to get started or to produce your best writing. Good writers rarely produce perfect copy the first time, and many change their works even after they've been published. (Even great writers cross out, add, and change—take a look at some of their manuscripts.)

You'll find it easier to begin to write down ideas if you remind yourself that you're working on a draft, that your first attempt can be

changed, reorganized, or even thrown away. Many writers find that writing multiple drafts actually shortens their overall writing time. When you accept that your first efforts are preliminary, you're more likely to avoid editing too early in the writing process. You gain the freedom to follow thoughts and ideas to more original ends.

Start This Process Early

As soon as you get your assignment, begin to work on it. When you allow yourself time for reflecting, asking questions, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing, you can break the writing process into manageable stages, avoid last minute panics, and have more control over your work. Because word-processing programs are especially useful in the drafting stage, unwary writers may get sucked into that stage too soon and for too long. Careful thought and planning (pre-writing) lead to better writing, as does substantial effort in the revising stage, especially in revising for meaning.

WRITING A DRAFT

As you prepare to write the first draft of your paper, you should already know what your instructor is asking you to do and what general topic you're exploring. You also need to assess your audience and refine your topic by understanding the length and scope of your paper. Then the task is to create a workable thesis statement and begin building an argument that supports it.

Assessing Your Audience

In general, you can assume that your audience for any given paper is your instructor and your classmates. In other words, you're writing for people who know the material that you're discussing, and you should avoid providing unnecessary or irrelevant information on your topic. If you're writing a paper on Jane Austen's *Emma* for a literature class, you don't need to spend time providing a plot summary or a biographical sketch of Austen herself. Your instructor and your classmates have already read the novel and know something about Austen. Your paper should only assert a claim or an insight about the novel that you develop through your analysis of the text.

Occasionally your instructor may ask you to write for a specific imagined audience. You may be required to write a grant proposal, a newspaper editorial, or a legal brief. You still need to assess the purpose

of your writing and the audience to whom you're directing it, because you need to make sure your writing doesn't include information your readers already know or exclude information they may need.

Refining Your Topic
You can begin to refine your topic by looking at the length requirement of your assignment. A two-page paper requires you to make different writing choices than a ten-page paper would. The shorter the paper, the tighter the focus and the narrower your argument must be. By contrast, a longer paper will allow you to explore an idea or issue in greater depth. If your topic is "ways to improve the Social Security system" but your limit is two pages, it would be impossible for you to analyze and assess all the conflicting proposals for overhauling the system. However, you could look at one aspect of one proposal in a short paper:

> Allowing individuals to invest their own Social Security dollars in the stock market.

Creating a Thesis
Simply refining your topic is not enough. You must make it clear to your reader that you have something to say about that topic, that you have a point or thesis. In the simplest terms, a thesis statement is a conviction that you've reached about your topic:

> Individuals should be allowed to invest their own Social Security dollars in the stock market.

To write an effective essay, you must prove your thesis. You must analyze your subject critically, not just describe it. Don't write about individual investment of Social Security dollars without also discussing *why* it would (or would not) be a gain for both individuals and the system itself. You must also analyze *how* it would change the existing system. Papers shouldn't be written only to show that you've read something. They must show the result of your thinking and questions about what you've read.

When you create a thesis, you should make sure that it is somewhat contentious. Above all, avoid self-evident statements. The following statement is undeniably true, but a poor thesis for a paper:

> Pol Pot was one of the most monstrous leaders of the
> Twentieth Century.

Such a statement gives you nothing to argue, no facts to analyze; no one would offer a counter-argument. To make sure you have a thesis, rather than just a topic, think of your paper as an experiment in which you see if your analysis supports a hypothesis that you've stated at the beginning:

> American intervention in Cambodian politics during the
> Vietnam War played a significant role in bringing Pol Pot's
> Communist Khmer Rouge to power.

To prove this hypothesis, you could analyze and discuss the existing historical facts. There are certainly counter-arguments to this position that you'd have to address and refute in order to prove the truth of this claim.

Another way to make sure you have a thesis is to force yourself to write a sentence about your paper that follows this form: *Although* such and such, *nevertheless* so and so is true, *because*: reason one, reason two, reason three.

> *Although* economists have argued that the stock market
> is too unstable for safe Social Security fund investment,
> *nevertheless* an examination of the market's yield over the last
> fifty years demonstrates the viability of this plan, *because*…

> *Although* the U.S. government sought to stop Communist
> advances in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War,
> *nevertheless* American policies in Cambodia during the
> conflict led directly to Pol Pot's Communist Khmer Rouge
> taking power, *because*…

This formula will lead to a clumsy sentence that you shouldn't use in your papers. But it will give you a provisional outline: the *although* section first, followed by the *nevertheless* section (these two can also be reversed), then the development of each *because* statement. It will also guarantee that you have something to say, that you've considered some arguments against your position, and that you have some reasons for taking it. Later, as you edit and revise your paper, you'll probably find it necessary to make this outline more varied or more subtle—or perhaps

to abandon it altogether. The thinking involved in constructing that clumsy sentence, however, is never wasted. You've defined your thesis.

Structuring an Argument

A good paper moves steadily toward a goal. Every paragraph and every idea in it should be clearly related to that goal. Cut out peripheral facts and ideas, no matter how fascinating. Cut out plot summaries, descriptions, or discussions of previous research that don't contribute to your argument.

Remind yourself of what you're trying to do. In each paper, you'll choose an approach to your topic. You may define, analyze, explain, compare, evaluate or use some mixture of these and other techniques.

Reconsider your approach when you've written your first draft: Ask yourself what method or methods you've used and what methods you could have used instead. How does this analysis support your point? Is your comparison relevant? What would change in the paper if you used another strategy, and would that change be an improvement?

Developing an Argument

A logical argument depends on sound evidence and good reasoning. You must be sure that you've examined your underlying assumptions and made them clear to the reader. Precise thinking in any discipline demands that your basic assumptions be as explicit as possible and that you don't contradict these assumptions anywhere in your paper. You must also be sure that your ideas follow each other logically, that you've given sufficient evidence or proof for your arguments, and that you've acknowledged important conflicting opinions or contradictory facts and dealt with them. Suppose you want to make the following argument:

> The current emphasis on lowering cholesterol to prevent heart disease is misplaced. Recent research shows that specific vitamin deficiencies are far more accurate as predictors of heart disease than is high cholesterol.

An effective argument would involve your presentation of the case for lowering cholesterol and then your refutation of that case based on your presentation and analysis of the new research documenting the connection between vitamin deficiencies and heart attacks. Of course, the evidence for this paper couldn't be your own opinion; the evidence would have to be reputable, tested science.

When you argue for your points of view about literary or religious works, a piece of music, or other subjects in the humanities, you may at times gather scholarly evidence in support of your opinion. However, the majority of your paper should be based on your own analysis of textual evidence.

Suppose you want to assert that the imagery in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* intensifies a reader's understanding of the insidious effects of racism. To prove this thesis, you'll need to examine specific images and argue why and how Morrison's use of imagery helps readers understand the way racism affects someone:

> By analyzing several images of eyes and seeing in *The Bluest Eye*, the reader comes to understand how Pecola's obsession with blue eyes reveals her own internalized racism.

As you write your paper, ask yourself why you find your thesis convincing. Then ask if you've given the reader a chance to check its validity. Your reader must be able to follow the logical steps you've made and to examine the evidence. Test your generalizations by thinking of exceptions and counter-arguments. Be sure that you're being logical when you claim to be logical. Don't sprinkle *hence*, *therefore,* and *thus* where no logical relationship exists.

When you've finished a first draft, try to wait at least a day before looking at it again. Then, re-read it as objectively and critically as possible. Would you, as a detached or even hostile reader, understand the connections among your thesis, supporting evidence, and conclusions? Would you understand the important terms, or should they be defined? Would you find the treatment fair, or have objections and troubling evidence been swept under the rug? Be the first and fiercest critic of your own logic.

Remember: The first draft of your paper should contain a thesis statement that you develop by means of a sound argument. Although arguments often appeal to a reader's emotions or ethics, academic arguments should be logical, well-reasoned, and well-supported to be sound and therefore persuasive to the reader.

Introductions and Conclusions
Beginning and ending a paper can be a challenge. Often a student writes an introduction and conclusion that are nearly identical, the last paragraph a restatement of the first.

Composing mirror-image first and last paragraphs not only wastes space, it squanders an opportunity. Introductions and conclusions are not just paragraphs that occur at the beginning and end of a paper. They form a dynamic partnership that encloses and enhances an argument. By moving between them, revising each in light of the other, you can clarify your point and clinch your argument.

What should a first paragraph do? Certainly by the end of the first paragraph—or the first sentences in a very short paper, the first paragraphs in a longer one—your reader should have some idea of what your thesis is. The first paragraph is an opportunity to set the appropriate tone for your paper, to catch your reader's attention, to make your reader start thinking with you.

Avoid common pitfalls. If you want to make a good first impression, avoid paragraphs that move grandly from the beginning of recorded history to your specific problem:

> All artists everywhere, in every time and culture, have been
> obsessed with the problem of self.

A beginning as grandiose or pretentious as this one will only make your reader lose faith in you. Another common pitfall is sprinkling background information that any reader of your paper would be likely to know:

> In his fourth-century BC dialogue known as the *Symposium*,
> the Greek philosopher Plato, a student of Socrates, examines
> Socrates' theory of love.

Too many first paragraphs just mark time. The following sentence illustrates the problem:

> While it seems clear that these two books are dissimilar in
> many ways, they show many similarities, and it seems equally
> clear that Fielding has used *Don Quixote* as a model for his
> work.

This sentence finally gets around to saying something in the last ten words; everything before them is so cautious as to be almost meaningless. Notice that the first twenty or so words could introduce any comparison of any two books. Avoid such interchangeable parts. Again, be specific about your subject right away.

Begin at the beginning, then move on: As you write your paper,

you'll hit your stride, find a more appropriate tone or vocabulary, discover a particularly good example. You can then go back to recast your first paragraph, using your discoveries to introduce your reader to your subject in the cleanest and most effective way.

Let's move between an introduction and conclusion of our own. Here's a rough introduction:

> America is stronger today because of the contributions of other cultures, like Columbus, the Italian, who claimed the New World for Spain. So we should be thankful, not angry with immigrants who pursue the American dream. My Aunt Gina, poor and hungry, came from Sicily in 1945. Mussolini had been deposed. World War II was over. To New York she came and went to work for a small importer of Sicilian olive oil. The company is worth millions today, and her contributions can't be discounted, nor can the contributions of all the others before her or after her. That's why it's wrong to put limits on immigration, though illegal immigration is another matter.

This introduction raises too many questions. Is this a paper about Aunt Gina or immigration? How relevant is Columbus? Do we need to hear so much about World War II? Generalizations such as "the American dream" only add to the fuzzy effect. Illegal immigration may be pertinent, but is it central?

You may wish to stop everything and revise such an introduction, and you're not wrong to feel that way—but don't do it yet. Go back later when the meaning of the paper has emerged, when it's easier to know how to revise. In other words, write all the way through to the conclusion just to see how your thinking comes out.

Strange as it may sound, a conclusion is the best friend an introduction has. In writing a conclusion, the writer often draws together ideas and draws out the most significant implications. Let's see what an early conclusion to the paper about Aunt Gina (or is it about immigration?) looks like:

> Like many immigrants, both legal and illegal, Aunt Gina worked for years at rock bottom wages. Without low-wage workers the U.S. economy would undergo a wrenching transformation; many Americans, not just immigrants, would suffer the consequences. In spite of her value to the economy,

> Gina and others like her have been the targets of campaigns of hate. Anti-immigration hysteria that scapegoats newcomers doesn't make America stronger. It makes America weaker.

Here the writer identifies her subject, the bashing of immigrants and punitive anti-immigration legislation. She's also made clear what's at stake—the health of the American economy, no less. Now it's time to revise the introduction so that it works more closely with the conclusion, so that they fit.

If in an early draft you address your main idea for the first time in the conclusion, or address it with greater effectiveness, why fight it? Such a conclusion might make a fine introduction, so move it to the beginning and revise it, and no one will know the difference! But that requires writing a new conclusion, of course—preferably one that really concludes. Too often, even in revised papers, the last paragraph is a restatement of the first. This creates the impression that, despite all the ground a paper has covered, the argument has arrived nowhere.

Why not tailor the introduction to fit the conclusion? If the conclusion delivers an answer, ask an appropriate question (for example, "Does immigration harm the U.S. economy or help it?"), and place the question in the introduction. You can also restate the question as an issue the paper will resolve. Even if a conclusion raises new, but related issues, or examines the significance of what has been learned, these elements can help a writer craft an opening that anticipates the main point without giving the game away.

Here's the revised introduction:

> When I think of the immigrant experience, I think of Aunt Gina. After World War II, she left Sicily for New York and went to work for a small importer of olive oil. The company is worth millions today, and her contributions to its success, while modest, can't be discounted. The truth is that Aunt Gina worked all her life for low pay. Now, in the wake of political campaigns against "illegal immigrants," and the enactment of laws that punish legal and illegal immigrants alike, the real contributions of low-wage workers to American prosperity are being cynically overlooked.

Happily, Columbus is gone. So is the extraneous stuff about World War II. Illegal and legal immigrants fall under one category now—low wage workers whose contributions to American prosperity (not the "American

dream") are too often overlooked.

Once you're happy with the introduction, it's time to polish the conclusion, starting with the first line. Avoid the formulaic: "In conclusion," "To sum up," "In summary," or "Thus we see that…." The alert reader will know that the conclusion has arrived by the fact that there are no more pages left. Concentrate instead on a transition that engages the main idea, improves the fit. Your last paragraph is your last chance to frame your essential ideas in a succinct and convincing way, to pull together the strands of your argument, to draw conclusions, to suggest their implications. Be sure that your last sentence is both forceful and interesting; end with a bang, not a whimper. Conclusions should both pull together what has gone before and round off your paper.

Sometimes writers like to close with a quotation, and it's fine if you do that, but be sure it amplifies the main point or puts your ideas in perspective. Too often, a closing quotation has an anticlimactic effect, especially if it restates points already established. Generally, "So what?" is a useful question to ask when ending a paper. Where has the argument of the paper taken us? Redefining the key terms of an argument can accomplish the same effect, especially when the redefinition answers the question "So what?" and reveals the significance of your thesis.

Remember that the introduction and conclusion of a paper are your first and last chance to persuade the reader. Be sure to make the most of the opportunities they present.

Paragraphs and Transitions

Although introductions and conclusions are perhaps the most eye-catching parts of a paper, the intervening paragraphs are important too. A paragraph is a unit of thought. Unit by unit, your paragraphs together develop your paper's thesis. In other words, the central ideas of each of your paragraphs, in sequence, represent an outline of your argument.

Good paragraphs are unified and coherent. You'll find that unified paragraphs often develop a topic sentence that announces the paragraph's theme or controlling idea. Here's an example:

> Freudians are self-contradictory and dogmatic. They contradict themselves whenever they speak of analysis as "The Cure" and at the same time encourage patients to think of analysis as an open-ended process, often lasting for decades. They're maddeningly dogmatic when they meet every criticism with a reference to one of their sacred texts, as if the great Sigmund had an answer for every problem in the modern world.

In this example, the topic sentence is the first sentence in the paragraph. Most of the time it's reassuring to your reader to find it there. (It's also helpful to you as a writer; a strong topic sentence means you know from the beginning what you want your paragraph to be about.) Occasionally you may want to locate your topic sentence in the middle of the paragraph, or perhaps to build up to it at the end. Sometimes a paragraph doesn't have an explicit topic sentence, but if not, the paragraph should be so unified that a reader would have no difficulty summarizing its central point.

Irrelevant details or a shift in focus can disrupt paragraph unity. Let's look at our example again, after a less disciplined writer has had a crack at it:

> Freudians are self-contradictory and dogmatic. They contradict themselves whenever they speak of analysis as "The Cure" and at the same time encourage patients to think of analysis as an open-ended process, often lasting for decades. <u>Analysis can be expensive, too; many Freudian practitioners charge as much as $250 for 50 minutes, and since this can go on for years, a patient may be left with staggering debt.</u> They're maddeningly dogmatic when they meet every criticism with a reference to their sacred texts, as if the great Sigmund had an answer for every problem in the modern world.

The sentence this writer has added is distracting; how much analysis costs isn't really the point. And the sentence not only disrupts the paragraph's unity, it shifts its focus from Freudians and their theory to the perspective of the suffering, impoverished patient.

Paragraphs should be coherently organized as well as unified. In our first example, the organizational plan is clear: the writer takes the first term in the topic sentence, *self-contradictory*, and explains it; then does the same for the second term, *dogmatic*. Many other kinds of organization are possible. For example, you can describe something from the outside to the inside; you can go from the general to the specific or vice versa; you can proceed chronologically. Just be sure that the reader can tell what your plan is. Be sure you have a plan.

If each of your paragraphs is unified and organized, you next need to look at them together to be sure they're in the right order. If they aren't, rearrange them so the sequence makes logical sense. When it does, you usually don't have to worry much about transitions, because the logic of each paragraph will carry you naturally into the next. Writers

who struggle with transitions are often trying to conceal an underlying organizational problem. Transitional words (*similarly, furthermore, indeed*, and the like) will not help if your basic problem is the order of the paragraphs.

But if the logic is there, transitions are easy. Suppose the next paragraph in our essay on Freudian theory goes like this:

> Analysis was suited to a more leisurely past, a more verbal culture, an age when the elite felt entitled to every self-indulgent therapy that presented itself. Modern Freudians need to remind themselves that every great religion has adapted itself and its sacred texts to the demands of new times, new scientific discoveries, new modes of thought.

Let's put it together with the first paragraph and see how the transition practically writes itself:

> Freudian theory is often both self-contradictory and dogmatic. Freudians contradict themselves whenever they speak of analysis as "The Cure" and at the same time encourage patients to think of analysis as an open-ended process, often lasting for decades. They're maddeningly dogmatic when they meet every criticism with a reference to one of their sacred texts, as if the great Sigmund had an answer for every problem in the modern world.
>
> <u>But Sigmund didn't, and neither do modern Freudians</u>. Analysis was suited to a more leisurely past, a more verbal culture, an age when the elite felt entitled to every self-indulgent therapy that presented itself. Modern Freudians need to remind themselves that every great religion has adapted itself and its sacred texts to the demands of new times, new scientific discoveries, new modes of thought.

Transitional expressions such as *likewise, similarly, in addition, consequently, accordingly, admittedly, although, indeed, chiefly* (and many others) can be very useful, especially if the relation between sentences or paragraphs may not be immediately clear to the reader, or if you want to emphasize certain aspects of these relationships. But there's no substitute for a coherent organization of each paragraph by itself and of the sequence in which you place these well-crafted paragraphs.

REVISING AND EDITING

HIGHER AND LOWER ORDER CONCERNS

When you have a complete first draft of your paper, you'll begin to think about a second draft, then a third draft—about revising, in short. Writers who use computers may tend to focus on surface issues, the editing part of revising, when they revise, probably because word processing programs make it so easy to do this. Experienced writers are more likely to separate the revising/editing process into higher and lower order concerns. Higher order concerns are thesis and focus, audience and purpose, development and organization. These come first. Lower order concerns are editing and proofreading. Deal with these later.

Work on higher order concerns in stages: focus on the main idea first; then identify your audience; then check your argument.

- **Thesis**: Be sure that your paper contains a sentence stating its main point. Try looking for the sentence in your introduction and conclusion. There should be a main idea in there somewhere, preferably one that answers the question "How?" or "Why?" If not, stop revising and start thinking again.
- **Audience**: Knowing your audience helps determine whether you need to define terms or provide background, or how much analysis is required to explain your thinking. Unless the assignment identifies a specific reader, think of your teacher and classmates as your ideal audience; they've read the texts, but do they see what you see? Explain yourself to them.
- **Development and organization**: Does your argument need work? If paragraphs are undeveloped, you may need more evidence or analysis or both. Does your paper progress in a logical way? Don't hesitate to cut and paste paragraphs; you can always move them back. Try to strengthen the connections between points, which means improving your transitions.

Once you've put the building blocks of your paper in place and once you're sure they hold together, then it's time to move on to lower order concerns. Each of these concerns is treated in more detail later in this handbook.

- **Sentences**: Grammar check programs can only recognize certain kinds of wordiness and (sometimes) the passive voice. They

can't tell you much about sentence structure. Read aloud and listen for meaning, shape, and length. Two sentences that say the same thing can create blocks of verbal concrete. Keep chipping away at that concrete, cutting away everything you don't need. If you run out of breath while reading, you might want to consider breaking up the sentence. Or you may hear too many sentences that are all the same length or constructed the same way. Edit for variety. Reading aloud can help you catch run-ons and sentence fragments. It's important to repair these. They're more than cosmetic errors; they can impede understanding.

■ **Word Choice**: Beware of fancy, pompous words. Do you really want to use "plethora" when "too many" will do? Simple, concrete words can achieve great power when placed in a strong, lean sentence. Use words that tell us what you really mean, not words that obscure meaning. If you hear a phrase all the time ("the bottom line"), or see it in newspapers and magazines or on the Web, it's probably a cliché. Come up with something more original. Consider it a challenge!

■ **Punctuation**: Why agonize over a comma if you're not satisfied with the sentence in the first place? Many revisions require re-punctuation, so don't start re-punctuating until you've finished revising.

■ **Spelling, typos, etc.**: Now that you've worked down the list of concerns from the highest to the lowest order, you're ready to proofread. Spell check programs will catch some mistakes but not all. It's a good idea to consult that old standby, the dictionary, too.

In practical terms, it's true, you might find yourself contending with more than one concern at a time. For example, following a logical order of ideas can help refine a thesis; the right word can unlock the right order of words. But if you're stuck, take a step back, work on one concern at a time, and separate your higher order concerns from your lower order concerns.

EDITING FOR STYLE

As you work toward a final version of your draft, at some point your attention will turn to stylistic issues. Words and sentences, after all, are the building blocks you're working with; each one needs to

be thoughtfully chosen and carefully placed if the building you're constructing is to be sound. Let's start with choosing the right words.

Choosing the Right Words

Mark Twain once said that the difference between the right word and the wrong one is like the difference between lightning and a lightning bug. But how do you find the right one, tell the flash from the flicker?

Your first guide, of course, is a good dictionary. Keep a dictionary handy whenever you're writing, and use it to check your word choice, to see if a near-synonym might be closer to what you mean, to see if the word has a metaphorical basis or connotations that undercut your idea, to supplement your computer's spell checker, or to confirm the preposition used with a word.

Though your skill in choosing words and looking at your own language will develop only as you read and practice, below are a few general guidelines for word choice in your papers.

Choose Simple, Not Fancy Words

Some students believe that papers should be written in a special language, a language much more abstract, elaborate, and remote than the language they would use in a conversation or a letter. For example, in a paper about Trollope's *Phineas Finn*, you might be tempted to write, "The protagonist has a disinclination towards matrimony in view of the relative poverty of his prospective betrothed." Don't. Instead, write, "The hero doesn't want to marry his fiancée because she's poor." Much better. Though slang is seldom appropriate and though you'll sometimes need to use the special vocabulary of a discipline, you should stay as close as possible to the words you use every day. Here are some good choices:

> *do* instead of *accomplish*
> *show* instead of *demonstrate, exemplify*, or *exhibit*
> *help* instead of *facilitate*
> *say* instead of *assert, articulate, state,* or *postulate*
> *has* instead of *possess*

Sometimes one simple word can take the place of three or four*:*

> be in attendance at = attend
> due to the fact that = because
> come together as a group = meet

recognize the fact that = acknowledge
by means of = with

Often, almost reflexively, we use two words when one will do (and two are redundant), as in:

final outcome	perfectly clear
basic essentials	advance planning
completely accurate	postpone until later

Troublesome Words

The following deceptively similar words cause problems for many writers. The next time you use one of these, look it up:

affect, effect
allude, elude
allusion, illusion
ambiguous, ambivalent
assure, ensure, insure
bourgeois, bourgeoisie
compliment, complement
discrete, discreet
imminent, immanent, eminent

As you encounter other pairs or groups of words that regularly trip you up, start your own list and post it above your desk.

Certain Greek and Latin words commonly used in English that end in *a* are plural: *data, media, phenomena, criteria, colloquia,* etc. They take plural verbs:

This datum is confusing; the further data are even worse.

The medium is the message; the media give conflicting messages.

The only criterion is excellence; the criteria are excellence and enthusiasm.

Don't invent nouns by adding endings to established words. For example:

> *satirization* for *satire*
> *analyzation* for *analysis*
> *structuralization* for *structure*
> *aggressivity* for *aggression*
> *summarization* for *summary*

Clichés, Mixed Metaphors, and Jargon

In typesetting, a cliché was a mold used to cast metal into letters, a shape repeated over and over again. The word cliché now refers to combinations of words that have been repeated so often that they've lost their force. Don't use combinations you've repeatedly heard before. Though "leave no stone unturned" was probably once a vivid way to describe laborious and thorough effort, it now seems limp and unimaginative. Beware of combinations you can complete without thinking: loud and clear, hue and cry, cool as a cucumber, playing with fire, etc. And putting a cliché in apologetic quotation marks doesn't redeem it; don't even try.

Be careful not to mix metaphors. A metaphor like "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" works because it's internally consistent (although repeated usage has made it a cliché). The idea of breaking glass with rocks says something vivid we can understand about self-awareness and vulnerability. "People who live in glass houses shouldn't sling mud at others" doesn't work because the images are inconsistent. Often people mix metaphors because they aren't conscious of the metaphorical bases of words they use. Here are two examples: "This illustrates the void in his life" (Can you really illustrate a void?); "The core of the issue revolves around the larger quandary" (Does the core revolve around the apple?).

Jargon is a special problem. All disciplines have their own technical language, words that convey complicated ideas in condensed and precise form: *rubato* in music, *phylum* in biology, *painterly* in art history, *signifier* in literary studies. When you write in these disciplines, words like these, both precise and concise, will serve you well. But these special languages can easily drift over into jargon, resulting in a self-referential prose that only a few initiates can understand: "The integrated interaction of the social unit is ascribed to multi-variables that validate normative cultural standards." Ugh!

The First Person and Contractions

This is probably as good a place as any to point out two other choices you have as you select your words. One is whether or not to use the first-

person voice in your papers, to say, for example, "I will first examine Coleridge's language. . . ." In many high schools this first-person voice is a no-no. However, *I* is now acceptable in scholarly writing, even the most technical, as long as your emphasis is on the text, the facts, or the experiment, rather than on your reactions and feelings.

Another choice that has to do with formality is the question of contractions. You may have noticed that in this handbook we've used contractions frequently and consistently—for example, choosing *we've* instead of *we have* in the first part of this sentence. We did so because we wanted this handbook to have an informal, friendly tone. You can use contractions in your papers, but be aware that your tone will be more familiar, less formal. When deciding what degree of formality you want, think about your audience.

Shaping Your Sentences

Good writing depends on good sentences, sentences crafted so that design reinforces meaning instead of obscuring it. The first step towards achieving grace and eloquence in your prose is to work for conciseness. Getting rid of unnecessary words helps you to see the underlying shape of the sentence. Let's start there.

Economy

Don't waste space on windy repetition of the terms of the assignment. Is there anything worth preserving in the following sentence?

> There are many similarities and differences between Samuel Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

If you remove the names of the assigned texts and their authors, you're left with nothing but a meaningless statement that could refer to almost any two things in the world.

Don't clutter up your sentences with filler. Certain empty phrases like *there is* and *there are* seem to engender other clutter (many *which*'s and *that*'s, for example). In the following sentence, merely by deciding to get rid of *There is*, you create a much stronger and more compact sentence:

> There is one tree central to the composition which is large and fills the picture space. (original, 16 words)

> One large tree, central to the composition, fills the picture

space. (revision, 11 words)

Similarly, avoid useless repetition of words or phrases.

> In the border closer to the image, there is a crease which runs through the border about one inch. (original, 19 words)

> Closer to the image, a one-inch crease runs through the border. (revision, 11 words)

Avoid needlessly stringing together prepositional phrases (phrases headed by *of*, *about*, *in*, *on*, etc.). In the following example, you could use a combination of strategies to create a much leaner, more direct revision:

> One of the important chapters of the book that I find interesting is the one about the language of chimpanzees. (20 words, 4 prepositional phrases)

> The important chapter on chimpanzee language interests me. (8 words, 1 prepositional phrase)

Active and Passive Voice

You've probably noticed in most of the above examples that weak verbs like *is* and *was* often contribute to wordiness, especially if they're part of what we call passive constructions.

The English language contains two "verbal voices": passive and active. The active voice is usually more direct, concise, and vivid than the passive voice. In the passive voice, the subject of the sentence doesn't perform the action, but is acted upon by someone or something. The verb is always some form of the "to be" verb, such as *is*, *are, were*, and *was*. Here's a sentence in the passive voice:

> Most academic prose is marred by jargon.

To change this sentence to active voice, eliminate the "to be" verb, *is*, and turn the word that follows it into an action verb:

> Jargon mars most academic prose.

The real source of the action in the sentence often becomes clearer after revision from passive to active voice:

> *Lolita* was called a brilliant but obscene book.

Get rid of the "to be" verb, ask yourself who called *Lolita* brilliant but obscene, and you come up with:

> Critics called *Lolita* brilliant but obscene.

Even these brief examples show why the passive voice is wordier than the active voice. The passive voice may be appropriate, however, if the agent or the actor is unknown or unimportant:

> The reagent was added to the solution in the beaker.

> Louis Philippe was known as the Citizen King.

Be especially careful not to use the passive voice to give your own opinion spurious weight, as in:

> Coed schools are considered to be frivolous compared to Smith.

Passive Voice in Scientific Writing

When should passive voice be used in lab reports and scientific writing? Passive voice is often used in the Methods section to emphasize the science performed. For instance, "Three grams of solute were added" emphasizes the solute, whereas "I added three grams of solute" emphasizes the scientist. Scientists have also traditionally used passive voice throughout their papers to avoid using "I" or "we," downplaying the scientist in favor of the science itself. However, this tradition is changing. Some scientists now believe using "I/we" improves clarity and acknowledges the inevitable role of the scientist herself as well as any biases she may bring to the work. Ask your instructors for their preference on passive voice.

Even in scientific writing that employs passive voice, use active voice as often as possible. Here, passive voice is appropriate because the participants of the study should be emphasized, not the study author:

> The study participants were given a placebo.

Here, it is unnecessary, because the sentence is easily rearranged to active voice without "I/we" and with correct emphasis:

> A number of connections were made in Ishiguro's paper between his theory and health outcomes.

> A number of interpretations are suggested by these results.

Modify to active voice as follows:

> Ishiguro links his theory to health outcomes.

> These results suggest a number of interpretations.

Parallel Structure

Parallel constructions—phrases or clauses within the same sentence that repeat the same grammatical structure—also help keep your prose tight. Using parallel structure almost always makes your sentences shorter, and at the same time provides emphasis, reinforces meaning, and clarifies relationships. The last half of the sentence you just read embodied parallel structure nicely. Compare it to the following awkward, wordy version:

> Parallel structure is usually economical, and it is emphatic, seems to reinforce meaning, and generally clarifies relationships.

In other words, parts of a sentence that are parallel in thought and function should also be parallel in form. For example, when you give a list or a series, all the items in the series should have the same grammatical form. Don't write this:

> A villain is usually dashing, courageous, appears to be wealthy, and in general a charmer.

Revise so that all the villain's attributes are adjectives:

> A villain is usually dashing, courageous, apparently wealthy, and charming.

When you make a comparison, be sure that the elements you're

trying to compare are parallel. In the following example the writer intends to compare two novels:

> Like *Bleak House*, Joseph Conrad uses multiple narrators in *Lord Jim.*

But because of the way she's structured the sentence, she's actually comparing a novel with a novelist. A better way is to make the elements of the comparison parallel:

> Like Dickens's *Bleak House*, Conrad's *Lord Jim* uses multiple narrators.

Certain pairs of words require parallel construction: *both/and, either/or, neither/nor, not only/but also*. Be sure that you place these pairs just before the parts of the sentence you mean to connect. This writer puts *not only* in the wrong place:

> The study not only suggests climate change causes early snow melt but also increases forest fire rates.

Here *climate change* introduces both of the verb phrases, or outcomes, so you should put *not only* after it:

> The study suggests climate change not only causes early snow melt but also increases forest fire rates.

Coordination, Subordination, and Emphasis

Some inexperienced writers produce sequences of short, choppy sentences, in beginning-reader style:

> Patroclus took Achilles' place in the fighting. He wore Achilles' armor. Patroclus represented Achilles.

The sentence rhythm is monotonous, and the jerky style makes it hard for your reader to see the connections between your ideas, or to tell which idea is most important. Combine the short sentences to indicate the relative importance of your ideas:

> By taking Achilles' place in the fighting and wearing his armor, Patroclus represented Achilles.

Here the writer has put the supporting ideas in a subordinate clause, the main idea in an independent clause. When two ideas are of equal importance, link them with a coordinating conjunction (*and, or, but, yet, for, nor, while*):

> Patroclus took Achilles' place in the fighting, while Achilles stayed near the hollow ships.

Avoid weak *and*'s that don't show logical relationships:

> In the first chapters, gray fog blankets everything, and Dickens begins to describe the Jarndyce lawsuit.

Show the connection:

> In the first chapters, a blanket of gray fog obscures both London and the Jarndyce lawsuit.

The most interesting or important part of your sentence belongs at the end. How anti-climactic does the following sentence sound?

> Wrenching the crown from the hands of the Pope, Napoleon crowned himself in Notre Dame on December 2, 1804.

Much more effective is:

> On December 2, 1804, Napoleon crowned himself in Notre Dame, wrenching the crown from the hands of the Pope.

Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

Occasionally something goes wrong in a sentence that seriously interferes with meaning, or even creates an unintentionally comic effect. The biggest culprit in this area is probably the dangling or misplaced modifier.

A dangling modifier is a sentence part, usually a phrase or clause, that modifies no word or the wrong word in the sentence. Here's one:

> By using the first-person, the effect is more intimate.

The modifier is the clause before the comma. A reader expects that what the clause modifies or describes will occupy the position just after the

comma, but here it doesn't. The *effect* isn't *using the first-person*; the author is. Since the author isn't in the sentence, the modifier dangles, with nothing to modify. A revision would say:

> By using the first-person, Dickens creates a more intimate effect.

Here are two more examples, with revisions, just to solidify the point:

> By analyzing the first document, it can be seen that . . .
> The first document shows . . .
>
> In doing so, his strength and honor are maintained.
> His act maintains his strength and honor.

Sometimes the modifier doesn't dangle; it's simply in the wrong place. For example:

> Full of suspense, Dickens writes detective stories like *Bleak House*.

It's the book, not the author, that's full of suspense. Try:

> Dickens writes detective stories like *Bleak House*, full of suspense.

A relative of the dangling/misplaced modifier is the homeless *which* clause. For example:

> After his stormy childhood, he was unable to take advice from his uncles when he became king, which was very unfortunate.

What was unfortunate: that he became king, that he couldn't take advice, that his childhood was stormy? Rephrase and restructure:

> Unfortunately, his stormy childhood made him unable to accept advice from his uncles when he became king.

This can pose a similar problem, especially at the beginning of sentences. Usually the writer intends for the *this* to refer to some idea or vague combination of ideas that have appeared in the preceding sentence, as in:

> Dickens uses multiple narrators, complicated patterns of imagery, and suggestive names like Jellyby. This creates an effect of . . .

When you begin a new sentence with *This*, ask yourself if it's clear what noun would follow the *This*. If it isn't, revise! (See also the section in this handbook on Pronoun Reference.)

Choosing Verb Tenses and Managing Tense Consistency

You may use several different verb tenses in the course of one paper, but every paper should have a main tense.

Use the present tense as the main tense to state your own ideas or to present facts. The present tense is also used to to summarize and discuss an author's claims in a specific text or to discuss events in a literary work (a novel, poem, or movie).

> In Hamlet's soliloquy, Shakespeare debates essential questions of life and death.

Use the past tense when your main purpose is to narrate past events (such as historical events) or to show a progression of ideas over time.

> In 1664, Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon.

A mixture of tenses is correct and necessary, if the context warrants it, and it often does.

> Hershel *describes* in detail the Greek community he *studied* in Crete.

> Pummel *predicts* that small-scale economies *will thrive* in the 21st Century.

In both these examples the main tense is present, but the writer also uses the past and future tenses to describe time-bound events.

Similarly, in a paper that deals primarily with time-bound events, the main tense is usually past, but other tenses may be appropriate:

> The South *fought* fiercely at Gettysburg, although historians *agree* that the rebel troops *lacked* the artillery reserves of the Union.

Here the verbs describing historical events (*fought* and *lacked*) are in the main tense, past, while the verb that refers to historical texts (*agree*) is present.

Be consistent, but not afraid to use a different tense when you need it.

GRAMMAR

Many people are uncomfortable about grammar because they've been frustrated by it in the past, and not without good reason, given the number of rules, their complexity, and all the terminology necessary to understand them. To complicate matters, there are probably more exceptions to the rules than there are rules. Comfort with the rules of grammar will make you a more fluent, confident writer, but if reading a rule doesn't help you, you may find it more useful to study the examples below. The following five sections should be used for reference if you have problems in any of these areas: sentence fragments or run-ons, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, pronoun reference, and punctuation.

Fragments and Run-on Sentences

Correct grammar and usage won't by themselves make you a better writer, but errors in grammar and usage may stigmatize you. Errors in sentence boundaries—fragments, run-on sentences—are among the most stigmatizing and may suggest incompetence or carelessness.

To understand sentence fragments and run-on sentences, you must first understand what constitutes a grammatically complete sentence (also commonly called a main sentence or an independent clause). First, at a minimum, a grammatically complete sentence must have a subject and a tensed verb that agrees with it:

> Chomsky gave an inspiring lecture.
> (*Chomsky* is the subject, *gave* the tensed verb)

Verb forms like *give*, *gives*, and *have given* carry tense. Verb forms like *to give* and *giving* do not, by themselves, carry tense, and thus do not, by themselves, make a sentence grammatically complete; they can, however, combine with other verb forms that do carry tense to make the sentence complete (*like to give*, *am giving*).

Second, a grammatically complete sentence must be able to stand

alone. If a group of words starts with a subordinating word that makes it dependent on a main sentence (e.g. *after, although, because, since, when*), it cannot stand by itself.

> Since Chomsky gave an inspiring lecture.
> (ungrammatical, because *since* takes away the sentence's
> ability to stand alone)

Fragments

A fragment is a grammatically incomplete sentence. Sometimes an expression is a fragment because it lacks a subject and/or a tensed verb that agrees with the subject. Other times an expression is a fragment because it starts with a subordinating word that makes it dependent on a main sentence

> Chomsky gave an inspiring lecture. <u>His best lecture ever on universal grammar</u>. (the fragment lacks a tensed verb agreeing with a subject)

> Jane is very unhappy at MIT. <u>Because she has become interested in sociolinguistics</u>. (the fragment starts with a subordinating word that makes it dependent on a main sentence)

> <u>The best place to study linguistics</u>. In my opinion, it is not MIT but Stanford. (the fragment lacks a tensed verb agreeing with a subject—the infinitive verb *to study* carries no tense by itself)

Ways to Correct a Fragment

- Use a comma instead of a period to connect the fragment to the main sentence.

> Chomsky gave an inspiring lecture, his best lecture ever on universal grammar.

> Jane is very unhappy at MIT, because she has become interested in sociolinguistics.

- Add a subject and/or a tensed verb agreeing with it, making the fragment a complete sentence.

Chomsky gave an inspiring lecture. <u>It was</u> his best lecture ever on universal grammar.

- Integrate the two sentences in an alternative, sensible way, tightening up the wordiness.

In my opinion, the best place to study linguistics is not MIT but Stanford.

Run-on Sentences

A run-on sentence is comprised of two sentences connected with no punctuation at all or with only a comma. (This is known as a comma splice.)

Jane used to study linguistics at MIT she attends Stanford now.

Jane used to study linguistics at MIT, she attends Stanford now.

Ways to Correct a Run-on Sentence

- Place a period or a semicolon between the sentences. If the relationship between the two sentences is weak, you might also want to add a transitional word or expression (e.g. *consequently, however, thus, as a result*).

Jane used to study linguistics at MIT. <u>However</u>, she attends Stanford now.

- Place a comma and a coordinating word (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) between the sentences.

Jane used to study linguistics at MIT, <u>but</u> she attends Stanford now.

- Subordinate the first sentence with a subordinating word (e.g. *after, although, because, since, when*) and place a comma between the two elements.

<u>Although</u> Jane used to study linguistics at MIT, she attends Stanford now.

Note: Only coordinating words—*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so,* easily remembered with the acronym FANBOYS—can connect two grammatically complete sentences with a comma. Other transitional words and expressions cannot, even when they have very similar meaning to the coordinating words (e.g. *and* can, but *in addition* cannot; *but* can, but *however* cannot). It's easier to remember the expressions that can than those that cannot, as the latter are too numerous.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-verb agreement comes easily to most native English speakers. Some situations are tricky, though, and lead to common errors. We'll focus on those.

■ Verbs always agree with their subjects, even when the subjects are far away.

The second entry in this long list of books and articles interests me most.

Alert: Expressions like *as well as, in addition to, accompanied by, together with*, and *along with* do not affect subject-verb agreement.

This book, together with the related articles, clarifies the situation for me.

■ Compound subjects (two subjects connected with *and*) take plural agreement.

Professor Meyers and her assistant have completed their groundbreaking work.

■ Lists preceded by *each* and *every* take singular verbs.

Every novel, play, and poem I read motivates me to become an English major.

However, lists followed by *each* take plural verbs.

A novel, a play, and a poem each manifest a different use of language.

■ Verbs agreeing with compound *either...or/neither...nor* expressions agree with the element closest to them.

Neither the book nor the journal articles help in understanding the Asian monetary crisis. (*help* agrees with *articles*, the closest element)

Tip: If one element is singular and one is plural, placing the plural second (closer to the verb) makes the sentence more idiomatic.

■ Indefinite pronouns almost always take a singular verb. Indefinite pronouns are words like *anybody*, *either*, *neither*, *somebody*, *anyone*, *everybody*, *nobody*, *someone*, *anything*, *everyone*, *none*, *something*, *each*, *everything*, *no one*.

Everyone agrees that Tibet has undergone profound changes in recent history.

■ Collective nouns (nouns with a singular form referring to a group) take a singular verb.

The audience applauds on cue.

To emphasize each individual in the collective, the collective nouns can take a plural verb.

The audience were already pushing and shoving past each other when the curtain dropped.

Alert: The expression *the number* takes a singular verb, while *a number* takes a plural one.

The number of women with PhDs in computer science is small.
Consequently, a number of scholars are advocating for educational reform.

■ Units of measurement take a singular verb when they refer to a collective entity and a plural one when they refer to individuals.

A quarter of the gas <u>condenses</u> within 15 seconds.
A quarter of the tests <u>reveal</u> nothing that we don't already
know.

■ The titles of works and words written as words take a singular
   verb.

Sons and Lovers <u>deserves</u> a very high place in the literary
canon.
Bats <u>is</u> the plural of *bat*.

Pronoun Reference

A pronoun is a word that stands for a noun. In this relationship, the
noun is called the antecedent, which literally means "the thing that came
before." In fact, an antecedent should come right before its pronoun,
either in the same sentence or in the one preceding—no further away
than that. Otherwise, you may confuse your reader.

Weak: The Prime Minister informed the President that he should
        resign. (ambiguous: is *he* the Prime Minister or the
        President?)
Better: The Prime Minister advised the President to resign.

Weak: In the United Kingdom, they do not have a president.
        (unspecified antecedent: who is *they*?)
Better: The United Kingdom does not have a president.

Weak: The United Kingdom has a prime minister, who is very
        powerful, and this simplifies the political process. (vague
        antecedent: what does *this* refer to? having a prime minister
        or the fact that he's very powerful?)
Better: The power of the British prime minister simplifies the political
        process.

Never use the same pronoun to refer to two different nouns in the
same sentence or consecutive sentences:

Weak: The Girondists insisted on their fundamental principles, but their meaning was often unclear and contradictory. (*their* refers to the Girondists the first time, the principles the second)

Better: The Girondists insisted on their fundamental principles, but the meaning of these principles was often unclear and contradictory.

Avoid using a possessive noun as antecedent; your reference will always seem unclear.

Weak: Throughout Marx's *Kapital*, he affirms that …

Better: Throughout *Kapital*, Marx affirms that …

Lastly, there's a special class of pronouns called *relative pronouns* (e.g. *who, whom, which, that*). These pronouns introduce whole clauses that describe a noun. Make sure to place these pronouns right after (or as close as possible to) the nouns they describe.

Weak: The Prime Minister criticized the President in his speech, <u>who had, in fact, shown poor judgment</u>. (antecedent too far away: the President, not the speech, showed poor judgment)

Better   In his speech, the Prime Minister criticized the President, who had, in fact, shown poor judgment.

Remember that, except in formulae like "it is raining," pronouns should refer to an antecedent that your reader can locate quickly and easily.

Pronoun Agreement

Just about all native speakers (and most fluent non-native speakers) have good intuitions about correct grammar regarding simple pronoun-antecedent and subject-verb agreement rules; in other words, they know and observe the rules without knowing that they're doing it. However, some expressions present difficulties for all speakers, often because they're arbitrary but have nonetheless become enshrined in the standard language over the years. For these expressions, appealing to intuition doesn't always work, and often neither does appealing to form or meaning because these expressions are in fact so arbitrary. The expressions below usually present the greatest confusion in pronoun-antecedent agreement.

- ■ Even though they may sometimes seem plural in meaning, indefinite pronouns have traditionally taken a format of third person singular (*he* or *she*).

  <u>Everyone</u> who thinks that <u>he or she</u> is depressed should consult a professional.

- ■ Generic nouns have traditionally taken a format of third person singular (*he* or *she*).

  <u>Every novelist</u> has <u>his or her</u> favorite characters.
  <u>A smart novelist</u> nowadays should write <u>his or her</u> books for a multicultural market.

Alternatively, you could use the third person singular *they* (and its associated forms—*them*, *their*, *themselves*), which has gained widespread acceptability both in speech and in writing:

  Everyone who thinks they are depressed should consult a professional.

  Every novelist has their favorite characters.

We tend to think of the third person singular use of *they* as a relatively recent development as we try to avoid sexist language while also trying to avoid the cumbersomeness of *he or she* or the oddity of *s/he*. However, both the search for a gender-neutral, third-person singular pronoun and the use of *they* as a singular pronoun date back centuries. In the 18th century, grammarians tried to solve the problem by declaring that *he* should act as a gender-neutral pronoun, a usage that remained widely accepted until the 1960s when feminists challenged sexist linguistic practices.

We endorse the singular use of *they* even though it violates number agreement, because everyone agrees the *he or she* is cumbersome; the singular use of *they* has documented historical roots dating back centuries; its usage is now common in speech and in many kinds of writing; and we think acceptance is forthcoming—*they* will go the way of *you*, which also acquired singular reference (the original singular second-person form was *thou*). Be warned, however, that not everybody endorses the singular use of *they*. Many style guides (e.g. that of the

American Psychological Association, APA) recommend that you use a version of *he or she*.

- Collective nouns (nouns with a singular form referring to a group) take singular pronouns. Here are examples of collective nouns: jury, committee, audience, crowd, class, troupe, family, team.

  <u>The family</u> moved back to <u>its</u> hometown.

To stress individual members of the group, use a plural pronoun.

After Jesse revealed her so-called news, <u>the family</u> scattered to <u>their</u> respective rooms.

- Compound expressions connected by *and* take a plural pronoun.

  <u>Freud and Jung</u> quarreled and went <u>their</u> separate ways.

- Pronouns referring to compound expressions connected by *or, nor, either...or*, and *neither...nor* agree with the closest element.

  <u>Neither Chomsky nor his followers</u> integrate sociolinguistics into <u>their</u> theories. (*followers* is closer to the pronoun than *Chomsky*)

Tips: When one element is singular and the other plural, placing the plural element second makes a more idiomatic sentence. When one element is male and the other is female, the sentence is almost always awkward. In these cases, revise the sentence using a different sentence structure.

PUNCTUATION
Punctuation helps you clarify how a sentence should be read. It's useful to think of the comma, the semi-colon, the colon, and the dash as signs that assist a reader in grasping where a sentence is going.

The Comma
The comma is primarily a separating device. Think of it as a road sign that signals to the reader the need to pause.

- Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the main sentence.

    If you don't like Kant, you certainly won't like Hegel.

- Use a comma to separate items in a series (words, phrases, clauses). The last comma is optional.

    Kant's works are difficult because of their complexity, their allusions, and their prose.

- Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) that joins two complete sentences. (Some people use the acronym FANBOYS to remember these words.)

    I can read Kant, but I can appreciate Hegel.

Alert: Pairs of words, phrases, or dependent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction should *not* be separated with a comma.

    I like Kant and Hegel.

The Semicolon
The semicolon is primarily a linking device used to join two complete sentences closely related in meaning. The two sentences are usually about the same length, too. Use the semicolon judiciously, not too often. It's a special kind of punctuation, not a workhorse like the comma and the period.

- Use a semicolon to join two complete sentences.

    I understand Hegel; I admire Kant.

- Use a semicolon to join two complete sentences linked with a subordinating conjunction (*however, consequently, moreover,* etc.).

    I understand Hegel; however, I admire Kant.

■ You can also use the semicolon as a less confusing additional barrier between items that are already separated by commas.

> We study the Cavalier poets Lovelace, Carew, and Suckling; the metaphysical poets Donne, Cowley, and Crashaw; and the religious mystics Herbert, Vaughan, and Traherne.

The Colon

The colon, like the dash and the semicolon, is a linking device, but it signals a different relationship between the parts of the sentence. Also, what precedes a colon must be a complete sentence (with a sentence and verb). Think of the colon as a kind of trumpet, a means to signal your reader that what comes before heralds something more important or specific after the colon.

■ Use the colon after a complete sentence to introduce, supplement, explain, or add something to what has already been said.

> I value these qualities above all: imagination, curiosity, and intellectual honesty.

■ Use a colon to introduce a quotation only when the clause that introduces the quotation is a complete sentence.

> *Silent Spring* sounded a warning about pesticides: "The most alarming of man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers and sea with dangerous, even lethal materials."

The Dash

The dash differs from the colon in that it doesn't require a complete sentence to precede it. Use the dash when the word or word group that follows it constitutes a summation, an amplification, a commentary, an explanation, or a reversal of what went before. You can use the dash very effectively to create special, dramatic emphasis, but use it only very occasionally. Overuse of the dash can make your prose appear fragmented and incoherent.

> Over 104 pounds a year—this is how much sugar is in the average person's diet.

Use dashes in pairs to enclose abrupt parenthetical elements that occur within a sentence.

> Southern novelists—and Hemingway at his best—are the most important American writers of the post-war years.

The Apostrophe

Compared to the complicated possibilities of the comma, apostrophes should be easy. Usually an apostrophe and an added *s* indicate possession:

> The <u>professor's</u> lecture was fascinating.

If the noun is singular and ends in *s*, add 's:

> James's notes are more detailed than mine.

But if the added *s* would look or sound awkward, use only the apostrophe:

> The professor noted Euripides' irony.

If the noun is plural, add only an apostrophe:

> The professors' vote against grade inflation was unanimous.

The primary confusion about the apostrophe arises with the distinction between *it's* and *its*. In contractions like *can't* and *haven't*, the apostrophe takes the place of missing letters; *can't* and *haven't* stand for *cannot* and *have not*. Use an apostrophe in *it's* if you mean *it is,* but not if you mean *its* in the possessive sense:

> *It's* time to retire that lecture; *its* point is becoming increasingly obscure.

Quotation Marks

Put double quotation marks around a person's spoken or written words:

> As the professor sagely noted, "An educated electorate is the heart of democracy."

Use single quotation marks only to enclose a quotation within a quotation:

> As the professor sagely noted, "An uneducated electorate cries out 'educate me' to those who control its destiny."

Further discussion of punctuating quotations can be found in the section *Using Sources.*

POLISHING AND PROOFING

If you've gotten this far, you're probably happy with your thesis and unlikely to change your paper in fundamental ways. But the final touches can seriously affect the impression your paper makes on a reader. Here's a checklist:

- Make sure your organization works well: The best way to do this is to make a "post-writing outline." That is, write down, in sequence, the main idea of each paragraph. These main ideas are the skeleton of your argument: Are all the bones in the right places? Would a late paragraph be more helpful if you moved it up to p. 1?

- Presumably you've already carefully edited your paper (see the appropriate sections of this handbook). If you haven't, do it now.

- Don't make the mistake of allotting only a few minutes for proofreading. When you've spent a lot of time and thought on a paper, you don't want your reader's impression of it to be spoiled by many annoying (even if trivial) errors. That kind of carelessness subtly undermines your reader's confidence in you as a writer, so that even your best ideas won't be as convincing as you thought they'd be.

- Put some distance between yourself and the paper—time if you have it, space (physical or psychological) if you don't. Don't try

to proofread just after you finish writing; at that point you're still too close to what you've written. You need to find a way to come back to it with fresh eyes.

■ Read slowly and read every word. Some people actually proofread backwards, or right to left, so they see each word not as part of a unit of meaning, but *as a word.* Others who don't quite have the patience for this technique separate the text into individual sentences by pressing the spacebar after each sentence.

■ Don't try to proofread for everything at once. Read through the paper for grammatical problems, then for punctuation, then for spelling. On the subject of spelling—don't rely on computer spell checks. If you mean "their" and write "there," the computer won't tell you. Pay special attention to the spelling of proper names: if you consistently spell Jane Austen's last name as "Austin," your English instructor may be too irritated to give your brilliant thesis about *Emma* the acclaim it deserves. Be sure you're spelling key terms correctly: your art history instructor may not applaud your point about angels and *putti* if you've called them "angles" and "*putty.*"

■ Did you number your pages?

THE RESEARCH PAPER

Most of the papers Smith students write are 2-6 pages and based on the writer's response to a given text or texts. Sometimes, however, you'll need to write a term paper or seminar paper. These genres represent other challenges besides greater length; you usually need to do extensive research before you can begin to develop a thesis or organize your evidence. The next two sections offer tips to make the research process manageable and productive.

RESEARCHING A TOPIC

Research is the scholarly investigation of your topic. You might need to conduct this research by gathering data from a laboratory experiment, conducting a survey, or reading information gathered using library sources or the open Web. This section will help you plan for and organize your research, especially if you expect to use materials from Smith College Libraries and the Web.

Planning for Research

Before you begin your research, take a few moments to plan what you need to do. Review the suggestions made earlier in this guide on "Getting Started"—especially those about understanding the length of your paper, the nature of your topic, and the importance of beginning early.

To prepare for effective computer searching, you must think carefully about the language of your topic. Write down the key words and phrases that describe your subject so that you can search each one in the databases you'll encounter. For example, researching a paper on global warming might involve searching for some of the following terms:

> global warming
> climate change
> anthropogenic global warming

Sometimes reading an article from a scholarly encyclopedia will help you find the proper language as well as a bibliography of important books and articles. Ask a research librarian to suggest an encyclopedia on your subject. For example, for global warming the *Encyclopedia of Global Change* is one of several that would help you begin your research.

Being Flexible

Not all topics work. Some require resources that are hard to obtain or might not yet exist. For example, an issue of interest in your California hometown might be difficult or even impossible to research in Massachusetts. A recent murder case might have resulted in only superficial news coverage and not in anything more substantive and appropriate for your paper.

Have a fallback position. If necessary you might work on another aspect of the same subject. Be prepared to shift your focus if experience shows that obtaining resources will prove too difficult or time-consuming.

Getting Help

Don't try to do everything yourself; successful researchers take advantage of all available help. You've already been advised to talk to your instructor about topic selection. Continue that process throughout your research, especially if your topic has changed.

Consult with a research librarian as soon as you've decided upon your topic. Librarians can help you further refine your topic and guide you to the best sources. If you need more time, a librarian will make a research appointment with you, spending as much time as is necessary to help you locate scholarly materials. Librarians also want you to ask for help whenever you encounter any searching difficulties; they know research is often confusing, and the surest way to avoid confusion (and to learn more about the research process) is to ask them for help. They understand that this is how you'll learn to improve your research.

Keeping Track

To avoid duplication of effort, keep a log of where you've searched. Email, write down, and/or print out complete information on every source you consult: author, title, date, Web site address, etc. If you photocopy or scan book chapters and journal articles, be sure to copy/scan the title page or front page information, too. Write down or create a Word/Google document listing the information for your bibliography (e.g., author, article/book title, journal title, date, Web address). Finally, if you have PDFs of articles and chapters you've scanned or downloaded, save them in your Smith Google Drive account, so you'll be able to access them when you need them. (If

you're not sure how to do this, ask a librarian.) All this may seem a bother now, but it will save you time and much heartache later on when writing the paper. Two software programs, RefWorks and Zotero, can help you manage your citations, and librarians can help you learn more about these programs.

Giving Credit
Always give proper credit in your citations and bibliography for any ideas or facts you use. Even if you don't use the same words as your source, give credit for others' ideas. If you aren't sure whether to cite, err on the side of doing so. Using another's ideas without giving credit—plagiarism—is an extremely serious offense to be avoided at all costs. For more on this topic, see the section Using Sources. If you're unclear about a particular instance in your paper, talk to your instructor, a writing instructor at the Jacobson Center, or a librarian.

Finding the Right Stuff
Your teacher will expect you to use the most timely, reliable, and authoritative materials possible. These scholarly books, periodical articles, and documents usually share the following characteristics:

- They're aimed at a specialized readership, not the general public.
- They're written by experts in the field.
- They're published by a scholarly association or university press.
- They cite their sources.
- They emphasize reasoned argument over emotional rhetoric.

Finding the Right Stuff via the Open Web
By the time you do your first paper at Smith College, you'll likely have had some experience searching the Web for previous assignments as well as for pleasure. Of course, search engines such as Google won't always lead you to sites that fit the scholarly criteria outlined above. However, there are some search engines and databases—e.g., Google Scholar and PubMed—that do provide access to scholarly material. Some of this material is freely accessible to anyone, and some is behind a paywall (to protect the economic interests of publishers and occasionally authors).

When you search the open Web and find what you think is a scholarly source, start by evaluating three aspects: its point of view (is it objective? overly biased?); its timeliness (when was it published?); and its overall reliability (does it cite other sources? do other sources

mention it?). If you're unsure whether a source is scholarly, ask a research librarian or your instructor.

Subject Web Pages

The previous paragraphs discussed the importance of finding scholarly material for your paper and the limitations of using Internet search engines for this purpose. This section offers an alternative way of doing research using specially-designed subject Web pages.

Subject Web pages are guides to electronic resources. Begin your search with the subject Web pages designed by research librarians at Smith. These are on the Libraries' homepage, at http://www.smith.edu/libraries/

On the left side of the Libraries' home page, you'll find a subject page for every department and program at Smith College. These pages contain links to scholarly materials purchased for you and other Smith students. These are excellent places for you to do your work.

For example, look at the Libraries' Web page on Education. By using this page, you can quickly locate books, articles, and some of the most important websites in the discipline. No matter what your topic, a page like this has been designed to help you.

Finding Books

Use books to give yourself a broad overview or even an in-depth treatment of your topic.

To locate books:

- Go to the Libraries' home page and click the tab "Catalog."
- Use the search box to type in keywords for your topic.
- If you find no relevant titles, ask a librarian for help.

If you find a large number of books, begin with recent titles published by scholarly organizations or university presses. If you find too few books, you might want to try other KEYWORDS or SUBJECT terms. Remember to consult the bibliographies and footnotes of any book you find. You may already have located dozens—even hundreds—of additional sources. If so, look for these sources in the Five College Library Catalog. Your library research may be all but finished.

Finding Articles

Use articles to give you timely, focused discussions of specific aspects of your subject or general approaches to your topic. As with searching for books, consult a librarian within a few minutes if you don't find anything relevant. You may simply need to use different vocabulary or another database.

To locate articles:

- In the upper left-hand corner of the Libraries' home page, use the drop-down menu to choose the subject closest to your topic.
- From the subject page, click on the tab "Articles."
- Select a database and search for your topic.
- If you are unfamiliar with a database, ask a librarian for help.

To see if a journal is available online, click on the SC LINKS button next to a citation in a database or the "Find Journals" button on the Libraries' home page. Some databases simply list sources, some give summaries (abstracts) of their articles, and others provide complete articles online. Expect that at least some important sources will be available only in printed form rather than online. Since your instructor expects you to read the best resources, make your decision on what to use based upon the quality, timeliness, and relevance of the article—not on whether you can immediately download it.

Finding Statistics and Using Citation Style Formats

Start by looking at the Libraries' "Research" page, which has links to dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, statistical sources, and much more. On this page you can also find suggestions on how to cite sources in the correct format. Be sure to ask your instructor about his or her expectations or which kind of style to use. The most common are Modern Language Association (MLA), *Chicago Manual of Style*, and American Psychological Association (APA) (see pp. 59-79). Scientific reference guidelines vary depending on subject—chemistry, biology, physics, etc. This handbook provides American Chemical Society (ACS) as a representative example (see pp. 74-79). See the Libraries' guide to the most used citation formats (http://libguides.smith.edu/citation) and check with your instructor to see what he or she may require.

Getting Materials the Library Doesn't Own

No library owns everything, and you'll probably need to ask for a few items neither in the Smith College Libraries nor available online. If you need a book owned by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Hampshire, or Mount Holyoke College, you may request it online. To request books available in the Five Colleges:

- Find the title in the Five College Library Catalog.
- Click on "Request Item" at the top of the page.
- Type your name and the 15-digit library barcode number on the back of your ID card.

If you need an article that isn't at Smith ("at Smith" means in print or online), or if you need a book that isn't owned by one of these schools, go to the Smith Libraries' "Library Services" page and register for an Interlibrary Loan account: http://www.smith.edu/libraries/services/ill. It's free (well, your tuition pays for it), and it will allow you access to books and articles beyond Smith and the other Five Colleges. Need help getting started with Interlibrary Loan? Ask a research librarian!

More Help

If you encounter trouble at any point in the research process, ask for help. If you're not already in a library, you can e-mail or instant message your query using this link on the Smith College Libraries' homepage: http://www.smith.edu/libraries/help/ A research librarian will promptly answer whatever questions you have—and no question is too "simple"— so by all means, ask!

USING SOURCES

Using Sources Effectively

Whether your paper is a short one dealing with one or two texts or a long one incorporating research, you'll usually draw on at least three types of materials: your own thoughts and insights; commonplace knowledge (such as proverbs, fairytales, well-known historical facts, or standard information in a field of study); and the particular thoughts, insights, or words of someone else. This last category raises some special concerns that you'll want to think about as you revise. If you're working with sources, spend some time looking at the way you've used your sources*.*

When to Quote

Don't pack your paper with huge blocks of quotations or intersperse every sentence with quoted words and phrases. You'll drown out your own voice. Quote only when you can answer at least one of the following questions with yes:

- Are the words themselves at issue in your paper?
- Is the language of the source especially vivid, colorful, or precise?
- Will paraphrase or summary lose or distort meaning?
- Will a direct quotation harness the authority of the source more effectively?
- Will the exact words reinforce emphatically what you've already said?

If you can't answer yes to any of these questions, a paraphrase of your source, properly acknowledged, is all you need.

When you quote, do it sparingly. Quote only as much as you're actually going to use. Don't quote a whole paragraph when all you are really interested in is a key phrase; don't reproduce a whole speech from *Hamlet* when you're only planning to discuss two or three lines.

How to Quote

When you do need the exact words, you must give them exactly as they're written. Never change, add, or leave out something without showing what you've done. The following quotation is from Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address":

> With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Indicate omissions in your quotations by substituting an ellipsis (three periods) for the words left out. For example:

> As Lincoln said, "With malice toward none, with charity for all … let us strive on to finish the work we are in."

Indicate additions or changes by using square brackets (not parentheses).
For example:

> Lincoln hoped to help "him who shall have borne the battle [on either
> side] and … his widow and his orphan."

Often you'll need to make minor changes, like the omission of *for* in the
preceding example, to make a quotation fit your sentence.

Incorporate prose quotations of not more than four typed lines in
your text, as we've done with the brief quotations from Lincoln above.
Longer prose quotations should be indented one inch from the left
margin. For example:

> At the beginning of his speech, Lincoln refers to his first address four
> years before:
>
> > On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts
> > were anxiously directed to an impending war. All dreaded it, all
> > sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered
> > from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without
> > war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking destroy it without
> > war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotia-
> > tion.

Omit quotation marks around indented material.

If you're quoting poetry, include brief quotations, a line or less, in
quotation marks in your sentence.   For example:

> The alliteration in "Then shall the fall further the flight in me" under-
> lines the Christian paradox Herbert is exploring in "Easter Wings."

Two or three lines can also be included in your text. Separate the lines
with a spaced slash and retain the capitalization of the original. For
example:

> In "Easter Wings" Herbert hopes "to rise / As larks, harmoniously, /
> And sing this day thy victories."

If you need to quote more than three lines, indent one inch from the left margin and reproduce the exact structure and punctuation of the source. The indentation indicates a quotation; quotation marks are not necessary. For example:

> The speaker senses a benign curiosity in the "otherworldly" moose and reports her fellow travelers' wonder with Bishop's characteristic qualification and understatement:
>
> > Taking her time,
> > She looks the bus over,
> > Grand, otherworldly,
> > Why, why do we feel
> > (we all feel) this sweet
> > sensation of joy? (st. 26, ll. 1-6)

Notice the citation: *st.* abbreviates stanza, *l.* line, *ll.* more than one line.

When to Paraphrase

Paraphrasing allows you to put your sources' ideas to work while using your own words. This means it can help you to avoid using too many quotations, which can overwhelm your voice in an essay. Because you use your own language and sentence structure when paraphrasing, you can exercise firmer control over the meaning of the passage you're using, emphasizing the part of it that best supports your own argument. The process of creating a successful paraphrase will also ensure that you really understand your source.

Consider using a paraphrase when:

- your source's exact words are not important;
- their exact words are not appropriate (for instance, when their style is radically different from the tone of your paper);
- their exact words are simply not useful (they emphasize something different from what you're emphasizing, for instance).

How to Paraphrase

What you're doing when you paraphrase is to put someone else's idea into your own words. You must be very careful when doing this not

to borrow particular turns of phrase or sentence structure, since those elements of language are, like ideas, the creative work of the original author. Remember that successfully reproducing the idea in your own prose is only one part of your task: you must also provide a clear citation telling your reader where you found this idea.

Here's a sentence from Nell Irvin Painter's *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*:

> The great majority of Southern whites continued to resent emancipation, and their resentment first found expression in senseless rapine and later in attacks calculated to undermine the freedpeople's newfound independence (17).

Here's an unacceptable paraphrase:

> Most Southern whites still resented emancipation, and their resentment led them first to meaningless rapine and later to attacks meant to rob freedpeople of their newfound freedom.

The writer here has simply moved a few words around and found synonyms for others. She steals the author's key words and sentence structure and passes off the passage as her own. A more responsible writer would acknowledge the source and express the idea using her own words and sentence structure, indicating that she's really digested it:

> As Nell Irvin Painter points out in *Exodusters*, resentment over emancipation led many Southern whites to act out against former slaves, first by stealing or destroying their property, and then by mounting violent attacks that often rendered their freedom meaningless (17).

This paraphrase still shares some words in common with the original—"resentment," for instance, and "Southern whites." These are nouns that would be used in any discussion of this topic, however, and don't have the proprietary, author-specific feel of "rapine" or "undermine." You can use these more specific words in your paraphrase, but you must use quotation marks to indicate that they were originally chosen by the author of the passage.

A few more tips:

- When reading through the passage you want to paraphrase, try to understand it as a whole. Think broadly: How would you explain its meaning to a friend? What is the author trying to say?
- Choose only the section of a passage that you need to support your point: You needn't paraphrase an entire paragraph if all that's needed for your argument is a single sentence.
- It can be helpful to set the original passage aside when writing your paraphrase. Read through it, make a few notes, but then don't look back at it until you've made your own version.

When to Summarize

A summary allows you to present the gist of someone's work. You might want to present a critic's argument clearly, for instance, in order to then be able to take your own stance in comparison. Summary will also allow you to give your audience a general introduction to a larger source—for instance, you may want to summarize a text that you're relatively certain your audience will not be familiar with. You can also use summary to refresh your reader's memory, if they haven't read the source recently. Like the process of paraphrasing, writing an accurate summary will require your full understanding of a text or long passage.

How to Summarize

Start by making an outline of the major points of the article or text. Use paraphrase—your own words—to explain what the author is arguing (or in the case of a fictional text, what "happens"), and make note of both the major, overarching argument and any sub-arguments. Avoid details: You really only need the major plot points or contentions. Remember that you're writing the summary in order to provide relevant background for your own essay. Details that confuse or wander off from your topic are unnecessary.

A few tips:

- Begin your summary with a clear identification of the author, source, and main point. For example, "In her 1992 work of critical theory, *Playing in the Dark,* Toni Morrison explores the ways that racial whiteness and blackness are constructed in American literature."
- Use present tense throughout your summary, and remind your

> reader of the source by using phrases such as Morrison writes or the article claims or the author suggests, etc.

- ■ Never include your own ideas, interpretations, or analysis in your summary: Be as objective as you possibly can.
- ■ You may decide to copy a particular phrase from the original source, perhaps because it is remarkable language, or presents the kernel of the author's viewpoint succinctly in a way that cannot be paraphrased. Do this very sparingly, and when you do, remember to use quotation marks and a page citation for the quote.
- ■ Check with your instructor for a target length for a stand-alone summary. You'll need to adjust the level of sub-arguments and detail included, according to the amount of space you have. After you're done writing, go back to your source and double-check. Did you accurately portray their arguments?

Integrating Your Sources

Be sure that your reader always knows the relationship between your sources and your own argument. If you agree with the quoted author, make that clear. For example, you could introduce the quotation by saying, "As Johnson wisely notes, ..." If you're skeptical, try "Johnson jumps to the conclusion that. . . ." Don't expect your reader to see the quoted material in the same light that you do; your responsibility is to guide the reader by telling her what *you* make of it for purposes of *your* argument.

On the stylistic level, integrate your sources smoothly with your own sentences. For example:

> The review concluded with "Given Dickinson's popularity, a new edition of her work is likely."

The unfortunate conjunction of "with" and "Given" is something you probably wouldn't put up with in your own prose; don't let it get by just because you're working with a quotation. A better choice would be "that."

You don't need special punctuation just because you're quoting; punctuate as if the quoted material were your own. In the following example, the comma after "that" is superfluous:

> Johnson claims that, "Jones is a true protectionist."

You'll probably introduce most of your quotations with verbs like *claims, says, states, asserts, writes, notes*. As a rule, if you use *that* after these verbs, don't use a comma (as in the above example). If you omit *that*, use a comma after the verb for clarity. (See the section of the handbook on punctuation for more discussion of quotations and punctuation.)

Acknowledging and Documenting Your Sources

You have no obligation to acknowledge your own ideas and insights, of course, nor is it necessary to acknowledge commonplace information readily available to anyone.

If such information is at all controversial or its origins problematic, however, you must acknowledge. For example, in most contexts the population of Iowa would be common information, but if your paper's context suggests census tampering and political scandal, your reader needs to know the source of the population figures you use.

You must always cite your source when you quote even a few words (and, of course, those words must be in quotation marks).

You must always cite your source when you paraphrase or summarize someone else's ideas or observations.

When in doubt, cite!

How to Acknowledge

Different disciplines use different formats or styles for citing sources. English, for example, uses the style of the Modern Language Association (MLA), while psychology and most other social sciences use the style of the American Psychological Association (APA). History and art history usually use the style prescribed in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. In the sciences, the style varies depending on the discipline; here, we provide American Chemical Society (ACS) style as a representative example. While all styles of citation share the common purpose of acknowledging the debt and enabling the reader to locate the exact source of the information, styles differ markedly in form and arrangement. When in doubt, ask your instructor what style you should use. After a few words about plagiarism, we provide guidelines to the MLA, Chicago, APA, and ACS styles, including the citation of electronic sources.

Plagiarism

"Prohibited Conduct," according to the Smith College *Student Handbook*, includes "plagiarism and all forms of academic dishonesty."

The authors add, "Smith College expects all submitted work . . . to be the original work of the student author and to acknowledge all sources of information used in compiling the work [including] another student's materials; any research, published or otherwise, not done by the student; any material found on the Internet."

Note the quotation marks. In this case, we can't be sure who set down the precise words of the Smith College Academic Honor Code, since the code is not the product of a single individual but an institution. And yet, if we wish to avoid the charge of plagiarism, we must acknowledge what we've borrowed, word for word, idea by idea. You can't just change a word or phrase here and there and call it your own.

Plagiarism is not an arcane notion bandied about by fuddy-duddies. Plagiarism has always been with us, and always will be. As the authors of the first *Writing Papers* put it, "*Plagiarism* comes from the Latin word *plagiarius*, which originally meant kidnapper and then was extended to cover literary or scholarly 'kidnapping' of ideas or phrases as well" (42).

No matter how much we might like to take credit for the above idea, the credit is due to those who did the actual writing, those who showed the enterprise (and mobility) to rise from their desks and walk to the library to look up the etymology of plagiarism.

If the notion of "walking to the library" strikes you as old-fashioned, read on. The technology of reading and writing has made inexorable, sometimes spectacular advances, but all the while the temptation to borrow from the work of others has remained constant. That's because succumbing to such a temptation is a human failing, not a technological glitch.

The growth of the Internet is a case in point. What could be easier, after all, than to park your mind in neutral and to use a search engine such as Google to glean from the ever-expanding universe of research on the Internet? A few clicks of the mouse later, a few strokes of the keyboard, and—presto—instant ideas and instant prose.

But, as surely as the Internet giveth, so too the Internet taketh away. For every "Paper Mill" Web site from which an ethically impaired student can download a research paper, there are Web sites that offer "detection" services, such as Plagiserv or Glatt Plagiarism Services. Don't think that your instructors are unaware of these services. A medieval scholar may have his or her mind on the Cathedral of Chartres,

a mathematician may be consumed by the enigma of infinity, but they have access to the same Internet you do.

In the never-ending race between the meticulous, slow-but-steady scholar and the fleet-footed plagiarist, sooner or later the scholar wins the day. Just ask some of America's most popular historians who have found themselves embarrassed when passages in their work were found to have been copied verbatim from other sources—without acknowledgment! Some of these historians have claimed that their research assistants committed the crime—and just where did the assistants come from, we might ask? Chances are good that those assistants were recent graduates of colleges much like this one, and that for them the distinction between "taking inspiration" and "taking liberties" had become blurred.

So let's get it straight. Readers of texts by students and popular historians alike have a right to expect footnotes or similar documentation for the following kinds of borrowing:

- All word-for-word quotations (except common sayings)
- All passages you've summarized or paraphrased
- All theories or interpretations, or scientific/empirical findings that aren't your own
- All key words or terms you've taken from a specific source

Yes, in a busy world filled with imminent deadlines and pressure to produce top quality material, the temptation lies ready at hand for quick cut-and-paste solutions. That degree of pressure, those types of deadlines are the reasons why it is harder for students or for scholars, indeed for all of us, to remain vigilant.

Look at the temptation to plagiarize as a challenge to your personal integrity. Or, for those who are less high-minded about these things, consider the consequences for your status in school.

MLA, *CHICAGO MANUAL*, APA, AND ACS STYLES
MLA Style
When you write papers in the humanities—literature, philosophy, and religion, among other disciplines—you need to follow the reference guidelines of the Modern Language Association (MLA).

MLA style requires an in-text citation, also known as a parenthetical citation, which includes only enough information to allow the reader to identify the source. Ideally, you should identify the author in the sentence that introduces the source; this enables you to keep the parenthetical material brief. The full bibliographic detail for that source is then listed in a "Works Cited" page. For example:

In-Text Citations
As Austen shrewdly points out, "a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife"(1).

Works Cited List
Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Egerton, 1813.

Formatting Quotations
Short quotations of no more than four lines should be placed in double quotation marks and incorporated into the text. If the material quoted is poetry, indicate the line breaks with a slash mark:

> We recognize many familiar lines from Shakespeare, such as "The quality of mercy is not strained,/ It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven" (*The Merchant of Venice*, 4.1.184-5).

Note that the parenthetical citation identifies the specific play as well as the act, scene, and line numbers.

If a quotation runs to more than four lines, it should be set off from the text in a free-standing block indented one inch from the left margin. Subsequent lines should be flush with the first line and double-spaced. Quotation marks are not necessary because the format itself makes clear to the reader that you're quoting directly. Here's an example:

> Many scholars, including Wilson himself, have commented on the agency's corruption. As he points out,
>
> > it has falsified records, assassinated reputations, maligned innocent bystanders, and risked its own people. Reorganiza-

tion is hopeless; the agency is rotten to the core and needs to
be abolished, and the whole question of its purpose should be
re-thought. But at this point such a refreshing prospect seems
unlikely. Too many people in power have too high a stake in
its continuation; too few people who might actually force a
confrontation have the will to do so. (422)

The punctuation preceding a block quotation varies. If the sentence
preceding the quotation is complete, use a colon. If the sentence is in-
complete, punctuate as you would if the sentence and the quotation were
straight, uninterrupted text.

MLA Guide

1. *Book with One Author*

In-Text Citation Form
Either
Van Horne claims that the biggest problems in Appalachia are ecological
(46).
Or
The biggest problems in Appalachia are ecological (Van Horne 46).

Works Cited Form
Van Horne, Robert. *Coal Mines and Floods: A History of Breathitt
        County, Kentucky*. Jackson, KY: Pippa Passes Press, 1989. Print.

2. *Two or More Works by the Same Author*

In-Text Citation Form
Either
In *Coal Mines and Floods*, Van Horne asserts that ecology is
Appalachia's biggest problem (46).

Or
Van Horne asserts that ecology is Appalachia's biggest problem (*Coal Mines* 46).

Works Cited Form (arrange alphabetically by title)
Van Horne, Robert. *Coal Mines and Floods: A History of Breathitt County, Kentucky.* Jackson, KY: Pippa Passes Press, 1989. Print.
---. *Feuds of Southeastern Kentucky*. Jackson, KY: Pippa Passes Press, 1994. Print.

3. Two or Three Authors

In-Text Citation Form
Either
Smith and Wesson repeatedly point out that only the researchers know the results (49).
Or
Only the researchers know the results (Smith and Wesson 49).

Works Cited Form
Smith, Peter, and Asa Wesson. *Loaded Guns*. Springfield, MA: Hill, 1988. Print.

4. Four or More Authors

In-Text Citation Form
(Gates *et al.* 321)

Works Cited Form
Either
Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., Anthony P. Griffin, Donald E. Lively, Robert C. Post, William Rubenstein, and Nadine Strossen. *Speaking of Race, Speaking of Sex: Hate Speech, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties*. New York: New York UP, 1994. Print.

Or

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *et al. Speaking of Race, Speaking of Sex:
        Hate Speech, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.* New York: New
        York UP, 1994. Print.

5. Citing a Work in an Anthology

In-Text Citation Form
(Szwed 425)

Works Cited Form
Szwed, John F. "The Ethnography of Literacy." *Literacy: A Cultural
        Sourcebook*. Ed. Ellen Cushman. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins,
        2000. 421-429. Print.

6. A Book with an Editor

In-Text Citation Form
(Bryson 22)

Works Cited Form
Bryson, Bill, ed. *The Best American Travel Writing 2000*. Boston:
        Houghton Mifflin, 2000. Print.

7. Article in a Scholarly Journal

In-Text Citation Form
(Hayakawa 367)

Works Cited Form
Hayakawa, S. I. "Mr. Eliot's Auto Da Fe." *Sewanee Review* 42.3
        (1934): 365-71. Print.

8. Article in a Newspaper

In-Text Citation Form
(Hakim 1)

Works Cited Form
Hakim, Danny. "Talking Green vs. Making Green." *New York Times* 28
    Mar. 2000: B1+.

9. *Citing Electronic Sources*

In-Text Citation Form
(Glickman)

Works Cited Form
Glickman, Lawrence B. "The Strike in the Temple of Consumption:
        Consumer Activism and Twentieth-Century American Political
        Culture." *The Journal of American History* 88.1 (2001). History
        Cooperative. Web. 28 Mar 2002.

The Chicago Manual of Style
When you write papers in some disciplines in the humanities—especially
in history and art history—you may sometimes be asked to follow
the reference guidelines of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Unlike the
MLA and APA styles, which cite sources using parenthetical notes,
The Chicago Manual of Style uses footnotes or endnotes. If you use
footnotes, the bibliographic information should be placed at the "foot" or
the bottom of the page on which it appears. If you use endnotes, it should
be placed at the end of the paper in numerical order.

The Chicago Manual uses one form for presenting information in
footnotes/endnotes and another form for presenting information in the
final "Bibliography" page. Make sure you don't confuse them.

Footnotes/Endnotes
The first citation of a footnote/endnote should be denoted by a superscript
1 (raised numeral) placed at the end of the material it supports. The
numeral comes after any mark of punctuation. Each subsequent citation
should be numbered consecutively throughout the paper. If you're using
Microsoft Word, the program will superscript footnote/endnote numerals
and keep track of the sequencing, but you do need to choose between
footnotes and endnotes.

Indent the first line of each footnote/endnote entry. *The Chicago Manual* suggests five spaces; we suggest one-half inch for easy formatting. Subsequent lines should go out to the established margin.

Footnote/Endnote Entry

Barbara A. Kellum is especially interested in "what we do *not* see in considering narrative and meaning on the Ara Pacis Augustae."[1]

 1. Barbara A. Kellum, "What We See and What We Don't See. Narrative Structure and the Ara Pacis Augustae," *Art History* 17, no. 1 (1994): 28.

Subsequent citations should be abbreviated. Give the author's last name, a short form of the title, and the page number(s).

 2. Kellum, "What We See," 29.

Place the short form of the title of an article in quotation marks. Italicize the short form of the title of a book.

Bibliography

The Chicago Manual of Style uses the title "Bibliography" for the final page offering full bibliographical information for all sources cited in a paper. (MLA uses the title "Works Cited.") Entries should be alphabetized according to the last names of the authors. A work for which no author's name is given is alphabetized according to the first word of the title (disregarding "A," "An," or "The"). You should include every work—articles, books, Web sites, primary sources—that supplied valuable information for your paper.

Begin each entry at the left hand margin, and if it's necessary to carry it over to a subsequent line, use a hanging indent; that is, each additional line in that entry should be indented one-half inch. Single-space within each entry and double-space between entries.

Bibliography Entry

Kellum, Barbara A. "What We See and What We Don't See. Narrative Structure and the Ara Pacis Augustae." *Art History* 17, no. 1 (1994): 26-45.

Formatting Quotations

Short, direct prose quotations should be incorporated into the text and enclosed in double quotation marks. Here's an example:

> Newbury acknowledges that the conflicts in central Africa in the early 1990s were in some ways interdependent, but argues that "although political tension and violence in each country clearly exacerbated violence in the others, each one also had deep local roots."[5]

If a quotation runs to more than four lines, it should be set off in a free-standing block that's indented one-half inch from the left margin. Subsequent lines should be typed flush with the first and double-spaced. Quotation marks aren't necessary, because the format itself makes clear to the reader that you're quoting directly. The following is an example:

> Newbury offers a compelling justification for examining the intersection of history and politics as a useful context for understanding convergent catastrophes such as those in Central Africa:
>
> > I am concerned with how history is used to aggravate rather than diminish the intensity of these crises. A clear grasp of the historical record may help to reduce tensions. I focus in particular on the nature of boundaries and ethnicities, on territorial and cultural classifications. Moreover, I explore how a rigid concept of these forms of categorization—which, I argue, are historically flexible concepts—can abet conflict.[6]

The punctuation preceding a block quotation varies. If the sentence preceding the quotation is complete (as above), use a colon. If a sentence is incomplete, punctuate as you would if the sentence and quotation were straight uninterrupted text.

Chicago Manual of Style Guide

1. A Book with One Author

In Footnote/Endnote Form
    1. Joachim W. Stieber, *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel and the Secular and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the Empire : The Conflict over Supreme Authority and Power in the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 99.

In Bibliography Form
Stieber, Joachim W. *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel and the Secular and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the Empire: The Conflict over Supreme Authority and Power in the Church.* Leiden: Brill, 1978.

2. Two or Three Authors

In Footnote/Endnote Form
    2. Robert McCrum, William Cran, and Robert MacNeil, *The Story of English* (London: Penguin, 1992), 49.

In Bibliography Form
McCrum, Robert, William Cran, and Robert MacNeil. *The Story of English*. London: Penguin, 1992.

3. Work in an Anthology

In Footnote/Endnote Form
    4. Ray Harlow, "Some Languages Are Not Good Enough," in *Language Myths*, ed. Peter Trudgill (London: Penguin, 1998), 10.

In Bibliography Form
Harlow, Ray. "Some Languages Are Not Good Enough." In *Language Myths*, edited by Peter Trudgill, 9-14. London: Penguin, 1998.

4. Article in a Journal

In Footnote/Endnote Form
     3. Douglas L. Patey, "Aesthetics and the Rise of Lyric in the Eighteenth Century," *Studies in English Literature* 33, no. 3 (1993): 598.

In Bibliography Form
Patey, Douglas L. "Aesthetics and the Rise of Lyric in the Eighteenth
     Century." *Studies in English Literature* 33, no. 3 (1993): 588-608.

5. Article in an Electronic Journal

In Footnote/Endnote Form
     12. Judith Egan and Patricia M. Bikai, "Archaeology in Jordan," *American Journal of Archaeology* 104, no. 3 (2000): page, if any, http://www.jstor.org/sici?sici=00029114%28200007%29104%3 3%3C561%3AAIJ%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S.

In Bibliography Form
Egan, Judith, and Patricia M. Bikai. "Archaeology in Jordan." *American
     Journal of Archaeology* 104, no. 3 (2000), http://www.jstor.org/si
     ci?sici=00029114%28200007%29104%3A3%3C561%3AAIJ%3
     E2.0.CO%3B2-S.

6. Article in a Popular Magazine

In Footnote/Endnote Form
     6. Andrew Zimbalist, "All Right All You Lawyers, Play Ball," *Business Week*, April 15, 2002, 108.

In Bibliography Form
Zimbalist, Andrew. "All Right All You Lawyers, Play Ball." *Business
     Week*, April 15, 2002, 108-109.

7. Article in a Newspaper

In Footnote/Endnote Form
     7. Jason DeParle, "Border Crossings," *New York Times*,

September 7, 2007, A3.

In Bibliography Form
DeParle, Jason. "Border Crossings." *New York Times*, September 7, 2007,
  A3.

8. Lectures

In Footnote/Endnote Form
   10. Jon D. Levenson, "How Monotheism Unites—and Divides—
Jews, Christians, and Muslims" (lecture, Smith College, Northampton,
MA, September 25, 2008).

In Bibliography Form
Levenson, Jon D. "How Monotheism Unites—and Divides—Jews,
  Christians, and Muslims." Lecture, Smith College, Northampton,
  MA, September 25, 2008.

9. Web Site

In Footnote/Endnote Form
   11. Pamela Petro, *Petrograph Gallery*, http://www.petrographs.
blogspot.com.

In Bibliography Form
Petro, Pamela. *Petrograph Gallery*. http://www.petrographs.blogspot.com.

Note: *The Chicago Manual of Style* doesn't advise including the date you
accessed a Web source, but you may provide an access date after the URL
if the information is time-sensitive.

When no author is named, treat the site's sponsor as the author.

APA Style
When you write papers in the social sciences—psychology, sociology,
anthropology, and political science among others—you need to follow the
reference guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA).
  APA style makes use of both an in-text citation, also known as a

parenthetical note, and an entry for a final "References" page. For example:

In-Text Citations
Watters (2008) detailed the best practices service providers can utilize in assisting refugee children.

References Entry
Watters, C. (2008). Refugee children: Towards the next horizon.
        London; New York: Routledge.

Formatting Quotations
Short quotations of fewer that 40 words should be incorporated into the text and enclosed with double quotation marks. Always provide the author, year, and page number of the text and include a complete reference in the reference list.

> Weinstein (1987) wrote that the twinship transference is "perhaps the most profound opportunity offered to a patient in group therapy" (p.150).

> They argue, "It is the rare contemporary practitioner who posits that psychotherapy can be value-neutral" (Norcross and Wogan, 1987, pp. 5-6) but offer no viable proof.

Long quotations of 40 words or more should be set off in a free-standing block of typewritten lines and the quotation marks should be omitted. A block quotation should begin on a new line and indented as you would indent a new paragraph. Subsequent lines should be typed flush with the indent. The entire quotation should be double spaced.

> Beck's (1995) thesis explored why students selected either an MSW
>
> degree or one in clinical psychology:
>
>> The findings of the research show that, in general, both
>>
>> groups had considered other career paths and expressed

> a desire to help people. The social work students
>
> tended to be motivated by the desire to relate to clients,
>
> stemming from childhood experience. This group valued
>
> understanding clients in a broader social context. In
>
> contrast, psychology students tended to be motivated by a
>
> curiosity about human behavior, stemming from their high
>
> school or college experiences. This group was more likely
>
> to value science, testing and research. (p. i)

The punctuation preceding a block quotation varies. If the sentence preceding the quotation is complete, use a colon. If the sentence is incomplete, punctuate as you would if the sentence and the quotation were straight uninterrupted text.

APA Guide

1. *Book With One Author*

In-Text Citation Form
(Bain, 2004, p. 14)

Reference List Form
Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA:
         Harvard University Press.

2. *Two or More Books by the Same Author in the Same Year*

To distinguish between the sources, alphabetize them by title (book, article or chapter) and assign lower-case letters (a, b, c) accordingly. Then, use a letter with the year in the in-text citation. Use the letters with the year also to order the entries in the references list.

In-Text Citation Form
(Winnicott, 1971a, p. 45)

(Winnicott, 1971b, p. 81)

Reference List Form (arrange by year of publication, earliest first)
Winnicott, D.W. (1971a). *Playing and reality*. London: Tavistock.
Winnicott, D.W. (1971b). *Therapeutic consultation in child psychiatry*.
      London: Hogarth Press.

3. Book With Two to Five Authors

In-Text Citation Form
(Garrod, Smulyan, Powers, & Kilkenny, 1995, p. 18)

Note: For works with two authors, cite both authors' names every time
you make an in-text citation note. For works with three to five authors,
cite all authors for your first in-text citation; after that, cite only the name
of the first author followed by *et al*.

(Garrod *et al.*, 1995, p. 24)

Reference List Form
Garrod, A., Smulyan, L., Powers, S. & Kilkenny, R. (1995). *Adolescent
     portraits: Identity, relationships and challenges*. Needham
     Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

4. Book by a Corporate Author

In-Text Citation Form
In the text, provide the complete name of the text and the association that
published it when you first mention it. After that, you can refer to the
name of the text.

According to the American Psychological Association's publication
manual (APA manual), writers are increasingly using the active voice in
their prose.

Reference List Form
American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American psychological association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

5. Article or Chapter in an Edited Book

In-Text Citation Form
(Plath, 2000, pp. 12-14)

Reference List Form
Plath, S. (2000). *The unabridged journals*. K. V. Kukil (Ed.). New York, NY: Anchor.

6. Article in a Scholarly Journal

In-Text Citation Form
(Fein and Nuehring, 1982, pp. 7-13)

Reference List Form
Fein, S. B. & Nuehring, E.M. (1982). Intrapsychic effects of stigma: A process of breakdown and reconstruction of social reality. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 7, 3-13.

7. Secondary Sources

In-Text Citation Form
If you are quoting a source that is quoted in another source, in the text, phrase the citation in the following way:

In Seidenberg and McClelland's study (as cited in Coltheart, Curtis, Atkins, & Haller, 1993), ...

Reference List Form
In your references list you indicate the source you actually read:

Coltheart, M., Curtis, B., Atkins, P., & Haller, M. (1993). Models of reading aloud: Dual-route and parallel-distributed-processing approaches. *Psychological Review*, 100, 589-608.

8. Article from an Online Journal

In-Text Citation Form
(Ketenci, 2014, p. 14)

Reference List Form
Ketenci, N. (2014). The effect of global financial crisis on trade elasticities: Evidence from BRIICS countries and Turkey. *Journal of International and Global Economic Studies*, v. 7, iss. 1, pp. 1-19. Retrieved from http://www2.southeastern.edu/orgs/econjournal/index_files/Page410.htm

9. Article from an Online Journal with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

In-Text Citation Form
(Woodridge & Shapka, 2012, p. 212)

Reference List Form
Woodridge, M.B., & Shapka, J. (2012). Playing with technology: Mother-toddler interaction scores lower during play with electronic toys. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 33(5), 211-218. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2012.05.005

For ways to reference sources not listed in this section, visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) or the APA website.

ACS STYLE
In the sciences—chemistry, biology, physics, and geology, among other disciplines—citation styles vary from journal to journal. You may be asked to follow the reference guidelines of a major scientific association (e.g. American Chemical Society, Council of Biology Editors, American Institute of Physics). The American Chemical Society (ACS) guidelines are provided here as a representative example.

ACS style makes use of both an in-text citation and an entry for a final "References" page. Citations may be formatted in author-date, superscript, or parenthetical style. For author-date style, the "References" entries are listed in alphabetical order. In superscript and parenthetical style, the "References" entries are listed numerically in order of first appearance.

In-Text Citation

Author-date
Molina and Rowland (1974) first documented the destructive effect of chlorofluorocarbons on the ozone layer.

Superscript
Molina and Rowland first documented the destructive effect of chlorofluorocarbons on the ozone layer.[1]

Parenthetical
Molina and Rowland first documented the destructive effect of chlorofluorocarbons on the ozone layer (1).

In the sciences, you may need to cite multiple references for a single statement. To do so, cite in order of the date. For author-date style, separate different years by the same author(s) with commas, and separate different authors with semicolons. For superscript or parenthetical style, separate with commas unless the references are sequential, in which case a dash is used.

(Crutzen, 1970; Molina and Rowland, 1974, 1975)

The first signs of the destructive effects of human emissions on the ozone layer were documented in the 1970s.[1,2,5]

The first signs of the destructive effects of human emissions on the ozone layer were documented in the 1970s (*1-3*).

References Entry

Author-date
Molina, M.J.; Rowland, F. S.; Stratospheric sink for chlorofluoromethanes:
chlorine atom-catalysed destruction of ozone. *Nature*, **1974**, *249*, 810-812.

Superscript and Parenthetical
1. Crutzen, P. The influence of nitrogen oxides on the atmospheric ozone content. *Q. J. R. Meteorol. Soc*. **1970**, *96*, 320-325.
2. Molina, M.J.; Rowland, F. S.; Stratospheric sink for chlorofluoromethanes: chlorine atom-catalysed destruction of ozone. *Nature*, **1974**, *249*, 810-812.

Formatting Quotations

Scientific papers and lab reports seldom incorporate direct quotations. Paraphrasing is the preferred method. However, if you do include a quotation, follow these procedures.

Short quotations of fewer than 40 words should be incorporated into the text and enclosed with double quotation marks. Always provide the author and year of the text and include a complete reference in the reference list. Page numbers are not used.

> In his seminal paper documenting air pollution's impact on the ozone layer, Crutzen (1970) noted, "There is a distinct possibility that nitrogen oxides are of great importance in ozone photochemistry."

Long quotations of 40 words or more should be set off in a free-standing block of typewritten lines and the quotation marks should be omitted. A block quotation should begin on a new line and indented as you would indent a new paragraph. Subsequent lines should be typed flush with the indent. The entire quotation should be double spaced.

> Gleick describes the important link between energy and water availability:

> In addition to using water to produce energy, we use energy to produce, move, and clean water. Energy permits us to make use of water that was previously considered undrinkable or unobtainable. We can now remove salts and other contaminants using desalination and wastewater treatment techniques, and we pump water from deep underground aquifers or distant sources. The availability and price of energy sets limits on the extent to which unusual sources of water can be tapped.[1]

The punctuation preceding a block quotation varies. If the sentence preceding the quotation is complete, use a colon. If the sentence is incomplete, punctuate as you would if the sentence and the quotation were straight, uninterrupted text.

ACS Guide

1. Book With One Author

In-Text Citation Form
(Chang, 2003)

Reference List Form
Chang, R. *General Chemistry: The Essential Concepts*, 3rd ed.; McGraw-Hill: Boston, 2003.

2. Book With Two to Five Authors

In-Text Citation Form
(Thompson and Turk, 2007)

Note: For works with two authors, cite both authors' names every time you make an in-text citation note. For works with three to five authors, cite only the name of the first author followed by et al.

(Ahluwalia et al., 2007)

Reference List Form
Ahluwalia, V.K.; Kumar, L.S.; Kumar, S. *Chemistry of Natural Products: Amino Acids, Peptides, Proteins and Enzymes*; Ane Books India: New Delhi, 2007.

3. Article or Chapter in an Edited Book

In-Text Citation Form
(Shea, 2004)

Reference List Form
Shea, K. M. Feist-Bénary Furan Synthesis. In *Name Reactions in Heterocyclic Chemistry*; Li, J. J., Ed.; John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ, 2004; pp 160-167.

4. Article in a Scholarly Journal

In-Text Citation Form
(Burk and Chung, 1992)

Reference List Form
Burk, L.A.; Chung, L.Y. The Stereostructure of Bisabolene Trihydrochloride. *J. Nat. Prod.* **1992***, 55*, 1336-1338.

Note: ACS style makes use of journal title abbreviations. These abbreviations are listed online at the Chemical Abstracts Service Source Index.

5. Article from an Online Journal

In-Text Citation Form
(Zloh et al., 2003)

Reference List Form
Zloh, M.; Esposito, D.; Gibbons, W. A. Helical Net Plots and Lipid Favourable Surface Mapping of Transmembrane Helices of

Integral Membrane Proteins: Aids to Structure Determination of Integral Membrane Proteins. *Internet J. Chem*. [Online] **2003**, *6*, Article 2. http://www.ijc.com/articles/2003v6/2/ (accessed Oct 13, 2004).

6. *Web page/Organization author*

In-Text Citation Form
(National Library of Medicine, 2004)

Reference List Form
National Library of Medicine. Environmental Health and Toxicology: Specialized Information Services. http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/enviro. html (accessed Aug 23, 2004).

7. *Article in a popular/non-scientific magazine*

In-Text Citation Form
(Manning, 2004)

Reference List Form
Manning, R. Super Organics. *Wired*, May 2004, pp 176-181.

For ways to reference sources not listed in this section, visit the ACS Web site or see *The ACS Style Guide: A Manual for Authors and Editors, 2nd ed.*, Washington, DC, by the American Chemical Society, 1997, also available online.

APPENDIX

This section briefly discusses three specific genres: the comparison/contrast essay, the lab report, and the essay exam. All present special challenges.

Writing Comparison-and-Contrast Essays

The comparison-and-contrast essay is a frequently assigned paper topic: compare two texts, three political positions, two solutions to a problem, three pieces of art. Essay exams frequently take this form too: compare Plato's and Aristotle's theories of education.

When you're asked to compare and contrast, your goal is to construct an argument based on a discussion of the similarities and/or differences in two or more texts, theories, or objects. Simply pointing out or listing the similarities and differences is not enough; you also need to state why these similarities/differences matter. For example, in a religion paper you might begin by comparing and contrasting how two religious texts approach the idea of the self, but then move on to formulating a thesis about what role the self plays in achieving enlightenment. Giving equal time to the items being compared isn't always an issue. In fact, some of the best comparisons use one text, position, or object to shed light on another, the second being the more important or focal item.

When writing a comparison-and-contrast essay, you should begin with an introductory paragraph that introduces the items and includes a clear thesis statement about them. In some cases, depending on your material and your audience, a brief summary of the items might also be appropriate.

You can organize the body of the comparison-and-contrast essay either point-by-point or subject-by-subject. In the first pattern of organization, point-by-point, you would discuss one assertion about both subjects, then another, and another. Here's an example:

Introduction (Thesis: In the past ten years, flexibility in several key areas has helped private businesses be more successful in achieving their diversity goals than public institutions.)
   A. Recruitment
    1.Private businesses
    2.Public institutions

    B. Training
      1.Private businesses
      2.Public institutions
    C. Compensation
      1.Private businesses
      2.Public institutions
   Conclusion

This pattern of organization would be best if, for example, you want to highlight the distinct differences or similarities of your subjects—in this case, how more flexibility in recruitment, training, and compensation helped private businesses be more successful in achieving their diversity goals.

  In the second pattern of organization, subject-by-subject, you would discuss all your assertions about one subject and then all your assertions about the second subject, constantly referring to the first. You should treat the assertions in the same order. Here's an example:

   Introduction
    A. Private businesses
      1. Recruitment
      2. Training
      3. Compensation
    B. Public institutions
      1. Recruitment
      2. Training
      3. Compensation
   Conclusion

This method works best when one of your subjects is less important or less interesting than the other, or when you are primarily interested in it in terms of how it can illuminate the item which does seem more important, or focal. Get the first item out of the way quickly and concentrate on the second one. Be careful, however, to refer back periodically to your first subject in the discussion of your second subject and to include the first subject in your conclusion.

Writing Lab Reports
Most lab reports follow similar rules in their written structure. Different science departments vary in terms of what sections to include and the

details needed in each section, and each department has specific rules about how to format your data, tables and figures. However, most lab reports—and formal scientific papers—contain these basic sections.

Abstract

The Abstract briefly summarizes the whole lab report. One good way to write a draft abstract is to write one sentence for each section of the report: one sentence of Introduction (or importance/purpose), one of Methods, one of Results, one of Discussion, and one of Conclusion (or ramifications/importance). Then revise for clarity. You may need a sentence more or less for any section depending on the needs of your particular lab. Not all lab reports require an abstract.

Introduction

The Introduction presents to the reader the purpose of the lab and contextualizes it by describing: 1) the state of knowledge in the area of inquiry, 2) the unanswered question to be investigated, and 3) the importance of answering the question. Introductions may be "right side up" or "upside down." They may first describe the lab's exact purpose or aims, and then put those aims in context. Or, the lab may first present the importance of the question within the field of interest, then the exact aims/purpose of the lab.

Methods

Methods are a narrative description of how the lab was conducted. They provide all the information—and only the information—necessary for the reader to repeat the lab and obtain the same results. Methods should not be written like instructions: "First, add 3 grams of solute to 50 milliliters of solution." Rather, they should be narrative: "Solute (3 grams) was added to the solution (50 milliliters)." Also, avoid unnecessary information: "We walked across the room to use the sink." Methods should be packed with numbers, like quantities or durations, as well as names/makes of equipment used. Some departments and scientific disciplines, such as chemistry, require Methods to be written in passive voice.

Results
The Results section should present (surprise!) the results. However, many students find this section challenging. Your tables and figures go here, or are referenced here if attached to the end of the report. However, you must describe each table/figure's main points *in words*, even if the table/fig is right there! For instance, "Figure 1 shows a positive linear relationship between incubation time and total microbial count until hour 10." Important numbers, correlations, and findings, with units, must be described. Unless you are doing a combined Results and Discussion section, avoid the temptation to explain what the results mean—just state the key data and relationships. Captions for tables/figures should be short: put details in the text.

Discussion
The Discussion may be rolled in as "Results and Discussion" or "Discussion and Conclusions." The Discussion explains what your results mean, or interprets the results. Discussion frequently occurs *after* results are presented. However, even in lab reports where Results and Discussion are presented together, it's good practice to separate each sentence presenting a result (piece of data) from a subsequent sentence that interprets that result. This order allows readers to draw their own conclusions from the data without the influence of the writer's biases. Although no science can be completely unbiased, this format helps retain the distinction between What Actually Happened and What You Think Happened.

Conclusion
The Conclusion is your chance to sum up the whole lab report. Your major findings/results, and their meaning, should be summarized for the reader here. Then, contextualize those findings for the reader by describing, in broad terms, 1) their implications, 2) how they influence/ will influence the field in question, and 3) whether there remain any unanswered questions or further research to be conducted. Try not to repeat your introduction, but take a broader view toward the future.

Works Cited
Be sure to cite all information you obtained from other sources, including your review of any other literature. Use correct style: American

Chemical Society (ACS) or American Psychological Association (APA) citation styles are common formats for the sciences. Introductions and Conclusions in particular should contain many in-text citations to prior work, with the extended reference information listed in the Works Cited.

Writing Essay Exams

An essay written for an exam should have all the virtues of a good paper: it should take a position early on; it should be well organized; it should provide sound evidence for its claims or positions; and it should use language well. For both essay exams and papers, the secret to success is in large part how well you prepare.

Many students prepare for essay exams by simply reading their notes over and over. But will the exam test how well you read? No. It will test how well you think and write. Just as you pre-write before starting a paper, review for your exam by *writing* about the material. Make a list of the most important points. Anticipate what the questions are likely to be (usually you can come pretty close) and write practice paragraphs. These activities loosen up the vocabulary you need and also uncover weak spots where you don't remember or understand something well enough to write about it.

When you take the exam, if the question asks you to take a position, be sure you make that position clear in your very first sentence, and if possible, indicate what sort of evidence you'll use to support it. For example, if the question is "Which president had the more effective foreign policy, Richard Nixon or George H.W. Bush?" let your first sentence read, "Nixon [or Bush] was by far the more effective president in the area of foreign policy, because 1) he had a deeper understanding of how global economics worked; 2) he insisted that his State Department be staffed by career diplomats with a solid understanding of historical issues; and 3) he was fortunate enough to be president at a time when many opportunities for diplomatic breakthroughs presented themselves."

An opening sentence like this does several things. First, it puts your basic answer on record even if you run out of time and can't develop it as completely as you might have liked. Second, it provides you with an outline to follow. Third, it reassures your reader that you've understood the question and provided a thoughtful answer; the reader can actually pay attention to your presentation from the beginning rather than skimming to see where you're headed.