Essay Resource

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and Hacker, Diana. *A Canadian Writer's Reference 4e with 2009 MLA Update*. Boston • New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. Print.
also Wikipedia and the *New Oxford American Dictionary*

Compiled by Chris Davis

Types of Writing

Essay

Types of Writing • DANE-CCC

There are many different forms of writing, but most of them can be classified under the DANE-CCC acronym:

Descriptive	**A**rgumentative and Persuasive	**N**arrative	**E**xpository
Compare and Contrast	**C**ause and Effect	**C**ritical Analysis	

Descriptive Writing

Descriptive writing generally uses a lot of sensory details that appeal to the five senses. It can also describe what something is, how it works, or how something happened. A literary device that is directly associated with this form of writing is imagery.

Argumentative and Persuasive Writing

Argumentative and persuasive writing both try to convince the reader to accept the writer's point of view. This writing can either be serious or funny, but is always focused on convincing the reader of the validity of an opinion.

Although both argumentative and persuasive writing aim to convince someone of something, they are different in how they approach this goal. Argumentative writing relies solely on facts and logic to convince the reader, while persuasive writing, which also uses facts and logic, employ rhetorical devices/persuasive strategies to convince the reader. While rhetorical devices/persuasive strategies enhance a persuasive essay, they are considered fallacies in an argumentative essay.

Narrative Writing

Narrative writing tells a story. Generally, narrative writing is conversational in style, and tells of a personal experience. It uses action verbs, and is most commonly written in the first person, present tense to communicate a feeling of immediacy and currency in the story.

Expository Writing

Expository writing is informative, and explains how something is done. It generally explains actions that should be performed in a series. This form of writing is considered "how-to" writing, and is found in most instruction manuals. It may be in the form of step-by-step instructions or in a story form with the instructions/explanations subtly given along the way.

Compare and Contrast Writing

Compare and contrast writing discusses the similarities and differences between two concepts, issues, people, places, things, etc. This type of writing can be an unbiased discussion, which merely discusses a subject with no argumentation, or it may be an attempt to convince the reader of the writer's opinion.

Cause and Effect Writing

Cause and effect writing explains how and/or why some event happened, and what resulted from the event. This is a study of the relationship between two or more events or experiences. It can discuss both causes and effects, or it can address one or the other. A cause essay usually discusses the reasons how and/or why something happened. An effect essay discusses what happened after a specific event or circumstance.

Critical Analysis Writing

A critical essay analyses the strengths, weaknesses, and methods of someone else's work. Generally, these essays begin with a brief overview of the main points of the text, movie, or piece of art, followed by an analysis of the work's meaning. It should then discuss how well the author/creator accomplishes his/her goals and makes his/her points. A critical essay can be written about another essay, story, book, poem, movie, or work of art.

Essay

Types of Writing • Key Question Words

Key Words	Questions and Strategies
Analyse	*Analyse the drawing in the Models section.* Analyse literally means "to take apart." In order to analyse something, one must examine and discuss it one part at a time to **find** meaning, and be able to say how each part contributes to the whole.
Compare	*Compare Darwin's theory of natural selection with Lamarck's theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.* When one compares, one should look for qualities and characteristics that resemble each other. The term *compare* is usually accompanied by *with*, implying that one is to emphasize similarities. However, one can also mention differences.
Contrast	*Contrast the laws pertaining to consumer protection fifty years ago with those in effect today.* When one is asked to contrast, one should present differences, although on may also mention similarities. Focus, however, on those things, qualities, events, or problems that one can contrast.
Criticize	*Criticize the federal government's policy on Canadian ownership of Canadian resources.* When one is asked to criticize, one should not merely find fault but give *one's* opinions about both the merits and demerits of something. Take a strong stand, but do present all the facts; in other words, for the above question, one should discuss the reasons why the government did what it did.
Discuss	*Discuss C.D. Howe's role in the pipeline debate of the 1950s.* The term *discuss* appears often in exam questions. One should analyse, examine, and present the pros and cons regarding the problems involved in the question. One will receive a good mark if one's details are complete and thorough.
Explain	*Explain the phlogiston theory in no more than 100 words.* One is expected to write an expository paragraph when asked to explain. This will require some description of the person or topic involved. Consider interesting and distinguishing features. It is important that one explain clearly and concisely. One should appear to one's marker as an authority on the subject; therefore, write with conviction.
Illustrate	*In "Granite Point," how is it made obvious that Mathew murdered Kloski? Use specific evidence to illustrate your proof.* A question on an English or history exam that asks one to illustrate with specific, concrete examples usually requires that one explain or clarify one's answer by presenting quotations from the text (seldom, if ever, diagrams). One's opinion by itself is not what is required. If one is not able to bring a primary source (in this case, a copy of the story) into the exam room, one will have to paraphrase rather than give direct quotations to support one's claims. Note: Begin the essay by rephrasing the question; for example, "In 'Granite Point' Valgardson makes it obvious that Mathew killed Kloski; here is the proof." Then follow basic essay structure. By rephrasing the question in this way, one will find that all one has to do is provide illustrations to prove one's claim.
Justify	*Justify the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.* One must prove a point or statement when one is asked to justify it. Show evidence for one's decisions. One must convince one's reader that one is right.

Key Words	Questions and Strategies
List	*List five symptoms of diabetes mellitus.* The term *list* is confusing. Is one to write an essay, or is one to present a list? If one is asked to write an essay, obviously one must enumerate in paragraph form; but if one is not, one should present a brief, itemized series. Indicate that one is presenting a list because that is what is asked for in the question.
Relate	*Relate the discovery of the Athabasca tar sands to future development in northern Alberta.* When one is asked to relate one thing to another, one should emphasize the relationships, connections, or associations between them.
Review	*Review Laurence Olivier's film of* Hamlet. A review demands critical examination. Do not necessarily mention only the bad points, but what one likes as well. Jot down what one wishes to discuss: the acting, the scenery, the costumes, the sound, and so forth. Then organize your points in a satisfying sequence and briefly analyse or comment on each.
Summarize	*Summarize the causes of Québec's dispute with Ottawa over the constitution.* To summarize means that one is to condense. One may, at times, be given a longer passage to summarize; however, if one is given a question like the one above, one should present only the main facts, without illustrations and elaborations.
Synthesize	*Synthesize the data gathered in the experiment.* Synthesize means to combine two or more things into a coherent whole that forms something new. From a literary standpoint, this is a good way of looking at a conclusion paragraph of an essay. A conclusion paragraph of an essay should synthesize, not summarize. After all, in the body paragraphs of an essay, one is analysing subtopics of thesis (see "Analyse" above). Now that the audience fully understands how each part analysed contributes to the whole, synthesis is where those parts are brought together to **create** meaning, which should ultimately support the thesis of the essay.
Trace	*Trace the route of Samuel Hearne across Canada.* Obviously a map or diagram would help to answer this question, but if one is asked to write an essay, one should give a description of Hearne's progress, from the point of origin to his final destination, and explain the historical significance of his journey. Consider how it has changed over time. State significant events that influence the person or topic involved. Use chronological order.

Do not be afraid to tell your reader in what way you are interpreting a question. Terms are always open to interpretation. If you have misinterpreted the term but you have explained what you are doing and you answer with conviction, you will receive more credit than if your reader has to figure out what you are trying to do.

As you continue to study and write assignments and exams, add to this list of key words. Do not be afraid to ask an instructor "What exactly does this term mean?" Then add the term and explanation to your list.

Paragraph Writing • Descriptive

Descriptive paragraphs make readers see, feel, and hear what the writer has seen, felt, and heard. Whether we're describing a person, a place, or a thing, the aim is to reveal a subject through vivid and carefully selected details.

Example 1:

Gregory is my beautiful gray Persian cat. He walks with pride and grace, performing a dance of disdain as he slowly lifts and lowers each paw with the delicacy of a ballet dancer. His pride, however, does not extend to his appearance, for he spends most of his time indoors watching television and growing fat. He enjoys TV commercials, especially those for Meow Mix and 9 Lives. His familiarity with cat food commercials has led him to reject generic brands of cat food in favour of only the most expensive brands. Gregory is as finicky about visitors as he is about what he eats, befriending some and repelling others. He may snuggle up against your ankle, begging to be petted, or he may imitate a skunk and stain your favourite trousers. Gregory does not do this to establish his territory, as many cat experts think, but to humiliate me because he is jealous of my friends. After my guests have fled, I look at the old fleabag snoozing and smiling to himself in front of the television set, and I have to forgive him for his obnoxious, but endearing, habits.

Example 2:

Sunset is the time of day where our sky meets the outer space solar winds. There are blue, pink, and purple swirls, spinning and twisting like a cloud of balloons caught in a blender. The sun moves slowly beyond the horizon, while the moon races to take its place in prominence atop the night sky. People slow to a crawl, entranced, fully forgetting the deeds that still must get done. There is a coolness… a calmness… whenever the sun does set.

TIP!

Try incorporating some of the following literary devices into your creative writing to make it more interesting:

Alliteration: repetition of the initial consonant sounds of words: "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."

Imagery: language that appeals to the five senses

Hyperbole: extreme exaggeration to add meaning

Onomatopoeia: use of a word whose sound imitates its meaning: "hiss"

Paragraph Writing • Argumentative

Argumentative/persuasive paragraphs attempt to convince the reader of something. An opinion or argument is usually presented in the topic sentence. The argument is supported by facts and persuasive strategies.

Example 1:

The greatest problem faced by students in public high schools is large class size. First, student participation in larger classes is limited to a select few. Second, the amount of students per class makes individual conferences with teachers hard to get. Third, in large classes, papers can take weeks for teachers to grade. As a result, teacher feedback is not effective. There are many benefits to classrooms with fewer students. In smaller classes, all students will have the opportunity to participate. In addition, classes will be more focused and on task, and the teacher will be able to develop a closer relationship with students. These factors will allow students to learn and develop their abilities. Also, smaller class size will also allow teachers to effectively critique students' work. Moreover, in small classes, students can develop working relationships with one another. Thus, in order to improve the level of education in public schools today, reducing class size is required.

Paragraph Writing • Expository

Expository paragraphs "expose" things about a subject. They are also sometimes called information paragraphs because they give information about a person, place, thing, or idea. A good expository writer does research. Find out all you can about a topic before beginning an expository paragraph. Expository paragraphs: explain a process, concept, relationship, or how something works. Unlike the persuasive paragraph, they do not seek to persuade the reader.

Example 1:

Dolphins

The dolphin may look like a fish, but this friendly sea creature is really a mammal. First of all, dolphins have lungs just like we do. They must come to the surface of the water to breathe and get oxygen from the air. Fish can take oxygen from the water. Like other mammals, dolphins also have backbones and are warm-blooded. Finally, they nurse young dolphins on milk, just like a cow might nurse a calf. The dolphin's streamlined body and its big strong tail resemble a fish, but do not be fooled; it is definitely a mammal.

Narrative paragraphs tell a story and can relay a sequence of events. The events are told in chronological order (the order in which they happened). The story can either be fictional or nonfictional.

A narrative paragraph most often tells a story in order to illustrate or demonstrate a point. Because of this, developing a **strong topic sentence** is important. The topic sentence should not start narration but should establish a purpose. It might be used to establish setting or character.

Example:

Neil Armstrong had quite a day on July 21, 1969. This was the day he became the first man to walk on the moon. The journey began several days earlier when on July 16th the Apollo 11 launched from Earth headed to the moon. On board with Neil Armstrong were Michael Collins and Buzz Aldrin. The crew had landed on the moon in the Sea of Tranquility a day before the actual walk. Upon Neil's first step onto the surface of the Earth's moon, he said, "That's one small step for man, on giant leap for mankind." It sure was. What a day!

There are **two types of dialogue** in narrative writing:

Direct Discourse: dialogue using quotation marks

Example: Upon Neil's first step onto the surface of the Earth's moon, he said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

Indirect Discourse: relaying what was said without actual dialogue

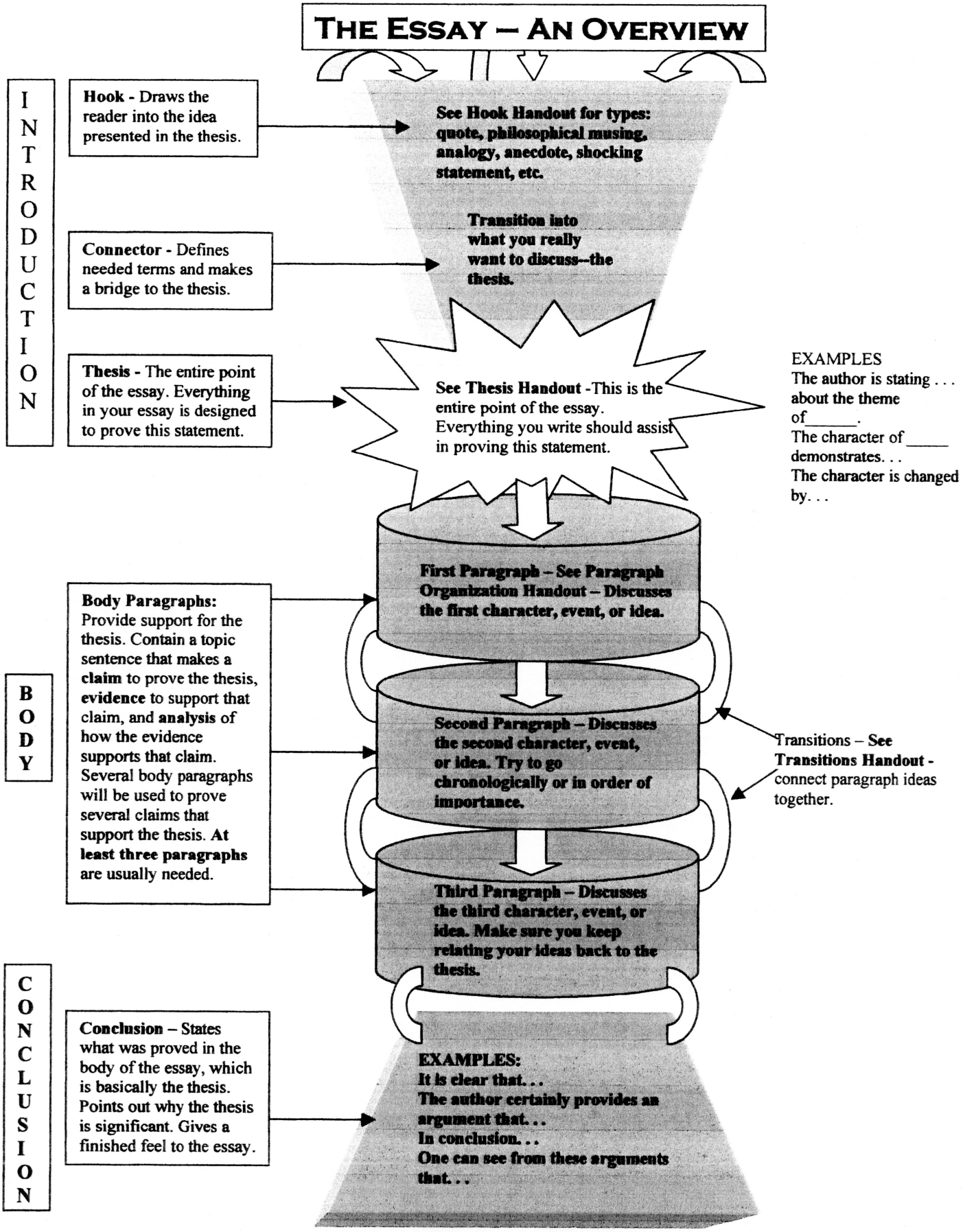
Example: Neil Armstrong landed on the moon and was taken aback. He commented on the importance of the event.

Narrative can also occur through an **internal monologue**. Internal thoughts are usually italicized.

Example: Excited thoughts were running through Neil's head. His mind raced, *this is perhaps the most important day of my life*.

Essay Structure

THE ESSAY – AN OVERVIEW



Essays A Variety of Essay Structures

Structure:

Logically: One idea leads to the next.
Major premise, minor premise, conclusion (If this is so, and this is so, then this must be so.) or (number of examples makes it so)

Chronologically: ordered by time, the order in which the events occur

Sequentially: order in which they occur–e.g., "and the next step is…" (usually in method or how to essays).

Climatically: Build to a climax, a revelation, a discovery.
Least important to most important point

Comparison/Contrast:

Method 1 point by point

e.g. Point 1 as in work A
then as in work B
Point 2 as in work A
then as in work B
Point 3 as in work A
then as in work B

Method 2 work A then work B

e.g. Work A: point 1
then point 2
then point 3
Work B: point 1
then point 2
then point 3

Classification: By subject, by category, by topic

e.g. Love: infatuation
romance
companionship
physical/lust

Cause and Effect: One event or situation causing the next and so forth.
e.g. Consumers stop spending…production down…layoffs…consumers stop spending…production down…plants close…high unemployment…consumers…

Argumentative:

Logic induction: observes and reports on a case(s) and then formulates a general rule.
deduction: major premise, minor premise, conclusion (e.g. Men are mortal. Sam is a man. Sam is mortal.)

May be valid or invalid.

Persuasive: convince through emotion. Justify.

Essays

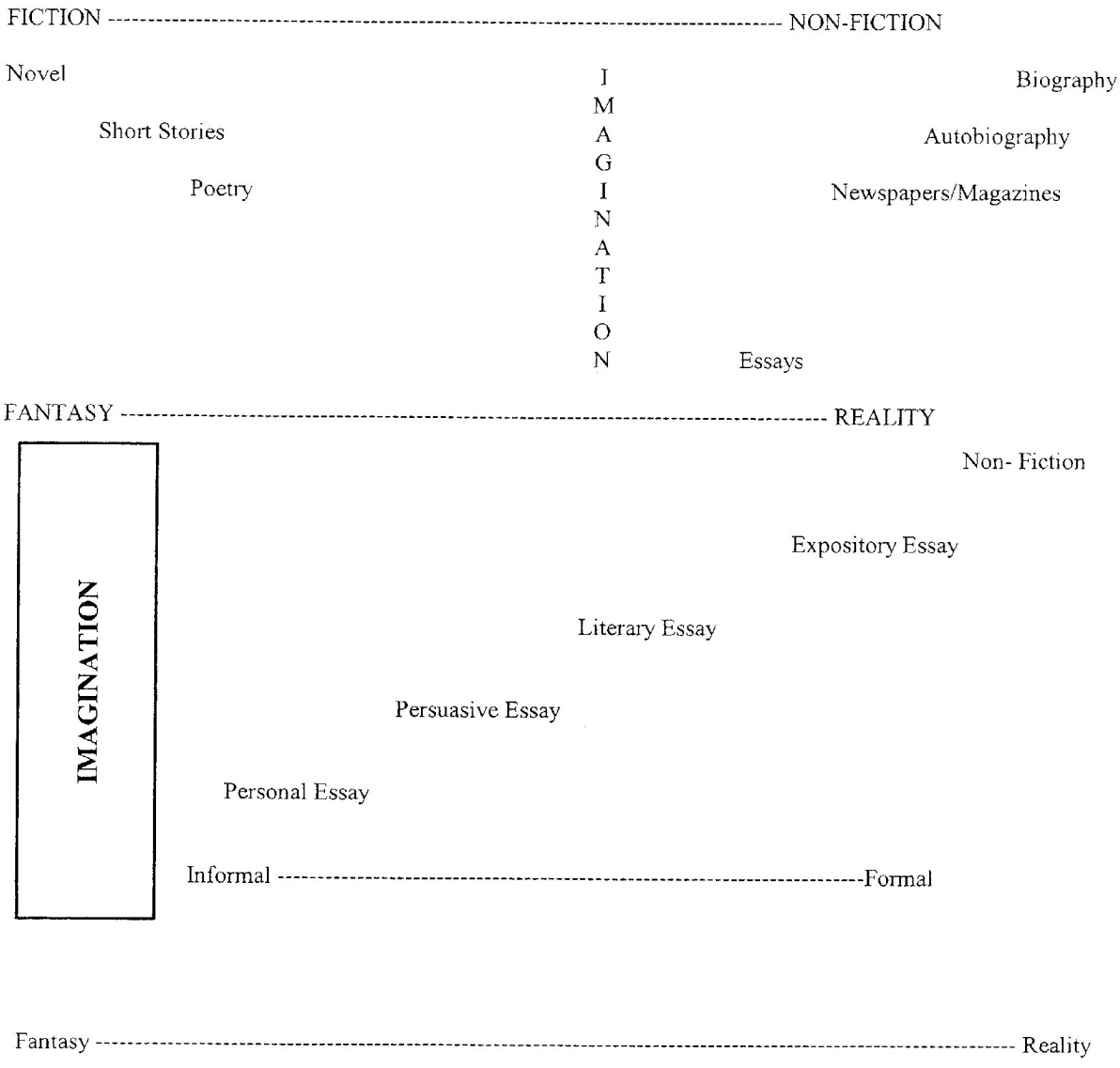
The Formal Essay

When you write a Formal Essay about a novel, play, short story, poem, or issue, you should discuss your interpretation of some aspect of the work or issue. To do this, you will need to go beyond the plot or simple details; that is, explain some deeper meaning about the work or issue. A reader of your essay should acquire a better appreciation and understanding of the piece of literature or issue by reading your explanation of one or more of its significant features.

There are several approaches to this; however, retelling the story (plot summary) is an approach for which you will not receive credit. Details of plot should only be used to support particular claims.

In your essay, you should resist mentioning what you think of the work; expressing your opinion is not the main purpose of a Formal Essay. If you wish to criticize the effectiveness of a work, write a review; in a Formal Essay, you interpret what it, or part of it, means.

The Essay and Its Place Among Various Types of Writing



Brainstorming Techniques

Essay

Brainstorming Techniques

Brainstorming can help you choose a topic, develop an approach to a topic, or deepen your understanding of the topic's potential.

If you consciously take advantage of your natural thinking processes by gathering your brain's energies into a "storm," you can transform these energies into written words or diagrams that will lead to lively, vibrant writing.

Whether you are starting with too much information or not enough, brainstorming can help you to put a new writing task in motion or revive a project that hasn't reached completion. Let's take a look at each case:

When you've got nothing: You might need a storm to approach when you feel "blank" about the topic, devoid of inspiration, full of anxiety about the topic, or just too tired to craft an orderly outline. In this case, brainstorming stirs up the dust, whips some air into our stilled pools of thought, and gets the breeze of inspiration moving again.

When you've got too much: There are times when you have too much chaos in your brain and need to bring in some conscious order. In this case, brainstorming forces the mental chaos and random thoughts to rain out onto the page, giving you some concrete words or schemas that you can then arrange according to their logical relations.

What follows are great ideas on how to brainstorm–ideas from professional writers, novice writers, people who would rather avoid writing, and people who spend a lot of time brainstorming about…well, how to brainstorm.

Try out several of these options and challenge yourself to vary the techniques you rely on; some techniques might suit a particular writer, academic discipline, or assignment better than others. If the technique you try first doesn't seem to help you, move right along and try some others.

Listing/Bulleting:
In this technique you jot down lists of words or phrases under a particular topic. Try this one by basing your list either

- on the general topic
- on one or more words from your particular thesis claim, or
- on a word or idea that is the complete opposite of your original word or idea.

For example, if your general assignment is to write about the changes in inventions over time, and your specific thesis claims that "the 20th century presented a large number of inventions to advance US society by improving upon the status of 19th-century society," you could brainstorm two different lists to ensure you are covering the topic thoroughly and that your thesis will be easy to prove.

The first list might be based on your thesis; you would jot down as many 20th-century inventions as you could, as long as you know of their positive effects on society. The second list might be based on the opposite claim and you would instead jot down inventions that you associate with a decline in that society's quality. You could do the same two lists for 19th-century inventions and then compare the evidence from all four lists.

Using multiple lists will help you to gather more perspective on the topic and ensure that, sure enough, your thesis is solid as a rock, or, …uh oh, your thesis is full of holes and you'd better alter your claim to one you can prove.

Cubing:
Cubing enables you to consider your topic from six different directions; just as a cube is six-sided, your cubing brainstorming will result in six "sides" or approaches to the topic. Take a sheet of paper, consider your topic, and respond to these six commands.

1. Describe it.
2. Compare it.
3. Associate it.
4. Analyze it.
5. Apply it.
6. Argue for and against it.

Look over what you've written. Do any of the responses suggest anything new about your topic? What interactions do you notice among the "sides"? That is, do you see patterns repeating, or a theme emerging that you could use to approach the topic or draft a thesis? Does one side seem particularly fruitful in getting your brain moving? Could that one side help you draft your thesis statement? Use this technique in a way that serves your topic. It should, at least, give you a broader awareness of the topic's complexities, if not a sharper focus on what you will do with it.

Similes:
In this technique, complete the following sentence:
_____ is/was/are/were like _____.
In the first blank put one of the terms or concepts your paper centers on. Then try to brainstorm as many answers as possible for the second blank, writing them down as you come up with them.

After you have produced a list of options, look over your ideas. What kinds of ideas come forward? What patterns or associations do you find?

Clustering/ Mapping/ Webbing:
The general idea:
This technique has three (or more) different names, according to how you describe the activity itself or what the end product looks like. In short, you will write a lot of different terms and phrases onto a sheet of paper in a random fashion and later go back to link the words together into a sort of "map" or "web" that forms groups from the separate parts. Allow yourself to start with chaos. After the chaos subsides, you will be able to create some order out of it.

How to do it:
1. Take your sheet(s) of paper and write your main topic in the center, using a word or two or three.

2. Moving out from the center and filling in the open space any way you are driven to fill it, start to write down, fast, as many related concepts or terms as you can associate with the central topic. Jot them quickly, move into another space, jot some more down, move to another blank, and just keep moving around and jotting. If you run out of similar concepts, jot down opposites, jot down things that are only slightly related, or jot down your grandpa's name, but try to keep moving and associating. Don't worry about the (lack of) sense of what you write, for you can chose to keep or toss out these ideas when the activity is over.

3. Once the storm has subsided and you are faced with a hail of terms and phrases, you can start to cluster. Circle terms that seem related and then draw a line connecting the circles. Find some more and circle them and draw more lines to connect them with what you think is closely related. When you run out of terms that associate, start with another term. Look for concepts and terms that might relate to that term. Circle them and then link them with a connecting line. Continue this process until you have found all the associated terms. Some of the terms might end up uncircled, but these "loners" can also be useful to you. (Note: You can use different colored pens/pencils/chalk for this part, if you like. If that's not possible, try to vary the kind of line you use to encircle the topics; use a wavy line, a straight line, a dashed line, a dotted line, a zig-zagging line, etc. in order to see what goes with what).

4. There! When you stand back and survey your work, you should see a set of clusters, or a big web, or a sort of map: hence the names for this activity. At this point you can start to form conclusions about how to approach your topic. There are about as many possible results to this activity as there are stars in the night sky, so what you do from here will depend on your particular results. Let's take an example or two in order to illustrate how you might form some logical relationships between the clusters and loners you've decided to keep. At the end of the day, what you do with the particular "map" or "cluster set" or "web" that you produce depends on what you need. What does this map or web tell you to do? Explore an option or two and get your draft going!

Journalistic Questions:
In this technique you would use the "big six" questions that journalists rely on to thoroughly research a story. The six are: Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, and How?. Write each question word on a sheet of paper, leaving space between them. Then, write out some sentences or phrases in answer, as they fit your particular topic. You might also answer into a tape recorder if you'd rather talk out your ideas.

Now look over your batch of responses. Do you see that you have more to say about one or two of the questions? Or, are your answers for each question pretty well balanced in depth and content? Was there one question that you had absolutely no answer for? How might this awareness help you to decide how to frame your thesis claim or to organize your paper? Or, how might it reveal what you must work on further, doing library research or interviews or further note-taking?

For example, if your answers reveal that you know a lot more about "where" and "why" something happened than you know about "what" and "when," how could you use this lack of balance to direct your research or to shape your paper? How might you organize your paper so that it emphasizes the known versus the unknown aspects of evidence in the field of study? What else might you do with your results?

Brainstorming Techniques

Relationship Between the Parts:
In this technique, begin by writing the following pairs of terms on opposite margins of one sheet of paper:

Whole	Parts
Part	Parts of Parts
Part	Parts of Parts
Part	Parts of Parts

Looking over these four groups of pairs, start to fill in your ideas below each heading. Keep going down through as many levels as you can. Now, look at the various parts that comprise the parts of your whole concept. What sorts of conclusions can you draw according to the patterns, or lack of patterns, that you see?

Thinking Outside the Box:
Even when you are writing within a particular academic discipline, you can take advantage of your semesters of experience in other courses from other departments. Let's say you are writing a paper for an English course. You could ask yourself, "Hmmm, if I were writing about this very same topic in a biology course or using this term in a history course, how might I see or understand it differently? Are there varying definitions for this concept within, say, philosophy or physics, that might encourage me to think about this term from a new, richer point of view?"

For example, when discussing "culture" in your English 11, communications, or cultural studies course, you could incorporate the definition of "culture" that is frequently used in the biological sciences. Remember those little Petri dishes from your lab experiments in high school? Those dishes are used to "culture" substances for bacterial growth and analysis, right? How might it help you write your paper if you thought of "culture" as a medium upon which certain things will grow, will develop in new ways or will even flourish beyond expectations, but upon which the growth of other things might be retarded, significantly altered, or stopped altogether?

Using Charts or Shapes:
This is where graphic organizers can come into play. If you are more visually inclined, you might create charts, graphs, or tables in lieu of word lists or phrases as you try to shape or explore an idea. You could use the same phrases or words that are central to your topic and try different ways to arrange them spatially, say in a graph, on a grid, or in a table or chart. You might even try the trusty old flow chart. The important thing here is to get out of the realm of words alone and see how different spatial representations might help you see the relationships among your ideas. If you can't imagine the shape of a chart at first, just put down the words on the page and then draw lines between or around them. Or think of a shape. Do your ideas most easily form a triangle? square? umbrella? Can you put some ideas in parallel formation? In a line?

Consider Purpose and Audience:
Think about the parts of communication involved in any act of writing or speaking event: purpose and audience. What is your purpose? What are you trying to do? What verb captures your intent? Are you trying to inform? Convince? Describe? Each purpose will lead you to a different set of information and help you shape material to include and exclude in a draft. Write about why you are writing this draft in this form.

Brainstorming Techniques

Who is your audience? Who are you communicating with beyond the grader? What does that audience need to know? What do they already know? What information does that audience need first, second, third? Write about who you are writing to and what they need.

Dictionaries, Thesauruses, Encyclopedias:
When all else fails…this is a tried and true method, loved for centuries by writers of all stripe. Visit the library reference areas or stop by the Writing Center to browse various dictionaries, thesauruses (or other guide books and reference texts), encyclopedias or surf their online counterparts. Sometimes these basic steps are the best ones. It is almost guaranteed that you'll learn several things you did not know.

If you're looking at a hard copy reference, turn to your most important terms and see what sort of variety you find in the definitions. The obscure or archaic definition might help you to appreciate the term's breadth or realize how much its meaning has changed as the language changed. Could that realization be built into your paper somehow?

If you go to online sources, use their own search functions to find your key terms and see what suggestions they offer. For example, if you plug "good" into a thesaurus search, you will be given 14 different entries. Whew! If you were analyzing the film *Good Will Hunting*, imagine how you could enrich your paper by addressed the six or seven ways that "good" could be interpreted according to how the scenes, lighting, editing, music, etc., emphasized various aspects of "good."

An encyclopedia is sometimes a valuable resource if you need to clarify facts, get quick background, or get a broader context for an event or item. If you are stuck because you have a vague sense of a seemingly important issue, do a quick check with this reference and you may be able to move forward with your ideas.

Closing
Take the next step and start to write your first draft, or fill in those gaps you've been brainstorming about to complete your "almost ready" paper.

Start to write out some larger chunks (large groups of sentences or full paragraphs) to expand upon your smaller clusters and phrases. Keep building from there into larger sections of your paper. You don't have to start at the beginning of the draft. Start writing the section that comes together most easily. You can always go back to write the introduction later.

Remember, once you've begun the paper, you can stop and try another brainstorming technique whenever you feel stuck. Keep the energy moving and try several techniques to find what suits you or the particular project you are working on.

Source: The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007.

Essay

Brainstorming • Mind Map/Web

Topic: What or whom do you intend to analyze, describe, investigate?

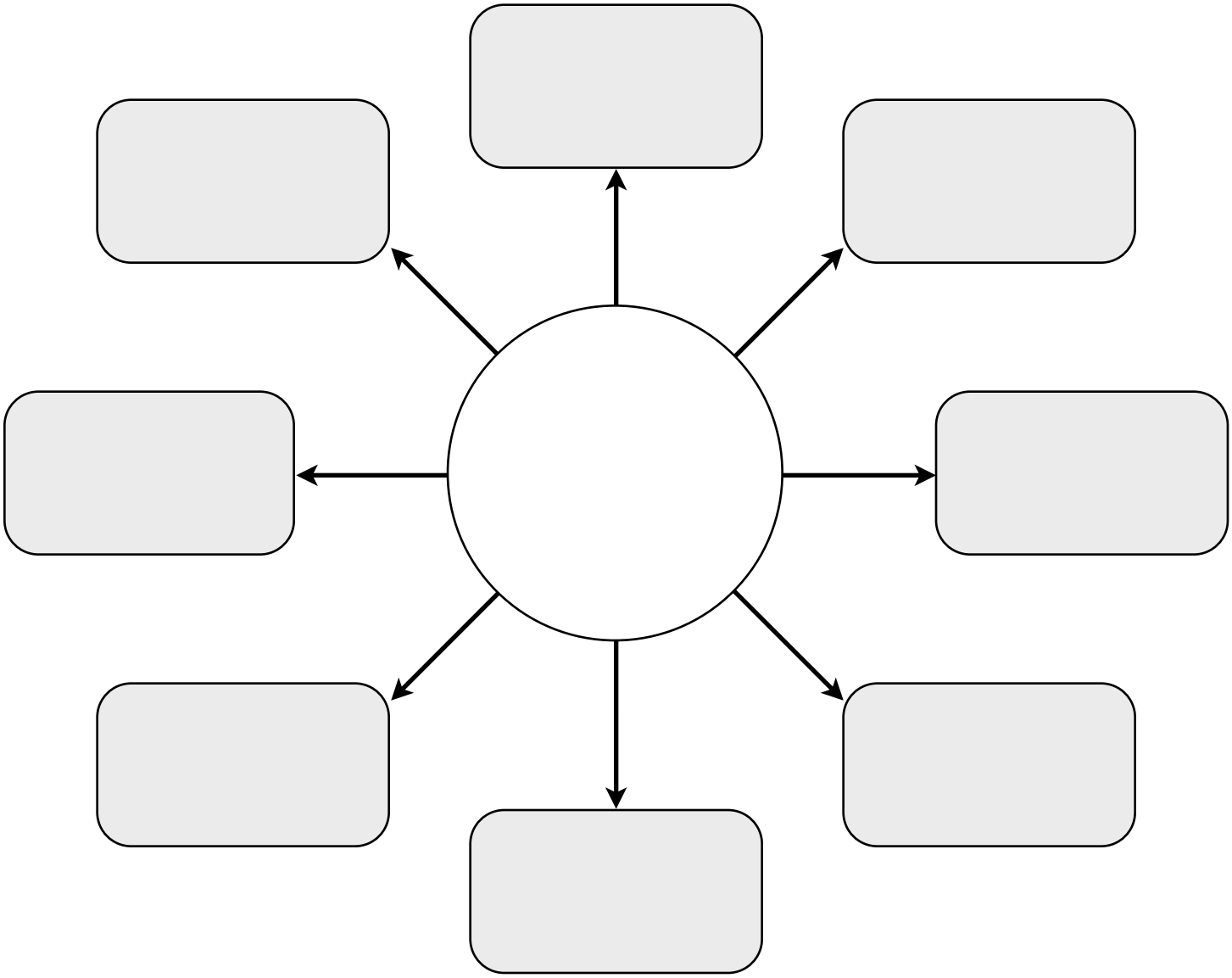
_____

_____

_____

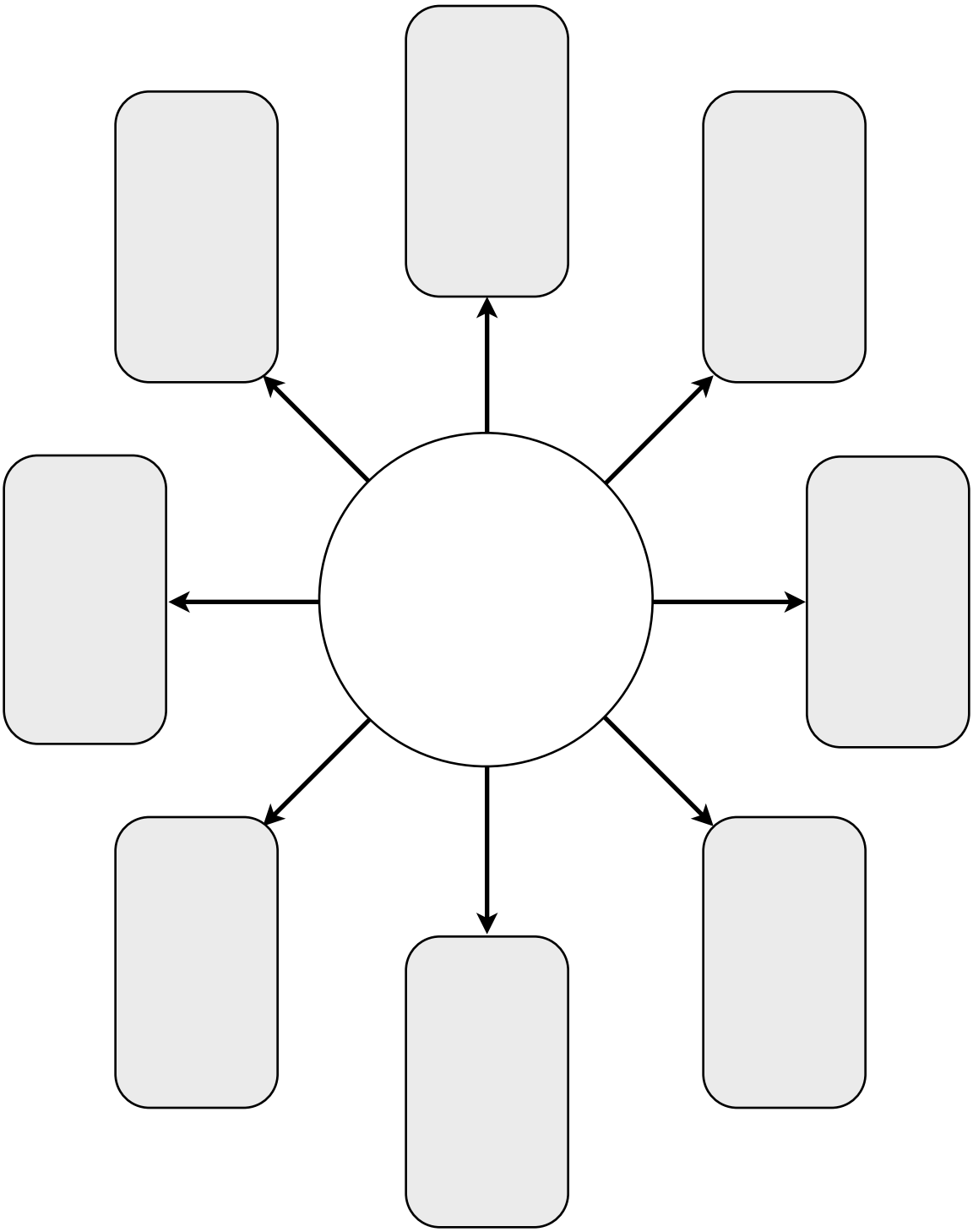
_____

Do a mind map, starting with what theme or topic you wish to analyze, describe, or investigate. If it is a person, add a section on the personality, not just physical description.



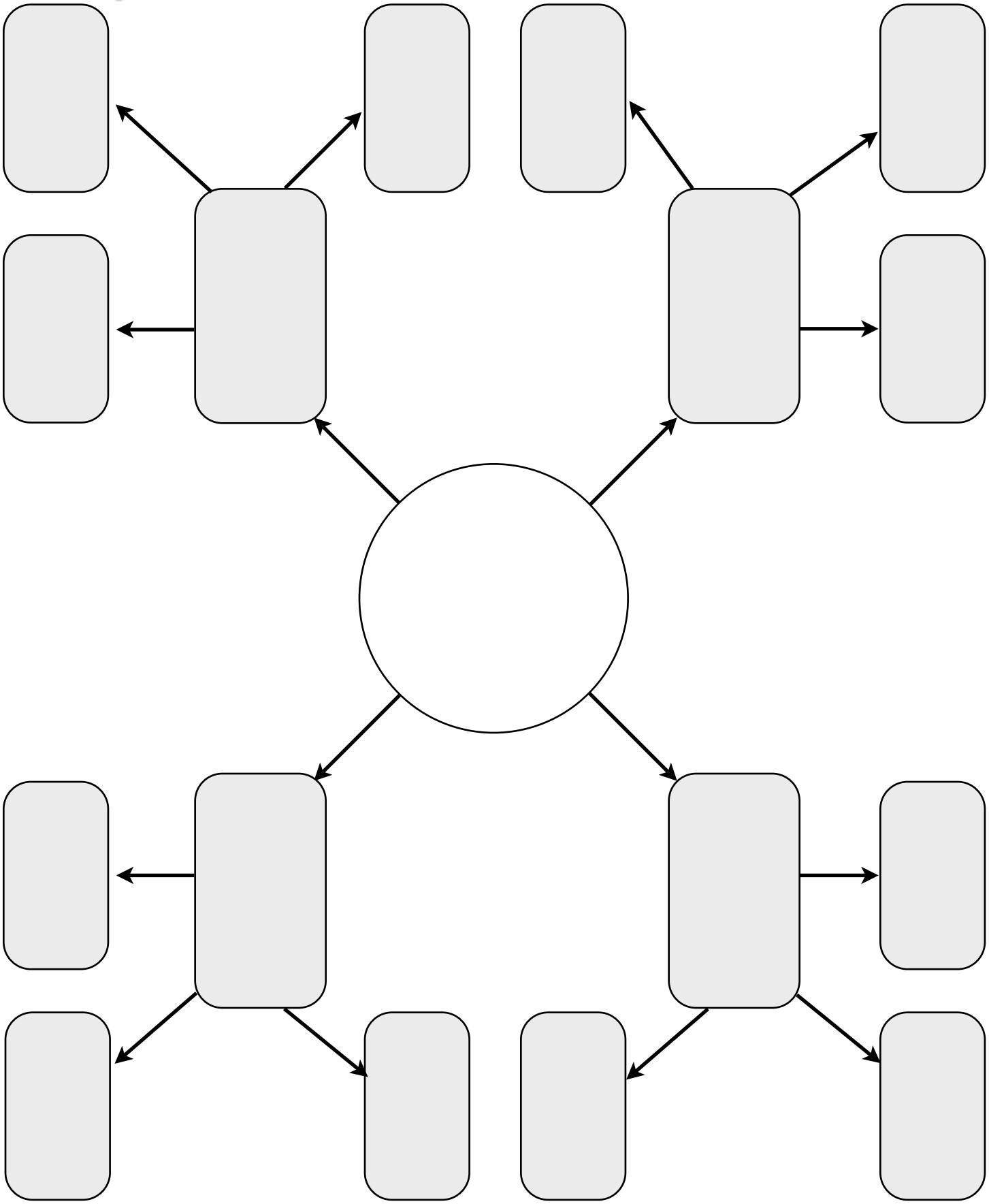
Essay

Brainstorming • Mind Map/Web



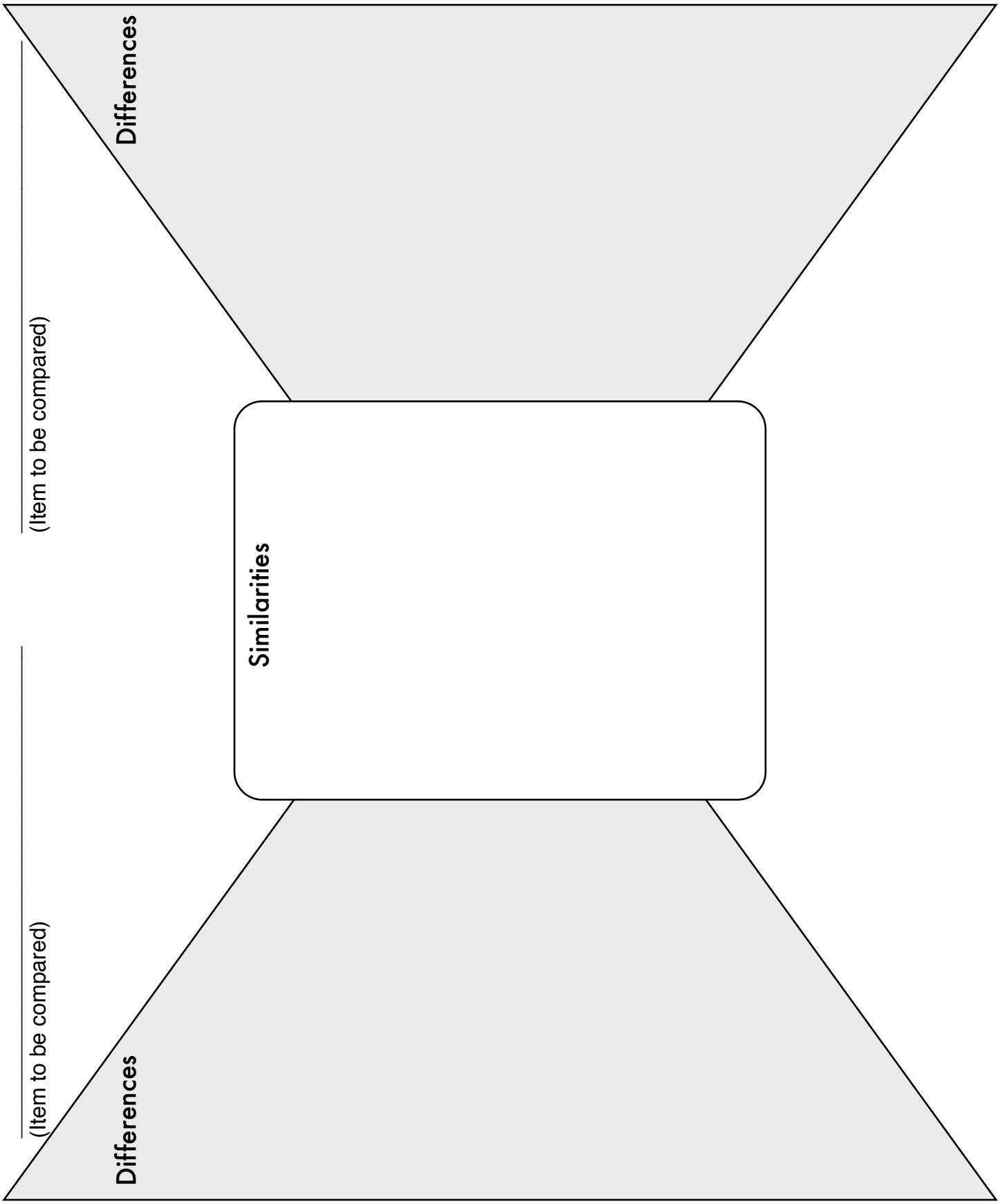
Essay

Brainstorming • Mind Map/Web



Essay

Brainstorming • Bow Tie



Research

Primary Sources

Primary sources come in various shapes and sizes, and often you have to do a little bit of research about the source to make sure you have correctly identified it. In a nutshell, a primary source was produced at the same time that the events described in the source took place.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are produced after the events described in the source took place.

Sound easy? In most cases it is. Here are some examples and problem areas:

> *Diaries* and *letters* written by people who were participants in the events they describe are easy to classify as primary sources, but what about *memoirs* or *autobiographies*? These are usually written well after the events took place and often tell you more about the period in which they were written than about the period they describe.
>
> What about *newspapers*? The author of an article presents an interpretation, but if the article reports current events, it is primary. If the article reports past events, it is secondary.
>
> What about *fiction*? If you are studying the novel or poem for its own sake, it is a primary source. If you are using the novel or poem as evidence–a historical novel, for example–it is a secondary source. In the same vein, a 19th-century *history textbook* can be considered a primary source if you are studying how the work was influenced by the period in which it was written or how it fits into a continuum of historical analysis (that is called historiography).

Finding Materials

It may happen that you come up with a topic and go to the library to find sources. You sit down with ten books that you gleaned from a keyword search on the library's online catalog. You find one fits all your criteria. What do you do now? Go back to the library catalog? Browse the shelves near where you found the first ten? Those methods may work, but a more efficient way is to follow the trail of sources in the one book you have decided to use. Look at the **footnotes** and **bibliography**. Note titles that the author relies on or refers to as pillars of the discipline. Then look up those books or articles in the library.

Processing the Data
Once you have gathered the resources you need for your essay, you need to process it. This means you will have to analyse it (rework, reorganize, reread, reflect) on the data you collected. You may not simply rely on the data to prove your point. The data is merely evidence to support YOU. This means that you must ensure that the insights in your paper are your own. This can often be difficult. Use the following prompts to spark links between the resources you have collected and your own thinking.

1. What are the causes and effects of _____?

_____

_____

_____

2. Can I identify relationships and trends?

_____

_____

_____

3. What are the potential positive/negative impacts of _____?

_____

_____

_____

4. Who or what will _____ influence?

_____

_____

_____

5. What does _____ mean to me? My family? My community? The environment?

_____

_____

_____

6. What is the importance of _____?

_____

_____

_____

Evaluating Information Sources

Although information comes in different formats (print, electronic), you can use similar criteria to evaluate any source for quality and usefulness. During your research phase, you are looking for sources that are not only informative, but also accurate. Before including any source in your own research, be sure that you ascertain the reliability of all sources.

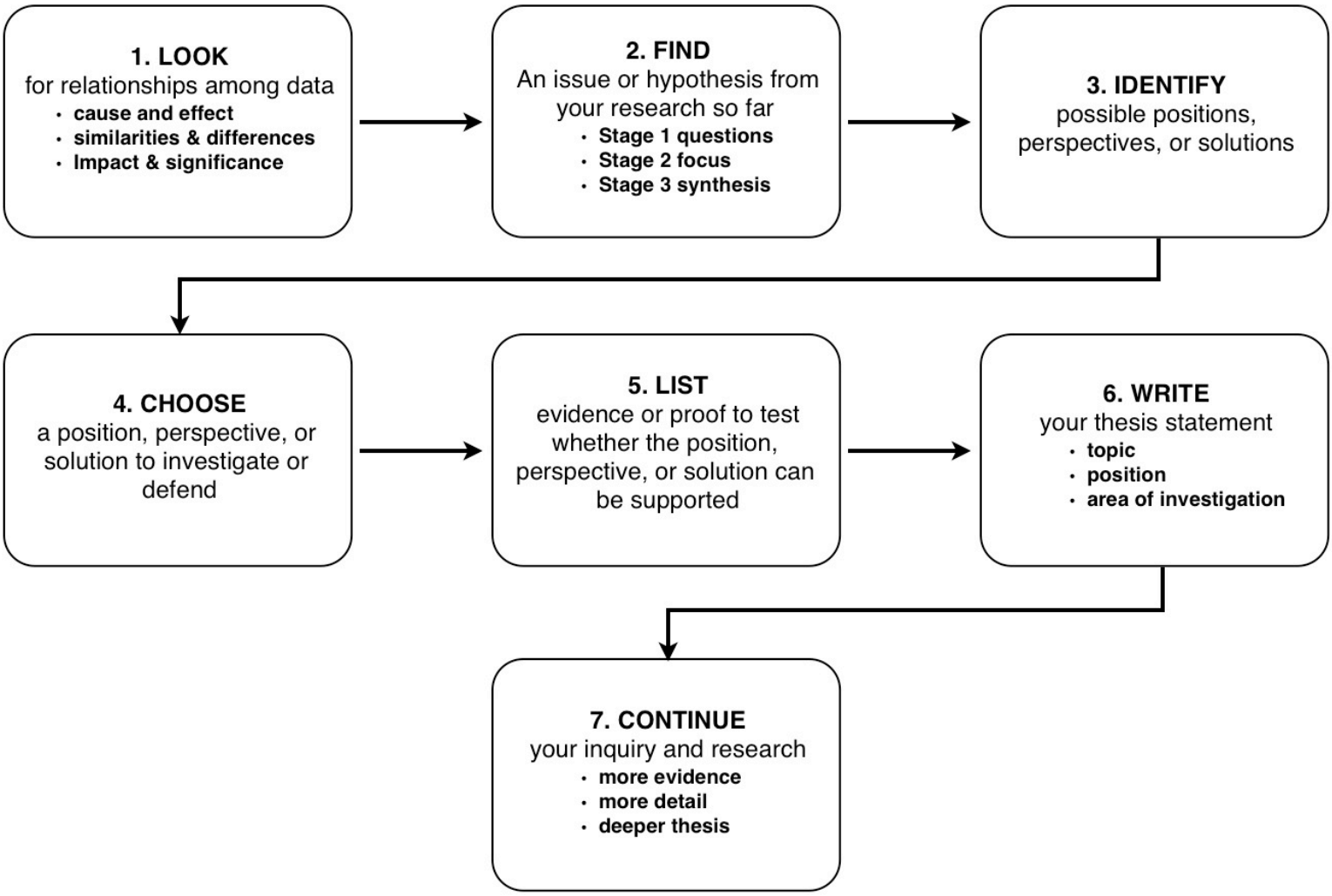
Criteria	Consider These Key Questions
Authority	Who created the work? Can you trust the author? What are his/her credentials to create this work? What is the author's reputation in the subject area?
Objectivity	Is there an organization sponsoring the source? If so, what is the organization's purpose in sponsoring the source? Is the author's purpose and intended audience clearly stated? Does the work provide factual information, opinion, or propaganda? Does the author have a biased point of view? Does the author use stereotypes? For websites, what does the domain address tell you about the site? • .edu: educational site (usually university or college) • .gov: government site • .org: organization, foundation, or advocacy group • .info: informational site • .net: general Internet site • .com: business or commercial organization • .co.uk: a British site (n.b. Most country sites have a two-letter abbreviation) • .ca: a Canadian site
Accuracy	Are the author's facts accurate? Are the opinions supported with data? Is there evidence of good research and documentation? Does the source contain a contact and a Works Cited page to verify the content?
Completeness	How completely and deeply does the work cover the topic? Does the work answer the questions completely?
Currency	Is the date of publication given? Is the information current enough for your topic? Is there more recent data/information about your topic that makes this source inaccurate?
Relevancy	Does the source contain the information you need? Does it provide information that is relevant to your topic?
Format	Does the format of the source present the information in an attractive and clear way? Are there special visual features to aid understanding and pleasure?

Devising a Thesis

Essays

Crafting a Thesis Statement

Based on your resources, notes, and readings, craft a clear, well-reasoned thesis statement.



What is a Thesis?

The thesis is the central point or argument of an essay. The thesis statement, in one or two sentences, expresses that central point or argument.

A good thesis statement is **NOT a statement of fact:**

> **X** "Canada is a constitutional monarchy with a federal system of parliamentary government."

It is also **NOT a statement of intent:**

> **X** "This essay will examine the setting in *Jane Eyre* in order to discuss the theme of orphanhood."

A good thesis statement is a statement of position that requires the evidence in the body of the essay for support.

Three Models of Thesis Statements

1. **The simple statement of position**

   "As a democracy, Canada offers only limited rights and privileges to its citizens."

   "In *Jane Eyre*, the settings function primarily to support the theme of orphanhood."

2. **The roadmap thesis statement** includes supporting points in the order they will appear:

   "Canada offers only limited rights and privileges to its citizens because of the persistence of a class structure and limited accessibility to both the political process and higher education."

   "In *Jane Eyre*, the settings function primarily to support the theme of orphanhood by emphasizing Jane's alienation, loneliness, and poverty."

3. **The complex thesis statement** can accommodate two sides of an issue.

   "Although Canada affords its citizens many democratic rights and privileges, those rights and privileges are limited by the persistence of a class structure and limited accessibility to both the political process and higher education."

   "Canada affords its citizens many democratic rights and privileges. However, those rights and privileges are limited by the persistence of a class structure and limited accessibility to both the political process and higher education."

   "Although the settings in *Jane Eyre* can be seen to place the novel in the Victorian gothic tradition, they serve primarily to support the theme of orphanhood by emphasizing Jane's alienation, loneliness, and poverty."

Source: The Writing Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, 2011.

What is a Thesis Statement?

Almost all of us—even if we don't do it consciously—look early in an essay for a one- or two-sentence condensation of the argument or analysis that is to follow. We refer to that condensation as a thesis statement.

Why Should Your Essay Contain a Thesis Statement?

- to test your ideas by distilling them into a sentence or two
- to better organize and develop your argument
- to provide your reader with a "guide" to your argument

In general, your thesis statement will accomplish these goals if you think of the thesis as the answer to the question your paper explores.

How to Generate a Thesis Statement if the Topic is Assigned

Almost all assignments, no matter how complicated, can be reduced to a single question. Your first step, then, is to distill the assignment into a specific question. For example, if your assignment is, "Write a report to the local school board explaining the potential benefits of using computers in a fourth-grade class," turn the request into a question like, "What are the potential benefits of using computers in a fourth-grade class?" After you've chosen the question your essay will answer, compose one or two complete sentences answering that question.

Q: "What are the potential benefits of using computers in a fourth-grade class?"

A: "The potential benefits of using computers in a fourth-grade class are . . ."

OR

A: "Using computers in a fourth-grade class promises to improve . . ."

The answer to the question is the thesis statement for the essay.

How to Tell a Strong Thesis Statement from a Weak One

1. A strong thesis statement takes some sort of stand.

Remember that your thesis needs to show your conclusions about a subject. For example, if you are writing a paper for a class on fitness, you might be asked to choose a popular weight-loss product to evaluate. Here are two thesis statements:

There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Tea Supplement.

This is a weak thesis statement. First, it fails to take a stand. Second, the phrase *negative and positive aspects* is vague.

Because Banana Herb Tea Supplement promotes rapid weight loss that results in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it poses a potential danger to customers.

This is a strong thesis because it takes a stand, and because it's specific.

2. A strong thesis statement justifies discussion.

Your thesis should indicate the point of the discussion. If your assignment is to write a paper on kinship systems, using your own family as an example, you might come up with either of these two thesis statements:

My family is an extended family.

This is a weak thesis because it merely states an observation. Your reader won't be able to tell the point of the statement, and will probably stop reading.

While most American families would view consanguineal marriage as a threat to the nuclear family structure, many Iranian families, like my own, believe that these marriages help reinforce kinship ties in an extended family.

This is a strong thesis because it shows how your experience contradicts a widely-accepted view. A good strategy for creating a strong thesis is to show that the topic is controversial. Readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay to see how you support your point.

3. A strong thesis statement expresses one main idea.

Readers need to be able to see that your paper has one main point. If your thesis statement expresses more than one idea, then you might confuse your readers about the subject of your paper. For example:

Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of the Internet, and Web pages can provide both advertising and customer support.

This is a weak thesis statement because the reader can't decide whether the paper is about marketing on the Internet or Web pages. To revise the thesis, the relationship between the two ideas needs to become more clear. One way to revise the thesis would be to write:

Because the Internet is filled with tremendous marketing potential, companies should exploit this potential by using Web pages that offer both advertising and customer support.

This is a strong thesis because it shows that the two ideas are related. Hint: a great many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like *because*, *since*, *so*, *although*, *unless*, and *however*.

4. A strong thesis statement is specific.

A thesis statement should show exactly what your paper will be about, and will help you keep your paper to a manageable topic. For example, if you're writing a seven-to-ten page paper on hunger, you might say:

World hunger has many causes and effects.

This is a weak thesis statement for two major reasons. First, *world hunger* can't be discussed thoroughly in seven to ten pages. Second, *many causes and effects* is vague. You should be able to identify specific causes and effects. A revised thesis might look like this:

Hunger persists in Glandelinia because jobs are scarce and farming in the infertile soil is rarely profitable.

This is a strong thesis statement because it narrows the subject to a more specific and manageable topic, and it also identifies the specific causes for the existence of hunger.

Source: Writing Tutorial Services, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Essays Useful Formulae for Developing a Thesis

Thesis Structure: Topic – Position – Area of Investigation

Topic = what (subject matter) the thesis is about • **Position** = your position (on a topic/issue) that makes the thesis arguable • **Area of Investigation** = what gives the essay specificity of scope (who/what your statement affects or applies to)

Examples:

- Inadequate early childhood parenting (**topic**) produces irreparable damage (**position**) in adults' psychological health (**area of investigation**).
- Minority government (**topic**) provides the best form of government (**position**) in the Canadian federal system (**area of investigation**).
- The characters, in *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck and *Water for Elephants* by Sarah Gruen, face similar calamities in their struggle to prosper during the Great Depression.

Thesis Structure: Aspect – Verb – Meaning

Pattern One: (author)'s (title of work), (uses, shows) (**aspect**) which (emphasizes, demonstrate, illustrates, defines, develops, strengthens, etc.) (**verb**) the (**overall meaning of text/message**).

Pattern Two: (author)'s (title of work), uses (one **aspect**) to (**define, strengthen, illustrate**) the (**overall meaning of text/message**).

- **Example:** Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*, shows that racial boundaries are overcome through personal sacrifice born out of risk and isolation, emphasizing that actions of individuals promote positive social changes.

Pattern Three: In (title of work), (author) uses (**literary element**) to (**develop, illustrate, strengthen**) (**overall meaning of text/message**).

- **Example:** Kate Chopin's story, "The Awakening", uses symbolism to celebrate the heroism of female protagonists as they escape the narrow constraints of the early twentieth century patriarchy.

Note: In your final essay, you do NOT need to include the title/author of texts.

Thesis Structure: Thing – Action – Reason

If you are not sure whether you have a good thesis statement, see if you can fit your ideas into one of these basic patterns.

Pattern One: (**Something**) (**does something**) because (**reason(s)**).

- **Example:** Conrad's works reveal the ugly truth of imperialism through negative characterization and outcome of plot events.

Pattern Two: Because (**reason(s)**), (**something**) (**does something**).

- **Example:** Because Conrad depicts the Company employees negatively, including the ends they meet, *Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret Sharer* reveal the ugly truth of imperialism.
- **Example:** Prejudgments are harmful because they limit the lives of the stereotyped individual and the person doing the stereotyping.

Pattern Three: Although (opposing evidence), (**reason(s)**) show (**something**) (**does something**).

- **Example:** Although critics denounce Conrad's works as racist, diction analysis and plot examination reveal *Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret Sharer* to be works that blast racial stereotypes.

How Do I Know If My Thesis Is Strong?

When reviewing your first draft and its working thesis, ask yourself the following:

- ***Do I answer the question?*** Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
- ***Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?*** If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.
- ***Is my thesis statement specific enough?*** Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful", see if you can be more specific: *why* is something "good"; *what specifically* makes something "successful"?
- ***Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?*** If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.
- ***Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?*** If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's okay to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper. Remember, always assess and revise your writing as necessary.
- ***Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?*** If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning.

Examples of Theses

1. **Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a great American novel.**

Why is this thesis weak? Your teacher is probably not interested in your opinion of the novel; instead, he/she wants you to think about *why* it's such a great novel–what do Huck's adventures tell us about life, about America, about coming of age, about race relations, etc.?

2. **In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain develops a contrast between life on the river and life on the shore.**

Here's a working thesis with potential: you have highlighted an important aspect of the novel for investigation; however, it's still not clear what your analysis will reveal. Your reader is intrigued, but is still thinking, "So what? What's the point of this contrast? What does it signify?"

3. **Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* suggest that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave "civilized" society and go back to nature.**

This final thesis statement presents an interpretation of a literary work based on an analysis of its content. Of course, for the essay itself to be successful, you must now present evidence from the novel that will convince the reader of your interpretation.

Essays

Framework for Developing a Thesis for an Essay

Fill in the following blanks to help formulate a working thesis:

What is the **topic**? _____

What **question** do you want to address related to the topic? The question can begin with "Should…? or Why…?

_____

What **position** are you taking when answering your question? Are you **for or against** what the question is asking?

_____

Explain **why** you are taking this position. Be sure to select a reason for which you can expand into three body paragraphs. Also consider whether your reasoning is **arguable** and that it answers "**so what?**"

Your answer should or can begin with *because* _____

_____

_____

Now put it all together!

Position + Answer = Working Thesis!

Working Thesis

_____

_____

_____

Outlines

Building Body Paragraphs with Effective Quotations

First Subtopic: _____

	Context (point)	Quotation (proof)	Explanation
1			
2			
3			

Second Subtopic: _____

	Context (point)	Quotation (proof)	Explanation
1			
2			
3			

Third Subtopic: _____

	Context (point)	Quotation (proof)	Explanation
1			
2			
3			

Essays

Concise Outline for a Literary Essay

Reminders for Academic Writing:

- Formal Language, No Contractions, Third Person, Present Tense
- Use logical arguments, not emotional or plot-based arguments

Outline is to be a maximum of two (2) typed pages. Use the MLA heading and page number format. Follow the exact formatting, headings, and spacing, as demonstrated in the template below.

Topic: the subject matter dealt with in the essay (e.g., conflict developing character); You may be able to develop this into a creative title for the essay.
Novel & Author: use proper MLA title format

Introduction
Hook: general statements on the topic (see "Introductory Techniques • The Hook"); no questions!
Thesis: specific statement; must be a **c**lear, **a**rguable, **r**elevant **s**tatement (c.a.r.s.) based on your topic.

Body Paragraphs (BP)
Argument 1: topic sentence is based on an aspect or subtopic; must also be c.a.r.s., support the thesis, and be worded differently than in the introduction and conclusion paragraphs.

Example 1: as an embedded quotation. Embedding provides the context for the quotation and necessitates using a snippet of text from another source. Include MLA citation.
Explanation: 1-2 sentences to give an idea of how you will be explaining how this example relates to the topic sentence and why it is significant to the thesis.

Example 2: as an embedded quotation. Embedding provides the context. Include MLA citation.
Explanation: 1-2 sentences to give an idea of how you will be explaining how this example relates to the topic sentence and why it is significant to the thesis.

Example 3: as an embedded quotation. Embedding provides the context. Include MLA citation.
Explanation: 1-2 sentences to give an idea of how you will be explaining how this example relates to the topic sentence and why it is significant to the thesis.

BP2
Argument 2: Repeat format, headings, and spacing as demonstrated above in Body Paragraph 1.

BP3
Argument 3: Repeat format, headings, and spacing as demonstrated above in Body Paragraph 1.

Conclusion
Thesis: restate in different words
Argument 1: restate in different words
Argument 2: restate in different words
Argument 3: restate in different words
Synthesis: Explain how and why the topic sentences support your thesis
Commentary: End with an insightful, thought-provoking comment that links your thesis with a broader issue.

Essays

Concise Outline for a Literary Essay

Reminders for Academic Writing:

- Formal Language, No Contractions, Third Person, Present Tense
- Use logical arguments, not emotional or plot-based arguments

Outline is to be a maximum of two (2) typed pages. Use the MLA heading and page number format. Follow the exact formatting, headings, and spacing, as demonstrated in the template below.

Topic: _____

INTRODUCTION

Hook: _____

Specific statement (thesis): _____

_____

BODY

1st main point (as a statement): _____

Example 1: _____

Example 2: _____

Example 3: _____

2nd main point (as a statement): _____

Example 1: _____

Example 2: _____

Example 3: _____

3rd main point (as a statement): _____

Example 1: _____

Example 2: _____

Example 3: _____

CONCLUSION: Restate thesis, then arguments, in different words; add a thought-provoking idea.

Essay Extended Outline

Organizing Your Introductory Paragraph

1. Opens with a General Statement on the Topic (a.k.a. Your "Hook")

---

2. Introduce the Context of Essay (usually name of author and novel)

---

3. State Argument #1 (reword Topic Sentence for BP1)

---

4. State Argument #2 (reword Topic Sentence for BP2)

---

5. State Argument #3 (reword Topic Sentence for BP3)

---

6. Present Thesis (must be a specific, arguable statement)

Your thesis and all your topic sentences must be **c**lear, **a**rguable, **r**elevant **s**tatements (C.A.R.S.).

Organizing Your Body Paragraphs

Body Paragraph #1

1. Topic Sentence (for Argument #1)

---

2. Introduce/Provide Context for Example 1 (this can be combined with Give Example so as to embed it)

---

3. Give Example 1 (Usually a quotation or direct paraphrase from text)

---

4. Analyse Example 1 (Explain HOW / WHY this example proves your topic sentence)

---

5. Introduce/Provide Context for Example 2 (this can be combined with Give Example so as to embed it)

---

6. Give Example 2 (Usually a quotation or direct paraphrase from text)

---

7. Analyse Example 2 (Explain HOW / WHY this example proves your topic sentence)

---

8. Conclude, making sure to summarize why the information in this paragraph supports the thesis.

---

9. Link to Next Paragraph

Essay Extended Outline

Body Paragraph #2

1. Topic Sentence (for Argument #1)

---

2. Introduce/Provide Context for Example 1 (this can be combined with Give Example so as to embed it)

---

3. Give Example 1 (Usually a quotation or direct paraphrase from text)

---

4. Analyse Example 1 (Explain HOW / WHY this example proves your topic sentence)

---

5. Introduce/Provide Context for Example 2 (this can be combined with Give Example so as to embed it)

---

6. Give Example 2 (Usually a quotation or direct paraphrase from text)

---

7. Analyse Example 2 (Explain HOW / WHY this example proves your topic sentence)

---

8. Conclude, making sure to summarize why the information in this paragraph supports the thesis.

---

9. Link to Next Paragraph

Essay Extended Outline

Body Paragraph #3

1. Topic Sentence (for Argument #1)

---

2. Introduce/Provide Context for Example 1 (this can be combined with Give Example so as to embed it)

---

3. Give Example 1 (Usually a quotation or direct paraphrase from text)

---

4. Analyse Example 1 (Explain HOW / WHY this example proves your topic sentence)

---

5. Introduce/Provide Context for Example 2 (this can be combined with Give Example so as to embed it)

---

6. Give Example 2 (Usually a quotation or direct paraphrase from text)

---

7. Analyse Example 2 (Explain HOW / WHY this example proves your topic sentence)

---

8. Conclude, making sure to summarize why the information in this paragraph supports the thesis.

NO LINK

Organizing Your Conclusion Paragraph

1. Opens with a Restatement of the Thesis

---

2. Re-State Argument #1 (reword Topic Sentence for BP1)

---

3. Re-State Argument #2 (reword Topic Sentence for BP2)

---

4. Re-State Argument #3 (reword Topic Sentence for BP3)

---

5. Make any Additional Conclusions

---

6. End with a General Thought-Provoking or Insightful Comment or Question on the Topic That Links Your Thesis With a Broader Issue

---

Essays Concise Outline for a Comparative Essay in AB Format

Reminders for Academic Writing:

- Formal Language, No Contractions, Third Person, Present Tense (including quotations used)
- Use logical arguments, not emotional or plot-based arguments
- Four (4) quotations per body paragraph (2 from each work)

Outline is to be a maximum of two (2) typed pages. Use the MLA heading and page number format. Follow the exact formatting, headings, and spacing, as demonstrated in the template below.

Work A & author: use proper MLA title format **Work B & author:** use proper MLA title format
Topic: the subject matter dealt with in the essay (e.g., conflict developing character)

Introduction
Hook: general statement on the topic (see "Introductory Techniques • The Hook")
Arguments: State arguments in the order they will appear as body paragraphs in the essay. Do so in different words than the body paragraph topic sentences and conclusion.
Thesis: specific statement; must be a **c**lear, **a**rguable, **r**elevant **s**tatement (c.a.r.s.) based on your topic.

Body Paragraphs
Argument 1: topic sentence is based on an aspect or subtopic; must also be c.a.r.s., support the thesis, and be worded differently than in the introduction and conclusion paragraphs.

Example 1: as an embedded quotation from Work A. Embedding provides the context for the quotation and necessitates using a snippet of text from another source. Include MLA citation.
Explanation: 1-2 sentences to give an idea of how you will be explaining how or why this example relates to the topic sentence

Example 2: as an embedded quotation from Work B. Embedding provides the context for the quotation and necessitates using a snippet of text from another source. Include MLA citation.
Explanation: 1-2 sentences to give an idea of how you will be explaining how or why this example relates to the topic sentence

Significance: state the significance of the comparison and how it relates back to your thesis

Argument 2: Repeat format, headings, and spacing as demonstrated above in Body Paragraph 1.

Argument 3: Repeat format, headings, and spacing as demonstrated above in Body Paragraph 1.

Conclusion
Thesis: restate in different words
Argument 1: restate in different words
Argument 2: restate in different words
Argument 3: restate in different words
Synthesis: Explain how and why the topic sentences support your thesis
Commentary: End with an insightful, thought-provoking comment that links your thesis with a broader issue.

Essays Concise Outline for a Comparative Essay in AB Format

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- Four (4) quotations per body paragraph (2 from each work)

Outline is to be a maximum of two (2) typed pages. Use the MLA heading and page number format. Follow the exact formatting, headings, and spacing, as demonstrated in the template below.

Work A & author: _____ Work B & author: _____

Topic: _____

INTRODUCTION

Hook: _____

State arguments as words, phrases, sentences in the order they will appear as body paragraphs in the essay. Do so in different words than the body paragraph topic sentences and conclusion.

Specific statement (thesis): _____

_____

BODY PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Argument (topic sentence) 1: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Explanation (1A): _____

_____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Explanation (1B): _____

_____

Significance of Comparison: _____

Conclude (and link to next paragraph): _____

Argument (topic sentence) 2: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Explanation (2A): _____

_____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Explanation (2B): _____

_____

Significance of Comparison: _____

Conclude (and link to next paragraph): _____

Argument (topic sentence) 3: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Explanation (3A): _____

_____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Explanation (3B): _____

_____

Significance of Comparison: _____

CONCLUSION: Restate thesis, then arguments, in different words and synthesize ideas.

Thought-Provoking Comment: _____

Essays Concise Outline for a Comparative Essay in AB Format

Reminders for Academic Writing:

- Formal Language, No Contractions, Third Person, Present Tense (including quotations used)
- Use logical arguments, not emotional or plot-based arguments
- Four (4) quotations per body paragraph (2 from each work)

Outline is to be a maximum of two (2) typed pages. Use the MLA heading and page number format. Follow the exact formatting, headings, and spacing, as demonstrated in the template below.

ALTERNATE TEMPLATE VERSION

Work A & author: _____ Work B & author: _____

Topic: _____

INTRODUCTION

Hook: _____

Specific statement (thesis): _____

_____

BODY PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Argument (topic sentence) 1: _____

1st Point of Comparison: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Significance of Comparison: _____

2nd Point of Comparison: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Significance of Comparison: _____

Conclude (and link to next paragraph): _____

Argument (topic sentence) 2: _____

1st Point of Comparison: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Significance of Comparison: _____

2nd Point of Comparison: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Significance of Comparison: _____

Conclude (and link to next paragraph): _____

Argument (topic sentence) 3: _____

1st Point of Comparison: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Significance of Comparison: _____

2nd Point of Comparison: _____

Example 1 (Work A): _____

Example 2 (Work B): _____

Significance of Comparison: _____

Conclude (no link to conclusion paragraph): _____

CONCLUSION: Restate thesis, then arguments, in different words and synthesize ideas.

Thought-Provoking Comment: _____

Comparative Essay Planner

Titles of literature being compared:

1. _____

2. _____

MLA entry for Works Cited page for each piece of literature:

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

Thesis Statement:

Topic: _____

Purpose: _____

Working Thesis statement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Comparative Essay Planner

Literary Work 1 for (title of second literary piece): _____
Aspect #1: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Literary Work 2 for (title of second literary piece): _____
Aspect #1: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Comparative Essay Planner

Literary Work 1 for (title of second literary piece): _____
Aspect #2: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Literary Work 2 for (title of second literary piece): _____
Aspect #2: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Comparative Essay Planner

Literary Work 1 for (title of second literary piece): _____
Aspect #3: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Literary Work 2 for (title of second literary piece): _____
Aspect #3: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Essay Planner

MLA entry for Works Cited page for each piece of literature:

1. _____

_____

Thesis Statement:

Topic: _____

Purpose: _____

Working Thesis statement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Aspect #1: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Essay Planner

Aspect #2: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Aspect #3: _____

Explanation (in point form) - what is this aspect and how does this aspect support the purpose of your thesis?	Support (in the form of direct or indirect quotations for each point in your explanation). Be sure to include references (i.e., page numbers or act, scene, and line numbers).

Writing Techniques

A hook is named for its ability to catch the reader's attention and make the reader want to read on. It is essential that stories, news articles, and especially essays begin with good hooks because a writer is often judged within the first few sentences. Just as the news tries to stimulate our fears by announcing a "danger in our water supply," a writer must try to bring the reader from his or her world into the world of the essay. This is done with a few choice words at the beginning of the essay: the infamous hook.

It is not easy to think of how to make someone want to read an essay about a novel. It's not even easy to make them want to read some novels. The key is to say something that the reader can relate to by bringing the **theme** of the novel you are discussing to the forefront and applying it to current "fascinating" topics of discussion.

Startling Statement

good and evil theme

All human beings are capable of the most gruesome crimes imaginable. It is only because of the customs and controls of civilization that we do not become brute savages.

Quote from Literature

Utopia theme

"But I like the inconveniences."
"We don't," said the Controller. "We prefer to do things comfortably."
"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin." *BNW*

Quote from Another Source

leadership or insecurity theme

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, which most frightens us." Nelson Mandela

Rhetorical Question

justice system theme

How would you feel if you found out that the murderer of the person you loved most in the world was about to be set free after only two years in prison?

Shocking Statistic

depression theme

On a recent anonymous survey, over ninety percent of high school males admitted to secretly enjoying the music of 'N Sync and to practicing their "hot dance moves."

Anecdote/Scenario

courage theme

A close friend of mine was in the Vietnam War, and he admitted to me that he was terrified every time he had to go into battle. Even so, I consider him one of the most courageous men I have ever known. It is not the absence of fear that defines courage, but the ability of one to force oneself to take action in spite of fear.

Analogy

superficiality theme

The models that grace the pages of magazines seem to be better than anyone we have ever met: they seem elegant, untouchable, and perfect. But, just as magazine covers are manipulated to hide imperfections, we, too, sometimes fool ourselves into ignoring the flaws of individuals whom we have built up to be perfect beings.

Philosophical Musing

self-perception theme

Why is it that, if a person were to have his or her navel suddenly disappear, we would think that their stomach looked weird? I mean, that darn navel thing is pretty weird just being there, don't you think?

Humorous Musing

conformity theme

Why is it that, when I go to school with my underwear on my head, the world looks at me as if I were unusual? High school kids are so caught up in their little cliques that I feel like I've got to become one of those "underwear under the pants" types too. (Note: Humour is not appropriate for all classes and teachers. Use good judgement.)

Essays Introductory Techniques • Hook Strategies

A good introductory paragraph is between 4-7 sentences in length, begins with a hook strategy, and ends with a clear thesis statement. Not only should your hook serve to immediately grab the reader's interest, but it should be a natural lead-in to your thesis, and a meaningful opportunity for the reader to relate to the topic of your essay.

A hook is named for its ability to catch the reader's attention and make the reader want to read on. It is essential that stories, news articles, and especially essays begin with good hooks because a writer is often judged within the first few sentences. Just as the news tries to stimulate our fears by announcing a "danger in our water supply," a writer must try to bring the reader from his or her world into the world of the essay. This is done with a few choice words at the beginning of the essay: the infamous hook.

It is not easy to think of how to make someone want to read an essay about a novel. It's not even easy to make them want to read some novels. The key is to say something that the reader can relate to by bringing the **theme** of the novel you are discussing to the forefront and applying it to current "fascinating" topics of discussion.

1. **Anecdote/Scenario/Analogy:** Use an anecdote or scenario that relates to your topic to relate to the reader.

Example (courage topic): This man was in the Vietnam War, and he admitted that he was terrified every time he had to go into battle. Even so, people consider him one of the most courageous men they have ever known. It is not the absence of fear that defines courage, but the ability of one to force oneself to take action in spite of fear.
Example (superficiality topic): The models that grace the pages of magazines seem to be better than anyone one might ever meet; they seem elegant, untouchable, and perfect. But, just as magazine covers are manipulated to hide imperfections, people, also, sometimes fool themselves into ignoring the flaws of individuals whom they have built up to be perfect beings.
Note: Yes, it would be natural to use "I" for this strategy, but there are ways to do this effectively without using personal pronouns.

2. **Rhetorical/Philosophical Question:** Ask thought-provoking, universal questions (NOT the ones posed in essay prompt).

Example (justice system topic): How would one feel if they found out that the murderer of the person they loved most in the world was about to be set free after only two years in prison?
Example (self-perception topic): Why is it that, if a person were to have his or her navel suddenly disappear, people would think that their stomach looked weird?
Note: Avoid the implied "you" when presenting these questions to the reader. Do you plan to answer these questions? When? At the end of your hook or will you revisit and answer in your conclusion?

3. **Shocking Information:** Use a statistic, fact, or statement that is unusual, bizarre, interesting, or shocking that is related to your topic to catch the reader's attention.

Example (good and evil topic): All human beings are capable of the most gruesome crimes imaginable. It is only because of the customs and controls of civilization that we do not become brute savages.
Example (depression topic): On a recent anonymous survey, over ninety percent of high school males admitted to secretly enjoying the music of 'N Sync and to practicing their "hot dance moves."
Note: Again, the fact or statistic would have to relate to the topic you are discussing. It could be a modern-day fact or statistic, or perhaps an interesting fact from Shakespeare's time.

4. **Quotation:** Use a quotation, song lyric, or short poem related to your topic to relate to the reader.

Example (leadership or insecurity topic): "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, which most frightens us." Nelson Mandela
Example (Utopia topic): "But I like the inconveniences."
"We don't," said the Controller. "We prefer to do things comfortably."
"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin." *BNW*
Note: This does not necessarily mean a quote from the text. In fact, it is recommended that you save textual evidence for your body paragraphs. Can you think of a famous quote that relates to your topic? How?

Essays

Introductory Techniques • The Hook

Introductions establish the direction your writing is going to take. A good introduction grabs your reader's attention and refuses to let go. But–what's a good way to begin writing? Here are some suggestions:

1. **Open with a Question:**
   Have you ever wondered how you would survive if you found yourself alone in the wilderness?

2. **Open with an Announcement:**
   This is not a cookbook for the gourmet. These recipes are strictly for the cook on a tight budget.

3. **Open with a Bold and Challenging Statement:**
   Contrary to what some people think, most of our learning takes place out of school.

4. **Open with a Quotation:**
   "You're going to regret this." That is what my best friend Liza said as I got on the roller coaster.

5. **Open with a Riddle or a Puzzle that the Reader Can Grapple with:**
   What textbook has no pages, is miles wide, smells like a creek, and has been around for millions of years? That's right–Outdoor School.

6. **Open with a Personal Experience:**
   I am still glad I did not cry at the funeral, though I did in my room later.

7. **Open with How You Felt:**
   My hands were sweaty! My teeth would not quit chattering. Prickly fingers ran up my spine. What would happen next?

8. **Open with Some Action:**
   I ran down the dock as fast as my legs would carry me, my feet pounding away on the old wood.

9. **Open with a Reaction:**
   I could not imagine what my father could be hollering about already at 7:00 in the morning. I thought hard and fast about what I might have done to get him all riled up.

Essays

Effective Conclusion Strategies

One or more of the following strategies may help you write an effective conclusion.

1. Play the "So What" Game. If you're stuck and feel like your conclusion isn't saying anything new or interesting. Whenever you make a statement from your conclusion, say "So what?" or "Why should anybody care?" Then ponder that question and answer it.

2. Return to the theme or themes in the introduction. This strategy brings the reader full circle. For example, if you begin by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay is helpful in creating a new understanding.

3. Synthesize, don't summarize: include a brief summary of the paper's main points, but don't simply repeat things that were in your paper. Instead, show your reader how the points you made, and the support and examples you used, fit together. Pull it all together.

4. Include a provocative insight or quotation from the research or reading you did for your paper.

5. Propose a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study. This can redirect your reader's thought process and help him/her to apply your info and ideas to his/her own life or to see the broader implications.

6. Point to broader implications. For example, if your paper examines the Greensboro sit-ins or another event in the Civil Rights Movement, you could point out its impact on the Civil Rights Movement as a whole. A paper about the style of writer Virginia Woolf could point to her influence on other writers or on later feminists.

7. Evaluate the importance of the essay's subject; demonstrate how the topic has broad significance; suggest results or consequences; ask the reader to do something with a "call to action"; return to the introduction/hook statement; include a rhetorical question or provocative question about the essay's main point; warn the reader about something based on the essay's thesis; include an image or description that lends finality to the essay; statement of hope based on the thesis; useful analogy or comparison or a final impression of your thoughts/feelings.

Strategies to Avoid in Conclusions

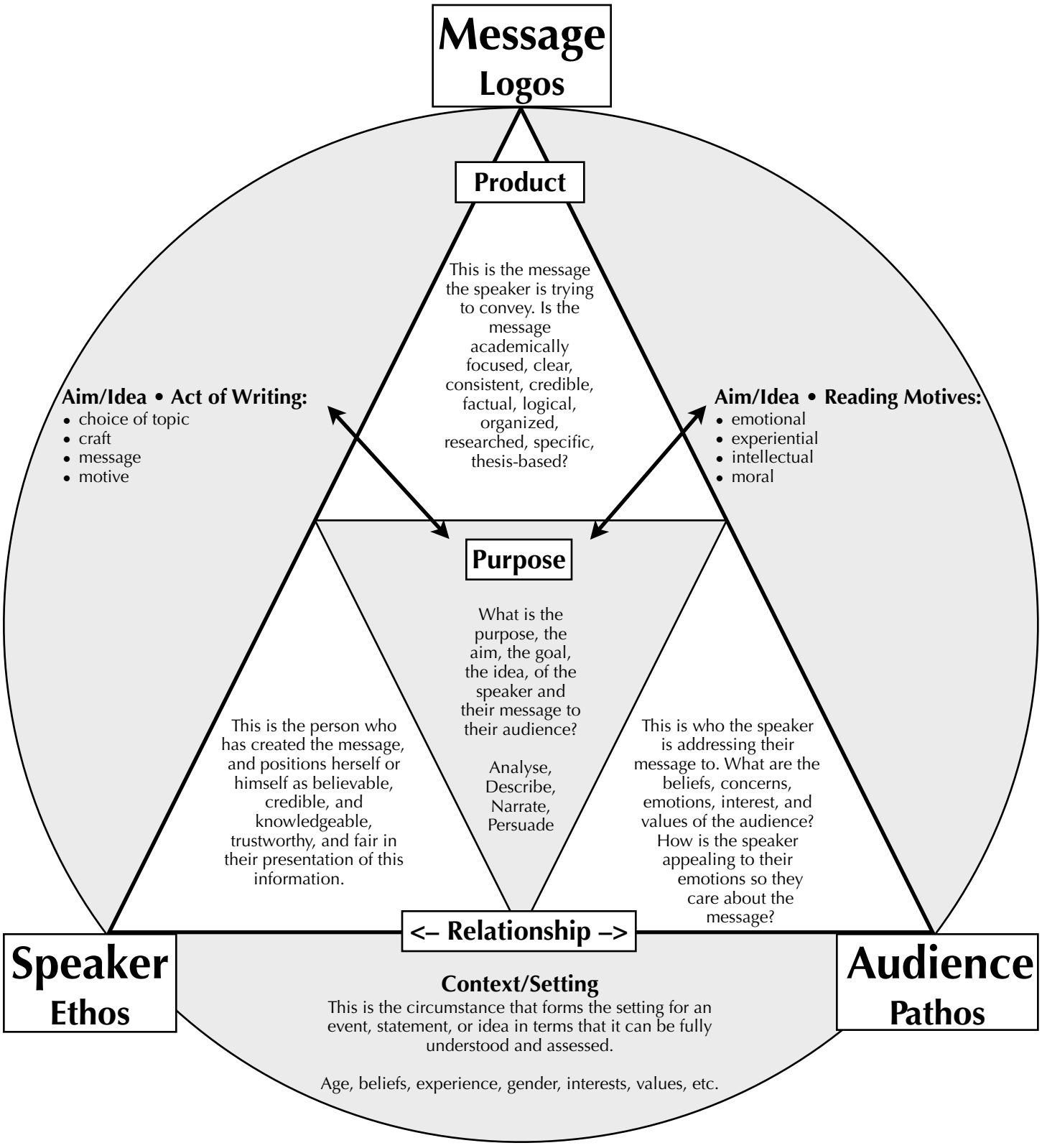
1. Beginning with an unnecessary, overused phrase such as "in conclusion," "in summary," or "in closing". Although these phrases can work in speeches, they come across as wooden and trite in writing.

2. Introducing a new idea or subtopic in your conclusion.

3. Making sentimental, emotional appeals that are out of character with the rest of an analytical paper.

4. Including evidence (quotations, statistics, etc.) that should be in the body of the paper.

Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle



Essays

Embedding Quotations

Embedding snippets of quotes is a more effective and sophisticated way to use quotations in your paper. They are often shorter than the original quote, allowing you to use your own words to paraphrase, summarize, or introduce the quote or idea. In addition, they improve sentence fluency. What is a snippet? It is a portion of the original quote. To embed a quotation, take part of your sentence and fuse it with the quotation you want to use in a way that makes sense grammatically and stylistically.

Example: According to scholars, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, biographical information presents Gilman as "a rebellious feminist besides being a medical iconoclast" (1467).

The following excerpts come from the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck:

Original Quote: "I ought to have shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn't ought to have let no stranger shoot my dog."

Snippet of quote: "I ought to have shot that dog myself" (Steinbeck 27).

Embedding a quotation at the beginning of a sentence using a snippet of the quote:

"[He] ought to have shot that dog [himself]" instead of letting a stranger do it, is what Candy laments as he reflects on how he should have performed this task (Steinbeck 27).

Embedding a quotation in the middle of a sentence:

Candy confesses to George and Lennie that he "ought to have shot that dog" himself, and further notes that he regrets allowing a stranger to do it (Steinbeck 27).

Embedding a quotation at the end of a sentence (also referred to as using a lead-in phrase):

Candy reveals to George his deep regret that he "ought to have shot that dog [himself]" (Steinbeck 27).

Embedding a quotation throughout a sentence (embedding more than one snippet):

Candy exclaims that he "ought to have shot that dog [himself]" and regrets letting a "stranger shoot [his] dog" (Steinbeck 27).

Using Brackets and Ellipses

Brackets [] allow you to do two things: **1.** Change the author's original wording (i.e., conjugating, changing tense, changing upper or lowercase, pronouns to nouns). **2.** Add words for fluency and clarity.

Ellipsis (…) allows you to delete a word or words from the middle of the original longer quote. **Note:** You do not need them at the beginning or end of a quote, even if you eliminate words. This is considered a snippet.

Example 1: Changing the author's original wording for better fluency.

Candy realizes that he "ought to have shot that dog [himself]" (Steinbeck 27). What is the change from the original quote? _____

Example 2: Adding words to the author's original wording.

Candy states to George, "I ought to have shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn't ought to have let no stranger [Carlson] shoot my dog" (Steinbeck 27).

What has been changed? _____

Practice

Examine the following sentences and quotations. Fuse the two together in a way that makes sense.

My Sentence: Dunstan felt very guilty about the snowball incident.

Quotation: "I was contrite and guilty, for I knew the snowball had been meant for me, but the Dempsters did not seem to think of that" (Davies 11).

Answer: _____

_____

My Sentence: Marcus Antony believed that Brutus was indeed a noble Roman.

Quotation: "This was the noblest Roman of them all" (5.5.68).

Answer: _____

_____

Directions: Practice the skill of embedding quotations into your own sentences. Use each of the four methods: **beginning, middle, end,** and **throughout** a sentence.

Use the following quote and commentary and embed the quotation as directed:

In "The Landlady," when Billy Weaver first encounters the landlady, her physical appearance and demeanour are misleading. He is drawn into her establishment by her kind and gentle nature.

Quotation: She was about forty-five or fifty years old, and the moment she saw him, she gave him a warm welcoming smile. "Please come in," she said pleasantly. She stepped aside, holding the door wide open, and Billy found himself automatically starting forward into the house. The compulsion or, more accurately, the

desire to follow after her into that house was extraordinarily strong. “I saw the notice in the window,” he said, holding himself back. “Yes, I know.” “I was wondering about a room.” “It’s all ready for you, my dear,” she said. She had a round pink face and very gentle blue eyes. (Dahl)

Embed the quotation in the beginning of the sentence.

Embed the quotation in the middle of the sentence.

Embed the quotation at the end of the sentence.

Embed snippets from the quotation throughout a sentence.

This resource will help you write clearly by eliminating unnecessary words and rearranging your phrases.

The goal of concise writing is to use the most effective words. Concise writing does not always have the fewest words, but it always uses the strongest ones. Writers often fill sentences with weak or unnecessary words that can be deleted or replaced. Words and phrases should be deliberately chosen for the work they are doing. Like bad employees, words that don't accomplish enough should be fired. When only the most effective words remain, writing will be far more concise and readable.

This resource contains general conciseness tips followed by very specific strategies for pruning sentences.

1. Replace several vague words with more powerful and specific words.

Often, writers use several small and ambiguous words to express a concept, wasting energy expressing ideas better relayed through fewer specific words. As a general rule, more specific words lead to more concise writing. Because of the variety of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, most things have a closely corresponding description. Brainstorming or searching a thesaurus can lead to the word best suited for a specific instance. Notice that the examples below actually convey more as they drop in word count.

Wordy: The politician talked about several of the merits of after-school programs in his speech (14 words)
Concise: The politician touted after-school programs in his speech. (8 words)
Wordy: Suzie believed but could not confirm that Billy had feelings of affection for her. (14 words)
Concise: Suzie assumed that Billy adored her. (6 words)
Wordy: Our website has made available many of the things you can use for making a decision on the best dentist. (20 words)
Concise: Our website presents criteria for determining the best dentist. (9 words)
Wordy: Working as a pupil under someone who develops photos was an experience that really helped me learn a lot. (20 words)
Concise: Working as a photo technician's apprentice was an educational experience. (10 words)

2. Interrogate every word in a sentence

Check every word to make sure that it is providing something important and unique to a sentence. If words are dead weight, they can be deleted or replaced. Other sections in this handout cover this concept more specifically, but there are some general examples below containing sentences with words that could be cut.

Wordy: The teacher demonstrated some of the various ways and methods for cutting words from my essay that I had written for class. (22 words)
Concise: The teacher demonstrated methods for cutting words from my essay. (10 words)
Wordy: Many have made the wise observation that when a stone is in motion rolling down a hill or incline that that moving stone is not as likely to be covered all over with the kind of thick green moss that grows on stationary unmoving things and becomes a nuisance and suggests that those things haven’t moved in a long time and probably won’t move any time soon. (67 words)
Concise: A rolling stone gathers no moss. (6 words)

3. Combine Sentences.

Some information does not require a full sentence, and can easily be inserted into another sentence without losing any of its value.

Wordy: The supposed crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life. This crash is rumored to have occurred in 1947. (24 words)
Concise: The supposed 1947 crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life. (16 words)

Eliminating Words

1. Eliminate words that explain the obvious or provide excessive detail

Always consider readers while drafting and revising writing. If passages explain or describe details that would already be obvious to readers, delete or reword them. Readers are also very adept at filling in the non-essential aspects of a narrative, as in the fourth example.

Wordy: I received your inquiry that you wrote about tennis rackets yesterday, and read it thoroughly. Yes, we do have... (19 words)
Concise: I received your inquiry about tennis rackets yesterday. Yes, we do have...(12 words)
Wordy: It goes without saying that we are acquainted with your policy on filing tax returns, and we have every intention of complying with the regulations that you have mentioned. (29 words)
Concise: We intend to comply with the tax-return regulations that you have mentioned. (12 words)
Wordy: Imagine a mental picture of someone engaged in the intellectual activity of trying to learn what the rules are for how to play the game of chess. (27 words)
Concise: Imagine someone trying to learn the rules of chess. (9 words)
Wordy: After booking a ticket to Dallas from a travel agent, I packed my bags and arranged for a taxi to the airport. Once there, I checked in, went through security, and was ready to board. But problems beyond my control led to a three-hour delay before takeoff. (47 words)
Concise: My flight to Dallas was delayed for three hours. (9 words)
Wordy: Baseball, one of our oldest and most popular outdoor summer sports in terms of total attendance at ball parks and viewing on television, has the kind of rhythm of play on the field that alternates between times when players passively wait with no action taking place between the pitches to the batter and then times when they explode into action as the batter hits a pitched ball to one of the players and the player fields it. (77 words)
Concise: Baseball has a rhythm that alternates between waiting and explosive action. (11 words)

2. Eliminate unnecessary determiners and modifiers

Writers sometimes clog up their prose with one or more extra words or phrases that seem to determine narrowly or to modify the meaning of a noun but don't actually add to the meaning of the sentence. Although such words and phrases can be meaningful in the appropriate context, they are often used as "filler" and can easily be eliminated.

Wordy: Any particular type of dessert is fine with me. (9 words)
Concise: Any dessert is fine with me. (6 words)
Wordy: Balancing the budget by Friday is an impossibility without some kind of extra help. (14 words)
Concise: Balancing the budget by Friday is impossible without extra help. (10 words)
Wordy: For all intents and purposes, American industrial productivity generally depends on certain factors that are really more psychological in kind than of any given technological aspect. (26 words)
Concise: American industrial productivity depends more on psychological than on technological factors. (11 words)

Here's a list of some words and phrases that can often be pruned away to make sentences clearer:

kind of; sort of; type of; really; basically; for all intents and purposes; definitely; actually; generally; individual; specific particular

3. Omit repetitive wording

Watch for phrases or longer passages which repeat words with similar meanings. Words that don't build on the content of sentences or paragraphs are rarely necessary.

Wordy: I would appreciate it if you would bring to the attention of your drafting officers the administrator's dislike of long sentences and paragraphs in messages to the field and in other items drafted for her signature or approval, as well as in all correspondence, reports, and studies. Please encourage your section to keep their sentences short. (56 words)

Concise: Please encourage your drafting officers to keep sentences and paragraphs in letters, reports, and studies short. Dr. Lomas, the administrator, has mentioned that reports and memos drafted for her approval recently have been wordy and thus time-consuming. (37 words)

4. Omit Redundant Pairs

Many pairs of words imply each other. Finish implies complete, so the phrase completely finish is redundant in most cases. So are many other pairs of words:

past memories; various differences; each individual _____ basic fundamentals; true facts; important essentials future plans; terrible tragedy; end result; final outcome; free gift; past history; unexpected surprise sudden crisis

A related expression that's not redundant as much as it is illogical is "very unique." Since unique means "one of a kind," adding modifiers of degree such as "very," "so," "especially," "somewhat," "extremely," and so on is illogical. One-of-a-kind-ness has no gradations; something is either unique or it is not.

Wordy: Before the travel agent was completely able to finish explaining the various differences among all of the many very unique vacation packages his travel agency was offering, the customer changed her future plans. (33 words)
Concise: Before the travel agent finished explaining the differences among the unique vacation packages his travel agency was offering, the customer changed her plans. (23 words)

5. Omit Redundant Categories

Specific words imply their general categories, so we usually don't have to state both. We know that a period is a segment of time, that pink is a color, that shiny is an appearance. In each of the following phrases, the general category term can be dropped, leaving just the specific descriptive word:

large in size often times; of a bright color; heavy in weight; period in time; round in shape; at an early time; economics field; of cheap quality; honest in character; of an uncertain condition; in a confused state; unusual in nature; extreme in degree; of a strange type

Wordy: During that time period, many car buyers preferred cars that were pink in color and shiny in appearance. (18 words)
Concise: During that period, many car buyers preferred pink, shiny cars. (10 words)
Wordy: The microscope revealed a group of organisms that were round in shape and peculiar in nature. (16 words)
Concise: The microscope revealed a group of peculiar, round organisms. (9 words)

Changing Phrases

1. Change phrases into single-words and adjectives

Using phrases to convey meaning that could be presented in a single word contributes to wordiness. Convert phrases into single words when possible.

Wordy: The employee with ambition... (4 words)
Concise: The ambitious employee... (3 words)
Wordy: The department showing the best performance... (6 words)
Concise: The best-performing department... (4 words)
Wordy: Jeff Converse, our chief of consulting, suggested at our last board meeting the installation of microfilm equipment in the department of data processing. (23 words)
Concise: At our last board meeting, Chief Consultant Jeff Converse suggested that we install microfilm equipment in the data processing department. (20 words)
Wordy: As you carefully read what you have written to improve your wording and catch small errors of spelling, punctuation, and so on, the thing to do before you do anything else is to try to see where a series of words expressing

action could replace the ideas found in nouns rather than verbs. (53 words)
Concise: As you edit, first find nominalizations that you can replace with verb phrases. (13 words)

2. Change unnecessary that, who, and which clauses into phrases

Using a clause to convey meaning that could be presented in a phrase or even a word contributes to wordiness. Convert modifying clauses into phrases or single words when possible.

Wordy: The report, which was released recently... (6 words)
Concise: The recently released report... (4 words)
Wordy: All applicants who are interested in the job must... (9 words)
Concise: All job applicants must... (4 words)
Wordy: The system that is most efficient and accurate... (8 words)
Concise: The most efficient and accurate system... (6 words)

3. Change Passive Verbs into Active Verbs

See our document on active and passive voice for a more thorough explanation of this topic.

Wordy: An account was opened by Mrs. Simms. (7 words)
Concise: Mrs. Simms opened an account. (5 words)
Wordy: Your figures were checked by the research department. (8 words)
Concise: The research department checked your figures. (6 words)

Avoid Common Pitfalls

1. Avoid overusing expletives at the beginning of sentences

Expletives are phrases of the form it + be-verb or there + be-verb. Such expressions can be rhetorically effective for emphasis in some situations, but overuse or unnecessary use of expletive constructions creates wordy prose. Take the following example: "It is imperative that we find a solution." The same meaning could be expressed with this more succinct wording: "We must find a solution." But using the expletive construction allows the writer to emphasize the urgency of the situation by placing the word imperative near the beginning of the sentence, so the version with the expletive may be preferable.

Still, you should generally avoid excessive or unnecessary use of expletives. The most common kind of unnecessary expletive construction involves an expletive followed by a noun and a relative clause beginning with that, which, or who. In most cases, concise sentences can be created by eliminating the expletive opening, making the noun the subject of the sentence, and eliminating the relative pronoun.

Wordy: It is the governor who signs or vetoes bills. (9 words)
Concise: The governor signs or vetoes bills. (6 words)
Wordy: There are four rules that should be observed: ... (8 words)
Concise: Four rules should be observed:... (5 words)
Wordy: There was a big explosion, which shook the windows, and people ran into the street. (15 words)
Concise: A big explosion shook the windows, and people ran into the street. (12 words)

2. Avoid overusing noun forms of verbs

Use verbs when possible rather than noun forms known as nominalizations. Sentences with many nominalizations usually have forms of be as the main verbs. Using the action verbs disguised in nominalizations as the main verbs--instead of forms of be--can help to create engaging rather than dull prose.

Wordy: The function of this department is the collection of accounts. (10 words)

Concise: This department collects accounts. (4 words)
Wordy: The current focus of the medical profession is disease prevention. (10 words)
Concise: The medical profession currently focuses on disease prevention. (8 words)

3. Avoid unnecessary infinitive phrases

Some infinitive phrases can be converted into finite verbs or brief noun phrases. Making such changes also often results in the replacement of a be-verb with an action verb.

Wordy: The duty of a clerk is to check all incoming mail and to record it. (15 words)
Concise: A clerk checks and records all incoming mail. (8 words)
Wordy: A shortage of tellers at our branch office on Friday and Saturday during rush hours has caused customers to become dissatisfied with service. (23 words)
Concise: A teller shortage at our branch office on Friday and Saturday during rush hours has caused customer dissatisfaction. (18 words)

4. Avoid circumlocutions in favor of direct expressions

Circumlocutions are commonly used roundabout expressions that take several words to say what could be said more succinctly. We often overlook them because many such expressions are habitual figures of speech. In writing, though, they should be avoided since they add extra words without extra meaning. Of course, occasionally you may for rhetorical effect decide to use, say, an expletive construction instead of a more succinct expression. These guidelines should be taken as general recommendations, not absolute rules.

Wordy: At this/that point in time... (2/4 words)
Concise: Now/then... (1 word)
Wordy: In accordance with your request... (5 words)
Concise: As you requested... (3 words)

Below are some other words which may simplify lengthier circumlocutions.

"Because," "Since," "Why" = the reason for; for the reason that; owing/due to the fact that; in light of the fact that; considering the fact that; on the grounds that; this is why
"When" = on the occasion of; in a situation in which; under circumstances in which
"about" = as regards; in reference to; with regard to; concerning the matter of where _____ is concerned
"Must," "Should" = it is crucial that; it is necessary that; there is a need/necessity for it is important that; cannot be avoided
"Can" = is able to; has the opportunity to has the capacity for has the ability to
"May," "Might," "Could" = it is possible that; there is a chance that; it could happen that; the possibility exists for

Wordy: It is possible that nothing will come of these preparations. (10 words)
Concise: Nothing may come of these preparations. (6 words)
Wordy: She has the ability to influence the outcome. (8 words)
Concise: She can influence the outcome. (5 words)
Wordy: It is necessary that we take a stand on this pressing issue. (12 words)
Concise: We must take a stand on this pressing issue. (9 words)

Source: *The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab, 2011. Web. 1 Jan. 2011.
Contributors:Ryan Weber, Nick Hurm.

Essays Widows and Orphans

In typesetting, **widows** and **orphans** are words or short lines at the beginning or end of a paragraph, which are left dangling at the top or bottom of a column, separated from the rest of the paragraph. There is some disagreement about the definitions of widow and orphan; what one source calls a widow another calls an orphan. *The Chicago Manual of Style* uses these definitions:

Widow

- A paragraph-ending line that falls at the beginning of the following page or column, thus separated from the rest of the text.

Orphan

- A paragraph-opening line that appears by itself at the bottom of a page or column.
- A word, part of a word, or very short line that appears by itself at the end of a paragraph. Orphans result in too much white space between paragraphs or at the bottom of a page.

Remembering the Terms
A common mnemonic is "An orphan has no past; a widow has no future" or "An orphan is left behind, whereas a widow must go on alone" (Bringhurst, *The Elements of Typographic Style*. 3rd ed).

Another way to think is that orphaned lines appear at the "birth" (start) of paragraphs; widowed lines appear at the "death" (end) of paragraphs.

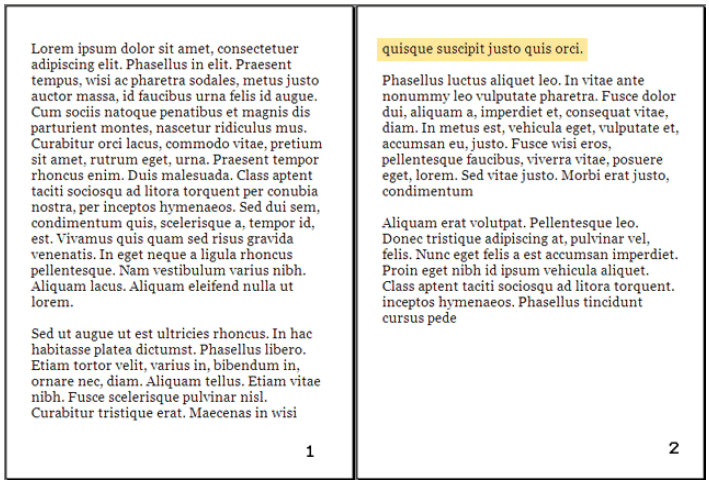
Alternately, here's one more mnemonic device: "An orphan is alone from the beginning; a widow is alone at the end."

Guidelines

Some techniques for eliminating widows include:

- Forcing a page break early, producing a shorter page;
- Adjusting the leading, the space between lines of text (although such carding or feathering is usually frowned upon);
- Adjusting the spacing between words to produce 'tighter' or 'looser' paragraphs;
- Adjusting the hyphenation of words or characters within the paragraph;
- Adjusting the page's margins;
- Subtle scaling of the page, though too much non-uniform scaling can visibly distort the letters;
- Rewriting a portion of the paragraph;
- Reduce the tracking of the words;
- Adding a pull quote to the text (more common for magazines); and
- Adding a figure to the text, or resizing an existing figure.

Example of a highlighted widowed line: last line of a paragraph, all alone on the other side of a page break.



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1

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2

An orphan is cured more easily, by inserting a blank line or forcing a page break to push the orphan line onto the next page to be with the rest of its paragraph. Such a cure may have to be undone if editing the text repositions the automatic page or column break.

Similarly, a single orphaned word at the end of a paragraph can be cured by forcing one or more words from the preceding line into the orphan's line. Most full-featured word processors and page layout applications include a paragraph setting (or option) to automatically prevent widows and orphans. When the option is turned on, an orphan is forced to the top of the next page or column; and the line preceding a widow is forced to the next page or column with the last line.

Source: *Wikipedia*

Essays

Transitional Devices

Transitional expressions show relationships between thoughts and give a sense of direction and continuity. Consequently, they assist the reader in moving from detail to detail within a single sentence, from sentence to sentence, and lastly, from paragraph to paragraph. They are a necessary factor in coherence, especially regarding essays. Hoping these tables assist you with your future writing successes.

Addition	Comparison	Contrast	Emphasis	Example	Exception
in addition	similarly	however	certainly	for example	yet
moreover	likewise	nevertheless	in any event	for instance	still
further	in like manner	on the other hand	in fact	in this case	however
furthermore	whereas	but	indeed	in another case	nevertheless
finally	except	yet	extremely	on this occasion	naturally
first	by comparison	after all	perennially	in this situation	despite/in spite of
second	compared to	on the contrary	eternally	evidence of this	of course
in the third place	balanced against	notwithstanding	empathetically	proof of this	once in a while
once again	where	in contrast		thus	sometime
also	in the same way			in this manner	granted
besides that					
additionally					
Opening/General	**Place**	**Proof**	**Result**	**Sequence**	**Time**
admittedly	near	for the same reason	accordingly	first/second/third	at once
assuredly	beyond	evidently	thus	preceding this	immediately
certainly	opposite to	furthermore	consequently	concurrently	meanwhile
granted	adjacent to	moreover	hence	following	at length
no doubt	at the same place	besides	therefore	at this time/point	in the meantime
nobody denies	here/there	indeed	wherefore	subsequently	at the same time
obviously		in fact	thereupon	afterward	simultaneously
of course		in addition	truly then	after/before this	in the end
to be sure		because	in final consideration	previously	then
truly		clearly then	in final analysis	soon/as soon as	at last
undoubtedly		in light of this	indeed	finally	at first
unquestionably		it is easy to see that	in conclusion	before/before long	in the first place
generally speaking			finally	next	later
in general			lastly		
at this level					
in this situation					

Essays

Fallacies

Fallacies are defects that weaken arguments. By learning to look for them in your own and others' writing, you can strengthen your ability to evaluate the arguments you make, read, and hear. Fallacies are very, very common, and can be quite persuasive, at least to the casual reader or listener. You can find dozens of examples of fallacies in newspapers, advertisements, and other sources. To write a convincing argument, try to avoid the following pitfalls in logical thinking.

Term	Definition
Hasty Generalizations	Arriving at a conclusion without enough evidence. Stereotypes about people (Asian-American students are better in math. French people are more romantic. Frat boys are drunkards. Grad students are nerdy, etc.). Example: *My roommate said her Philosophy class was hard, and the one I'm in is hard, too. All Philosophy classes must be hard!"*
Circular Reasoning	Restating in different words what has already been stated. Example: *Dieting is hard because consuming fewer calories is hard.*
Post Hoc/False Cause	Assuming that because B comes after A, A caused B. Examples: *When I sat down at the computer it stopped working, so I must have done something wrong. "President Jones raised taxes, and then the rate of violent crime went up. Jones is responsible for the rise in violent crime."*
Slippery Slope	Assumes a chain of cause-effect relationships with very suspect connections. Example: *Because I failed my exam, my parents were mad, I lost my wallet, my car wouldn't start, and I got fired.*
Non Sequitur	The first part of the idea does not relate to the other. Example: *I did well in school because I always wore nice clothes.*
False Dichotomy	Suggesting only two alternatives when the issue may have many alternatives. Example: *"Caldwell Hall is in bad shape. Either we tear it down and put up a new building, or we continue to risk students' safety. Obviously we shouldn't risk anyone's safety, so we must tear the building down." The argument neglects to mention the possibility that we might repair the building.*
False Authority	Draws attention away from the evidence and leans on the popularity of someone who may have little knowledge of the issue or product. Example: *"We should abolish the death penalty. Many respected people, such as actor Guy Handsome, have publicly stated their opposition to it." While Guy Handsome may be an authority on matters having to do with acting, there's no particular reason why anyone should be moved by his political opinions–he is probably no more of an authority on the death penalty than the person writing the paper.*
Ad Hominem ("against the person")	Attacking the person instead of the idea. Example: *Don't vote for Jerry Brown; he's a left-wing fanatic, a throwback to the 60s who meditates and eats health foods.*
Ad Populum ("to the people")	Claiming that most people agree so it must be right. Example: "*Canada should change its immigration policies. 70% of Canadians think so!" The arguer is trying to get us to agree with the conclusion by appealing to our desire to fit in with other Canadians.*
Tu Quoque ("you too!")	Attacking the person instead of the idea because the person has actually done the thing he or she is arguing against, so the arguments shouldn't be listened to. Example: *"Johnny's parents have explained to him why he shouldn't smoke, mentioning the damage to his health, the cost, and so forth. Johnny replies that he won't accept their argument because they used to smoke." The fact that his parents have done the thing they are condemning has no bearing on the premises they put forward in their argument (smoking harms your health and is very expensive).*
Appeal to Pity	When an arguer tries to get people to accept a conclusion by evoking pity for someone. Example: *"It's wrong to tax corporations–think of all the money they give to charity, and of the costs they already pay to run their businesses!"*
Appeal to Ignorance	Arguing that because there is no conclusive evidence on an issue, the arguer's conclusion should be accepted. Example: *"There has been no research conducted on pregnant women taking allergy medicine, and there have been no negative side effects shown in pregnant women. Therefore, it is safe for pregnant women to take allergy medicine."*
Weak Analogy	When arguments rely on an analogy comparing two things that aren't really alike in the relevant aspects. Example: *"Guns are like hammers–they're both tools with metal parts that could be used to kill someone. And yet it would be ridiculous to restrict the purchase of hammers–so restrictions on purchasing guns are equally ridiculous."*

Fallacies

Term	Definition
Missing the Point	The premises of an argument do support a particular conclusion–but not the conclusion that the arguer actually draws. Example: *"The seriousness of a punishment should match the seriousness of the crime. Right now, the punishment for drunk driving may simply be a fine. But drunk driving is a very serious crime that can kill innocent people. So the death penalty should be the punishment for drunk driving." The argument actually supports several conclusions–"The punishment for drunk driving should be very serious," in particular–but it doesn't support the claim that the death penalty, specifically, is warranted.*
Red Herring	Partway through an argument, the arguer goes off on a tangent, raising a side issue that distracts the audience from the main argument. Often, the arguer never returns to the original issue. Example: *"The criminal won't say where he was on the night of the crime, but he does remember being teased relentlessly as a child."*
Equivocation	Sliding between two or more different meanings of a single word or phrase that is important to the argument. Example: *"Giving money to charity is the right thing to do. So charities have a right to our money." The equivocation here is on the word "right": "right" can mean both something that is correct or good (as in "I got the right answers on the test") and something to which someone has a claim (as in "everyone has a right to life").*
Stacking the Deck	Giving a slanted view of the issue by focusing only on one side. Example: I deserve to get an A in the class because I like the teacher, work hard, and attend class.

How Do I Find Fallacies In My Own Writing?

- Pretend you disagree with the conclusion you're defending. What parts of the argument would now seem fishy to you? What parts would seem easiest to attack? Give special attention to strengthening those parts.

- List your main points; under each one, list the evidence you have for it. Seeing your claims and evidence laid out this way may make you realize that you have no good evidence for a particular claim, or it may help you look more critically at the evidence you're using.

- Learn which types of fallacies you're especially prone to, and be careful to check for them in your work. Some writers make lots of appeals to authority; others are more likely to rely on weak analogies or set up straw men. Read over some of your old papers to see if there's a particular kind of fallacy you need to watch out for.

- Be aware that broad claims need more proof than narrow ones. Claims that use sweeping words like "all," "no," "none," "every," "always," "never," "no one," and "everyone" are sometimes appropriate–but they require a lot more proof than less-sweeping claims that use words like "some," "many," "few," "sometimes," "usually," and so forth.

- Double check your characterizations of others, especially your opponents, to be sure they are accurate and fair.

Analysis: Literary Devices & Quotations

Essays

Answering Literary Device Quotation Questions

When you get a question on an evaluation (quiz, test, assignment, exam) that asks you to state the **significance** (importance) or **effectiveness** (success in producing a desired or intended result) of a literary device in a quotation, it can be very daunting. So much so that students will write the definition of the literary device, as a Hail Mary attempt. Here are some examples of poor answers to such quotation questions:

Giving the definition of the literary device	"It puts a picture/an image in your mind."
"It makes you visualize it better."	"It makes it more interesting."

These answers do not make much sense or tell us anything, and they do not demonstrate the student's knowledge or understanding of literary devices that they recognize and understand the meaning of. Answering these types of questions requires a certain level of critical thinking and inquiry. The following recommended steps should help you to answer such questions significantly more effectively.

Step 1: Understand the purpose of the literary device.
Most literary devices add depth to literary and visual works by their use. Their very purpose is what helps to convey that depth.

Step 2: Understand the context of the quotation.
Most of my students have expressed that when they see a quotation question, they only really see it in isolation and seldom even think of context. This adds to the mystification of understanding a quotation question, thereby making it seem difficult or impossible to answer. Consider the following elements when thinking of context:

- Who is speaking in the quotation?
- What event(s) occurred that led the character to speak those lines?
- Who is the character speaking to, if anyone?
- What event(s) occurred as a result of what the character said?

Step 3: Understand the character speaking in the quotation.
Character development is what drives any good story. Understanding character is something that we often do while reading or watching a story, without even realizing it. We naturally identify with certain characters and dislike other characters because of their personality traits and how they navigate life situations. That is the key! If you understand how a character thinks and acts, you know how they are likely to act or react in a situation.

Now you are ready to analyse a literary device in relation to a quotation! All you have to do is combine all of the aforementioned steps. Read on to the following page for an example of how to answer a literary device quotation question, using these three steps.

Essays Answering Literary Device Quotation Questions

Example:

TYBALT: What, drawn and talk of peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.
(Shakespeare 1.1.71-72)

Literary device: alliteration, repetition (underlined)

1. Explain why this literary device is effective (2 marks).
This is a rather vague question, but one that has been used by us in the past. Many students had misinterpreted this by writing a definition of a literary device; not a good response, though not a clear question. Be thankful this question is no longer used. At least we know that **effective** means successfully producing a desired or intended result. With a question like this, there is only so full of an answer a teacher can receive, as you can see in the following answers to each of these possible questions.

Answer: Alliteration (or repetition) is effective in this quotation, as it emphasizes the hate that Tybalt feels toward all Montagues or any peace with them.

2. Explain the significance of this literary device, in relation to Tybalt's character (2 marks).
Upon reading this question, we know that **significance** means we have to state the importance of the literary device, and relate it to what we know about Tybalt's character. So the question is already giving us a reminder of **Step 3**. These are Tybalt's second lines of the play, *Romeo and Juliet*. Upon his initial appearance, he establishes himself as the most violent, aggressive character in the play; this is what we initially learn of him. **Step 2:** In the opening scene of the play, the animosity between the two feuding families is sparked again, as the Capulet servants start a fight with the Montague servants. Benvolio, of the house of Montague, attempts to stop the fight. Tybalt arrives, ridiculing him, and wishes to continue the fight when he speaks the words in the quotation. **Step 1:** The purpose of alliteration is emphasis through sound. It is also significant where the literary device is located in the quotation.

Answer: The significance of the alliteration in this quotation by Tybalt is to emphasize his aggressive and violent nature, and his hate of all Montagues or any peace with them. This exacerbates the fight started by the servants of the feuding families.

3. Explain why this literary device is significant in relation to a topic or theme in the play (2 marks).
Step 1: The purpose of repetition is emphasis through repeating of words. Again, be cognizant of the location of the literary device; that is always important and will help your analysis when using the three steps.

Answer: The significance of the repetition of the word *hate* in Tybalt's quotation emphasizes the topic of the role of the feuding families in the play. The hate is so strong between the feuding families that, even when a member of the opposing family is attempting to stop the fight, the other family will not even hear of it, simply because such a request is coming from their loathed enemy.

Essays

How to Do Quotation Analysis in a Paragraph

When you are composing a paragraph, be it in a journal, response, essay, or just a paragraph, the first thing to remember is paragraph structure. A very common structure to follow for paragraphs is S.E.E.C., outlined and explained below:

> **Statement:** the topic sentence, the subject matter of the paragraph
> **Example:** the evidence used to support the topic, in the form of quotations and statistics
> **Explanation:** where one explains the relationship of the example to the topic sentence
> **Conclusion:** the synthesis of the analysis to arrive at a reasoned judgment to close the topic

This basic structure needs to be followed in order to communicate effectively and to be clear, concise, and focused. It is often taken for granted that everyone is capable of this basic writing framework. So when that basic structure is not adhered to, it makes the content being analysed even less intelligible.

Assuming the structure is not an issue, what is a teacher looking for when they want a quotation analysed? Well, first of all, quotations must always be introduced, embedded, cited, and explained. However, before even getting to the quotation, it all must start with the statement or topic sentence of the paragraph. Almost all essay components are connected and work synergistically. This is why if there is a weakness in an argument statement, it can derail the development of your overall topic, the thesis. Analysing quotations in your paragraph requires a certain level of critical thinking and inquiry in order to analyse it fully and complete the development of the idea initiated in the topic sentence. The following recommended steps should help you to analyse your quotations fully and significantly more effectively.

The examples that follow have been taken from actual student essays and have been transcribed verbatim. The students are not cited in the interest of confidentiality. Work from their essays are surrounded by quotations marks. Quotations used in those essays are also surrounded by quotation marks but have been *italicized* to allow for differentiating between the students' statements, *quotations*, and analyses.

Step 1: The statement must be clear and concise (and arguable if an essay argument statement). There is no need to overcomplicate a topic sentence, even an arguable one. If a teacher reads the topic sentence and it seems unclear to them, and they ask you what that statement is trying to convey, your answer should not require an explanation. You should be able to respond with a word or phrase.

Example 1: This argument statement is **not clear or concise**.

> "If self-driving cars are open to the public, and society's reliance on technology increases, the consequences will become more severe if hackers take control of any electronic devices in malicious ways."

Example 2: This statement from the same essay is **better** because it is a more clear and concise argument.

> "One of the biggest problems with self-driving cars is programming them with a sense of **morality and emotions**."

Example 3: Even better would be for it to read:

> Programming self-driving cars with a sense of **morality and emotions** poses a significant problem.

You should be able to boil down the topic sentence to one word or phrase; that is what the focus of that statement should be. In the case of the argument statement directly above, it is the "morality and emotions". The statement or argument is to be built around that, so that you know exactly and clearly what the topic of the paragraph is that you are about to analyse.

Sometimes a statement might have more than one component that makes the topic or argument whole, as in the one displayed below.

Example 4: This is a multi-component argument.

> "It is **within human nature** to **alleviate suffering** and **ameliorate** the **prosperity** of society."

Firstly, this statement has not been connected to the essay's overall topic. It should read more like this:

> "Stem cells will **alleviate** human **suffering** and **ameliorate** the **prosperity** of society."

The writer can now use "it is within human nature" elsewhere in that same paragraph as an introductory or context-building phrase or as part of their analysis.

In this argument statement, there are two components that make the topic whole. The topic is about the betterment of humanity's health. It is arguing that stem cells must be used in order achieve the goal to "alleviate human suffering", which will lead to ameliorating the "prosperity of society," be it holistic or material prosperity.

Step 2: Quotation choice and length must help add clarity and relevance to the topic.
When choosing a quotation that supports the topic of your paragraph, examine it closely to ensure you are only keeping what you require to support the topic. Many students feel that they must use a quotation that is a full sentence or very long. What they forget is that the essay is to be in their voice, so the more they draw from external sources, the less it will be their voice in the essay. Also, remember that the essay or assignment is likely to require quite a bit of analysis of your own ideas.

All of the quotations should not comprise more than 1/16th the length of the assignment. Much like visuals used to enhance presentations, quotations are used to enhance the essay by supporting *your* claims and ideas of the essay, not *be* the essay. When stripping enhancements away, you should still be saying something original of substance.

Some teachers may say that there is a general rule of thumb that one's analysis must be at least twice as long as the evidence provided. Anything in the quote that you select that does not fully address the topic of the paragraph is extraneous and must be stripped away. Choosing snippets of quotations, just the phrase or clause that specifically and solely supports the topic of the paragraph, is to your advantage. It is significantly easier to embed, thereby keeping more of the essay in your voice, it keeps it focused and relevant, and it allows you more room for a full analysis, which is what will get you better marks.

Example 5: Note the length of the quotation. In green is what specifically and solely supports the topic.

> **Statement:** "Having special needs students in mainstream classrooms has many positive social impacts on students with and without disabilities."
> **Example:** "*Mainstreaming prepares non-disabled students for the real world by* ***teaching them about diversity*** *and* ***helping them develop empathy***" (Lawrence).

Example 6: Notice the length of the quotation. It is not a full sentence and all of it supports the topic.

> **Statement:** "It is within human nature to alleviate suffering and ameliorate the prosperity of society."
> **Example:** "***remove or reduce suffering to the extent possible***" (Green and Palpant).

Step 3: Fully explain how and/or why the quotation supports or relates to the topic.
In order to provide your teacher with a full analysis of a quotation, you must explain the quotation's relationship to the topic of the paragraph. This means you will need to look at your clear, concise, and focused topic sentence and explain how your evidence relates to the topic, supports it, illustrates it, justifies it.

Ensure that your reader knows in what way you are interpreting the evidence so that your reader does not have to figure out what you are trying do. If the reader has to do that work, you can expect ambiguity or confusion, both of which will hurt your topic development within the paragraph and entire essay, and result in mark deductions. Whatever you compose in an assignment needs to convey exactly what you intend it to convey, such that it cannot be construed in any other way than what you intended.

Example 7: If your topic sentence is a simple, single-component topic, then see this example below of how one might analyse a quotation.

> **Statement:** "**Existing** human **lives are worth** saving **more than** potential human lives."
> **Example:** "*the law does not consider embryos to be people*" (Glick).
> **Explanation:** "If the legal system considered embryos to have the same rights as humans, medical professionals would be charged with murder for discarding embryos and unlawful imprisonment for storing them. Since the law does not recognize embryos as humans but as cells useful for science, society should hence accept this view. Since blastocysts are neither biologically nor legally considered to be human, just a cluster of cells, it should not be considered immoral to conduct research on them."

What this analysis lacks is that it seems to devote more explanation to the cells not being considered human than it does to explaining the necessity or importance of using the cells to save "existing human lives" or how existing lives are more valuable. It seems as though the writer is focusing attention on what the quotation is conveying, rather than explaining it in relation to the focus of their argument statement.

Then again, when looking at the quotation choice and the colour coding, one can see at first glance that it points the writer to heavily favour explaining that side. With the colours, one can visually see the issues from statement to explanation. One would need to have a very self-critical eye to catch this early enough and flip the focus of the explanation from the quotation to the actual idea they want to convey

in the argument statement. In keeping with the colour coding, there should be much more blue, explaining how existing lives are more valuable and how stem cells can be used to save them.

Example 8: If your topic sentence is more complex, with more than one component that makes the topic whole, peruse this example of a quotation analysis below.

> **Statement:** "It is **within human nature** to **alleviate suffering** and **ameliorate** the **prosperity** of society."
> **Example:** "*people [are] born good, instinctively concerned about the welfare of others*" (Ward).
> **Explanation:** "Truly then, society should be invested in stem cell research because the health of many people relies on the results of this study. The well-being of the population depends on doctors' ability to treat illnesses, and stem cell research could be a factor in the development of treating and curing these diseases. Due to humans being morally inclined to help others and reduce pain, they should instinctively be willing to go to every measure possible to reduce the suffering caused by illnesses. In this way, because human nature wants to help people live the healthiest lives possible, embryonic stem cell research should be considered ethical."

As we recall with this argument statement from Example 4, the statement does not directly address the main topic of the essay of stem cell research, but it is concise. It also implies that prosperity is not material and is in reference to one's health, which actually can also impact the material prosperity of society.

Since "people [are] born good" and are "instinctively concerned about the welfare of others," the quotation is already in line with the topic sentence. Now it is just about digging deeper to find meaning in the quotation as it relates to the topic, in order to develop the components of the topic to a point where it creates meaning for the reader that supports the thesis. Notice that there is a higher concentration of coloured phrases and clauses that address the different components of the statement in an attempt to explain and develop the paragraph topic fully.

Now you are ready to analyse a quotation in relation to a paragraph topic! All you have to do is combine all of the aforementioned steps, be thorough, and repeat as many times as your assignment requires.

Editing Checklists

Essays Peer Edit Sheet • Editor: _____

Essay Author: _____

Essay Title: _____

1. Checklist

MLA FORMAT CRITERIA	**Yes** or **No**
Is the student name, teacher name, course code and date of submission listed on the top left-hand corner?	
Is there a creative title on the next line?	
Are the pages numbered in the top right-hand corner i.e. last name page number?	
Is the entire essay double-spaced?	
Is there a work cited page?	
Are all in-text citations at the end of sentence?	
Is there a period **after** the in-text citation?	
ESSAY ORGANIZATION	
INTRODUCTION	
Is the hook the first few sentences of the essay?	
Did the student mention the author's name and the *title of the book* in the intro?	
Is the hook connected to the text?	
Are the three arguments listed in order as they are presented in the body paragraphs?	
Are there transition words?	
Is the thesis the last sentence of the introduction?	
BODY PARAGRAPH #1	
Is there a topic sentence?	
Is there a first point?	
Is there context to introduce the quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the first point?	
Is there an explanation that is longer than the point and proof together?	
Is there a second point?	
Is there context to introduce the second quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the second point?	
Is there an explanation longer than the point and proof together?	
Is there a third point?	
Is there context to introduce the third quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the third point?	
Is there an explanation longer than the point and proof together?	
Are there transition words?	
Is there a concluding sentence and a linking clause?	

Peer Edit Sheet • continued

BODY PARAGRAPH #2	
Is there a topic sentence?	
Is there a first point?	
Is there context to introduce the quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the first point?	
Is there an explanation that is longer than the point and proof together?	
Is there a second point?	
Is there context to introduce the second quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the second point?	
Is there an explanation longer than the point and proof together?	
Is there a third point?	
Is there context to introduce the third quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the third point?	
Is there an explanation longer than the point and proof together?	
Are there transition words?	
Is there a concluding sentence and a linking clause?	
BODY PARAGRAPH #3	
Is there a topic sentence?	
Is there a first point?	
Is there context to introduce the quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the first point?	
Is there an explanation that is longer than the point and proof together?	
Is there a second point?	
Is there context to introduce the second quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the second point?	
Is there an explanation longer than the point and proof together?	
Is there a third point?	
Is there context to introduce the third quote?	
Is there a quotation to support the third point?	
Is there an explanation longer than the point and proof together?	
Are there transition words?	
CONCLUSION	
Is the thesis, restated in a new way, the first sentence of the concluding paragraph?	
Are the three arguments reworded and listed in the same order as they appear in the essay?	
Are there transition words?	
Is the last sentence a thought-provoking statement?	

2. Highlight

STYLE

- Circle or highlight any contractions (can't, don't) in the essay.
- Circle or highlight any personal pronouns (I, you, me, my, us, we, our, your) in the essay.
- Circle or highlight any references to the student's own writing (this shows, this proves, this quote).
- Circle or highlight any quotations that are NOT EMBEDDED.

MLA

- Circle or highlight any quotations missing in-text citations.

3. Content

A. What is the thesis of the essay?

_____

_____

_____

B. Identify the **first** point.

_____

_____

C. Does the point provide enough background information or context to introduce the quotation?
YES or **NO**

D. Identify the explanation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Peer Edit Sheet • continued

E. Does the explanation describe how the quotation proves the point and why it is significant to the thesis? **YES** or **NO**

F. In the explanation, identify **where** the student explains the **how** and **why** (Use a coloured pen or highlighter).

G. Provide one strength.

_____

H. Provide one weakness.

_____

I. Provide a next step.

_____

J. Identify the **second** point.

_____

_____

K. Does the point provide enough background information or context to introduce the quotation? **YES** or **NO**

L. Identify the explanation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

M. Does the explanation describe how the quotation proves the point and why it is significant to the thesis? **YES** or **NO**

N. In the explanation, identify **where** the student explains the **how** and **why** (Use a coloured pen or highlighter).

O. Provide one strength.

_____

P. Provide one weakness.

Q. Provide a next step.

R. Identify the **third** point.

S. Does the point provide enough background information or context to introduce the quotation? **YES** or **NO**

T. Identify the explanation.

U. Does the explanation describe how the quotation proves the point and why it is significant to the thesis? **YES** or **NO**

V. In the explanation, identify **where** the student explains the **how** and **why** (Use a coloured pen or highlighter).

W. Provide one strength.

X. Provide one weakness.

Y. Provide a next step.

Essay Checklist 1

Instructions: Read over your peer's essay carefully and thoroughly and make any necessary corrections. Use the checklist as a guide, and indicate any corrections that should be made.

Introduction

- ☐ Identify the hook statement – Is the hook interesting?
- ☐ Does the hook give the reader an idea about the content of the essay?
- ☐ Identify the context sentence – Does it introduce the text/author?
- ☐ Identify three arguments – Are they arguable statements?
- ☐ Do they answer the question, "so what"?
- ☐ Are they written in order of importance?
- ☐ Identify the thesis – Is it at the end of the introductory paragraph?
- ☐ Is it written clearly?
- ☐ Is it a specific?
- ☐ Is it a provable argument?
- ☐ Does the thesis attempt to answer the question, "so what"?

Body Paragraphs 1, 2, 3

- ☐ Identify the argument – Is it at the beginning of the paragraph?
- ☐ Is it an arguable statement? Does it answer the question, "so what"?
- ☐ Does it correspond with the first argument in the introductory paragraph?

- ☐ Identify the first example – Is it a specific example from the text?
- ☐ Does the example support the first argument?
- ☐ Identify the first quotation – Is the quotation introduced?
- ☐ Is the quotation cited correctly?
- ☐ Is the quotation explained?
- ☐ Does the explanation provide a clear analysis (**NOT** a summary) of the quotation, in relation to the argument?

- ☐ Identify the second example – Is it a specific example from the text?
- ☐ Does the example support the first argument?
- ☐ Identify the second quotation – Is the quotation introduced?
- ☐ Is the quotation cited correctly?
- ☐ Is the quotation explained?
- ☐ Does the explanation provide a clear analysis (**NOT** a summary) of the quotation, in relation to the argument?

- ☐ Identify the third example – Is it a specific example from the text?
- ☐ Does the example support the first argument?
- ☐ Identify the third quotation – Is the quotation introduced?
- ☐ Is the quotation cited correctly?
- ☐ Is the quotation explained?
- ☐ Does the explanation provide a clear analysis (**NOT** a summary) of the quotation, in relation to the argument?

Conclusion

- ☐ Identify the restated thesis – Is the thesis rephrased?
- ☐ Identify the three arguments – Are the arguments rephrased?
- ☐ Identify the closing statement – Does the closing statement leave the reader thinking?

Style

- ☐ Is the essay written in simple present tense? **Correct:** Romeo travels to Mantua. **NOT** Romeo is walking to Mantua, or Romeo walked to Mantua.
- ☐ Is the essay written in active voice? **Correct:** Romeo murders Tybalt. **NOT** Tybalt is murdered by Romeo.
- ☐ Is the essay free from slang, clichés, and contractions?
- ☐ Does the essay contain interesting, vivid language?
- ☐ Are the details organized in order of importance?
- ☐ Are the details organized with transitional words and phrases?
- ☐ Is the essay free from personal pronouns (I, me, my, you, we, us, etc.)?
- ☐ Are there any sentences that are too wordy? Can they be condensed?
- ☐ Are there any words that are repeated too often?

Grammar and Mechanics

- ☐ Does the essay contain any errors in subject-verb agreement?
- ☐ Does the essay contain a simple sentence, a compound sentence, a complex sentence, and a compound-complex sentence?
- ☐ Does the essay contain a semicolon or a colon?
- ☐ Does the essay abide by the TIPSAN comma rules?
- ☐ Is the essay free from spelling errors? This includes misused homophones and American spelling.
- ☐ Is the essay free from capitalization errors?

Essays

Essay Checklist 2

Introductory Paragraph Checklist

- [ ] Opens with a **general statement** on the **topic**
- [ ] Introduce the context of essay (name of author and novel)
- [ ] State argument #1 (**reword** topic sentence for BP1)
- [ ] State argument #2 (**reword** topic sentence for BP2)
- [ ] State argument #3 (**reword** topic sentence for BP3)
- [ ] Present thesis

Body Paragraph One (BP1)

- [ ] Topic sentence
- [ ] **Introduce**/provide context for example 1
- [ ] **Give** example 1 (usually a quotation or a direct rephrase from text) Is it cited correctly?
- [ ] **Analyze** example 1 (explain **why** this example proves your **topic sentence**)
- [ ] **Introduce**/provide context for example 2
- [ ] **Give** example 2 (usually a quotation or a direct rephrase from text) Is it cited correctly?
- [ ] **Analyze** example 2 (explain **why** this example proves your **topic sentence**)
- [ ] Conclude, making sure to summarize why the information in this paragraph supports **thesis**
- [ ] Link to next paragraph

Body Paragraph Two (BP2)

- [ ] Topic sentence
- [ ] **Introduce**/provide context for example 1
- [ ] **Give** example 1 (usually a quotation or a direct rephrase from text) Is it cited correctly?
- [ ] **Analyze** example 1 (explain **why** this example proves your **topic sentence**)
- [ ] **Introduce**/provide context for example 2
- [ ] **Give** example 2 (usually a quotation or a direct rephrase from text) Is it cited correctly?
- [ ] **Analyze** example 2 (explain **why** this example proves your **topic sentence**)
- [ ] Conclude, making sure to summarize why the information in this paragraph supports **thesis**
- [ ] Link to next paragraph

Body Paragraph Three (BP3)

- [ ] Topic sentence
- [ ] **Introduce**/provide context for example 1
- [ ] **Give** example 1 (usually a quotation or a direct rephrase from text) Is it cited correctly?
- [ ] **Analyze** example 1 (explain **why** this example proves your **topic sentence**)
- [ ] **Introduce**/provide context for example 2
- [ ] **Give** example 2 (usually a quotation or a direct rephrase from text) Is it cited correctly?
- [ ] **Analyze** example 2 (explain **why** this example proves your **topic sentence**)
- [ ] Conclude, making sure to summarize why the information in this paragraph supports **thesis**

Conclusion Paragraph

- [ ] Opens with a **restatement** of the **thesis**
- [ ] Restate argument #1 (**reword** topic sentence for BP1)
- [ ] Restate argument #2 (**reword** topic sentence for BP2)
- [ ] Restate argument #3 (**reword** topic sentence for BP3)
- [ ] Make any additional conclusions
- [ ] End with a general **thought-provoking** comment on the topic (**Hint:** you may start with "Perhaps")

Essays Peer Edit Sheet • Editor: _____

Draft Writer: _____

Please check the appropriate response and make corrections and comments on the essay.

Essay Structure	**YES**	**NO**
Top-left identification on first page follows MLA guidelines	____	____
Page numbers are in the top right corner, preceded by the writer's surname	____	____
Introduction is engaging; hook is more than one sentence	____	____
Thesis is the last sentence in the introductory paragraph	____	____
Topic sentences are the first sentences in the body paragraphs	____	____
Order of information is logical (i.e., progressive, chronological, etc.)	____	____
In-text citations have author's name and page number (if applicable)	____	____
Quotations are embedded	____	____
Works Cited page(s) is double spaced and its own page	____	____
Quotations are not chained	____	____
Effective transitions are used between paragraphs	____	____
Conclusion ties up ideas and is also thought-provoking	____	____
Style		
Spelling is accurate	____	____
Contractions are not used	____	____
Personal pronouns are not used (use of third person)	____	____
No slang and no clichés	____	____
Subject-verb agreement	____	____
Correct pronoun form	____	____
Present tense is used	____	____
Variety of sentences (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex)	____	____
No repetition	____	____
Titles of long works are italicized and/or short works have quotation marks	____	____
Punctuation is accurate	____	____
Run-on sentences are avoided	____	____
Content		
No plot summary	____	____
Arguments support thesis	____	____
Content is appropriate for audience	____	____
Controlling idea is clear	____	____
Controlling idea is well-developed	____	____
Connections among ideas are logical	____	____
Information is accurate and complete	____	____
Details are specific and vivid	____	____
Evidence/research is smoothly integrated (if applicable)	____	____
Evidence/research is used efficiently and effectively	____	____

Essays Peer Edit Sheet • Editor: _____

1. What is the controlling idea of this draft?

2. Who is the intended audience? How can you tell?

3. What does the writer want the reader to learn, think, or believe?

4. Identify two strengths of this draft.

5. Make two suggestions to the writer about how to improve this draft. Explain these suggestions to the writer and give specific examples.

Rubrics

Rubric English Essay Outline /40

Name: _____

****Staple and submit this sheet with your completed assignment.****

Content

Hook					0	0.5	1				
Arguments					0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3
Thesis				0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	
Body Paragraph 1 (example A/B and analysis)				0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	
Body Paragraph 1 (example A/B and analysis)				0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	
Body Paragraph 1 (example A/B and analysis)				0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	
Transitions					0	0.5	1	1.5	2		
Conclusion					0	0.5	1	1.5	2		

Style

Structure	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Spelling and Mechanics	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Sentence Structure	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Word Choice and Formality	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5

Comments:

Rubric English Essay Outline /10

Name: _____

Hook:	0	0.5	1				
Thesis:	0	0.5	1	1.5	2		
Arguments:	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3
Examples:	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3
Conclusion:	0	0.5	1				

Overall Expectations: ***Developing and Organizing Content:*** generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience; ***Using Knowledge of Form and Style:*** draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; ***Applying Knowledge of Conventions:*** use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.

Comments:

Rubric English Essay Outline /10

Name: _____

Content

Thesis	0	1	2	3	4
Argument 1	0	1	2		
Argument 2	0	1	2		
Argument 3	0	1	2		

Comments:

Rubric

Senior Essay Peer or Self-Assessment /48

Name of Assessor: _____

Category	4 - Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 - Approaches Standards	1 - Below Standards	Score
Hook	The introductory paragraph has a strong hook.	The introductory paragraph has a hook.	The introductory paragraph has an irrelevant hook. Improvement is necessary.	The introductory paragraph is not interesting AND is not relevant to the topic.	
Thesis Statement	The thesis statement is very clearly identified.	The thesis statement is identified.	The thesis statement is somewhat identified.	The thesis statement is not identified.	
Arguments	There are 3 strong and valid arguments.	Includes 3 arguments that could be more clearly stated.	There are 1-2 arguments that are somewhat valid. 3 valid arguments are needed.	Arguments are not clearly stated and improvement is necessary.	
Evidence & Examples	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.	
Sequencing	A/B format is well developed Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought.	A/B format is consistent. Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought.	A/B format is inconsistent. A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing.	Not structured in A/B format. Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing.	
Transitions	A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected.	Transitions show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety.	Some transitions work well, but some connections between ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear OR nonexistent.	
Closing Paragraph	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the position is evident and a thought-provoking comment is included.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is somewhat restated and there is a thought-provoking statement.	The author's position is not clearly stated and there is no thought-provoking comment.	There is no conclusion–the paper just ends.	
Sources	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly. Works Cited includes at least 2 sources and is formatted correctly	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly. Works Cited includes at least 2 sources and is mostly correct	Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly. Works Cited includes less than 2 sources	Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly. Be careful to avoid plagiarism. Works Cited is incorrect or absent	
Sentence Structure	All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure.	Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structure in the essay.	Most sentences are well-constructed, but there is no variation in structure.	Most sentences are not well-constructed or varied.	
Grammar & Spelling	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	
Capitalization & Punctuation	Author makes no errors in capitalization or punctuation, so the essay is exceptionally easy to read.	Author makes 1-2 errors in capitalization or punctuation, but the essay is still easy to read.	Author makes 3-4 errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow.	Author makes several errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow.	
Overall Impression	Essay is excellent but still may need a couple of improvements.	Essay is good but needs a few minor improvements.	Essay is okay but needs some improvements.	Essay needs a lot of improvements.	

Rubric Senior University English Essay /55

Name: _____

****Staple and submit this sheet with your completed assignment.****

	Level R (0-49)	Level 1 (50-59)	Level 2 (60-69)	Level 3 (70-79)	Level 4 (80-89)	Level 4+ (90+)	Mark
Organization/ Structure 3-part thesis or equivalent, essay/ paragraph formatting, embedding	•Structure is entirely muddled •No embedding •Significant organizational errors on multiple levels	•Muddled structure •Problematic application of point/proof/ analysis •Significant errors embedding quotations •Numerous problems with topic sentences, paragraphing, introduction, and conclusion	•Somewhat effective application of point/proof/ analysis •Some significant errors embedding quotations •Somewhat effective topic sentences and/or paragraphing •Some problems with introduction and/or conclusion	•Effective use of point/proof/ analysis •Minor errors embedding quotations •Reasonably effective topic sentences and paragraphing •Technically correct introductory and concluding paragraphs	•Highly effective application of point/proof/ analysis •Flawless embedding of quotations •Effective topic sentences and paragraphing •Well-developed introduction and an effective conclusion	•Masterful use of point/proof/ analysis •Sophisticated embedding of quotations •Highly effective topic sentences and paragraphing •Carefully developed introduction and a thoughtful conclusion	**/10**
Topic Development/ Support Support, originality, logical development of ideas	•Unsuitable thesis statement/no thesis •Ideas too simple for level of course (plot-based/no argument) •Content shows little or no understanding of topic •No analysis/plot summary replaces analysis	•Thesis statement lacks clarity and specificity Overgeneralizatio n with inadequate support •Limited analysis	•Thesis statement is somewhat clear and specific •Underwhelming use of textual support •Analysis is thin	•Clear and specific thesis statement •Writer's position made convincing by use of evidence and logic •Good use of textual support •Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity	•Clear, specific, and reasonably challenging thesis •Writer's position made strongly convincing by use of evidence and logic •Excellent application of textual support •Some academic risks taken and most of them succeed	•Clear, specific, and challenging thesis •Distinct ideas developed in paper •Paper demonstrates ability to explore the subtleties and ambiguities of the subject •The writer has taken significant risks successfully	**/20**
Communication Style, mechanics, diction, sentence structure, syntax	•Quality of writing is inadequate for this course •Informal word choice	•Errors of grammar or diction frequent and significant enough to interfere with communication	•Sentence structure and diction generally correct but tends to be overly simple •Some serious grammatical errors (commas splices, fragments, etc.)	•Sentence structure and diction generally correct with some range in sentence types and punctuation •Errors relatively few and minor	•Few errors in sentence structure or diction •A wide range of sentence types and punctuation •A generally graceful style	•Negligible errors in sentence structure or diction •Sophisticated diction •Variety of sentence types and punctuation •Graceful and rich style	**/20**
MLA Works Cited, formatting, in-text citations	•Inadequate demonstration of MLA formatting	•Serious MLA formatting errors	•MLA formatting errors on multiple levels	•Minor MLA formatting errors	•Nearly flawless MLA formatting	•Flawless MLA formatting	**/5**

Comments:

Overall Expectations: ***Developing and Organizing Content:*** generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience; ***Using Knowledge of Form and Style:*** draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; ***Applying Knowledge of Conventions:*** use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.

Rubric Senior University English Essay /36

Name: _____

****Staple and submit this sheet with your completed assignment.****

	1 **Topic Development** Overall effect of paper.	2 **Support** Degree to which the response includes examples that develop the main points/proper citing.	3 **Organization** Degree to which the response is focused, clear, and in a logical order/formatting/ process work.	4 **Sentence Structure** Degree of inclusion of complete & correct sentences, varied in structure & length.	5 **Word Choice** Vocabulary Word choice Usage	6 **Mechanics** Spelling & capitalization Punctuation Paragraphing
6	Clear focus. Original, insightful, or imaginative. Compelling thesis. Clearly aware of task.	Supporting details are rich, interesting & full. Details are relevant and appropriate for the audience and focus. All citing is correct.	Carefully but subtly organized from beginning to end. Transitional devices are subordinate to meaning. Works Cited is correct. MLA format is correct. Process work is complete.	Sentence variety enhances style and effect. Successful use of more sophisticated sentence patterns. Embedded quotations enhance flow.	Rich, effective vocabulary. Correct usage. Strong authoritative voice.	Very few or no mechanical errors, with complexity.
5	Fluent fully developed. Clear awareness of audience and task. Solid. Clear thesis.	Details are strong, but lack richness and specificity. Most citing is correct.	Organized from beginning to end. Logical order. Generally successful in using transitions. Works Cited is mostly correct. MLA format is mostly correct. Process work is mostly complete.	Sentence variety is appropriate. Few errors. Moderately successful in using more sophisticated patterns. Embedded quotations are used correctly.	Effective vocabulary. Generally correct usage. Authoritative voice.	Few or no mechanical errors relative to the length or complexity.
4	Moderately fluent. Ideas developed, but limited in depth. Thesis is identifiable.	Details are adequate to support the focus. Details are generally relevant and appropriate for audience and focus. Some citing is correct.	Organized, but may have minor lapses in order or structure. Focused. Some transitions. Works Cited is generally correct. MLA format is generally correct. Process work is generally complete.	Some sentence variety. Some errors in usage. Attempts to use more sophisticated sentence patterns. Embedded quotations are used.	Acceptable vocabulary. Attempts to use rich language. Generally correct usage. Some authoritative voice.	Some errors that do not interfere with communication. Limited text, but mechanically correct.
3	Thinly developed. Some awareness of audience and task. Repetitive or too general. Thesis is somewhat identifiable.	Details lack elaboration. Some details do not support the focus. Important details are omitted. Minimal citing is correct.	Focus is unclear or limited. Poor transitions. Lacks closure. Chaining. Works Cited is somewhat correct. MLA format is somewhat correct. Process work is somewhat complete.	Little sentence variety. Errors in usage that interfere with meaning. Over-reliance on simple or repetitive sentences. Errors with embedded quotations.	Simplistic vocabulary with limited word choices. Noticeable errors in usage. Limited authoritative voice.	Some errors that do interfere with communication. Errors are disproportionate to length or complexity. Minor problems for reader.
2	Poorly developed. Poor awareness of audience or task. Lacks clarity. Thesis is poorly identified.	Details are merely listed. Repetitive details. Too few details. Very little citing.	Unfocused. Thought patterns are difficult to follow. Resembles freewriting. Lacks closure. No transitions. Multiple errors in Works Cited. Very little MLA formatting. Little evidence of process work.	No sentence variety. Serious errors in usage. Too brief to demonstrate variety. Numerous errors with embedded quotations.	Simplistic vocabulary with inappropriate and/or incorrect word choice. Numerous errors in usage. Lacks authoritative voice.	Noticeable errors that do interfere with communication. Errors cause major problems for reader.
1	Not developed. No awareness of audience or task. Inappropriate response. Thesis is not identifiable.	Virtually no details. Irrelevant details. No citing.	So short or muddled that it lacks organization or focus. No transitions. No Works Cited. No MLA formatting. No process work.	Lack of sentence sense. Riddled with errors. Too brief to evaluate. No embedded quotations.	Inadequate vocabulary. Too brief to evaluate. Lacks authoritative voice.	Errors that seriously interfere with communication. Too brief to evaluate.
Total	**T=** /6	**S=** /6	**O=** /6	**SS=** /6	**WC=** /6	**M=** /6

Overall Expectations: ***Developing and Organizing Content:*** generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience; ***Using Knowledge of Form and Style:*** draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; ***Applying Knowledge of Conventions:*** use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.

Rubric Senior College English Essay /36

Name: _____

****Staple and submit this sheet with your completed assignment.****

	1 **Topic Development** **Overall effect of paper. Degree to which response is focused.**	2 **Support** **Degree to which the response includes examples that develop the main points/proper citing.**	3 **Organization** **Degree to which the response is clear and in a logical order/ formatting/process work.**	4 **Sentence Structure** **Degree of inclusion of complete & correct sentences, varied in structure & length.**	5 **Word Choice** **Vocabulary Word choice Usage**	6 **Mechanics** **Spelling & capitalization Punctuation Paragraphing**
6	Original, insightful, or imaginative. Clear focus. Clearly aware of task. Compelling thesis.	Supporting details are rich, interesting & full. Details are relevant and appropriate for the audience and focus. All citing is correct. Works Cited is correct.	Organized from beginning to end. Transitional devices are subordinate to meaning. MLA format is exemplary. Process work is complete.	Sentence variety enhances style and effect. Successful use of more sophisticated sentence patterns.	Rich, effective vocabulary. Correct usage. Strong authoritative voice. Uses a formal tone and style with a high degree of effectiveness.	Very few or no mechanical errors, with complexity.
5	Fluent fully developed. Solid focus. Clear awareness of audience and task. Clear thesis.	Details are strong, but lack richness and specificity. Most citing is correct. Works Cited is mostly correct.	Order is logically organized. Generally successful in using transitions. MLA format is generally correct. Process work is mostly complete.	Sentence variety is appropriate. Few errors. Moderately successful in using more sophisticated patterns.	Effective vocabulary. Generally correct usage. Authoritative voice. Uses formal tone and style.	Few or no mechanical errors relative to the length or complexity.
4	Moderately fluent. Focused. Ideas developed, but limited in depth. Thesis is identifiable.	Details are adequate to support the focus. Details are generally relevant and appropriate for audience and focus. Some citing is correct. Works Cited is generally correct.	Organized, but may have minor lapses in order or structure. Some transitions. MLA format is somewhat correct. Process work is generally complete.	Some sentence variety. Some errors in usage. Attempts to use more sophisticated sentence patterns.	Acceptable vocabulary. Attempts to use rich language. Generally correct usage. Some authoritative voice. Uses a formal tone and style with some effectiveness.	Some errors that do not interfere with communication. Limited text, but mechanically correct.
3	Thinly developed. Focus is unclear or limited Some awareness of audience and task. Repetitive or too general. Thesis is somewhat identifiable.	Details lack elaboration. Some details do not support the focus. Important details are omitted. Very little citing. Noticeable errors in Works Cited.	Poorly organized. Poor transitions. Improper MLA formatting. Process work is somewhat complete.	Little sentence variety. Errors in usage that interfere with meaning. Over-reliance on simple or repetitive sentences.	Simplistic vocabulary with limited word choices. Noticeable errors in usage. Limited authoritative voice. Uses some informality in tone and style.	Some errors that do interfere with communication. Errors are disproportionate to length or complexity. Minor problems for reader.
2	Poorly developed. Unfocused. Poor awareness of audience or task. Lacks clarity. Thesis is poorly identified.	Details are merely listed. Repetitive details. Too few details. Improper citing. No Works Cited.	Thought patterns are difficult to follow Resembles freewriting. No transitions. Very little MLA formatting. Little evidence of process work.	No sentence variety. Serious errors in usage. Too brief to demonstrate variety.	Simplistic vocabulary with inappropriate and/or incorrect word choice. Numerous errors in usage. Lacks authoritative voice. Often uses informal tone and style.	Noticeable errors that do interfere with communication. Errors cause major problems for reader.
1	Not developed. Lacks focus. No awareness of audience or task. Inappropriate response. Thesis is not identifiable.	Virtually no details. Irrelevant details. No citing. No Works Cited.	So short or muddled that it lacks organization. No transitions. No MLA formatting. No process work.	Lack of sentence sense. Riddled with errors. Too brief to evaluate.	Inadequate vocabulary. Too brief to evaluate. Lacks authoritative voice. Rarely uses formal tone or style.	Errors that seriously interfere with communication. Too brief to evaluate.
Total	**T= /6**	**S= /6**	**O= /6**	**SS= /6**	**WC= /6**	**M= /6**

Overall Expectations: ***Developing and Organizing Content:*** generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience; ***Using Knowledge of Form and Style:*** draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; ***Applying Knowledge of Conventions:*** use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.

Rubric

Grade 10 Academic English Essay /25

Name: _____

****Staple and submit this sheet with your completed assignment.****

	1 **Topic Development** Overall effect of paper	2 **Support** Degree to which the response includes examples that develop the main points	3 **Organization** Degree to which the response is focused, clear, and in a logical order	4 **Communication** Vocabulary Word choice Usage	5 **Mechanics** Spelling and capitalization Punctuation
5	• Clear and complex focus in introduction • Original/insightful thesis • Thorough development of ideas • Shows a high degree of understanding of themes, concepts, and ideas	• Supporting details are rich, analyzed and well-developed • Details are relevant, enhance the argument, and are appropriate for the focus	• Details are effectively and carefully organized • Organizational devices are incorporated effectively • MLA format is exemplary • Essay shows thorough evidence of revision	• Uses a formal tone and appropriate style, with a high degree of effectiveness • Syntax communicates ideas with a high degree of clarity • Rich, effective use of academic diction	• Complex use of grammar and sentence structure, with minimal mechanical errors
4	• Clear focus and thesis • Clear development of ideas • Shows an understanding of themes, concepts, and ideas	• Supporting details are effectively analyzed and well-developed • Details are relevant and appropriate for the focus	• Details are organized effectively • Organizational devices are incorporated • MLA format is generally correct • Essay shows evidence of revision	• Uses formal tone and appropriate style • Syntax communicates information with clarity • Effective and correct usage of academic diction	• Few errors that do not interfere with communication
3	• Basic focus and/or thesis • Some development of ideas • Shows some understanding of themes, concepts, and ideas	• Some clear supporting details are included • Some details are relevant and appropriate for the focus	• Some details are organized • Some organizational devices are incorporated • MLA format is somewhat correct • Essay shows some evidence of revision	• Uses some informality in tone and style • Syntax communicates some information with clarity • Acceptable, generally correct usage of academic diction	• Errors that sometimes interfere with communication
2	• Vague focus and thesis • Limited development of ideas • Shows limited understanding of themes, concepts, and ideas	• Basic, undeveloped arguments • Limited details are often inappropriate for the focus	• Limited organization of details. Often resembles free-writing • Few organizational devices are incorporated • Improper MLA formatting • Essay shows minimal evidence of revision	• Often uses informal tone and style • Syntax communicates information with limited clarity • Simplistic vocabulary, with inappropriate/incorrect usage of academic diction	• Noticeable errors that interfere with communication
1	• Thesis is missing and/or focus is very unclear • Shows a lack of understanding of themes, concepts, and ideas • Too brief to evaluate accurately	• Arguments/evidence/ quotations are missing • Supporting details are irrelevant, missing, or unclear • Too few or weak arguments	• Very limited organization of details. Resembles free-writing • Lack of length and clarity, which results in poor organization • Little or no MLA formatting • Essay shows no evidence of revision. No rough copies submitted	• Rarely uses formal tone or style • Communication of information lacks clarity due to poor syntax • Inadequate academic diction, with numerous errors in usage	• Errors seriously interfere with communication • Too brief to evaluate accurately
Total	**T=** /5	**S=** /5	**O=** /5	**C=** /5	**M=** /5

Overall Expectations: ***Developing and Organizing Content:*** generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience; ***Using Knowledge of Form and Style:*** draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; ***Applying Knowledge of Conventions:*** use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.

Comments:

Rubric Grade 9 Academic English Essay /25

Name: _____

****Staple and submit this sheet with your completed assignment.****

	1 Topic Development Overall effect of paper	2 Support Degree to which the response includes examples that develop the main points	3 Organization Degree to which the response is focused, clear, and in a logical order	4 Communication Vocabulary Word choice Usage	5 Mechanics Spelling and capitalization Punctuation
5	• Hook creatively and effectively introduces topic. • Thesis is explicitly evident throughout entire essay. • Essay shows a high degree of understanding of themes, concepts or ideas.	• Arguments creatively and effectively answer "because," "how" or "why?" • Provides 3 highly effective statements, examples and explanations per body paragraph. •	• Highly effective paragraph structure: topic sentence, (SEE), concluding sentence. • Effective use of transitions. • Highly structured essay format.	• Uses a formal tone and appropriate diction with a high degree of effectiveness. • Communicates ideas with a high degree of clarity.	• Complex use of grammar and sentence structure, with minimal mechanical errors.
4	• Hook effectively introduces topic. • Thesis is evident throughout entire essay. • Essay shows an understanding of themes, concepts or ideas.	• Arguments effectively answer "because," "how" or "why". • Provides 3 effective statements, examples and explanations per body paragraph. •	• Proper paragraph structure: topic sentence, (SEE), concluding sentence. • Transitional words and sentences attempted. • Proper essay format.	• Uses formal tone and appropriate diction. • Communicates information with clarity.	• Few errors that do not interfere with communication.
3	• Hook introduces topic. • Thesis argument is missing in one or more paragraphs. • Essay shows some understanding of themes, concepts or ideas.	• Arguments answer "because," "how" or "why" somewhat effectively. • Provides 3 statements, examples and/or explanations per body paragraph. One or two elements may be missing overall. •	• Some elements of paragraph structure: topic sentence, (SEE), concluding sentence. • Some elements of proper essay format.	• Uses some informality in tone, diction. • Communicates some information with clarity.	• Some errors that interfere with communication.
2	• Hook is ineffective. • Thesis argument is missing in most paragraphs. • Essay shows a basic understanding of themes, concepts or ideas.	• Arguments ineffectively address "because," "how" or "why". • Some supporting elements are missing, irrelevant or unclear. •	• Limited development of paragraph structure: topic sentence, (SEE), concluding sentence. • Missing some elements of proper essay format.	• Often uses informal tone and ineffective diction. • Communicates information with limited clarity.	• Noticeable errors that interfere with communication.
1	• Hook is missing. • Thesis argument is missing or focus is very unclear. • Essay shows a lack of understanding of themes, concepts or ideas. • Too brief to evaluate accurately.	• Arguments do not answer "because," "how" or "why". • Many supporting elements are missing, irrelevant or unclear. • Too brief to evaluate accurately.	• Poor development of paragraph structure: topic sentence, (SEE), concluding sentence. • Resembles free writing. • Too brief to evaluate accurately.	• Rarely uses formal tone and appropriate diction. • Communication of information lacks clarity. • Too brief to evaluate accurately.	• Errors seriously interfere with communication. • Too brief to evaluate accurately.
Total	**T=** /5	**S=** /5	**O=** /5	**C=** /5	**M=** /5

Overall Expectations: ***Developing and Organizing Content:*** generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience; ***Using Knowledge of Form and Style:*** draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; ***Applying Knowledge of Conventions:*** use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.

Comments:

Metacognition

Essays

Metacognition • Name: _____

List what you did well on your essay

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List the areas that you need to work on in the essay.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Find three sentences that contain error(s) in your essay. Write the sentences down, identify the error and correct the sentence error.

Erroneous Sentence #1

Error:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Corrected Sentence:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Erroneous Sentence #2

Error:

Corrected Sentence:

Erroneous Sentence #3

Error:

Corrected Sentence:

Essays Reflection • Name: _____

These questions are meant to encourage you to think about the content and methodology employed in an essay you have just finished writing. Respond as fully as you can.

1. **What does the essay question mean to you?**

2. **Describe the steps you took as you went about answering the question (for example – made an outline, looked through notes and handouts, reread sections of the novel or play).**

3. **What problems did you encounter in your writing? (i.e., Was time a problem? Had you not paid careful enough attention to the novel or play, or to the class discussion or instructions?)**

4. **What does your title mean? How did you select it as the best possible title for your essay?**

5. **What did you do to avoid careless mistakes or mechanical errors? (Nothing? Proofread? Used a dictionary? Rewrote a rough draft?)**

6. **How do you feel about your finished product?**

7. **If you were to do this assignment over again, what would you do differently?**

8. **If you were assigning this essay a mark, what would it be?**

Essays

Metacognition • Name: _____

Since you are not permitted to keep your in-class essay, this exercise will be a means for you to record your common errors and reflect on them in an effort to improve for the next in-class writing.

List what you did well on your essay

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List the areas that you need to work on in the essay.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Find errors in your essay pertaining to the following five categories. Write the sentences down, identify the error and correct the sentence error.

1. Organization/Structure of the Essay (including paragraph structure)

Error:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Corrected organization or structure:

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Embedding/MLA Guidelines:

Error:

Corrected embedding of quotation(s) within sentence(s):

3. Style & Diction: Is it appropriately formal and academic in nature?

Error:

Corrected language choice(s):

4. Thesis & Argument(s): Are they deficient or missing?

Error:

Corrected thesis and/or argument(s):

5. Analysis: What is missing in yours?

Error:

Corrected analysis/analyses:

Essay Analysis: Literary Theory and Schools of Criticism

Introduction

A very basic way of thinking about literary theory is that these ideas act as different lenses critics use to view and talk about art, literature, and even culture. These different lenses allow critics to consider works of art based on certain assumptions within that school of theory. The different lenses also allow critics to focus on particular aspects of a work they consider important.

For example, if a critic is working with certain Marxist theories, s/he might focus on how the characters in a story interact based on their economic situation. If a critic is working with post-colonial theories, s/he might consider the same story but look at how characters from colonial powers (Britain, France, and even America) treat characters from, say, Africa or the Caribbean. Hopefully, after reading through and working with the resources in this area of the OWL, literary theory will become a little easier to understand and use.

Disclaimer

Please note that the schools of literary criticism and their explanations included here are by no means the only ways of distinguishing these separate areas of theory. Indeed, many critics use tools from two or more schools in their work. Some would define differently or greatly expand the (very) general statements given here. Our explanations are meant only as starting places for your own investigation into literary theory. We encourage you to use the list of scholars and works provided for each school to further your understanding of these theories.

We also recommend the following secondary sources for study of literary theory:

- *The Critical Tradition: Classical Texts and Contemporary Trends*, 1998, edited by David H. Richter
- *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, 1999, by Lois Tyson
- *Beginning Theory*, 2002, by Peter Barry

Although philosophers, critics, educators and authors have been writing about writing since ancient times, contemporary schools of literary theory have cohered from these discussions and now influence how scholars look at and write about literature. The following sections overview these movements in critical theory. Though the timeline below roughly follows a chronological order, we have placed some schools closer together because they are so closely aligned.

Timeline (most of these overlap)

- Moral Criticism, Dramatic Construction (~360 BC-present)
- Formalism, New Criticism, Neo-Aristotelian Criticism (1930s-present)
- Psychoanalytic Criticism, Jungian Criticism(1930s-present)
- Marxist Criticism (1930s-present)

- Reader-Response Criticism (1960s-present)
- Structuralism/Semiotics (1920s-present)
- Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction (1966-present)
- New Historicism/Cultural Studies (1980s-present)
- Post-Colonial Criticism (1990s-present)
- Feminist Criticism (1960s-present)
- Gender/Queer Studies (1970s-present)

Moral Criticism and Dramatic Construction (~360 BC-present)

Plato

In Book X of his *Republic*, Plato may have given us the first volley of detailed and lengthy literary criticism. The dialog between Socrates and two of his associates shows the participants of this discussion concluding that art must play a limited and very strict role in the perfect Greek Republic. Richter provides a nice summary of this point: "...poets may stay as servants of the state if they teach piety and virtue, but the pleasures of art are condemned as inherently corrupting to citizens..." (19).

One reason Plato included these ideas in his Socratic dialog because he believed that art was a mediocre reproduction of nature: "...what artists do...is hold the mirror up to nature: They copy the appearances of men, animals, and objects in the physical world...and the intelligence that went into its creation need involve nothing more than conjecture" (Richter 19). So in short, if art does not teach morality and ethics, then it is damaging to its audience, and for Plato this damaged his Republic.

Given this controversial approach to art, it's easy to see why Plato's position has an impact on literature and literary criticism even today (though scholars who critique work based on whether or not the story teaches a moral are few - virtue may have an impact on children's literature, however).

Aristotle

In *Poetics*, Aristotle breaks with his teacher (Plato) in the consideration of art. Aristotle considers poetry (and rhetoric), a productive science, whereas he thought logic and physics to be theoretical sciences, and ethics and politics practical sciences (Richter 38). Because Aristotle saw poetry and drama as means to an end (for example, an audience's enjoyment) he established some basic guidelines for authors to follow to achieve certain objectives.

To help authors achieve their objectives, Aristotle developed elements of organization and methods for writing effective poetry and drama known as the principles of dramatic construction

(Richter 39). Aristotle believed that elements like "...language, rhythm, and harmony..." as well as "...plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle..." influence the audience's katharsis (pity and fear) or satisfaction with the work (Richter 39). And so here we see one of the earliest attempts to explain what makes an effective or ineffective work of literature.

Like Plato, Aristotle's views on art heavily influence Western thought. The debate between Platonists and Aristotelians continued "...in the Neoplatonists of the second century AD, the Cambridge Platonists of the latter seventeenth century, and the idealists of the romantic movement" (Richter 17). Even today, the debate continues, and this debate is no more evident than in some of the discussions between adherents to the schools of criticism contained in this resource.

Formalism (1930s-present)

Form Follows Function: Russian Formalism, New Criticism, Neo-Aristotelianism

Formalists disagreed about what specific elements make a literary work "good" or "bad"; but generally, Formalism maintains that a literary work contains certain intrinsic features, and the theory "...defined and addressed the specifically literary qualities in the text" (Richter 699). Therefore, it's easy to see Formalism's relation to Aristotle's theories of dramatic construction.

Formalism attempts to treat each work as its own distinct piece, free from its environment, era, and even author. This point of view developed in reaction to "...forms of 'extrinsic' criticism that viewed the text as either the product of social and historical forces or a document making an ethical statement" (699). Formalists assume that the keys to understanding a text exist within "the text itself," (..."the battle cry of the New Critical effort..." and thus focus a great deal on, you guessed it, form (Tyson 118).

For the most part, Formalism is no longer used in the academy. However, New Critical theories are still used in secondary and college level instruction in literature and even writing (Tyson 115).

Typical questions:

- How does the work use imagery to develop its own symbols? (i.e. making a certain road stand for death by constant association)
- What is the quality of the work's organic unity "...the working together of all the parts to make an inseparable whole..." (Tyson 121)? In other words, does how the work is put together reflect what it is?
- How are the various parts of the work interconnected?
- How do paradox, irony, ambiguity, and tension work in the text?

- How do these parts and their collective whole contribute to or not contribute to the aesthetic quality of the work?
- How does the author resolve apparent contradictions within the work?
- What does the form of the work say about its content?
- Is there a central or focal passage that can be said to sum up the entirety of the work?
- How do the rhythms and/or rhyme schemes of a poem contribute to the meaning or effect of the piece?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

Russian Formalism

- Victor Shklovsky
- Roman Jakobson
- Victor Erlich - *Russian Formalism: History - Doctrine*, 1955
- Yuri Tynyanov

New Criticism

- John Crowe Ransom - *The New Criticism*, 1938
- I.A. Richards
- William Empson
- T.S. Eliot
- Allen Tate
- Cleanth Brooks

Neo-Aristotelianism (Chicago School of Criticism)

- R.S. Crane - *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern*, 1952
- Elder Olson
- Norman Maclean
- W.R. Keast
- Wayne C. Booth - *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 1961

Psychoanalytic Criticism (1930s-present)

Sigmund Freud

Psychoanalytic criticism builds on Freudian theories of psychology. While we don't have the room here to discuss all of Freud's work, a general overview is necessary to explain psychoanalytic literary criticism.

The Unconscious, the Desires, and the Defenses

Freud began his psychoanalytic work in the 1880s while attempting to treat behavioral disorders in his Viennese patients. He dubbed the disorders 'hysteria' and began treating them by listening to his patients talk through their problems. Based on this work, Freud asserted that people's behavior is affected by their unconscious: "...the notion that human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware..." (Tyson 14-15).

Freud believed that our unconscious was influenced by childhood events. Freud organized these events into developmental stages involving relationships with parents and drives of desire and pleasure where children focus "...on different parts of the body...starting with the mouth...shifting to the oral, anal, and phallic phases..." (Richter 1015). These stages reflect base levels of desire, but they also involve fear of loss (loss of genitals, loss of affection from parents, loss of life) and repression: "...the expunging from consciousness of these unhappy psychological events" (Tyson 15).

Tyson reminds us, however, that "...repression doesn't eliminate our painful experiences and emotions...we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to 'play out'...our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress" (15). To keep all of this conflict buried in our unconscious, Freud argued that we develop defenses: selective perception, selective memory, denial, displacement, projection, regression, fear of intimacy, and fear of death, among others.

Id, Ego, and Superego

Freud maintained that our desires and our unconscious conflicts give rise to three areas of the mind that wrestle for dominance as we grow from infancy, to childhood, to adulthood:

- id - "...the location of the drives" or libido
- ego - "...one of the major defenses against the power of the drives..." and home of the defenses listed above
- superego - the area of the unconscious that houses Judgment (of self and others) and "...which begins to form during childhood as a result of the Oedipus complex" (Richter 1015-1016)

Oedipus Complex

Freud believed that the Oedipus complex was "...one of the most powerfully determinative elements in the growth of the child" (Richter 1016). Essentially, the Oedipus complex involves children's need for their parents and the conflict that arises as children mature and realize they are not the absolute focus of their mother's attention: "the Oedipus complex begins in a late

phase of infantile sexuality, between the child's third and sixth year, and it takes a different form in males than it does in females" (Richter 1016).

Freud argued that both boys and girls wish to possess their mothers, but as they grow older "...they begin to sense that their claim to exclusive attention is thwarted by the mother's attention to the father..." (1016). Children, Freud maintained, connect this conflict of attention to the intimate relations between mother and father, relations from which the children are excluded. Freud believed that "the result is a murderous rage against the father...and a desire to possess the mother" (1016).

Freud pointed out, however, that "...the Oedipus complex differs in boys and girls...the functioning of the related castration complex" (1016). In short, Freud thought that "...during the Oedipal rivalry [between boys and their fathers], boys fantasized that punishment for their rage will take the form of..." castration (1016). When boys effectively work through this anxiety, Freud argued, "...the boy learns to identify with the father in the hope of someday possessing a woman like his mother. In girls, the castration complex does not take the form of anxiety...the result is a frustrated rage in which the girl shifts her sexual desire from the mother to the father" (1016).

Freud believed that eventually, the girl's spurned advanced toward the father give way to a desire to possess a man like her father later in life. Freud believed that the impact of the unconscious, id, ego, superego, the defenses, and the Oedipus complexes was inescapable and that these elements of the mind influence all our behavior (and even our dreams) as adults - of course this behavior involves what we write.

Freud and Literature

So what does all of this psychological business have to do with literature and the study of literature? Put simply, some critics believe that we can "...read psychoanalytically...to see which concepts are operating in the text in such a way as to enrich our understanding of the work and, if we plan to write a paper about it, to yield a meaningful, coherent psychoanalytic interpretation" (Tyson 29). Tyson provides some insightful and applicable questions to help guide our understanding of psychoanalytic criticism.

Typical questions:

- How do the operations of repression structure or inform the work?
- Are there any oedipal dynamics - or any other family dynamics - are work here?
- How can characters' behavior, narrative events, and/or images be explained in terms of psychoanalytic concepts of any kind (for example...fear or fascination with death, sexuality - which includes love and romance as well as sexual behavior - as a primary indicator of psychological identity or the operations of ego-id-superego)?

- What does the work suggest about the psychological being of its author?
- What might a given interpretation of a literary work suggest about the psychological motives of the reader?
- Are there prominent words in the piece that could have different or hidden meanings? Could there be a subconscious reason for the author using these "problem words"?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Harold Bloom - *A Theory of Poetry*, 1973; *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens*, 1976
- Peter Brooks
- Jacque Lacan - *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, 1988; "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud" (from*Écrits: A Selection*, 1957)
- Jane Gallop - *Reading Lacan*, 1985
- Julia Kristeva - *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 1984
- Marshall Alcorn - *Changing the Subject in English Class: Discourse and the Constructions of Desire*, 2002

Carl Jung

Jungian criticism attempts to explore the connection between literature and what Carl Jung (a student of Freud) called the “collective unconscious” of the human race: "...racial memory, through which the spirit of the whole human species manifests itself" (Richter 504). Jungian criticism, closely related to Freudian theory because of its connection to psychoanalysis, assumes that all stories and symbols are based on mythic models from mankind’s past.

Based on these commonalities, Jung developed archetypal myths, the *Syzygy*: "...a quaternion composing a whole, the unified self of which people are in search" (Richter 505). These archetypes are the Shadow, the Anima, the Animus, and the Spirit: "...beneath...[the Shadow] is the Anima, the feminine side of the male Self, and the Animus, the corresponding masculine side of the female Self" (Richter 505).

In literary analysis, a Jungian critic would look for archetypes (also see the discussion of Northrop Frye in the Structuralism section) in creative works: "Jungian criticism is generally involved with a search for the embodiment of these symbols within particular works of art." (Richter 505). When dealing with this sort of criticism, it is often useful to keep a handbook of mythology and a dictionary of symbols on hand.

Typical questions:

- What connections can we make between elements of the text and the archetypes? (Mask, Shadow, Anima, Animus)
- How do the characters in the text mirror the archetypal figures? (Great Mother or nurturing Mother, Whore, destroying Crone, Lover, Destroying Angel)
- How does the text mirror the archetypal narrative patterns? (Quest, Night-Sea-Journey)
- How symbolic is the imagery in the work?
- How does the protagonist reflect the hero of myth?
- Does the "hero" embark on a journey in either a physical or spiritual sense?
- Is there a journey to an underworld or land of the dead?
- What trials or ordeals does the protagonist face? What is the reward for overcoming them?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Maud Bodkin - *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, 1934
- Carl Jung - *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Vol. 9, Part 1 of *Collected Works*. 2nd ed. Trans. R.F.C. Hull, 1968
- Bettina Knapp - *Music, Archetype and the Writer: A Jungian View*, 1988
- Ricahrd Sugg - *Jungian Literary Criticism*, 1993

Marxist Criticism (1930s-present)

Whom Does it Benefit?

Based on the theories of Karl Marx (and so influenced by philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel), this school concerns itself with class differences, economic and otherwise, as well as the implications and complications of the capitalist system: "Marxism attempts to reveal the ways in which our socioeconomic system is the ultimate source of our experience" (Tyson 277).

Theorists working in the Marxist tradition, therefore, are interested in answering the overarching question, whom does it [the work, the effort, the policy, the road, etc.] benefit? The elite? The middle class? And Marxists critics are also interested in how the lower or working classes are oppressed - in everyday life and in literature.

The Material Dialectic

The Marxist school follows a process of thinking called the material dialectic. This belief system maintains that "...what drives historical change are the material realities of the economic base of society, rather than the ideological superstructure of politics, law, philosophy, religion, and art that is built upon that economic base" (Richter 1088).

Marx asserts that "...stable societies develop sites of resistance: contradictions build into the social system that ultimately lead to social revolution and the development of a new society upon the old" (1088). This cycle of contradiction, tension, and revolution must continue: there will always be conflict between the upper, middle, and lower (working) classes and this conflict will be reflected in literature and other forms of expression - art, music, movies, etc.

The Revolution

The continuing conflict between the classes will lead to upheaval and revolution by oppressed peoples and form the groundwork for a new order of society and economics where capitalism is abolished. According to Marx, the revolution will be led by the working class (others think peasants will lead the uprising) under the guidance of intellectuals. Once the elite and middle class are overthrown, the intellectuals will compose an equal society where everyone owns everything (socialism - not to be confused with Soviet or Maoist Communism).

Though a staggering number of different nuances exist within this school of literary theory, Marxist critics generally work in areas covered by the following questions.

Typical questions:

- Whom does it benefit if the work or effort is accepted/successful/believed, etc.?
- What is the social class of the author?
- Which class does the work claim to represent?
- What values does it reinforce?
- What values does it subvert?
- What conflict can be seen between the values the work champions and those it portrays?
- What social classes do the characters represent?
- How do characters from different classes interact or conflict?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Karl Marx - (with Friedrich Engels) *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848; *Das Kapital*, 1867; "Consciousness Derived from Material Conditions" from The German Ideology, 1932; "On Greek Art in Its Time" from *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859
- Leon Trotsky - "Literature and Revolution," 1923
- Georg Lukács - "The Ideology of Modernism," 1956
- Walter Benjamin - "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 1936
- Theodor W. Adorno
- Louis Althusser - *Reading Capital*, 1965
- Terry Eagleton - *Marxism and Literary Criticism, Criticism and Ideology*, 1976
- Frederic Jameson - *Marxism and Form, The Political Unconscious*, 1971

- Jürgen Habermas - *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 1990

Reader-Response Criticism (1960s-present)

What Do You Think?

At its most basic level, reader response criticism considers readers' reactions to literature as vital to interpreting the meaning of the text. However, reader-response criticism can take a number of different approaches. A critic deploying reader-response theory can use a psychoanalytic lens, a feminists lens, or even a structuralist lens. What these different lenses have in common when using a reader response approach is they maintain "...that what a text is cannot be separated from what it does" (Tyson 154).

Tyson explains that "...reader-response theorists share two beliefs: 1) that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and 2) that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text; rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature" (154). In this way, reader-response theory shares common ground with some of the deconstructionists discussed in the Post-structural area when they talk about "the death of the author," or her displacement as the (author)itarian figure in the text.

Typical questions:

- How does the interaction of text and reader create meaning?
- What does a phrase-by-phrase analysis of a short literary text, or a key portion of a longer text, tell us about the reading experience prestructured by (built into) that text?
- Do the sounds/shapes of the words as they appear on the page or how they are spoken by the reader enhance or change the meaning of the word/work?
- How might we interpret a literary text to show that the reader's response is, or is analogous to, the topic of the story?
- What does the body of criticism published about a literary text suggest about the critics who interpreted that text and/or about the reading experience produced by that text? (Tyson 191)

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Peter Rabinowitz - *Before Reading*, 1987
- Stanley Fish - *Is There a Text in This Class?-The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, 1980
- Elizabeth Freund - *The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism*, 1987
- David Bleich
- Norman Holland - *The Dynamics of Literary Response*, 1968
- Louise Rosenblatt

- Wolfgang Iser - *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, 1974
- Hans Rober Jauss

Structuralism and Semiotics (1920s-present)

Note: Structuralism, semiotics, and post-structuralism are some of the most complex literary theories to understand. Please be patient.

Linguistic Roots

The structuralist school emerges from theories of language and linguistics, and it looks for underlying elements in culture and literature that can be connected so that critics can develop general conclusions about the individual works and the systems from which they emerge. In fact, structuralism maintains that "...practically everything we do that is specifically human is expressed in language" (Richter 809). Structuralists believe that these language symbols extend far beyond written or oral communication.

For example, codes that represent all sorts of things permeate everything we do: "the performance of music requires complex notation...our economic life rests upon the exchange of labor and goods for symbols, such as cash, checks, stock, and certificates...social life depends on the meaningful gestures and signals of 'body language' and revolves around the exchange of small, symbolic favors: drinks, parties, dinners" (Richter 809).

Patterns and Experience

Structuralists assert that, since language exists in patterns, certain underlying elements are common to all human experiences. Structuralists believe we can observe these experiences through patterns: "...if you examine the physical structures of all buildings built in urban America in 1850 to discover the underlying principles that govern their composition, for example, principles of mechanical construction or of artistic form..." you are using a structuralist lens (Tyson 197).

Moreover, "you are also engaged in structuralist activity if you examine the structure of a single building to discover how its composition demonstrates underlying principles of a structural system. In the first example...you're generating a structural system of classification; in the second, you're demonstrating that an individual item belongs to a particular structural class" (Tyson 197).

Structuralism in Literary Theory

Structuralism is used in literary theory, for example, "...if you examine the structure of a large number of short stories to discover the underlying principles that govern their composition...principles of narrative progression...or of characterization...you are also engaged

in structuralist activity if you describe the structure of a single literary work to discover how its composition demonstrates the underlying principles of a given structural system" (Tyson 197-198).

Northrop Frye, however, takes a different approach to structuralism by exploring ways in which genres of Western literature fall into his four mythoi (also see Jungian criticism in the Freudian Literary Criticism resource):

1. theory of modes, or historical criticism (tragic, comic, and thematic);
2. theory of symbols, or ethical criticism (literal/descriptive, formal, mythical, and anagogic);
3. theory of myths, or archetypal criticism (comedy, romance, tragedy, irony/satire);
4. theory of genres, or rhetorical criticism (epos, prose, drama, lyric) (Tyson 240).

Peirce and Saussure

Two important theorists form the framework (hah) of structuralism: Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure. Peirce gave structuralism three important ideas for analyzing the sign systems that permeate and define our experiences:

1. "iconic signs, in which the signifier resembles the thing signified (such as the stick figures on washroom doors that signify 'Men' or 'Women';
2. indexes, in which the signifier is a reliable indicator of the presence of the signified (like fire and smoke);
3. true symbols, in which the signifier's relation to the thing signified is completely arbitrary and conventional [just as the sound /kat/ or the written word cat are conventional signs for the familiar feline]" (Richter 810).

These elements become very important when we move into deconstruction in the Postmodernism resource. Peirce also influenced the semiotic school of structuralist theory that uses sign systems.

Sign Systems

The discipline of semiotics plays an important role in structuralist literary theory and cultural studies. Semioticians "...appl[y] structuralist insights to the study of...sign systems...a non-linguistic object or behavior...that can be analyzed as if it were a language" (Tyson 205). Specifically, "...semiotics examines the ways non-linguistic objects and behaviors 'tell' us something.

For example, the picture of the reclining blond beauty in the skin-tight, black velvet dress on the billboard...'tells' us that those who drink this whiskey (presumably male) will be attractive to...beautiful women like the one displayed here" (Tyson 205). Lastly, Richter states, "semiotics takes off from Peirce - for whom language is one of numerous sign systems - and structuralism takes off from Saussure, for whom language was the sign system par excellence" (810).

Typical questions:

- Using a specific structuralist framework (like Frye's mythoi)...how should the text be classified in terms of its genre? In other words, what patterns exist within the text that make it a part of other works like it?
- Using a specific structuralist framework...analyze the text's narrative operations...can you speculate about the relationship between the...[text]... and the culture from which the text emerged? In other words, what patterns exist within the text that make it a product of a larger culture?
- What patterns exist within the text that connect it to the larger "human" experience? In other words, can we connect patterns and elements within the text to other texts from other cultures to map similarities that tell us more about the common human experience? This is a liberal humanist move that assumes that since we are all human, we all share basic human commonalities
- What rules or codes of interpretation must be internalized in order to 'make sense' of the text?
- What are the semiotics of a given category of cultural phenomena, or 'text,' such as high-school football games, television and/or magazine ads for a particular brand of perfume...or even media coverage of an historical event? (Tyson 225)

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Charles Sanders Peirce
- Ferdinand de Saussure - *Course in General Linguistics*, 1923
- Claude Lévi-Strauss - *The Elementary Structure of Kinship*, 1949; "The Structural Study of Myth," 1955
- Northrop Frye - *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1957
- Noam Chomsky - *Syntactic Structures*, 1957; *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, 1965
- Roland Barthes - *Critical Essays*, 1964; *Mythologies*, 1957; *S/Z*, 1970; *Image, Music, Text*, 1977
- Umberto Eco - *The Role of the Reader*, 1979

Postmodern Criticism

The Center Cannot Hold

This approach concerns itself with the ways and places where systems, frameworks, definitions, and certainties break down. Post-structuralism maintains that frameworks and systems, for example the structuralist systems explained in the Structuralist area, are merely fictitious constructs and that they cannot be trusted to develop meaning or to give order. In fact, the very

act of seeking order or a singular Truth (with a capital T) is absurd because there exists no unified truth.

Post-structuralism holds that there are many truths, that frameworks must bleed, and that structures must become unstable or decentered. Moreover, post-structuralism is also concerned with the power structures or hegemonies and power and how these elements contribute to and/or maintain structures to enforce hierarchy. Therefore, post-structural theory carries implications far beyond literary criticism.

What Does Your Meaning Mean?

By questioning the process of developing meaning, post-structural theory strikes at the very heart of philosophy and reality and throws knowledge making into what Jacques Derrida called "freeplay": "The concept of centered structure...is contradictorily coherent...the concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a freeplay which is constituted upon a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of the freeplay" (qtd. in Richter, 878-879).

Derrida first posited these ideas in 1966 at Johns Hopkins University, when he delivered "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences": "Perhaps something has occurred in the history of the concept of structure that could be called an 'event,' if this loaded word did not entail a meaning which it is precisely the function of structural-or structuralist-thought to reduce or to suspect. But let me use the term "event" anyway, employing it with caution and as if in quotation marks. In this sense, this event will have the exterior form of a rupture and a redoubling" (qtd. in Richter, 878). In his presentation, Derrida challenged structuralism's most basic ideas.

Can Language Do That?

Post-structural theory can be tied to a move against Modernist/Enlightenment ideas (philosophers: Immanuel Kant, Réne Descartes, John Locke, etc.) and Western religious beliefs (neo-Platonism, Catholicism, etc.). An early pioneer of this resistance was philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. In his essay, "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense" (1873), Nietzsche rejects even the very basis of our knowledge making, language, as a reliable system of communication: "The various languages, juxtaposed, show that words are never concerned with truth, never with adequate expression..." (248).

Below is an example, adapted from the Tyson text, of some language freeplay and a simple form of deconstruction:

```
Time (noun) flies (verb) like an arrow (adverb clause) = Time passes
quickly.
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Time (verb) flies (object) like an arrow (adverb clause) = Get out
your stopwatch and time the speed of flies as you would time an
arrow's flight.
Time flies (noun) like (verb) an arrow (object) = Time flies are fond
of arrows (or at least of one particular arrow).
```

So, post-structuralists assert that if we cannot trust language systems to convey truth, the very bases of truth are unreliable and the universe - or at least the universe we have constructed - becomes unraveled or de-centered. Nietzsche uses language slip as a base to move into the slip and shift of truth as a whole: “What is truth? …truths are an illusion about which it has been forgotten that they are illusions...” (On Truth and Lies 250).

This returns us to the discussion in the Structuralist area regarding signs, signifiers, and signified. Essentially, post-structuralism holds that we cannot trust the sign = signifier + signified formula, that there is a breakdown of certainty between sign/signifier, which leaves language systems hopelessly inadequate for relaying meaning so that we are (returning to Derrida) in eternal freeplay or instability.

What's Left?

Important to note, however, is that deconstruction is not just about tearing down - this is a common misconception. Derrida, in "Signature Event Context," addressed this limited view of post-structural theory: "Deconstruction cannot limit or proceed immediately to a neutralization: it must…practice an overturning of the classical opposition and a general displacement of the system. It is only on this condition that deconstruction will provide itself the means with which to intervene in the field of oppositions that it criticizes, which is also a field of nondiscursive forces" (328).

Derrida reminds us that through deconstruction we can identify the in-betweens and the marginalized to begin interstitial knowledge building.

Modernism vs Postmodernism

With the resistance to traditional forms of knowledge making (science, religion, language), inquiry, communication, and building meaning take on different forms to the post-structuralist. We can look at this difference as a split between Modernism and Postmodernism. The table below, excerpted from theorist Ihab Hassan's *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*(1998), offers us a way to make sense of some differences between modernism, dominated by Enlightenment ideas, and postmodernism, a space of freeplay and discourse.

Keep in mind that even the author, Hassan, "...is quick to point out how the dichotomies are themselves insecure, equivocal" (Harvey 42). Though post-structuralism is uncomfortable with binaries, Hassan provides us with some interesting contrasts to consider:

Modernism vs Postmodernism	
Modernism	***Postmodernism***
romanticism/symbolism	paraphysics/Dadaism
form (conjunctive, closed)	antiform (disjunctive, open)
purpose	play
design	chance
hierarchy	anarchy
mastery/logos	exhaustion/silence
art object/finished work/logos	process/performance/antithesis
centering	absence
genre/boundary	text/intertext
semantics	rhetoric
metaphor	metonymy
root/depth	rhizome/surface
signified	signifier
narrative/*grande histoire*	anti-narrative/*petite histoire*
genital/phallic	schizophrenia
origin/cause	difference-difference/trace
God the Father	The Holy Ghost
determinacy	interdeterminacy
transcendence	immanence

Post-Structuralism and Literature

If we are questioning/resisting the methods we use to build knowledge (science, religion, language), then traditional literary notions are also thrown into freeplay. These include the narrative and the author:

Narrative

The narrative is a fiction that locks readers into interpreting text in a single, chronological manner that does not reflect our experiences. Postmodern texts may not adhere to traditional notions of narrative. For example, in his seminal work, *Naked Lunch*, William S. Burroughs explodes the traditional narrative structure and critiques almost everything Modern: modern government, modern medicine, modern law-enforcement. Other examples of authors playing

with narrative include John Fowles; in the final sections of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Fowles steps outside his narrative to speak with the reader directly.

Moreover, grand narratives are resisted. For example, the belief that through science the human race will improve is questioned. In addition, metaphysics is questioned. Instead, postmodern knowledge building is local, situated, slippery, and self-critical (i.e. it questions itself and its role). Because post-structural work is self-critical, post-structural critics even look for ways texts contradict themselves (see typical questions below).

Author

The author is displaced as absolute author(ity), and the reader plays a role in interpreting the text and developing meaning (as best as possible) from the text. In "The Death of the Author," Roland Barthes argues that the idea of singular authorship is a recent phenomenon. Barthes explains that the death of the author shatters Modernist notions of authority and knowledge building (145).

Lastly, he states that once the author is dead and the Modernist idea of singular narrative (and thus authority) is overturned, texts become plural, and the interpretation of texts becomes a collaborative process between author and audience: "...a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue...but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader" (148). Barthes ends his essay by empowering the reader: "Classical criticism has never paid any attention to the reader...the writer is the only person in literature…it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (148).

Typical questions:

- How is language thrown into freeplay or questioned in the work? For example, note how Anthony Burgess plays with language (Russian vs English) in A Clockwork Orange, or how Burroughs plays with names and language in Naked Lunch.
- How does the work undermine or contradict generally accepted truths?
- How does the author (or a character) omit, change, or reconstruct memory and identity?
- How does a work fulfill or move outside the established conventions of its genre?
- How does the work deal with the separation (or lack thereof) between writer, work, and reader?
- What ideology does the text seem to promote?
- What is left out of the text that if included might undermine the goal of the work?
- If we changed the point of view of the text - say from one character to another, or multiple characters - how would the story change? Whose story is not told in the text? Who is left out and why might the author have omitted this character's tale?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

Theorists

- Immanuel Kant - "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?", 1784 (as a baseline to understand what Nietzsche was resisting)
- Friedrich Nietzsche - "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense," 1873; *The Gay Science*, 1882; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, A Book for All and None*, 1885
- Jacques Derrida - "Structure Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences," 1966;*Of Grammatology*, 1967; "Signature Even Context," 1972
- Roland Barthes - "The Death of the Author," 1967
- Deleuze and Guattari - "Rhizome," 1976
- Jean-François Lyotard - *The Postmodern Condition*, 1979
- Michele Foucault - *The Foucault Reader*, 1984
- Stephen Toulmin - *Cosmopolis*, 1990
- Martin Heidegger - Basic Writings, 1993
- Paul Cilliers - *Complexity and Postmodernity*, 1998
- Ihab Hassan - *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*, 1998; *From Postmodernism to Postmodernity: The Local/Global Context*, 2001

Postmodern Literature

- William S. Burroughs - *Naked Lunch*, 1959
- Angela Carter - *Burning Your Boats*, stories from 1962-1993 (first published as a collection in 1995)
- Kathy Acker - *Blood and Guts in High School*, 1978
- Paul Auster - *City of Glass* (volume one of the New York City Trilogy), 1985 (as a graphic novel published by Neon Lit, a division of Avon Books, 1994)
- Lynne Tillman - *Haunted Houses*, 1987
- David Wojnarowicz - *The Waterfront Journals*, 1996

New Historicism, Cultural Studies (1980s-present)

It's All Relative

This school, influenced by structuralist and post-structuralist theories, seeks to reconnect a work with the time period in which it was produced and identify it with the cultural and political movements of the time (Michel Foucault's concept of épistème). New Historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historic moment that created it. Specifically, New Historicism is "...a practice that has developed out of contemporary theory, particularly the structuralist realization that all human systems are symbolic and subject to the rules of language, and the

deconstructive realization that there is no way of positioning oneself as an observer outside the closed circle of textuality" (Richter 1205).

A helpful way of considering New Historical theory, Tyson explains, is to think about the retelling of history itself: "...questions asked by traditional historians and by new historicists are quite different...traditional historians ask, 'What happened?' and 'What does the event tell us about history?' In contrast, new historicists ask, 'How has the event been interpreted?' and 'What do the interpretations tell us about the interpreters?'" (278). So New Historicism resists the notion that "...history is a series of events that have a linear, causal relationship: event A caused event B; event B caused event C; and so on" (Tyson 278).

New historicists do not believe that we can look at history objectively, but rather that we interpret events as products of our time and culture and that "...we don't have clear access to any but the most basic facts of history...our understanding of what such facts mean...is...strictly a matter of interpretation, not fact" (279). Moreover, New Historicism holds that we are hopelessly subjective interpreters of what we observe.

Typical questions:

- What language/characters/events present in the work reflect the current events of the author's day?
- Are there words in the text that have changed their meaning from the time of the writing?
- How are such events interpreted and presented?
- How are events' interpretation and presentation a product of the culture of the author?
- Does the work's presentation support or condemn the event?
- Can it be seen to do both?
- How does this portrayal criticize the leading political figures or movements of the day?
- How does the literary text function as part of a continuum with other historical/cultural texts from the same period...?
- How can we use a literary work to "map" the interplay of both traditional and subversive discourses circulating in the culture in which that work emerged and/or the cultures in which the work has been interpreted?
- How does the work consider traditionally marginalized populations?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Michel Foucault - *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*, 1970;*Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, 1977
- Clifford Geertz - *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973; "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," 1992

- Hayden White - *Metahistory*, 1974; "The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation," 1982
- Stephen Greenblatt - *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, 1980
- Pierre Bourdieu - *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1977; *Homo Academicus*, 1984; *The Field of Cultural Production*, 1993

Post-Colonial Criticism (1990s-present)

History is Written by the Victors

Post-colonial criticism is similar to cultural studies, but it assumes a unique perspective on literature and politics that warrants a separate discussion. Specifically, post-colonial critics are concerned with literature produced by colonial powers and works produced by those who were/ are colonized. Post-colonial theory looks at issues of power, economics, politics, religion, and culture and how these elements work in relation to colonial hegemony (western colonizers controlling the colonized).

Therefore, a post-colonial critic might be interested in works such as Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe where colonial "...ideology [is] manifest in Crusoe's colonialist attitude toward the land upon which he's shipwrecked and toward the black man he 'colonizes' and names Friday" (Tyson 377). In addition, post-colonial theory might point out that "...despite Heart of Darkness's (Joseph Conrad) obvious anti-colonist agenda, the novel points to the colonized population as the standard of savagery to which Europeans are contrasted" (Tyson 375). Post-colonial criticism also takes the form of literature composed by authors that critique Euro-centric hegemony.

A Unique Perspective on Empire

Seminal post-colonial writers such as Nigerian author Chinua Achebe and Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o have written a number of stories recounting the suffering of colonized people. For example, in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe details the strife and devastation that occurred when British colonists began moving inland from the Nigerian coast.

Rather than glorifying the exploratory nature of European colonists as they expanded their sphere of influence, Achebe narrates the destructive events that led to the death and enslavement of thousands of Nigerians when the British imposed their Imperial government. In turn, Achebe points out the negative effects (and shifting ideas of identity and culture) caused by the imposition of western religion and economics on Nigerians during colonial rule.

Power, Hegemony, and Literature

Post-colonial criticism also questions the role of the western literary canon and western history as dominant forms of knowledge making. The terms "first-world," "second world," "third world" and "fourth world" nations are critiqued by post-colonial critics because they reinforce the

dominant positions of western cultures populating first world status. This critique includes the literary canon and histories written from the perspective of first-world cultures. So, for example, a post-colonial critic might question the works included in "the canon" because the canon does not contain works by authors outside western culture.

Moreover, the authors included in the canon often reinforce colonial hegemonic ideology, such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Western critics might consider Heart of Darkness an effective critique of colonial behavior. But post-colonial theorists and authors might disagree with this perspective: "...as Chinua Achebe observes, the novel's condemnation of European is based on a definition of Africans as savages: beneath their veneer of civilization, the Europeans are, the novel tells us, as barbaric as the Africans. And indeed, Achebe notes, the novel portrays Africans as a pre-historic mass of frenzied, howling, incomprehensible barbarians..." (Tyson 374-375).

Typical questions:

- How does the literary text, explicitly or allegorically, represent various aspects of colonial oppression?
- What does the text reveal about the problematics of post-colonial identity, including the relationship between personal and cultural identity and such issues as double consciousness and hybridity?
- What person(s) or groups does the work identify as "other" or stranger? How are such persons/groups described and treated?
- What does the text reveal about the politics and/or psychology of anti-colonialist resistance?
- What does the text reveal about the operations of cultural difference - the ways in which race, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs, and customs combine to form individual identity - in shaping our perceptions of ourselves, others, and the world in which we live?
- How does the text respond to or comment upon the characters, themes, or assumptions of a canonized (colonialist) work?
- Are there meaningful similarities among the literatures of different post-colonial populations?
- How does a literary text in the Western canon reinforce or undermine colonialist ideology through its representation of colonialization and/or its inappropriate silence about colonized peoples? (Tyson 378-379)

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

Criticism

- Edward Said - *Orientalism*, 1978; *Culture and Imperialism*, 1994
- Kamau Braithwaite - *The History of the Voice*, 1979
- Gayatri Spivak - *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, 1987
- Dominick LaCapra - *The Bounds of Race: Perspectives on Hegemony and Resistance*, 1991
- Homi Bhabha - *The Location of Culture*, 1994

Literature and non-fiction

- Chinua Achebe - *Things Fall Apart*, 1958
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o - *The River Between*, 1965
- Sembene Ousman - *God's Bits of Wood*, 1962
- Ruth Prawer Jhabvala - *Heat and Dust*, 1975
- Buchi Emecheta - *The Joys of Motherhood*, 1979
- Keri Hulme - *The Bone People*, 1983
- Robertson Davies - *What's Bred in the Bone*, 1985
- Kazuo Ishiguro - *The Remains of the Day*, 1988
- Bharati Mukherjee - *Jasmine*, 1989
- Jill Ker Conway - *The Road from Coorain*, 1989
- Helena Norberg-Hodge - *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*, 1991
- Michael Ondaatje - *The English Patient*, 1992
- Gita Mehta - *A River Sutra*, 1993
- Arundhati Roy - *The God of Small Things*, 1997
- Patrick Chamoiseau - *Texaco*, 1997

Feminist Criticism (1960s-present)

S/he

Feminist criticism is concerned with "...the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women" (Tyson). This school of theory looks at how aspects of our culture are inherently patriarchal (male dominated) and "...this critique strives to expose the explicit and implicit misogyny in male writing about women" (Richter 1346). This misogyny, Tyson reminds us, can extend into diverse areas of our culture: "Perhaps the most chilling example...is found in the world of modern medicine, where drugs prescribed for both sexes often have been tested on male subjects only" (83).

Feminist criticism is also concerned with less obvious forms of marginalization such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon: "...unless the critical or historical

point of view is feminist, there is a tendency to under-represent the contribution of women writers" (Tyson 82-83).

Common Space in Feminist Theories

Though a number of different approaches exist in feminist criticism, there exist some areas of commonality. This list is excerpted from Tyson:

1. Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically; patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which they are kept so
2. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other: she is marginalized, defined only by her difference from male norms and values
3. All of western (Anglo-European) civilization is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideology, for example, in the biblical portrayal of Eve as the origin of sin and death in the world
4. While biology determines our sex (male or female), culture determines our gender (masculine or feminine)
5. All feminist activity, including feminist theory and literary criticism, has as its ultimate goal to change the world by prompting gender equality
6. Gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the production and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not (91).

Feminist criticism has, in many ways, followed what some theorists call the three waves of feminism:

1. **First Wave Feminism** - late 1700s-early 1900's: writers like Mary Wollstonecraft (*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792) highlight the inequalities between the sexes. Activists like Susan B. Anthony and Victoria Woodhull contribute to the women's suffrage movement, which leads to National Universal Suffrage in 1920 with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment
2. **Second Wave Feminism** - early 1960s-late 1970s: building on more equal working conditions necessary in America during World War II, movements such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), formed in 1966, cohere feminist political activism. Writers like Simone de Beauvoir (*Le deuxième sexe*, 1972) and Elaine Showalter established the groundwork for the dissemination of feminist theories dove-tailed with the American Civil Rights movement
3. **Third Wave Feminism** - early 1990s-present: resisting the perceived essentialist (over generalized, over simplified) ideologies and a white, heterosexual, middle class focus of second wave feminism, third wave feminism borrows from post-structural and contemporary gender and race theories (see below) to expand on marginalized populations' experiences. Writers like Alice Walker work to "...reconcile it [feminism] with the concerns of the black community...[and] the survival and wholeness of her people, men and women both, and for the promotion of dialog and community as well as for the valorization of women and of all the varieties of work women perform" (Tyson 97).

Typical questions:

- How is the relationship between men and women portrayed?

- What are the power relationships between men and women (or characters assuming male/female roles)?
- How are male and female roles defined?
- What constitutes masculinity and femininity?
- How do characters embody these traits?
- Do characters take on traits from opposite genders? How so? How does this change others' reactions to them?
- What does the work reveal about the operations (economically, politically, socially, or psychologically) of patriarchy?
- What does the work imply about the possibilities of sisterhood as a mode of resisting patriarchy?
- What does the work say about women's creativity?
- What does the history of the work's reception by the public and by the critics tell us about the operation of patriarchy?
- What role the work play in terms of women's literary history and literary tradition? (Tyson)

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Mary Wollstonecraft - *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792
- Simone de Beauvoir - *Le deuxième sexe*, 1972
- Julia Kristeva - *About Chinese Women*, 1977
- Elaine Showalter - *A Literature of Their Own*, 1977; "Toward a Feminist Poetics," 1979
- Deborah E. McDowell - "New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism," 1980
- Alice Walker - *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, 1983
- Lillian S. Robinson - "Treason out Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon," 1983
- Camile Paglia - *Sexual Personae: The Androgyne in Literature and Art*, 1990

Gender Studies and Queer Theory (1970s-present)

Gender(s), Power, and Marginalization

Gender studies and queer theory explore issues of sexuality, power, and marginalized populations (woman as other) in literature and culture. Much of the work in gender studies and queer theory, while influenced by feminist criticism, emerges from post-structural interest in fragmented, de-centered knowledge building (Nietzsche, Derrida, Foucault), language (the breakdown of sign-signifier), and psychoanalysis (Lacan).

A primary concern in gender studies and queer theory is the manner in which gender and sexuality is discussed: "Effective as this work [feminism] was in changing what teachers taught and what the students read, there was a sense on the part of some feminist critics that...it was

still the old game that was being played, when what it needed was a new game entirely. The argument posed was that in order to counter patriarchy, it was necessary not merely to think about new texts, but to think about them in radically new ways" (Richter 1432).

Therefore, a critic working in gender studies and queer theory might even be uncomfortable with the binary established by many feminist scholars between masculine and feminine: "Cixous (following Derrida in *Of Grammatology*) sets up a series of binary oppositions (active/passive, sun/moon...father/mother, logos/pathos). Each pair can be analyzed as a hierarchy in which the former term represents the positive and masculine and the latter the negative and feminine principle" (Richter 1433-1434).

In-Betweens

Many critics working with gender and queer theory are interested in the breakdown of binaries such as male and female, the in-betweens (also following Derrida's interstitial knowledge building). For example, gender studies and queer theory maintains that cultural definitions of sexuality and what it means to be male and female are in flux: "...the distinction between "masculine" and "feminine" activities and behavior is constantly changing, so that women who wear baseball caps and fatigues...can be perceived as more piquantly sexy by some heterosexual men than those women who wear white frocks and gloves and look down demurely" (Richter 1437).

Moreover, Richter reminds us that as we learn more about our genetic structure, the biology of male/female becomes increasingly complex and murky: "even the physical dualism of sexual genetic structures and bodily parts breaks down when one considers those instances - XXY syndromes, natural sexual bimorphisms, as well as surgical transsexuals - that defy attempts at binary classification" (1437).

Typical questions:

- What elements of the text can be perceived as being masculine (active, powerful) and feminine (passive, marginalized) and how do the characters support these traditional roles?
- What sort of support (if any) is given to elements or characters who question the masculine/feminine binary? What happens to those elements/characters?
- What elements in the text exist in the middle, between the perceived masculine/feminine binary? In other words, what elements exhibit traits of both (bisexual)?
- How does the author present the text? Is it a traditional narrative? Is it secure and forceful? Or is it more hesitant or even collaborative?
- What are the politics (ideological agendas) of specific gay, lesbian, or queer works, and how are those politics revealed in...the work's thematic content or portrayals of its characters?

- What are the poetics (literary devices and strategies) of a specific lesbian, gay, or queer works?
- What does the work contribute to our knowledge of queer, gay, or lesbian experience and history, including literary history?
- How is queer, gay, or lesbian experience coded in texts that are by writers who are apparently homosexual?
- What does the work reveal about the operations (socially, politically, psychologically) homophobic?
- How does the literary text illustrate the problematics of sexuality and sexual "identity," that is the ways in which human sexuality does not fall neatly into the separate categories defined by the words homosexual and heterosexual?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Luce Irigaray - *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1974
- Hélène Cixous - "The Laugh of the Medussa," 1976
- Laura Mulvey - "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 1975; "Afterthoughts on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 1981
- Michele Foucault - *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I, 1980
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick - *Epistemology of the Closet*, 1994
- Lee Edelman - "Homographies," 1989
- Michael Warner
- Judith Butler - "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," 1991

Taken from Purdue OWL

Essay Analysis: Practice

Essay Analysis • What to Look for

Imagery • Sensory Details • Symbols • Allusions • Words/Phrases • Effect/Intent	• What sensory information is in the language (i.e., colour, scents, sounds, tastes, or textures)? • Drawing examples from the text, explain what the author is trying to convey through the use of imagery. • Are these images part of a larger pattern or structure within the text (e.g., does it connect to one of the major themes)? • What figures of speech–metaphors, similes, analogies, personification–does the writer use? How do they affect the meaning of the text? What is the author trying to accomplish by using them?

Diction
• Types
• Slang
• Colloquial
• Jargon
• Dialect
• Concrete
• Abstract
• Denotation
• Connotation
	• Which of the following categories best describes the diction in the passage or text?
	  • Low or informal (e.g., dialect, slang, or jargon)
	  • Elevated or formal language
	  • Abstract and concrete diction
	  • Denotation and connotation
	• What effect is the author trying to achieve through the use of a specific type of diction?
	• What does the author's use of diction suggest about his or her attitude toward the subject, event, or character?
	• What are the connotations of a given word used in a particular context? (To *begin*, you might ask if the word(s) have a positive or negative connotation, then consider them in the specific context.)
	• What words would best describe the diction in a specific passage or the text in general?

Syntax
Sentence Structure
• Simple
• Compound
• Complex
• Compound-Complex
Sentence Patterns
see next table
• Loose/Cumulative
• Periodic
• Balanced
• Chiasmus
• Asyndeton
• Polysyndeton
• Anaphora
• Epistrophe
• Parallelism
• Inversion
• Repetition
• Interruption
• Juxtaposition
• Declarative
• Imperative
• Interrogative
• Exclamatory
	• *Punctuation*: How does the author punctuate the sentence and to what extent does the punctuation affect the meaning?
	• *Structure*: How are words/phrases arranged within the sentence? What is the author trying to accomplish through this arrangement?
	• *Changes*: Are there places where the syntax clearly changes? If so, where, how, and why?
	• *Sentence length*: How many words are in the different sentences? Do you notice any pattern (e.g., a cluster of short sentences of a particular type)?
	• *Devices*: How would you describe the author's use of the following:
	  • Independent and dependent clauses
	  • Coordinating, subordinating, or correlative conjunctions
	  • Repetition
	  • Parallelism
	  • Fragments
	  • Comparisons
	• *Sentence beginnings*: How does the author begin his or her sentences? Does the author, for example, consistently begin with introductory phrases or clauses?
	• *Language*: What use does the author make of figurative language or colloquial expressions?
	• How does the author use syntax to enhance the meaning of the essay?

Tone and Audience • Word Choice • Details • Imagery	• How does the author's use of words, imagery, or details such as gesture or allusions reveal the author's attitude toward a character or event in the story? • What words best describe the author's attitude toward this subject, character, or event? • Using evidence from the text, explain the author's intended audience.

Types of Writing • Narrative • Persuasive • Expository • Descriptive • Compare/Contrast • Importance • Chronology • Cause-Effect • Critical Analysis	• *Exposition*: Is the author defining, comparing, classifying, analyzing (a process), describing, or narrating? • *Persuasion*: Is the author arguing about what something means, whether something is true, which alternative is best (or most important), or what course of action someone should take? • *General*: What is the author trying to accomplish? How is the writer using e.g., narrative, to solve that problem? • Are there places where the author blends or alternates between different writing patterns? If so, what is the author trying to accomplish by mixing them in these ways? • In what ways do you think the author's "type of writing" is effective? Why?

Sentence Patterns	
Anaphora	The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.
Asyndeton	The omission or absence of a conjunction between parts of a sentence. **Example:** "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty" (John F. Kenndy).
Balanced	A sentence that employs parallel structures of approximately the same length and importance.
Chiasmus	A rhetorical or literary figure in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order, in the same or a modified form. **Example:** "Ask not what *your country* can do for *you*–ask what *you* can do for *your country*" (John F. Kennedy).
Declarative	A sentence or phrase taking the form of a simple statement.
Epistrophe	The repetition of a word at the end of successive clauses or sentences.
Exclamatory	A sudden cry or remark, especially one expressing surprise, anger, or pain.
Imperative	A sentence or phrase expressing a command or exhortation.
Interrogative	A sentence or phrase conveying the force of a question.
Inversion	The reversal of the normal order of words, typically for rhetorical effect but also found in the regular formation of questions in English.
Juxtaposition	Two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect.
Loose/Cumulative	A sentence in which the main idea (independent clause) is elaborated by the successive addition of modifying clauses or phrases.
Parallelism	The use of successive verbal constructions in poetry or prose that correspond in grammatical structure, sound, meter, meaning, etc.
Periodic	A stylistic sentence that is not complete grammatically or semantically before the final clause or phrase.
Polysyndeton	The use of several conjunctions in close succession between parts of a sentence, especially where some could otherwise be omitted. **Example:** "So we'll live *and* pray, *and* sing, *and* tell old tales, *and* laugh at gilded butterflies, *and* hear poor rogues talk of court news, *and* we'll talk with them too" (*King Lear*, 5.3.11-15).
Repetition	The simple repeating of a word or phrase, within a sentence or a poetic line, with no particular placement of the words, in order to secure emphasis.

Logical Fallacies

Fallacies are defects that weaken arguments. By learning to look for them in your own and others' writing, you can strengthen your ability to evaluate the arguments you make, read, and hear. Fallacies are very, very common, and can be quite persuasive, at least to the casual reader or listener. You can find dozens of examples of fallacies in newspapers, advertisements, and other sources. To write a convincing argument, try to avoid the following pitfalls in logical thinking.

Term	Definition
Hasty Generalizations	Arriving at a conclusion without enough evidence. Stereotypes about people (Asian-American students are better in math. French people are more romantic. Frat boys are drunkards. Grad students are nerdy, etc.). **Example:** *My roommate said her Philosophy class was hard, and the one I'm in is hard, too. All Philosophy classes must be hard!"*
Circular Reasoning	Restating in different words what has already been stated. **Example:** *Dieting is hard because consuming fewer calories is hard.*
Post Hoc/False Cause	Assuming that because B comes after A, A caused B. **Examples:** *When I sat down at the computer it stopped working, so I must have done something wrong. "President Jones raised taxes, and then the rate of violent crime went up. Jones is responsible for the rise in violent crime."*
Slippery Slope	Assumes a chain of cause-effect relationships with very suspect connections. **Example:** *Because I failed my exam, my parents were mad, I lost my wallet, my car wouldn't start, and I got fired.*
Non Sequitur	The first part of the idea does not relate to the other. **Example:** *I did well in school because I always wore nice clothes.*
False Dichotomy	Suggesting only two alternatives when the issue may have many alternatives. **Example:** *"Caldwell Hall is in bad shape. Either we tear it down and put up a new building, or we continue to risk students' safety. Obviously we shouldn't risk anyone's safety, so we must tear the building down." The argument neglects to mention the possibility that we might repair the building.*
False Authority	Draws attention away from the evidence and leans on the popularity of someone who may have little knowledge of the issue or product. **Example:** *"We should abolish the death penalty. Many respected people, such as actor Guy Handsome, have publicly stated their opposition to it." While Guy Handsome may be an authority on matters having to do with acting, there's no particular reason why anyone should be moved by his political opinions–he is probably no more of an authority on the death penalty than the person writing the paper.*
Ad Hominem ("against the person")	Attacking the person instead of the idea. **Example:** *Don't vote for Jerry Brown; he's a left-wing fanatic, a throwback to the 60s who meditates and eats health foods.*
Ad Populum ("to the people")	Claiming that most people agree so it must be right. **Example:** "*Canada should change its immigration policies. 70% of Canadians think so!" The arguer is trying to get us to agree with the conclusion by appealing to our desire to fit in with other Canadians.*
Tu Quoque ("you too!")	Attacking the person instead of the idea because the person has actually done the thing he or she is arguing against, so the arguments shouldn't be listened to. **Example:** *"Johnny's parents have explained to him why he shouldn't smoke, mentioning the damage to his health, the cost, and so forth. Johnny replies that he won't accept their argument because they used to smoke." The fact that his parents have done the thing they are condemning has no bearing on the premises they put forward in their argument (smoking harms your health and is very expensive).*
Appeal to Pity	When an arguer tries to get people to accept a conclusion by evoking pity for someone. **Example:** *"It's wrong to tax corporations–think of all the money they give to charity, and of the costs they already pay to run their businesses!"*
Appeal to Ignorance	Arguing that because there is no conclusive evidence on an issue, the arguer's conclusion should be accepted. **Example:** *"There has been no research conducted on pregnant women taking allergy medicine, and there have been no negative side effects shown in pregnant women. Therefore, it is safe for pregnant women to take allergy medicine."*
Weak Analogy	When arguments rely on an analogy comparing two things that aren't really alike in the relevant aspects. **Example:** *"Guns are like hammers–they're both tools with metal parts that could be used to kill someone. And yet it would be ridiculous to restrict the purchase of hammers–so restrictions on purchasing guns are equally ridiculous."*

Logical Fallacies

Term	Definition
Missing the Point	The premises of an argument do support a particular conclusion–but not the conclusion that the arguer actually draws. **Example:** *"The seriousness of a punishment should match the seriousness of the crime. Right now, the punishment for drunk driving may simply be a fine. But drunk driving is a very serious crime that can kill innocent people. So the death penalty should be the punishment for drunk driving." The argument actually supports several conclusions–"The punishment for drunk driving should be very serious," in particular–but it doesn't support the claim that the death penalty, specifically, is warranted.*
Red Herring	Partway through an argument, the arguer goes off on a tangent, raising a side issue that distracts the audience from the main argument. Often, the arguer never returns to the original issue. **Example:** *"The criminal won't say where he was on the night of the crime, but he does remember being teased relentlessly as a child."*
Equivocation	Sliding between two or more different meanings of a single word or phrase that is important to the argument. **Example:** *"Giving money to charity is the right thing to do. So charities have a right to our money." The equivocation here is on the word "right": "right" can mean both something that is correct or good (as in "I got the right answers on the test") and something to which someone has a claim (as in "everyone has a right to life").*
Stacking the Deck	Giving a slanted view of the issue by focusing only on one side. **Example:** I deserve to get an A in the class because I like the teacher, work hard, and attend class.

How Do I Find Fallacies In My Own Writing?

- Pretend you disagree with the conclusion you're defending. What parts of the argument would now seem fishy to you? What parts would seem easiest to attack? Give special attention to strengthening those parts.

- List your main points; under each one, list the evidence you have for it. Seeing your claims and evidence laid out this way may make you realize that you have no good evidence for a particular claim, or it may help you look more critically at the evidence you're using.

- Learn which types of fallacies you're especially prone to, and be careful to check for them in your work. Some writers make lots of appeals to authority; others are more likely to rely on weak analogies or set up straw men. Read over some of your old papers to see if there's a particular kind of fallacy you need to watch out for.

- Be aware that broad claims need more proof than narrow ones. Claims that use sweeping words like "all," "no," "none," "every," "always," "never," "no one," and "everyone" are sometimes appropriate–but they require a lot more proof than less-sweeping claims that use words like "some," "many," "few," "sometimes," "usually," and so forth.

- Double check your characterizations of others, especially your opponents, to be sure they are accurate and fair.

You should be familiar with the elements of the essay, as well as the following terms:

Abstract/Concrete	**Abstract** is theoretical, relying more on generalities than on specific facts. Abstract writing tends to lack interest and force, because it is difficult to understand and difficult to apply. **Concrete** is factual and specific, relying more on particular examples than on abstract theory. Concrete language makes writing more forceful, interesting and convincing by recreating vividly for the reader what the writer has experienced or thought. Sense images, anecdotes, figures of speech and conciseness all play a part in concrete language and are generally lacking in its opposite, abstract language.
Allusion	An indirect reference to a passage in literature or scripture, an event, a person, or anything else with which the reader is thought to be familiar. An allusion is a device of compression in language, for in a few words it summons up the meaning of the thing to which it refers, and applies that meaning to the subject at hand. Critics of big government, for example, will often allude to Big Brother, the personification of governmental tyranny in George Orwell's novel *1984*.
Anecdote	A short account of an interesting and amusing incident. An anecdote can be a joke or a true story about others or oneself and is often used as an example to introduce an essay, close an essay, or illustrate points within an essay.
Bias Words	Terms which, either subtly or openly, encourage strong value judgement. Subjective language is a vital ingredient of much good writing, especially in description and in persuasion; to avoid it altogether would be both impossible and undesirable. The important thing is to avoid blatantly loaded language in an essay: words like "Commie," "slob," "cretin," "Newfie" or "ex-con" will inflame an uncritical reader and offend a critical one. Note that many bias words are also slang.
Colloquial/Slang	**Colloquial** is speech-like. Colloquial expressions like "cop," "guy," "kid," "nitty gritty" and "okay" are often used in conversation but are usually avoided in essays, especially formal essays. Although they are lively, colloquialisms are often inexact: "guy," for example, can refer to a person or a rope, and "kid" can refer to a child or a goat. **Slang** is racy, unconventional language often limited to a certain time, place or group. Slang is the extreme of colloquial language, terminology used in conversation but hardly ever in an essay except for dialogue or special effects. One reason to avoid a slang term is that not everyone will know it: expressions like "swell," "square" and "far out" have gone out of use, while expressions like "bug juice," "croaker," "jointman" and "rounder" are known to only one group – in this case, convicts.
Conciseness	The art of conveying the most meaning in the fewest words. A concise essay does not explain its topic less fully than a wordy one; it just uses words more efficiently. Concise writers get straight to the point and stay on topic. They are well enough organized to avoid repeating themselves. They give concrete examples rather than pages of abstract argument. They use a short word unless a long one is more exact. And most concise writers, to achieve these goals, revise extensively.
Deduction/Induction	**Deduction** is a kind of logic that accepts a general principle as true, then uses it to explain a specific case or cases. **Example:** major premise, minor premise, conclusion – Men are mortal. Sam is a man. Sam is mortal. **Induction** is a kind of logic that derives a general principle from the evidence of specific examples. **Example:** One observes and reports on a case(s) and then formulates a general rule. Deductions and inductions may be valid or invalid.
Dialogue/Prose	The quoted conversation of two or more people. Normally a new paragraph begins with each change of speaker, to avoid confusion as to who says what. A certain amount of dialogue can lend colour to an essay, but heavy use of it is normally reserved for fiction and drama.
Euphemism	A polite expression that softens or even conceals the truth: "pass away" for "die," "senior citizens" for "old people," "low-income neighbourhood" for "slum," "gosh darn" for "God Damn," "perspire" for "sweat," "eliminate" for "kill," and "de-hire" or "select out" for "fire." Euphemisms are becoming more and more common in uses ranging from personal kindness to advertising to political repression.
Figures of Speech (literary & poetic devices	Descriptive and often poetic devices in which meaning is concentrated and heightened, usually through comparisons. **Examples:** simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, irony, connotations, denotations.
Formal/Informal	**Formal** writing is deliberate and dignified. It avoids partial sentences, most (all) contractions, colloquial expressions and slang. Instead its vocabulary is standard and its sentences are often long and qualified with dependent clauses. In general it follows the accepted rules of grammar and principles of style. **Informal** writing resembles speech and, in fact, is often a representation of speech in writing. It may contain partial sentences, many short sentences, contractions, colloquial expressions and sometimes slang.
Juxtaposition (contrast)	The deliberate placing together of two or more thoughts, images or other elements that emphasize each other, usually by contrast.
Paradox	A statement that seems illogical but that in some unexpected way may be true. The Bible is full of paradoxes, as in "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Sarcasm/Satire	**Sarcasm** is scornful and contemptuous criticism, from the Greek word *sarkazein* ("to tear flesh"). **Satire** is humorous criticism meant to improve an individual or society by exposing abuses. In tone, satire can range from light humour to bitter criticism. Its chief tools are wit, irony, exaggeration, and sometimes sarcasm and ridicule.
Subjective/Objective	**Subjective** is the opposite of objective. In subjective writing the author relies more on intuitions, prejudices or interpretations than on hard evidence or logical proof. **Objective** is the opposite of subjective. In objective writing the author relies more on hard evidence and logical proof than on intuitions, prejudices or interpretations.
Symbol/Allegory	**Symbol** is when one thing stands for another, as in a flag representing a country, the cross representing Christianity, or a logo representing a company. Symbols appear frequently in poetry, drama, fiction and also essays. **Allegory** in poetry or prose, is a passage or an entire work that has two levels of meaning: literal and symbolic. Like a parable, an allegory draws such numerous or striking parallels between its literal subject and its implied subject that, without ever stating "the moral of the story," it leads us to perceive a moral or philosophical truth. An allegory, however, is longer and more complex than a parable. It also differs from an analogy in that it does not openly identify and compare the two subjects.
Tone	The manner of a writer toward the subject and reader. The tone of an essay can be light or serious, informal or formal, ironic or literal. Tone is often determined by subject matter; for example an essay about cocktail parties is likely to be lighter and less formal than one about funerals. An innovative writer, though, could reverse these treatments to give each of the essays an ironic tone. The identity of the reader also influences tone. An essay for specialists to read in a technical journal will tend to be more objective and serious than one written for the general reader. The main point for the writer is to choose the tone most appropriate to a particular essay, then maintain it throughout.
Transitions	A word, phrase, sentence or paragraph that moves the reader from one part of the essay to the next. Transitions even as short as "next," "then," "as a result," "on the other hand," "in conclusion" or "finally" are crucial not only to moving the argument along, but also to pointing out its logic.

Definitions from *The Act of Writing: Canadian Essays for Composition, Fourth Edition* by Ronald Conrad.

Analyzing Essays

As a class, we will read 5-6 essays and analyze each extensively. As you read each essay you should be talking notes that would answer the following questions in order to be prepared for a class discussion. This analysis work will prepare you for the essay midterm test. It is imperative that you answer each question in depth and include the "why's."

- What is the thesis?
- Identify at least 3 arguments that support this thesis
- Identify the style of writing by explaining the **significance** of the language used (types of sentences; vocabulary; punctuation) and use examples to clarify
- Identify and explain the **significance** of any literary/rhetorical devices found in the essay
- Explain the degree of effectiveness of this essay and give specific reasons why

All responses should be written on lined paper in your notebooks.

Writers use imagery to appeal to the senses. They do this by adding details about color, texture, scent, and so forth. The same idea can often be presented in different ways, to appeal to different senses.

The sentence below gives a straightforward description of an event. Rewrite the sentence five times, using words that appeal to each of the five senses: hearing, smell, touch, taste, and sight.

As the snow fell, she walked down the street with a cup of hot chocolate.

Hearing: _____

Smell: _____

Touch: _____

Taste: _____

Sight: _____

Read the paragraph below. Notice that it is devoid of vivid imagery! After you have read the paragraph, think about ways the author could have enticed a reader by including descriptive language. Then rewrite the paragraph using imagery. Try to appeal to all a reader's senses. But remember, too much imagery can seem forced or can bore the reader.

Yesterday, we walked down to the pond. It was hot outside. We went swimming in the water. Inez did a cannonball off the dock. We swam for hours. We ate sandwiches under a tree. Then we took a walk. At the end of the day, bugs started biting us. We headed home, just in time to see the sun setting.

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From Walch Publishing 2005

Essays for Analysis Practice

Essays "Blasting Music to Drown Out Reality" • Sydney J. Harris

The contractor sent around two sullen, slack-jawed young assistants to do some repair work on the tennis court across the road. They brought with them, inevitably, as standard equipment for the job, a powerful portable radio which kept blasting away for a full afternoon.

Call me any ugly word you will, such as snobbish or elitist, it remains my firm and unshakeable opinion that such people are as close to the moronic line as it is possible to get and still function in a social order. The tolerance for a high decibel rate, masquerading as "music," is in my opinion inversely proportional to the level of intelligence.

I can understand the need for what my children call elevator music in some factories or even restaurants, to keep the help from falling asleep or brooding on the essential monotony of their jobs. It is less pardonable in dentists' offices and such, but there it is at least relatively soft and easily ignored.

But these young men are working in August among grass and flowers and birds and birch trees, with a lovely view of the water and the cliffs and everything you might want to feast your senses on; instead, they anesthetized themselves with the junkiest of junk music throughout this God-given afternoon in a serenely sylvan setting.

My own theory is that people such as that turn on the radio not to bring something in, but to shut something out. It is not in order to hear the music, but in order that the vacuum in their minds may be soothed by sound, so that silence does not force them into thinking about themselves or experiencing the real world of perception and sensation.

And basically, what they want to shut out is the reality of their existence. This urge, almost a compulsion, to keep reality at arm's length is nearly pandemic in our society. It accounts not only for the incessant frenetic music, but also for the drugs, the booze, the sports mania, the television addiction, the intense preoccupation with trivia— all of which act as opiates, dulling any sense of reality.

Marx's harsh dictum of the last century can almost be turned upside down today to read: "Opium is the religion of the people." And nowhere—not even in drugs or booze—can this be more clearly seen than in the kind of music spewing forth from portables and automobile radios and most hi-fi sets.

Music began as a celebration of nature and an exploration of the human spirit. Bach elevates us, Mozart delights us, Beethoven deepens us; all bring us closer to the wellsprings of life. Now this great gift has been turned against itself, blasting forth a cacophony to dull and deaden and dehumanize the soul.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Title: _____ **Author:** _____

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1b. Is it implicit or explicit? _____

2. State **three arguments** from the essay that support the thesis.

Argument #1

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Argument #2

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Argument #3

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***** Do not forget to provide the parenthetical citation for all examples and quotations. *****

Essay Analysis Unit • Imagery

1. What sensory information is in the language (i.e., colour, scents, sounds, tastes, or textures)? Drawing examples from the text, explain what the author is trying to convey through the use of imagery.

2. Are these images part of a larger pattern or structure within the text (i.e., so they connect to one of the major themes)?

3. What figures of speech – similes, metaphors, analogies, personification – does the writer use? Choose 2 examples and explain how they affect the meaning of the text and what the author is trying to accomplish by using them.

   A. Example

Explanation

   B. Example

Explanation

Denotation and Connotation • Connotation Chart

Denotation: the dictionary definition of a word.

Connotation: the emotional associations a word has for its readers (i.e., the denotation of home is the place one lives, while the connotation of home is safety, security, belonging, and comfort).

Word	Connotation
EARTH	
ROSE	
MOTHER	
FATHER	
CAT	
DOG	
BLACK	
RED	
BLUE	

Connotation Ranking

Group 1
Thin, slim, lanky, skinny, gaunt, slender, beanpole, fit
Group 2
Aggressive, assertive, domineering, dynamic, pushy, forceful, controlling
Group 3
Shrewd, egghead, bright, clever, brilliant, cunning, smart, intelligent, brainy, nerd
Group 4
Thrifty, penny-pinching, conscientious shopper, frugal, cheap

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For each word, write a list of connotations. After you have compiled your list of connotations, rank each word from the word with the most positive connotation to the word with the most negative connotation.

Group 1
Thin, slim, lanky, skinny, gaunt, slender, beanpole, fit

For each word, write a list of connotations. After you have compiled your list of connotations, rank each word from the word with the most positive connotation to the word with the most negative connotation.

Group 2
Aggressive, assertive, domineering, dynamic, pushy, forceful, controlling

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For each word, write a list of connotations. After you have compiled your list of connotations, rank each word from the word with the most positive connotation to the word with the most negative connotation.

Group 3
Shrewd, egghead, bright, clever, brilliant, cunning, smart, intelligent, brainy, nerd

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For each word, write a list of connotations. After you have compiled your list of connotations, rank each word from the word with the most positive connotation to the word with the most negative connotation.

Group 4
Thrifty, penny-pinching, conscientious shopper, frugal, cheap

Guided Writing • Connotation and Imagery

Instructions:

This activity is to make something you find disgusting sound beautiful.

Think of something–an object or an action–that is ugly or repulsive. Describe this thing in such a way that the reader will either begin to see it as beautiful or will believe that the narrator truly believes it is beautiful. Do not resort to falsehood.

This is an activity for using descriptive language.

Examples:

It sits serenely against a black and yellow backdrop, basking in the sunlight. Pouring forth the true essence of life, in and of itself forms a utopia for those small children of the earth. Its aromas, alluring to so many, waft up and carry on the wind to far and wide. Its intricate workings exposed as a brilliant sunburst for all to see against its plain surroundings. Others may rush and hurry away from what they see as repulsive, but I am saddened to be able to revel only so briefly in the presence of roadkill, for I must continue driving to my ultimate destination.

The droplets, suspended in the air, are like millions of little prisms, reflecting the light. They sprinkle down upon me and it feels as if I have been in a gentle rain. The gust of air that comes next is simply divine. It is calming, reminding me of a nice spring breeze, blowing through my hair. Sometimes, I do not wipe the moisture off. I let it absorb into my face; after that I feel refreshed and replenished. My oh my, being sneezed on is such a wonderful experience.

Essays "Why We Crave Horror Movies" • Stephen King

I think that we're all mentally ill; those of us outside the asylums only hide it a little better – and maybe not all that much better, after all. We've all known people who talk to themselves, people who sometimes squinch their faces into horrible grimaces when they believe no one is watching, people who have some hysterical fear – of snakes, the dark, the tight place, the long drop . . . and, of course, those final worms and grubs that are waiting so patiently underground.

When we pay our four or five bucks and seat ourselves at tenth-row center in a theater showing a horror movie, we are daring the nightmare.

Why? Some of the reasons are simple and obvious. To show that we can, that we are not afraid, that we can ride this roller coaster. Which is not to say that a really good horror movie may not surprise a scream out of us at some point, the way we may scream when the roller coaster twists through a complete 360 or plows through a lake at the bottom of the drop. And horror movies, like roller coasters, have always been the special province of the young; by the time one turns 40 or 50, one's appetite for double twists or 360-degree loops may be considerably depleted.

We also go to re-establish our feelings of essential normality; the horror movie is innately conservative, even reactionary. Freda Jackson as the horrible melting woman in Die, Monster, Die! confirms for us that no matter how far we may be removed from the beauty of a Robert Redford or a Diana Ross, we are still light-years from true ugliness.

And we go to have fun.

Ah, but this is where the ground starts to slope away, isn't it? Because this is a very peculiar sort of fun, indeed. The fun comes from seeing others menaced – sometimes killed. One critic has suggested that if pro football has become the voyeur's version of combat, then the horror film has become the modern version of the public lynching.

It is true that the mythic "fairy-tale" horror film intends to take away the shades of grey . . . . It urges us to put away our more civilized and adult penchant for analysis and to become children again, seeing things in pure blacks and whites. It may be that horror movies provide psychic relief on this level because this invitation to lapse into simplicity, irrationality and even outright madness is extended so rarely. We are told we may allow our emotions a free rein . . . or no rein at all.

If we are all insane, then sanity becomes a matter of degree. If your insanity leads you to carve up women like Jack the Ripper or the Cleveland Torso Murderer, we clap you away in the funny farm (but neither of those two amateur-night surgeons was ever caught, heh-heh-heh); if, on the other hand, your insanity leads you only to talk to yourself when you're under stress or to pick your nose on your morning bus, then you are left alone to go about your business . . . though it is doubtful that you will ever be invited to the best parties.

The potential lyncher is in almost all of us (excluding saints, past and present; but then, most saints have been crazy in their own ways), and every now and then, he has to be let loose to scream and roll around in the grass. Our emotions and our fears form their own body, and we recognize that it demands its own exercise to maintain proper muscle tone. Certain of these emotional muscles are accepted – even

exalted – in civilized society; they are, of course, the emotions that tend to maintain the status quo of civilization itself. Love, friendship, loyalty, kindness -- these are all the emotions that we applaud, emotions that have been immortalized in the couplets of Hallmark cards and in the verses (I don't dare call it poetry) of Leonard Nimoy.

When we exhibit these emotions, society showers us with positive reinforcement; we learn this even before we get out of diapers. When, as children, we hug our rotten little puke of a sister and give her a kiss, all the aunts and uncles smile and twit and cry, "Isn't he the sweetest little thing?" Such coveted treats as chocolate-covered graham crackers often follow. But if we deliberately slam the rotten little puke of a sister's fingers in the door, sanctions follow – angry remonstrance from parents, aunts and uncles; instead of a chocolate-covered graham cracker, a spanking.

But anticivilization emotions don't go away, and they demand periodic exercise. We have such "sick" jokes as, "What's the difference between a truckload of bowling balls and a truckload of dead babies?" (You can't unload a truckload of bowling balls with a pitchfork . . . a joke, by the way, that I heard originally from a ten-year-old.) Such a joke may surprise a laugh or a grin out of us even as we recoil, a possibility that confirms the thesis: If we share a brotherhood of man, then we also share an insanity of man. None of which is intended as a defense of either the sick joke or insanity but merely as an explanation of why the best horror films, like the best fairy tales, manage to be reactionary, anarchistic, and revolutionary all at the same time.

The mythic horror movie, like the sick joke, has a dirty job to do. It deliberately appeals to all that is worst in us. It is morbidity unchained, our most base instincts let free, our nastiest fantasies realized . . . and it all happens, fittingly enough, in the dark. For those reasons, good liberals often shy away from horror films. For myself, I like to see the most aggressive of them – Dawn of the Dead, for instance – as lifting a trap door in the civilized forebrain and throwing a basket of raw meat to the hungry alligators swimming around in that subterranean river beneath.

Why bother? Because it keeps them from getting out, man. It keeps them down there and me up here. It was Lennon and McCartney who said that all you need is love, and I would agree with that.

As long as you keep the gators fed.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Title: _____ **Author:** _____

1. What is the **thesis** of the essay? Put it in your own words and provide a quotation from the essay as support.

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1b. Is it implicit or explicit? _____

2. State **three arguments** from the essay that support the thesis.

Argument #1

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***** Do not forget to provide the parenthetical citation for all examples and quotations. *****

Imagery

1. What sensory information is in the language (i.e., colour, scents, sounds, tastes, or textures)? Drawing examples from the text, explain what the author is trying to convey through the use of imagery.

Diction

1. What category best describes the diction in the essay?

B. What effect is the author trying to achieve through the use of a specific type of diction? Explain, supporting with examples from the text.

2. What does the author's use of diction suggest about his or her attitude toward the subject, event, or character?

3. Using **two** specific examples, explain the connotations of a specific word used in a particular context.

A. _____

B. _____

Sentence Structures

1. Simple Sentence

2. Compound Sentence

3. Complex Sentence

4. Compound-Complex Sentence

Sentence Patterns

5. Loose Sentence

6. Periodic Sentence

7. Balanced Sentence

8. Chiasmus

9. Asyndeton

10. Polysyndeton

11. Anaphora

12. Epistrophe

13. Parallel Structure

"A Story of War and Change" • Reza Kiarash

Like many Canadians, Reza Kiarash learned English only when he came to this country. It is his third language. Born in 1965 in Shushtar, Iran, Kiarash was the youngest of 12 children. After completing high school he was refused entry to university, so joined the Iranian army as a paramedic. His services were in demand, for the brutal war between Iran and its neighbour Iraq was in full sway. Of the 100 men in his platoon, says Kiarash, in two years only 10 were not killed or wounded. He was one of them. The narrative that follows may seem shocking, but he lived events like this "every day." Even after the war, Kiarash could not enter university or secure a good job, so he emigrated to Spain and learned Spanish. Soon, though, he continued to Canada, where after studying ESL he worked in a Toronto supermarket, then drove a cab. It was in 1990 that he entered Ryerson Polytechnic University, where in a first-year English class he wrote "A Story of War and Change." His teacher helped to edit it, then a student newspaper, The Eyeopener*, published it. Looking back on his war years, Kiarash says "Sometimes you blame yourself because you cannot help people the way you want, because you don't have enough knowledge in the field." After his studies in chemistry and biochemistry are completed, he therefore hopes to enter med school. His advice to student writers from other countries: "Don't translate; think in English as you write." His advice for learning English faster: "Find friends who speak English as a first language."*

It's New Year's Eve, and everyone is waiting for the radio to announce the moment. I am with a small group of soldiers. The table we prepared is very odd. The New Year's table is supposed to have sweets, greens and fruit, but ours has bullets, guns and grenades. Finally the radio says it: the New Year has begun. Everybody is screaming and shooting into the air, but this doesn't go on long because now a heavy bombardment begins. It is the enemy's New Year's gift for us. Our side is silent now. There is no movement, and everyone is in his refuge and shelter. Some soldiers are on duty in trenches or at posts made of wooden rails and sandbags. These men are in more danger than the others. They are not ready for this kind of fire attack. Suddenly the phone rings, and my heart starts pumping faster and faster. I know it's for me. That's my job – it comes in fire attacks when someone gets wounded. I pick up the phone. They need me at the third post, so I call the driver. We take the ambulance and move to the front, where we reach the "Death Furrow," so named because several men had been killed there. This part of the front is the worst I've seen so far. I leave the driver with the ambulance because the fire is too heavy. Now I run – no, not exactly run – sometimes run, and sometimes go flat on my belly to protect myself against fragments of bombs and shells. I am getting closer and closer. I can see the light, a huge light. It can't be fire. Yes, it is. Soldiers are calling for help, so I follow the voices. The first soldier tells me that the third post is on fire and three soldiers are trapped inside. I ask for help to go there, but everyone refuses. They are afraid, because the two front lines of war are so close together that soldiers can talk to enemy soldiers. Again I ask them to come with me to the third post, which by now is like a theatre screen with everybody watching. Then I give up trying to get help, and go alone. I can see the three soldiers. Two of them seem dead. They must be dead, because they are burnt. Another one has fallen beside the post. I go over to him. I try to talk to him, but there is no response. I find out why: he is wounded badly in the head. I try to carry him but he's so heavy I can't, so I go back to the soldiers. First of all I ask the sergeant of the group for help. He refuses. He says that's my problem, not his. I insult him because the wounded man is his own soldier. I remember how the day I joined the platoon this sergeant talked to the new soldiers about the war, and especially his boldness at war. He seemed brave to me then, but now I leave him with his boldness. Two other soldiers finally come to help me, and we carry the wounded man through the trench to the ambulance. I put him inside, then try to stop his bleeding. I

find his vein and inject him with a serum to replace his lost blood. There is no way for air to get in, so I use the oxygen tank and suction tube to open his windpipe. We are halfway to the hospital when suddenly the suction stops working. There is something wrong with it. I can't fix it now, and he is turning black. Time is going fast for him and for me. Now I make my decision. I put my mouth on his bloody mouth. I am exhaling air into his mouth. I can taste the salty blood. I am thinking about home, my mother and my friends, though I don't know how I can think about these things at this time. I exhale the air. I put my mouth on his mouth, but before I give it to him, he throws up on me or, I should say, in my mouth. I don't stop. I clean my mouth, his mouth, and start all over again. The driver is watching me in the mirror and asks if I'm all right. I tell him "Yes, just drive fast. This is no time to be disgusted." I get the man alive to the hospital. I know he is not going to live, but this is my job – to keep soldiers alive and help them. I am surprised that a person who was in high school six months ago can change that much in this short a time. I am proud of myself and glad that I've not changed like the sergeant.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Title: _____ **Author:** _____

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Imagery

1. What sensory information is in the language (i.e., colour, scents, sounds, tastes, or textures)? Drawing examples from the text, explain what the author is trying to convey through the use of imagery.

Diction

1. What does the author's use of diction suggest about his or her attitude toward the subject, event, or character?

B. What are the connotations of a given word used in a particular context? To begin, you might ask if the word(s) have a positive or negative connotation, then consider them in the specific context.

Syntax

1. How does the author punctuate certain sentences and to what extent does the punctuation affect the meaning?

2. Using a specific example, explain how the words/phrases are arranged within the sentence. What is the author trying to accomplish through this arrangement?

3. Are there places where the syntax clearly changes? If so, where, how, and why?

4. Choose one of the following devices and describe how and why the author uses it in the essay: independent and dependent clauses; repetition; parallelism; fragments; and comparisons.

5. Examine the lengths of the sentences in the essay. Are there any patterns or does the author use one particular sentence length more than others? Explain why.

B. Choose one sentence and explain how the author uses the sentence length to create a specific effect.

6. Does the author consistently start his/her sentences in a similar way or with similar wording? Give an example and explain the effect.

7. How does the author use syntax to enhance the meaning of the essay?

Essays "Why I Want a Wife" (1971) • Judy Brady (Syfers)

Let's begin by reading a classic short essay, "Why I Want a Wife," by Judy Syfers, now Brady, originally published in the first issue of *Ms. Magazine* in December 1971 and reprinted as "Why I [Still] Want a Wife" in the same magazine in 1990.

I belong to that classification of people known as wives. I am A Wife. And, not altogether incidentally, I am a mother.

Not too long ago a male friend of mine appeared on the scene fresh from a recent divorce. He had one child, who is, of course, with his ex-wife. He is looking for another wife. As I thought about him while I was ironing one evening, it suddenly occurred to me that I, too, would like to have a wife. Why do I want a wife?

I would like to go back to school so that I can become economically independent, support myself, and, if need be, support those dependent upon me. I want a wife who will work and send me to school. And while I am going to school, I want a wife to take care of my children. I want a wife to keep track of the children's doctor and dentist appointments. And to keep track of mine, too. I want a wife to make sure my children eat properly and are kept clean. I want a wife who will wash the children's clothes and keep them mended. I want a wife who is a good nurturant attendant to my children, who arranges for their schooling, makes sure that they have an adequate social life with their peers, takes them to the park, the zoo, etc. I want a wife who takes care of the children when they are sick, a wife who arranges to be around when the children need special care, because, of course, I cannot miss classes at school. My wife must arrange to lose time at work and not lose the job. It may mean a small cut in my wife's income from time to time, but I guess I can tolerate that. Needless to say, my wife will arrange and pay for the care of the children while my wife is working.

I want a wife who will take care of my physical needs. I want a wife who will keep my house clean. A wife who will pick up after my children, a wife who will pick up after me. I want a wife who will keep my clothes clean, ironed, mended, replaced when need be, and who will see to it that my personal things are kept in their proper place so that I can find what I need the minute I need it. I want a wife who cooks the meals, a wife who is a good cook. I want a wife who will plan the menus, do the necessary grocery shopping, prepare the meals, serve them pleasantly, and then do the cleaning up while I do my studying. I want a wife who will care for me when I am sick and sympathize with my pain and loss of time from school. I want a wife to go along when our family takes a vacation so that someone can continue to care for me and my children when I need a rest and change of scene.

I want a wife who will not bother me with rambling complaints about a wife's duties. But I want a wife who will listen to me when I feel the need to explain a rather difficult point I have come across in my course studies. And I want a wife who will type my papers for me when I have written them.

I want a wife who will take care of the details of my social life. When my wife and I are invited out by my friends, I want a wife who will take care of the baby-sitting arrangements. When I meet *people* at school that I like and want to entertain, I want a wife who will have the house clean, will prepare a special meal, *serve* it to me and my friends, and not interrupt when I talk about things that interest me and my friends. I want a wife who will have arranged that the children are fed and ready for bed before my guests arrive so that the children do not bother us. I want a wife who takes care of the needs of my guests so that they feel comfortable, who makes sure that they have an ashtray, that they are passed the hors d'oeuvres, that they

are offered a second helping of the food, that their wine glasses are replenished when necessary, that their coffee is served to them as they like it. And I want a wife who knows that sometimes I need a night out by myself.

I want a wife who is sensitive to my sexual needs, a wife who makes love passionately and eagerly when I feel like it, a wife who makes sure that I am satisfied. And, of course, I want a wife who will not demand sexual attention when I am not in the mood for it. I want a wife who assumes the complete responsibility for birth control, because I do not want more children. I want a wife who will remain sexually faithful to me so that I do not have to clutter up my intellectual life with jealousies. And I want a wife who understands that my sexual needs may entail more than strict adherence to monogamy. I must, after all, be able to relate to people as fully as possible.

If, by chance, I find another person more suitable as a wife than the wife I already have, I want the liberty to replace my present wife with another one. Naturally, I will expect a fresh, new life; my wife will take the children and be solely responsible for them so that I am left free.

When I am through with school and have a job, I want my wife to quit working and remain at home so that my wife can more fully and completely take care of a wife's duties. My God, who wouldn't want a wife?

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Title: _____ **Author:** _____

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Diction

1. What does the author's use of diction suggest about his or her attitude toward the subject, event, or character?

B. What are the connotations of a given word used in a particular context? To begin, you might ask if the word(s) have a positive or negative connotation, then consider them in the specific context.

Syntax

1. How does the author use syntax to enhance the meaning of the essay?

Tone

1. How does the author's use of words, imagery, or details such as allusion reveal the author's attitude toward a character or event in the story?

2. What words best describe the author's attitude toward this subject, character, or event?

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3. Using evidence from the text, explain the author's intended audience.

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Words to Describe Tone

Directions: Review the following lists of words that are useful in identifying the tone of a speaker or writer. For each set, describe the different nuances you see.

1.	cheerful	optimistic	hopeful	joyful
2.	angry	irate	enraged	annoyed
3.	critical	sarcastic	bitter	accusatory
4.	whimsical	lighthearted	imaginative	thoughtful
5.	nostalgic	regretful	sorrowful	homesick
6.	reflective	meditative	thoughtful	melancholy
7.	enthusiastic	avid	positive	zealous
8.	tender	romantic	loving	protective
9.	contrite	rueful	remorseful	sorry
10.	buoyant	self-confident	brash	smug

Identifying Tones

Directions: Read the following quotations, and identify the tones. Underline specific words and phrases that reflect tone.

1. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate."
– William Shakespeare

2. "I am His Majesty's dog at Kew.
Pray tell me, sir,
whose dog are you?"
– Alexander Pope

3. "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace."
– Elizabeth Barrett Browning

4. "The report of my death was an exaggeration."
– Mark Twain

5. "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.
– Henry David Thoreau