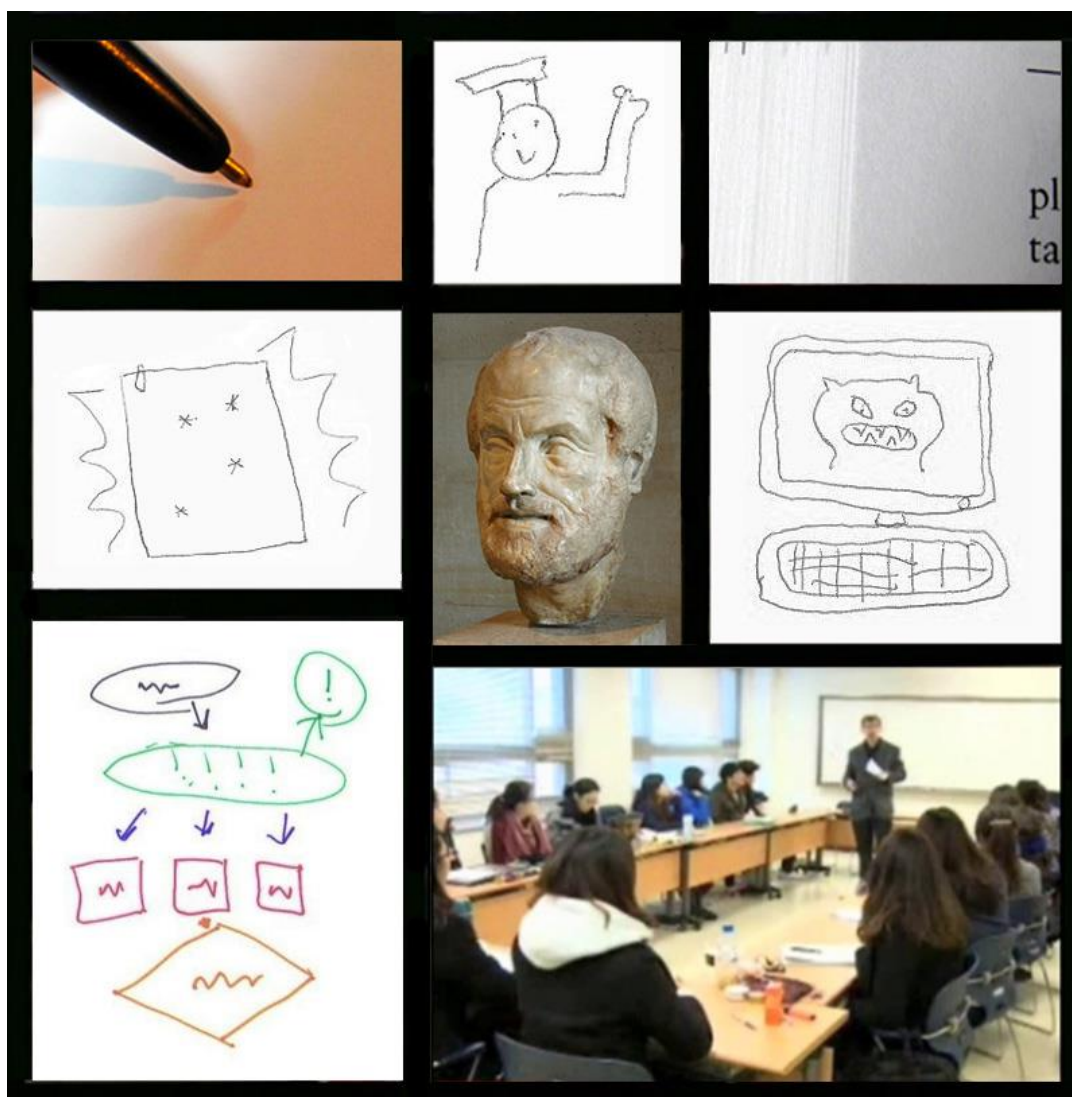


# Academic Research Papers for Koreans

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Go to <http://keneckert.com/engkorea/writing> for more materials, handouts, and a free companion video series to this book in nine episodes.

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There are many books to help Korean students write in English, but few deal with writing at the scholarly level. This is a book which deals with academic research paper writing and is designed primarily for Korean post-secondary writers. This book introduces and explains to the undergraduate or graduate student how to better plan, research, write, and edit an argument paper in MLA or APA format. While it is tailored to Hanyang University students, the information here is also meant to be helpful for a broad audience of writers.

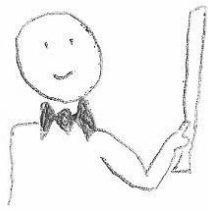
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# 1 Starting Out



If people cannot write well, they cannot think well, and if they cannot think well, others will do their thinking for them. – George Orwell

## Five Common Reasons Research Papers are Failures

1. The paper is filled with grammatical errors. If your paper has brilliant things to say but no one can understand your sentences, it is a failure.
2. The paper does not follow MLA / APA formatting standards. Non-standard title pages and sloppy headings or reference lists tell the reader that you are neither competent nor professional as a writer.
3. The paper has no clear thesis. If you merely present information or describe a topic without taking a position which the reader can recognize and follow, there is little reason to read the paper.
4. The paper has a confusing structure. The paper jumps randomly from idea to idea without presenting an understandable sequence or order.
5. The paper's evidence is weak. The paper does not cite its claims, or it presents vague evidence or generalizations ("Koreans believe"— "Many people nowadays") with no quotations or data.

Writing manuals always compare themselves to the grandfather of all writing manuals, Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* (1918), an essential guide to English grammar and usage now in public domain. This book is not intended to match the austere minimalism of Strunk & White but will hopefully in a short space introduce and explain to the undergraduate or graduate student, whether a native speaker or Korean, how to better plan, research, write, and edit an academic argument paper, whether for a freshman composition class or an honors/graduate thesis project. I have written mainly for the use of undergraduate and graduate students at Hanyang University, but this book is meant to be useful for anyone working on a research writing project.

### 1.1 Why Do We Write?

Writing is one of the most important inventions in human history. Penicillin, printing, sanitation, the internet, cars, and agriculture are all crucial innovations, but the knowledge of those inventions and the transmission of their techniques mostly rely on writing. Writing is essential for the communication and preservation of knowledge. The European Middle Ages were nowhere near as 'dark' as the cliché suggests, but it is not coincidental that during the centuries when literacy declined, the growth of civilization temporarily slowed as well.

Being a good writer will not only help you pass some class you have to take during college. It will help your career and possibly your personal life. If you can write effective and clear work memos or academic papers for conferences, you will be a more valuable employee and more likely to take on leadership roles. When people write poorly and are misunderstood, careers are endangered, relationships end, wrong orders get placed, bridges fall down, and businesses lose

money. Although you may write papers about content knowledge in some upper-level courses, or in what are called “Writing across the curriculum” courses, lower-level writing courses are usually less concerned with the material in papers for its own sake, and more focused on how your ability to plan and think develops in your writing.

Thus we can say that good writing in general in contemporary usage is informative, efficient, and most of all, clear. Unless you are writing a diary for yourself, it is not enough that you understand your own writing. Your reader must also understand it, or else the writing is a failure. Arguing with a reader, *but the paper does make sense, can't you see it*, is already admitting failure, like trying to convince someone that they don't have a stomach ache, or that they love you. The major responsibility is on you to be clear and the reader has a lesser responsibility to work to understand your ideas.

This book will stress clear writing, but a specific type—in particular, our subject is academic writing, with an emphasis on writing research papers for the humanities. Writing poetry, fiction, diaries, or news stories are all important and valuable activities, but our focus is academic writing for university courses or other professional career situations such as publications or conferences. Such writing typically encourages some position to be taken or new knowledge or conclusions to be derived.

Western universities often require undergraduates to take composition courses for the papers and essays typically required in later subject courses, and some professors continue to assign them in their major courses. Many honors and graduate programs also require the writing of a longer research thesis for graduation. These are not make-work projects or a lazy way to evaluate students. Writing papers inculcates independent work habits and a deep breadth of cognitive and linguistic skills valuable not only in the university but also in future careers. While the undergraduate term paper only became common in the nineteenth century, the scholarly article and the written thesis go back to the seventeenth and sixteenth.

Composition theory is in addition an academic discipline of its own which has begun to develop a structure of research issues in the last half century. University students who take advanced writing or literature courses aren't of course expected to learn the pedagogical and theoretical minutiae of composition theory, but they should understand some basic abstract principles and should see that writing well trains you to understand your intended major better, and also makes you a more disciplined and precise thinker.

In other words, the *process* of a writing course, the broader cognitive agility you develop while working on specific tasks, is often as important as the content learned, which is true for many pursuits in the humanities. The subjects covered in this book—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—are in fact the components of the *trivium*, the basic program of a medieval university education. These are the oldest subjects in the western university system, taught continuously since the sixth century A.D.

## 1.2 Making an Argument

Some academic writing is *expository* writing, which means that it simply defines or examines a subject. Personal writing, technical writing, or journalism may simply seek to explain, amuse, or give information without asserting any overt opinion. You might also be assigned *persuasive* writing, in which you might attempt to convince someone to accept or do something—for example, to get married, or move to Spain, or to drink a certain brand of beverage. But most academic writing, and the focus of this book, is argument research writing, which is stating and supporting a position with reasons and external evidence.

You might also be confused here because one of the goals in journalism or informative writing, such as a Wikipedia or newspaper article, is to be objective and fair and to explain all sides of the issue. In such writing you should *not* push your own opinion. Some academic writing is done in this style. But academic argument writing is not “fair and balanced” to both sides of an

issue. It commits to a position and provides evidence that the writer's position is correct. Most academic papers, at least in the humanities, are more like editorials or opinion letters. They take a position and support it. A courtroom lawyer cannot be fair and argue both sides of the case—he or she must assert only guilt or innocence. A verdict must be given.

What is an argument? One of the unfortunate drawbacks of the English language is that it has a massive vocabulary, but sometimes English's words are not efficient. A word like *argument* covers several sub-meanings. In common situations it usually involves anger, such as two people at a nightclub yelling at each other: "Keep your grubby hands off my boyfriend!" Two people involved in an automobile accident might have a loud argument based on high emotions.

But an academic argument by definition is not necessarily belligerent or emotional. It is simply a formal position to be proven or investigated: Hamlet is(n't) insane; this country should(n't) sign a free trade agreement with Brazil because a, b, and c; private messages on social networks can help promote budget cosmetics. So one of the first things you should understand about this form of academic essay writing is that by definition it takes a position and defends it with reasons and evidence. The role of writing in academia is often the asserting of new positions or conclusions, and this is the activity modeled in composition classes and thesis projects at the undergraduate or graduate level.

An argument paper assumes that the reader already has some information about the subject, and is expecting you to lead by making some evaluation or explanation about what it all means. Is Hamlet crazy, or isn't he? Well, which is it? The reader expects you to take a stand and to explain and provide evidence for it. One of the most common comments I write on student papers is "What is the point of your essay? What are you trying to prove or discover?"

There are many similarities between the persuasion techniques of academic writing and those of debate. In both you are attempting to construct and prove a position with reasons, evidence, examples, or statistics. Where the two usually differ is purpose. The reason you write an academic paper is to inform and convince the reader to accept your position.

A debate may not have that goal. A debate as a formal exercise may seek to convince an observing jury that one team has performed better. In its most degraded practice, such as in American cable talk-shows, the only goal may be to monopolize the conversation, to goad opponents into losing their temper and saying something foolish (what Latin calls a *stultiloquentia*), or to bully and humiliate opponents into silence. Insulting or offending your opponent into quitting the exchange may be seen as 'victory' in an angry online argument but is not the proper technique of scholarly writing.

The point of academic writing is not to 'beat' an imaginary opponent but to win over the reader to your position through persuasion—much like what theorists call Rogerian argumentation. This is less like a court or debate proceeding where you are trying to convince to a third party, and more like two judges conferring on a case. Your reader is your ally, and in essence the game is win-win for everyone. My favorite arguments were with close friends late at night over coffee and donuts, certainly not occasions for anger or hurt feelings.

New writers may nevertheless feel intimidated by the necessity to construct argumentative positions, particularly Korean students in a culture which values consensus. Richard Nisbett's *The Geography of Thought* (2003) is a useful book which analyzes how the culture of ancient Greece gave western thought its analytical and argumentative flavor, and how ancient China gave eastern thought its emphasis on relationships and harmony.

This raises a sensitive question: isn't asking Asian writers to form a western-style thesis argument a type of cultural imperialism? Possibly yes; but if you are taking a course speaking or writing in English, or learning about western literature or other ideas, using western concepts of rhetoric is going to be inevitable. Equally, your readers may be native English speakers, and audience is always an important consideration in crafting a paper. Moreover, in Asian rhetoric as anywhere, pointless writing is pointless writing. Your thesis statement may certainly seek to

demonstrate a relationship of harmony or synthesis of various viewpoints so long as there is an identifiable position.

Third, you might also protest that you are a young freshman and unqualified to argue new viewpoints on subjects you are still learning about in a field of experts. But your opinions and conclusions are still valid and valuable as a learning exercise; the ‘experts’ began the same way. Second, not all arguments need to be ones that change the world. They can be smaller observations, or they can be arguments about matters you *are* an expert on. Everyone has particular interests or experiences that set them apart from others.

You need to have some confidence to write an academic paper, because you must believe that your conclusions on your position are worth stating. Again, this is not necessarily done with arrogance or aggression. It is simply a position that forms the basis of your paper. Without an academic argument your paper is useless because it has no point. Just as a politician who will not take a stand on an issue can be infuriating, if you do not commit to a position in your paper out of shyness you will frustrate the reader, who is reading your paper for that very purpose: Is it up or down? Are you going to marry me or not? You tell *me*.

### Tip



“Do you love me?” “Well, there are certain reasons to say yes or no, and everyone has to decide.” Your girlfriend won’t accept such an answer. You need to take a stand! Equally, in an argument paper you need to take a stand.

## 1.3 Three Components of Writing

It is puzzling that our brains often seem comfortable thinking in threes, and we watch movies and read literature in trilogies: *The Matrix*; *Lord of the Rings*; *The Divine Comedy*. Not all arguments will have three reasons (a, b, and c), but for ease of memory in this book we will divide many aspects of writing into threes, and the first and most basic concerns the three building blocks of effective academic writing: grammar, structure, and content.

**Grammar** involves writing meaningful sentences with correct punctuation according to accepted English rules. Grammar rules are not natural laws in themselves; they are simply conventions agreed on by the language’s speakers. But without some common system giving meaning to words and their combinations, communication cannot happen. Thus the province of grammar is sentence writing and being correct on punctuation and spelling or on parts of the sentence, such as word class. This is the most basic issue in writing, and for some people it is their sole concern when writing in any language, native or foreign.

Grammar is somewhat like playing a musical instrument. Learning a foreign language’s grammar can be a tedious chore just as the basics of playing a guitar or piano are not very fun, but as you attain proficiency some of these skills become automatic, allowing you to concentrate on other matters.

If you are Korean, you normally do not think about speaking or writing sentences in Korean—they simply flow out, and your intuition tells you instantly when something is ungrammatical or unnatural, even if you cannot cognitively understand why. The ‘little bird’ in your head tells you that something is wrong. Similarly, no native speaker of English ever fully masters grammar, but many of its processes become unconscious. Yet this activity is only one third of writing.



**Structure** is arranging sentences and paragraphs into a meaningful and connected sequence. How do the sentences in a text fit together into a coherent whole? A short e-mail may have very simple and formulaic sections—A greeting, a message, and a “goodbye” element: “Hello Dave, please come to the pizza house tonight at 7, bye for now, Michelle.” Even these parts form a structure which the reader will recognize: greeting, message, and closure. A two-paragraph essay would also have some sense of an opening and a closing. In academic writing there are more formalized sections of introductions, body support, and conclusions which indicate the parts of the paper.

You might write grammatically correct sentences, but with no structure they will have no connection to each other. If your first sentence is about your stomach ache, your second sentence is about a television show you watched, the third sentence is about orangutans, and the fourth sentence is about Macbeth, as a group the sentences will seem disconnected and meaningless.

**Content** is the third aspect of academic writing. Is the writing clear and informative? Does it support the thesis statement? You might write grammatically correct sentences and they might form a coherent and consistent unit that moves from one idea to the next in perfect linear precision, but the whole paper might be garbage, with meaningless or faulty information. You might have an argument that is clearly wrong, you might have an argument with no proof or support, you might have a ridiculous argument, or you might have a contradictory argument. You might begin your paper by saying that policemen should carry guns, and then in the middle of your paper state that you have changed your mind and that policemen should not carry guns. This sort of paper is inconsistent and will be rejected as worthless by the reader regardless of grammatical or structural quality.

So by content, we ask what the value is of what you have written. Has your essay proven your thesis argument? Has it explained vital information to the reader? Are your arguments clear? All of these questions belong to the province of content.

A related issue to content is that of audience, or purposes. What sort of readership are you writing to, and what type of paper? Normally, if you’re an undergraduate, the answer is predetermined—you are writing a research paper for course credit for Prof. X, and there are certain guidelines and prompts for the paper. While I realize that this will probably be the case for most readers of this book, I bring the matter up to remind you that there are other writing genres and situations outside the course paper, as summarized at the end of the last chapter. It is also misguided to write your paper as though its audience is *literally* only Prof. X (I’ve had students begin their essay with “Hello, Professor Eckert!”); the purpose of such papers is usually to simulate a group of readers, however imaginary.

## 1.4 Three Processes of Writing

The three building blocks of grammar, structure, and content deal with how we evaluate or approach academic essays. It may be helpful to see the main activities or processes of academic writing as another group of threes: planning, writing, and editing.

### *Planning*

Planning involves considering your paper’s subject, size, and audience—who you are writing it for—and making decisions on how the paper will be arranged to meet these goals. This process might be quickly done mentally or may involve a detailed written plan.

Sometimes when I give essay exams, which are often timed exams out of necessity, I see two general types of students. One type thinks, “I have an hour—I need to hurry, hurry, write, write.” The other thinks, “I am going to take five or ten minutes to plan.” These students look as though they are doing nothing, but they are really thinking about what they are going to write, or

making scribbled notes, before they write their essays. Even though they have sacrificed a few minutes of exam time to plan, these students usually get better grades because their essays are more focused and consistent.

Successful writers see writing as more than a one-step process. If you do not plan your writing, there are two possible dangers. One danger is that you end up staring at a blank computer screen, frozen and unable to begin, and it is demoralizing to see the cursor and not know where to start. If you have a good outline or some other form of planning, the paper is already well on its way and you know what to do, and even if you freeze sometimes you have something tangible to refer to which will help you to continue.

When I wrote my master's thesis, my outline was about 20-30 pages, and that took months to prepare. That may be a little extreme in terms of planning. But doing all this actually saved me a great deal of time, because once I had that groundwork of information I knew what I was doing on each page. We have a human tendency to be lazy and to look at our short term benefit. We do not want to plan because it is extra work at the beginning, but that extra work you do in advance is going to make the actual writing of the paper quicker and easier.

The other danger in not planning your writing is that with longer papers you will be a little bit like a drunk driver. You may start writing about something, move on to something else, and then come back to subject x again, forgetting that you have already written about it. At the end of the paper you will have a meandering mess which drifts back and forth between topics. Having some type of outline prevents you from repeating the same materials, or from driving off the road into an irrelevant topic.

Your outline need not be a formal bullet-point schedule of steps. It can be any sort of textual or visual plan which helps you organize your ideas—I suppose it could even be a sound or video recording on your smartphone. The actual format or arrangement is your business. An outline can be serious, tightly organized, or a mess of scribbles, arrows, and notes. No one is ever going to see it. It can perform its job for you, and then you can throw it away.

It is possible to overplan too. What if I had begun to write after my 30-page outline and realized I had made an enormous mistake, and needed to make considerable changes—or worse, was too proud or impatient to do so? Do not worry if you find that your ideas evolve after you begin writing; part of writing itself is discovering and refining ideas as you progress. You can always return to your outline and alter or re-write it. If you want to drive to Seoul and you discover that you are headed toward Busan, only an idiot would stubbornly continue, refusing to turn around, intending to drive around the earth and reach Seoul from Russia. If your outline proves wrong and you see that your ideas or information are faulty, it is obviously better to stop and make changes or begin again.

For this reason, do not be locked into the mindset that planning, writing, and editing forms an ironclad, sequential series of steps. Sometimes you might jump back and forth between different activities. During writing, you might need to return to your planning stage momentarily. You might also be in the middle of editing when you realize you need substantial rewriting.

When I emphasize that these three activities are essential I do not mean they will always occur in this fixed order. Most people “write to think,” typing or writing down ideas and refining them as they read them or craft them into sentences, and I think it's a mistake to believe that writing is merely the skill of transcribing what we have previously decided to communicate. It is my own experience, and of course your mileage may vary, that I usually have only a rough idea of what I intend to write beforehand, which will become fully developed as I write and edit.

### *Writing*

The physical writing or typing of your paper might not be beginning-to-end either. One of my personal tricks is to write my introduction in a rush to warm myself up and then re-write it as a last step. The reader will never know or care in what order you wrote the paper's sections. It

makes no difference whether you write your body paragraphs early or late. Some people like to begin with title pages to warm up, and for many it is the last step.

### *Editing*

Close, disciplined editing makes text leaner and more effective, and catches mistakes. Normally, when you write, you return later and correct grammatical or typographical errors, or you might cut out the pieces that do not fit or which waste space. This is a skill which requires discipline, because we tend to fall in love with our writing. We do not want to change it and we think it is beautiful the way it is on the bright, clean paper with the shining, perpendicular paper clip. But that sort of self-control is going to make you a better writer, and is a valid third stage in the process of writing.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, one of the greatest American authors of the twentieth century, published *The Great Gatsby* only after lengthy revisions done with his editor, Maxwell Perkins. In turn, Fitzgerald also helped younger Ernest Hemingway with *The Sun Also Rises* as the latter developed as an author. These were two high-level, high-functioning writers—at the time Hemingway already had experience as a journalist. These people needed editors, and so do we; we all benefit from someone who will help us cut the pieces of text that we love the sound of but which do not work. In fact, sometimes very experienced writers need editors even more, as they may develop egos which prevent them from seeing their own work dispassionately.

If you do not have someone else to edit your work, you can at least still edit yourself. But you need to give yourself time between the stages of planning and writing your paper and revising it. Your brain needs to rest between those stages.

## **1.5 Part Science and Art**

As you are going to see, academic writing is part science and part art. Some writers are tightly organized and others are more freewheeling and spontaneous. Some people prefer to plan with traditional outlines with numbers, others like mathematical flowchart-style outlines, and visual people may have circles and arrows or use different-colored pens. Academic papers are fairly regimented in format, but how you get to the end result is entirely your business. No one can really teach you how to dance or how to write the perfect paper. I can only show you what I do as a model.

There is some room for personal idiosyncrasies in content and writing style, but much less in structural format in a scholarly paper. I have tried to explain the importance and usefulness of writing at the research level, but one basic objection to this entire book which I might anticipate is, *who* said that papers have to be arranged or written in such and such a way? Who ultimately has the authority to judge how a paper is written or constructed, and why should these rules be respected? Why can't I write a paper the way *I* want to?

This is a difficult question to address, but to me there is a two-part philosophical and practical answer. Whether these are essential Platonic or heavenly 'ideals,' or simply a reflection of how human cognition has come to work, there are some fairly universal patterns in written argumentation: People tend to understand an essay better when the author first presents the subject, then discusses it, and then has some recognizable form of closure. People are probably going to understand ten papers better and faster if all of them have a somewhat similar organizational pattern. Thus all over the world formal writing generally has introduction, body, and conclusion sections of some sort. Second, people are more likely to believe arguments if they are made with reasons and evidence.

But of course, many of the rules I'll lay out seem capricious, and don't seem handed down from the heavens. Perhaps it's obvious that we can't prove an argument that wasn't yet stated; but why do page numbers need to be on the top right? These are admittedly merely conventions

of organization and style that happen to predominate in the last century or so. You will not go to jail for breaking them. But neither will you go to jail for wearing socks on your ears and your tie on your toes at your job interview—you are just unlikely to get the job for flouting accepted modes of conduct. In the same way, there are expected practices in writing you are obliged to follow so that you conform to a community. These professional normative prescriptions allow your writing to be admitted into a dialogue.

Some directions I give will be quite strict—formats such as MLA / APA are particularly inflexible in how page formatting and citation typography, and your paper may be rejected or at least not taken seriously by others if you violate such standards. To some extent we need to accommodate to the current academic community standards of the early twenty-first century. English grammar as well is notoriously rife with exceptions, but it also demands a certain level of compliance to established contemporary norms.

Concepts of structure and argumentation are more flexible and somewhat arbitrary. Modern conventions such as topic sentences and paragraphs are somewhat open to stretching once you become more expert in their application. It may be helpful, then, to begin by discussing some principles of how English-language research papers are conventionally planned and structured.

## 2 Planning



In brief, planning is the process of deciding what you will write about and then amassing and organizing the information you will use in your paper. The sequence I use is to choose a topic, research and organize my sources, and then make a working argument and outline for the paper. All along the way, I am narrowing my topic down to a manageable size for the project I am working on. Of course, we're all human beings—sometimes the finished argument springs out at you immediately, and sometimes your steps will be mixed up or repeated. How you produce that plan need not be exactly the same every time; it is only important that you *have* a plan to keep yourself organized.

Goethe once wrote that what makes people unhappiest is trading what we really want for something we want right now. This applies entirely to planning as well. One reflection I have made in life is that we all think we are rational beings when we are not. Why else would poor or lazy writers refuse to spend twenty minutes planning their paper when having one might save hours of confusion later? It makes as much sense as being too impatient to buy a blueprint for a house and rushing out to randomly nail boards together. What time you save will be lost when everything falls down, and at best the frustration of getting the house to stand up will outweigh any time initially saved.

### 2.1 Fear and Your Body

I could certainly have chosen a better-paying profession, or one easier to enter, but I was born to be a professor. I *enjoyed* writing my dissertation. Many people liken it to childbirth. I *like* teaching writing. Most English professors prefer to leave it to adjuncts and graduate assistants. I

admit that it probably does not beat sitting in a gondola in Venice with a supermodel, but I find both teaching and doing academic writing satisfying and sometimes even fun. Most people aren't like me.

As noted earlier, one of the reasons you should plan your paper is to avoid the awful feeling of looking at your computer monitor in frozen panic, not knowing where to begin. But it's natural to feel anxiety during at least some stage of writing, and although experience will diminish this and give you confidence, you will be more effective when you write papers if you develop strategies and habits to minimize avoidance reflexes.

One recommendation is that you *write a lot*. Perhaps one reason I never found academic writing intimidating is that from childhood I wrote stories, poems, and letters. On a regular basis I write e-mails, blog posts, and discussion board comments. Optimally, if you are headed for university or career years writing research papers you should develop a habit of frequent scholarly writing. If not, I still advise that you make regular time to keep up a blog, or comment on other sites, or have some form of written expression you enjoy. This action, even if unrelated to the subject of your papers, will develop quicker and sharper skills of thinking through and arranging ideas, as well as building your comfort level with writing.

Additionally, looking back on my undergraduate years, I often think how foolish it was that I learned so many things but never reflected much about *how* I learn or think. Kenneth Burke once wrote that "Thinking which does not include thinking about thinking is merely problem solving, an activity carried out very well by fish." We have owner's manuals for every gadget, but not for our own brains. Another means of reducing the impulse to fear or avoid writing is to take the time to learn how you can maximize your personal efficiency and comfort level with it.

Ernest Hemingway advised writing drunk and editing sober, but for a scholarly paper I would not advise this! Nor do I have much regard for the romantic idea that writing should be some painful, agonized struggle. My experience is that I accomplish more when my mind is clearest and I'm at ease, and for me that is late morning. Through experimentation or life experience you can work out whether you write best at a particular time of day or night; if you need dead silence, or you need the white noise of a café, or music; if caffeine makes you alert or jittery; if you need to be warm, or cool, or on the floor, or outside, or with others. Learning to accommodate your own mental and physical inclinations may lessen the anticipation of writing being unpleasant.

## 2.2 Choosing a Topic

Before we begin to write a paper, we need to decide what it will be about. How do writers come up with ideas for papers? Someone may give you a topic or set of choices, or for some reason the topic may suggest itself based on circumstances. Or, you may have to cold-bloodedly concentrate on developing a suitable and workable paper idea. The audience you will be writing for—your peers, the professor, the public—will also affect the direction of your topic.

My own approach to planning a new paper is to decide on a topic and then research the subject in books or websites to give myself a basic foundation of knowledge. Then I try to come up with a temporary position or opinion on the subject. This may take some time, and I may need to do things such as wash dishes or walk or listen to music to let my mind wander and make connections or ideas. At other times I may be reading about the subject and have a sudden inspiration or disagreement about the writer's ideas, giving me a ready-made position.

Every writer has a favorite technique to help generate ideas, and others rely on chance flashes of insight. Every grad student has a story about a classmate who sat on a couch for months and then suddenly jumped up and wrote a master's thesis in a weekend. At times, you might need to sit down and cold-bloodedly concentrate, or you might need to let your mind float. While I discourage students from writing papers the night before, I admit that for a few people

the pressure and adrenaline helps them. It just does not help me—and if your printer cartridge runs out of ink an hour before class your delaying might also result in a late paper.

Some composition theorists also advocate brainstorming—writing down every thought as it randomly floats into your head—to help fertilize your mind with ideas. Scholars such as Peter Elbow even recommend forcing yourself to write continuously about the subject without stopping, flying through some pages to warm up your thinking, and then going back and repeatedly editing down the text as you attempt to solidify what is worth using.

I know composition professors who are dogmatic in stating “*research first, then argument.*” Their reason is that some writers commit the error of fixing on a position and then discounting or ignoring texts or evidence which disprove it. While that is true, I find this rule too simple for two reasons. One, it doesn’t fit everyone. Second, if you have nothing specific to prove or work toward, writing an effective outline will be very difficult and your thinking will be vague. You can drive your car as fast as you want, but if you haven’t decided where you are going you will accomplish nothing.

My advice, then, is that you develop a temporary position or idea on your topic and then allow yourself to affirm or modify your thinking as you read. This gives your research some structure but does not restrict or blind you from changing your opinions. This may happen either because after reading you decide the argument is impractical or contradicted by the evidence. This is not a failure and it sometimes happens to writers as they define their paper’s contents—again, some of writing is the act of writing-to-think.

### 2.3 Refining your Topic into a Position

#### Tip



Choosing a broad topic to get the prof off your back requires less work initially—“My paper is about China.” (Thanks for that.) But in the long run a focused, narrow topic is usually easier to research and write about.

Refining your topic is largely a process of narrowing and increasing specificity as you move from a general subject to a focused position and argument. Refining also involves considering the parameters set on your project such as audience and length. You will need to consider the sort of readership the paper is meant for. The cliché ‘general audience’ is thrown around a great deal—except there really is no such thing as a general audience. In a professional situation such as a journal or conference you may have a more precise idea of your audience’s level of knowledge and their expectations, and you might actually *know* many of them. But in a classroom, I suppose I imagine I am writing my paper at the level of the best students in the class. What are they likely to already know about the subject?

The other concern in refining is considering how long a paper you want or are instructed to write. Perhaps the most common problem students have with topics is choosing one matching the length of the paper. This requires experience. A fifty-page research paper about thumbtacks will be difficult to write without boring the reader, but a three-page paper might be just right. Yet the far more typical error is papers where the subject is too broad, resulting in shallow arguments and evidence. I cringe whenever students write about globalization, which is probably the single largest change in human civilization in the last two centuries. To attempt to discuss globalization in three pages is ridiculous—nothing profound is likely to come from that short space. What you are likely to produce is a light skim of ideas without giving any compelling discussion or proof of anything—a list as opposed to a paper.

Having a focus which is far too wide can happen when students are lazy and choose a vague topic, but can happen even to good writers. As little as a generation ago the challenge in doing research was usually finding enough information. Now the obstacle is often the overwhelming amount of information online and in books to navigate through. After doing some initial research you may find yourself feeling that you have bitten off more than you can chew.

If you are in this position, there are two possible solutions. One is to narrow your focus; for example, instead of discussing globalization, filter it down by one or more limiters:

- Concept: politics, marriage, travel
- Demographics: globalization's effects on elderly, females, fathers, redheads
- Geography: globalization's effects on one country
- Industry: globalization's effects on agriculture, entertainment, banking
- Time: a specific time period, or a comparison of two meaningfully similar or different periods

Case studies often offer a way of specializing your topic, limiting it by all of these factors. A second solution, albeit a rather mechanical one which I've used in past, is to look at your thesis and choose only one sub-argument. For example, if you have *Globalization is important for A, B, and C*—write a paper on C and subdivide *that* into sub-arguments. This will make more sense when we discuss thesis statements in chapter 4.

The example here is for international relations. For literature majors, you might think about a feature of the text which interests you. When scholarly papers about literature use the term *reading* as a noun, they often mean they are analyzing the work according to one of these specific aspects.

- Plot: What does the plot mean? Do events in the narrative have important meaning to the text as a whole?
- Characters: Is there a special meaning to a character, or in a relationship between two or more characters? Does a character change or react to an event in an interesting way?
- Symbolism: Is there a political, ethical, historical, feminist, religious, or other level of interpretation in the text which you see?
- Scene analysis: Does one scene or passage in the text help to explain or change the meaning of the entire text?
- Poetics: Is there an unusual way of phrasing words or arranging words in the text, or making them rhyme or create an image pattern? Why?
- Biographical/historical: Can the text be explained by examining the author's life, or by the historical or cultural circumstances it was written in?

All of these ideas might help you to find an interpretation or reading of the text which goes beyond a shallow, broad summary. For example, instead of analyzing theme x in novel y, you might analyze *one character* in novel y, arguing how that character exemplifies or advances that theme. Or, if this is too broad, you might filter again and select one scene or significant section of the novel where that character does this. For example:

*Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone* demonstrates the value of courage.

(Boring and vague. There are ten other papers on my desk with the same sentence.)

Hermione in *Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone* demonstrates the value of courage.

(A little better.)

Hermione, in the first train scene in *Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone*, demonstrates the novel's value of courage.

(Now I am curious. What is it about that particular scene which you think has importance?)

Or:

An important theme in *Dubliners* is selfish people taking advantage of the innocent.

(This is pretty vague.)

An important theme in "The Boarding House" in *Dubliners* is selfish people taking advantage of the innocent.

(Better; at least we have a specific story.)

An important theme in "The Boarding House" in *Dubliners* is Polly selfishly taking advantage of Mr. Doran, as it mirrors what happened to Polly's mother.

(Good. This is interesting and I want to see how the writer connects these two things.)

You might also believe it's boring to write a long paper about something very narrow and specific, but in my experience that's not the case at all—some of my favorite authors, Malcolm Gladwell and Leavitt & Dubner (*Freakonomics*), write essays on such things as ketchup or cheating teachers in Chicago; it's much more memorable reading than a general essay on "fast food" or "education." I've read countless identical papers about plastic surgery in Korea, but if someone writes about "freckle surgery for elderly left-handed businessmen," I'm going to take a special interest in that paper as it's something new.

### Tip



Don't forget the minor characters in literature papers. Some of my best papers were written about Gertrude and *not* Hamlet, or Neville instead of Harry or Snape. It's also easier to research and focus on these people.

Another irony is that students resist producing a specific, narrowed topic because it involves more initial mental labor than "My paper is about religion," but a precise topic is easier in the long run to write because there will also be less to research and read about, and the idea may be easier to hold in your head and conceptualize if it is more restricted. I remember a high school teacher telling me ruefully never to write my Masters' thesis on Shakespeare!—which would involve reading *everything* on Shakespeare, an impossible task.

## 2.4 Using Argument Moves

This next process may happen when you receive your assignment; or during your reading; or as you begin to put together an outline or thesis statement. I will place it here rather arbitrarily—not every writer will do things in the same sequence I do. But at some point you may need to decide what *type* of argument paper you are going to write.

Argument designs or *moves* can vary widely. The most basic argument forms a binary: x is *not* y, it is z. This might also be a value judgment: x is *better* than y. For this reason, a comparison argument tends to be easy to formulate: x is better or worse in some way than y.



Binaries are very useful in human cognition for understanding and analyzing issues because you break them down into clear oppositions, but—and this is somewhat of a western disease—binaries can also be limiting if you see every issue as a battle between two opposing ideas: 0 or 1. More sophisticated arguments move beyond either-or binaries into shades of grey, exploring more sophisticated or complex relationships. X may not be the opposite of y; it may be partly y or even somewhat z, and your argument may concern how much. Logically, if two concepts were *totally* different from each other there would be little to say about their relationship.

Here are some common moves which might help you to spatially or logically conceptualize your argument:

### *Comparison*

As stated, in this paper you compare multiple things and argue that one is better somehow, or explain how they differ. This format is also called *compare and contrast*. For example: “A big university is better than a small one because a, b, and c.” Again, the paper may not make a value judgment; it might simply explain how two things are similar (comparable) or different (contrasting): Hester in *The Scarlet Letter* is x as opposed to her daughter Pearl who is y.

Such papers require a *basis of comparison*—in what way are x and y comparable? Paris and New York are both cities. The things you compare should not be too similar—if you compare two pencils there isn’t much to say—or too different: if you compare Lady Gaga and a train, saying both are made of atoms, or Beowulf and Atticus Finch, because both are fictional characters, your ideas will be very limited. The best comparison papers suggest a unique but plausible connection: cooks and musicians are similar because both a, b, and c.

My least favorite comparison papers are where the author writes “Both big and small universities have benefits and drawbacks, and everyone has to decide for themselves.” Thanks for that. *Everything* has benefits and drawbacks. Comparison papers are best when the differences are made clear and sharp: either a big university *or* a small one is better, or have meaningful differences or similarities. Pick a side, dammit! No one wants to watch the soccer game with you if you want both sides to win.

### *Analysis*

In this paper you prove a position by breaking down things or concepts into parts, explaining how they interact as separate things, or deriving a conclusion: “Examination of blood glucose levels in these patients suggests that they might benefit from low-carbohydrate diets.” “This is how the poem uses increasingly short lines to create a visual and thematic effect.” These papers are often good for breaking down an engineering or design problem, such as identifying why an engine component failed. A business paper might analyze a specific business or event and make an argument about its qualities or results: “We can see that Acme Products’ marketing advertisement uses the visual strategies of a, b, and c.”

### *Process Analysis*

In this paper you take a position explaining how a sequence or grouping of steps creates a result: “The earthquake happened because a happened, which caused b, which caused c.” Process analysis papers need not be sequential: “The best way to build a bridge is by doing a, b, and c.” These papers are like analysis papers but tend to emphasize how certain steps or a sequence is significant in producing a result, focusing on relationships between different events or things in a series. This sort of paper is more common in science or social science topics, but could be done in literature also: “A, b, and c form a series of sequential events which cause the Savage to reject Lenina in *Brave New World*.”

### *Cause & Effect*

This argument establishes a sequential connection between two events: “Because x happened, Mango Airlines went bankrupt.” This paper is similar to a process analysis one, but is more binary as the emphasis is not on the process but on causality—how two events are logically interconnected. There was a war, and then an economic recession. These things are not coincidental; we can prove that the recession was caused by the war, and this is what happened because of the war. Because Napoleon did x in 1812, y happened.

Although both cause and effect need to be stated in your paper as connected issues, one or the other is normally the focus of a paper: the causes or the effects. Students often ask for permission to emphasize both, and there is no ‘rule’; it’s just simply more difficult to construct such a paper as you do not want to confuse the reader by chasing two horses.

### *Prediction*

In this paper you take a position predicting future events: “Next year the American dollar will decrease in value because of a, b, and c.” For many topics this argument frame is limited, and your paper might not be worth reading next year after the prediction is no longer relevant; but for quickly-changing subjects such as current events or politics such papers can be very interesting.

### *Problem / Solution*

Here a writer describes a solvable problem and proposes a solution: “The best way to diminish prostitution is by a, b, and c.” These papers often involve social or political issues. Both problem and solution need to be stated in the paper. Theoretically you could emphasize both, or even focus on the problem, but in practice your paper is likely to have more discussion of the solution.

Unless you have special purposes, the solution ought to be a realistic one: “The best way to solve traffic jams is to give everyone helicopters” is not a useful argument. Another problem I see in this sort of paper is vague solutions: “Obesity can be solved by better eating habits.” “Prostitution will be eliminated by teaching men to have better attitudes to sex.” Thanks for clearing that up. Normally the paper is not very helpful unless the solution is specifically stated. How can it be implemented?

A case study (more on that below) might also work well here. For example, if your paper is about school bullying you might examine how a school district in California dealt with bullying and then examine how it might be applied to your situation. Business paper writers also often like such papers as they have practical applications; for example, you might examine how to make foreign hiring or supply management more efficient.

### *Interpretation*

What does something *mean*? This sort of paper involves explaining the meaning or significance of a text, act, or some communication. I don’t want to give you the idea that this is the only or chief mode for literature students, but such a style often fits papers on literary criticism, where a problem of understanding a written text is involved. *Why* does Steinbeck have a chapter about a turtle in *The Grapes of Wrath*? *What* is the character function of Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*? Is *1984* meant to be prediction or satire? Such papers take a position attempting to answer such questions. In a way this mode is similar to analysis.

### *Challenging Conventional Wisdom*

This is perhaps my favorite structure for paper writing. Most people believe that x is true, but I am going to prove that y is really a better explanation. The critical consensus is that an author meant a in her book, but a closer reading shows that she meant b. Or, perhaps less aggressive for

a less confident newcomer to a field is something like this: No one seems to have noticed that a is related to b.

Recently, I read an essay where the author argued that people *should* show favoritism in hiring friends; though I disagreed, the logical process which the writer used was very interesting. This is a more advanced type of paper to write, because you need to learn about what scholars believe first, or have evidence to prove what ‘most people believe.’ You will need to do some research on what the conventional wisdom is on something before you confront it, so that you avoid a “scarecrow” argument: “Most people believe Caliban is a villain, but the text shows...” This isn’t an honest statement—you need to prove that most people believe Caliban is a villain before you construct an argument against that belief.

### Case Study

This somewhat overlaps with other categories, because a case study paper could be a comparison, analysis, or problem/solution paper, and so on. The difference is that in a case study, you focus specifically on one event, person, or institution and attempt to understand it or draw conclusions from it. The reasoning may be more *inductive*, meaning that you are trying to generate larger principles or explanations from examining a specific example of something. As they are in the social sciences, international business and international relations papers often make use of case studies. A business paper might examine a company’s decision or some event that affected it (a labor strike, bankruptcy, technological change) and attempt to derive explanations or lessons from it for future application.

In international relations, you might examine a political event or cultural phenomenon. For example, in a *single-case-based* study you might ask, “Why did the French leave Vietnam?” In a *comparative-case-based* study you might ask, “Why does Germany have much better relations with post-war allies in the twenty-first century than Japan does?” Again, the focus is on that particular situation and secondarily on the wider principles which affect it.

In time you will find your own favorite pattern or format. There are of course paper styles which do not fall squarely into any of these categories and which simply employ some general reasoning: x is true because of a, b, and c. These arguments often rely on *should* statements, advocating a moral action: “We should do x because of a, b, and c.”

When I teach academic writing to more advanced students, I often design the course so that students practice these different argument frames. Conceptually, comparison papers are generally easiest and structures involving analysis or synthesis of ideas are more difficult. But at some point I will have a student complain that a certain idea just doesn’t perfectly fit any of these formats. This is the point where the student hopefully realizes that the frames are there to help you, not to restrict you—the idea and the argument should come first, and then the paper structure can be bent to fit your purposes.

It’s my experience that the argument structure usually suggests itself naturally based on the topic, and it’s seldom that I’ve had to actually decide which one to use. Again, don’t be afraid to abandon or change these frames when you outgrow them.

Again, this list is concerned with argument formats. You may be asked to write a descriptive, narrative, personal, definitional, or other type of essay. These are important genres but generally do not emphasize a position to be taken.

## 2.5 Note Taking

As you read about your subject you may want to take notes to remember ideas and quotations you wish to use in your paper. There is no single best way to research and to take notes. I will only explain the system which I have developed over many years and which works well for me.

If my paper does not require external sources or evidence and can be written purely on my own experience and knowledge, I can go directly to preparing an outline. But this is not usually the case, and so I usually begin by going to the library to find books on my chosen subject, and I augment these sources with journal articles and perhaps internet resources and websites. While reading, I may do a quick scan or overview of the text to make a triage—meaning that I will divide the sources into ones which are useless, those which have some minor data or evidence I can use, and the ones which may be important for my paper. I do not want to waste time on the sources which do not help me presently, even if they might be interesting for other reasons. I can always write down the title for another time.

I then proceed to a deeper reading of the sources. As I read, I have a sheet of paper beside the book or the computer screen where I scribble down ideas, quotations, or facts which may be useful to me later along with the page number. I also make sure that I have the book or source written down:

contemporary novelists

ishiguro cites Russians - Chekhov - Dostoevsky as influences 123  
 ishiguro also left Nagasaki 123  
 - a meditation on sublimated pain - lost her homeland, husband, daughter 123  
 - all Ishiguro's characters are looking back to explain themselves 125  
 - a vivid narrator memory compromised by contradictions 127  
 Atsuko grieves and copes by fixating on the past 130  
 more sources 140

---

narrative skepticism

- the modernist concern of knowing 169  
 pale light suggests a self-deception realized 177  
 suffer from objective, compulsive repression 189

All this allows me to easily find what I want later when I am writing the paper and am reminded of some quotation or piece of information which will help me support my ideas. If I have a longer and more complex project, or I have several sheets of paper with these notes, I might even use numbers or colored highlighters to indicate which part of the paper the entry is related to.

Why bother with all this extra work? Why not just read some books or websites and then write the paper? As I will repeat throughout this book, a three-page paper is writing on training wheels. You are learning the basics of a skill which can then be expanded in size and scope. Your brain is probably capable of keeping straight all of the elements of the paper and the external information you have read for a three-page assignment. When your projects grow to five, ten, or two hundred pages, relying solely on your memory becomes progressively impossible without outlines and notes.

Nearly every new writer has paused while writing a paper and thought, "I read the best piece of text on this which will sum up the whole argument!"—and then wasted minutes or hours in frustration while frantically searching through a pile of books or photocopies to find that quotation, only to forget what he or she was looking for or how it fit into the paper. Having the notes already laid out would have reduced that process to seconds, allowing the writer to incorporate the source while the idea is fresh and clear.

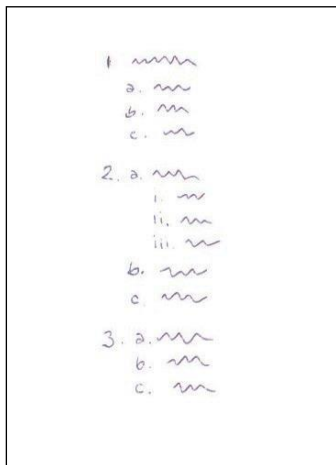
Thus having some knowledge of the subject through reading, some notes on those sources, and an idea of what you intend to prove or explain, will all greatly assist you in the next two steps

of planning: formulating a thesis statement and creating a rough outline. The point of it all is to help you to structure and speed up the final writing of the paper.

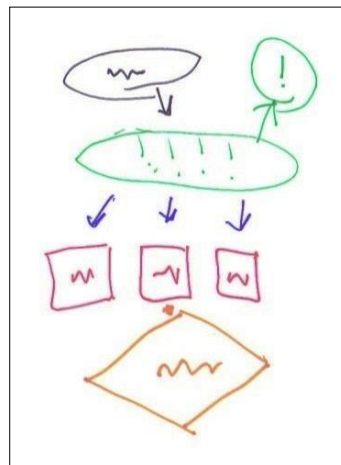
## 2.6 Outlining

The essay structures I have given in this chapter are meant to explain and illustrate the logic behind academic paper structure, but they are also *examples* for you to imitate. Before you write your paper, write an outline for it on a separate sheet of paper, or on your computer. It is that simple. Including this step in the sequence of writing processes—planning, writing, and editing—will make your paper more organized and easier to write. If you scribble four vague words you will get what you pay for in a vague essay, but a reasonably detailed outline will be immensely helpful to you.

The other good news is that again, an outline can be in any format that you find helpful or easy to write. Because I am a little older my outlines are quite conventional with numbers and key-words. But a more scientific or mathematical thinker might prefer a flowchart or a more symbolic arrangement on the paper. A visual person might have connected circles with different-colored words or lines. What type of outline you use makes no difference to the reader. He or she will never see it.



Number and point-form  
outline



Visual shapes and colors outline

Is it possible to *overplan* an outline? I suppose it is. It is important that you not see your outline as commandments handed down from on high, fixed and permanent. You may be well into your paper when you realize that an argument does not work or that it would be better elsewhere. There is nothing wrong with an outline full of scribbled arrows, changes, or erasures.

In my experience though, it is far more common for students to *under-plan*. If they write a point form outline, they tend to have only first-level headings:

- 1) Thesis argument: No character in *Brave New World* is heroic
- 2) Lenina
- 3) Bernard
- 4) The Savage
- 5) Conclusion

For a quick scribble before writing an in-class exam, perhaps this is adequate. For a planned paper, it's awful—it really gives little help to guide the writer in building the paper. It would

provide much more planning guidance with second or third-level headings (or a corresponding hierarchy or complexity if visual shapes or something else is used):

### 3) Bernard

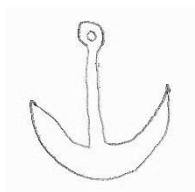
- a. Bernard is flawed and self-pitying
- b. Bernard does not really love Lenina
- c. Bernard betrays his friends to try to save himself

A longer paper may again break down this structure further, and even perhaps list some page numbers in the book for later reference (numbers here are imaginary):

- c. Bernard betrays his friends to try to save himself
  - i. He gives no help when the others are attacked (p. 188)
  - ii. He blames the others to the World Controller (p. 205)
  - iii. He breaks down and cries in childish whining (p. 207)

Once again, spending time planning *saves time later*. Not many people are like Mozart, who are inspired and write in a passionate frenzy toward a finished masterpiece. Most people are more like Beethoven, who need to write carefully and make changes in plans and repair wrong turns or mistakes. People *have* seen Beethoven's score manuscripts, which are full of scrawled notes and alterations, and nobody seems to think worse of him for it.

## 3 Thesis Statements



At least for me, the next sequential step in planning a paper after thinking about the argument frame is to define the specific argument, or at least a working one which may be (will probably be) improved later.

This is called the thesis statement (do not confuse it with a *thesis* itself, a longer academic paper). The thesis statement is the basic argument or position of the paper, and is normally one sentence. It generally does three things:

1. It specifies the subject of the paper to follow
2. It states the writer's position or angle on the subject
3. It gives an indication of what the major topics to follow will be

Bicycle paths are a good idea because they will promote fitness and reduce strain on roads.

The *subject* (1) is *bicycle paths*. The writer's *position* (2) is that they would be a *good idea*. The writer *indicates* (3) that the paper will discuss two reasons why, that bicycle paths would a) *promote fitness* and b) *reduce strain on roads*.

The thesis statement is the most important part of the entire essay. Theoretically you could chop out every sentence in the paper except the thesis statement. It is the one sentence

which comes somewhere in the introductory paragraph of your essay which is going to explain what your position is and indicate the direction of your paper. Without a thesis statement, the reader may be unable to see the point of the paper or follow the flow of ideas.

### 3.1 No Surprises

There are certain similarities between making a speech and writing a paper in that in both you might be attempting to persuade an audience, but there are things you do in rhetoric that you cannot or would not normally do in writing. One technique that people often employ in speeches is to surprise the audience: “I am going to tell you about something that will change your life!” An infomercial might similarly begin by building up to revealing the product, raising the audience’s suspense and curiosity.

Academic papers should not do this. They directly explain what you are going to discuss and what your central point or position is. These matters should be unambiguous and clear. A good academic paper does not tease or surprise the reader. Resist the temptation to be dramatic with a suspenseful title or introduction.

Think of movies: you go to see a film where there is a hero and a beautiful girl and at the beginning of the movie they come onstage. Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt say “Hello, we are the actors in this movie. In this movie we are going to fall in love, have an argument over a funny misunderstanding and break apart, and then we’ll get back together at the end and get married.” Nobody really wants to see a movie like that, but this is how academic papers work. You explain in advance at the beginning of the paper where your ideas are going.

Why can’t the reader simply read the paper and follow the arguments as they come? This may work when a paper is very short and the subject is reasonably simple. The problem is when you write about something complicated or abstract. If the reader cannot see where the paper is going and feels confused he or she may not continue.

Think of dancing. If you know how to dance it is fun because you understand the steps and you understand where you are supposed to go next. If you are dancing with someone and you do not know the sequence you feel like you are being jolted around. A bad academic paper is similar. As you read it you feel lost, and sometimes sentences spring up and seem totally random, because you do not understand where the flow of ideas is going. So clarifying at the very beginning of the paper what you are going to discuss is vital, and a clear thesis statement prepares the reader for what is to come.

### 3.2 Moving from Topic to Argument

#### Tip



Answer the question, “What is your paper trying to prove or show?” If you can’t answer this, chances are you have no clear thesis statement.

As you might have guessed by now, a topic is not an argument. “Plastic surgery” is a topic, but in itself it reveals no opinion or position. Eventually a writer needs to move from being informed on the subject to expressing some analysis or position on it, which will be the *argument* of the paper. Again, our writing process is one of narrowing, where you move toward a single focused idea which you wish to discuss and propose or prove.

This is not necessarily a strictly linear process, as you might begin your research with a working position on the subject which you later change or return to for more planning. For

example, you might begin researching a paper on gun control with a personal opinion already somewhat settled, though you should of course keep an open mind if your evidence begins to indicate other conclusions.

In chapter one we discussed the necessity of an argument in your paper, but now we should look at methods for formulating and evaluating arguments, and consider some of the features of a good scholarly one.

### *Good Arguments Do More Than Describe*

A paper which ‘discusses’ corporal punishment in schools and cites interesting statistics and examples, but does not ever take a position on the issue is heartbreaking to grade. Such an essay is a good report—but it is not an academic argument paper. A paper which describes how Twitter works or summarizes in detail the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* may be interesting, but neither are academic argument papers. It is a tempting mistake to be tricked by the mass of statistics presented or the excellent list of details presented in your paper and overlook the fact that your paper *says* nothing. Like the courtroom, the paper needs a verdict. What is your point?

### *Good Arguments are Useful and Provable*

A good academic argument is both useful and provable. A useful argument is relevant and interesting to other people besides you. If my position is that “the lint in my belly-button really itches because a, b, and c,” that position might be factually true, but it’s a position on a ridiculous subject and no one else cares. A useless argument might be well-supported with facts—my belly-button might really be itching—but it is still trivial.

Second, an argument needs evidence and reasons beyond the writer’s personal feelings and preferences. “Jessica Alba is better than Jennifer Lopez because Jessica Alba is more attractive” is not only bad logic but unprovable as an academic position. Perhaps many men would feel that this *is* a useful argument! But it is difficult to prove the thesis statement because there is no objective set of criteria which might help you form a judgment. Physical attractiveness is subjective.

Similarly, arguing that coffee tastes better than beer lacks reasons beyond personal taste. Certainly you could debate these matters with friends for fun (or in persuasive writing), and there is nothing wrong with having personal preferences and opinions. But these claims are not usually suitable for academic writing. If you argued that coffee is *healthier* than beer, or that survey data show that more people like Jessica Alba, in that case you might have concrete reasons for your position.

### *Good Arguments can Be Disagreed With*

Facts are used to support arguments, but oddly a fact *itself* is usually not a good argument. If the position of your paper is that “Jane Austen lived from 1775 to 1817,” or “Jimi Hendrix was a famous guitar player,” the reader will probably already know this information; second, you will have little else to prove or discuss in your essay. You could give evidence that Hendrix was famous and that he was not a turnip farmer or a delivery-truck driver, but that would also be a ridiculous paper. A better argument would be “Jimi Hendrix was a famous guitar player because x.” This is a position you can argue that is provable and useful.

By nature, good academic arguments should be theoretically refutable—that is, it should be possible to disagree. A position which *cannot* be opposed ought to immediately warn you that something may be wrong. This is why conspiracy theories can be so dangerously seductive. They are designed in such a way that no amount of evidence can disprove them. If you believe the government is hiding x from its citizens, a lack of evidence for the position merely proves that the



government is successfully hiding x from its citizens. An abundance of evidence that there is no x will merely prove how clever the government is at fooling everyone.

### *The Sweet Spot*

Thus at one extreme we want to avoid a thesis which is useless or inarguable, and at the other, we want to avoid a position which is factual or so obvious that there is nothing left to prove (“Russia is a big country”). A thesis such as “Murder is bad because x” is a bad idea because the reader will probably already accept the premise as self-evident, leaving the writer with little to discuss or persuade the audience of. The most successful thesis will probably be one where you can think of successful arguments to support it, but can also imagine credible possible objections to your position. A good argument in this regard is like a good conversation—you probably know from experience that obvious facts or far-off speculations will likely not be interesting for other people, but a topic which can provoke discussion or disagreement may be.

Argument is too obvious	-----Sweet spot -----	Argument is impossible or silly
Gatsby is a man	Gatsby can't buy love	The book was written by aliens
I am wearing socks	Should we wear ties to work?	What if everyone was naked?
Traffic jams are bad	Alternatives to car transport	All cars should be banned
Hamlet dies	Hamlet is indecisive	Hamlet is left-handed

Every few years I encounter people online who feel that literature means whatever we decide it means, and no one has any right to deny them their opinion. But this is a misunderstanding of respect—we all have a right to our interpretations, but this does not mean we are obligated to accept all opinions as equally valid. When people make this “Who’s to say that *Tom Sawyer* isn’t about x” claim it is at best a pretentious statement meant to ‘democratize’ all opinions by making them equal, but at worst it shuts down dialogue. If *Tom Sawyer* can be about anything without needing any reasons or evidence other than personal feelings, there is little more that can be said. Rather than seeing literary texts as having such binary correct/incorrect answers, it might be better to look for ‘sweet spots’ along a continuum—it may not be possible to say a novel or poem has an ultimately correct meaning, but we may be able to argue with evidence that x is a compellingly probable interpretation.

### *Devil’s Advocate Papers*

As a matter of reference, I should explain that you may have read a text with a seemingly outrageous position presented seriously. This is known as a ‘devil’s advocate’ paper, where you argue a position you do not agree with as a rhetorical exercise. This is an unusual approach in academia, but is possible. If you write such a paper advocating that sick people *shouldn’t* receive medical help or that animals *should* vote you would need to make your sarcasm obvious, as the paper could offend people who do not understand your intentions. There are still readers who misunderstand Swift’s satirical “A Modest Proposal” and object that Swift is a monster for advocating we eat poor children. Yet essays where the writer takes an unorthodox position and defends it can be thought-provoking. There is also an entire subgenre of counterfactual history where scholars make arguments based on hypothetical past events, for example “How would Europe be different if Germany won World War I?”

## 3.3 Cultural “Styles” and Hedging

In addition to structural differences, Korean writing is *stylistically* influenced by Chinese rather than Greco-Roman models—how the language prefers to arrange and discuss ideas. This does not mean that one writer cannot learn another culture’s conventions and employ multiple styles for

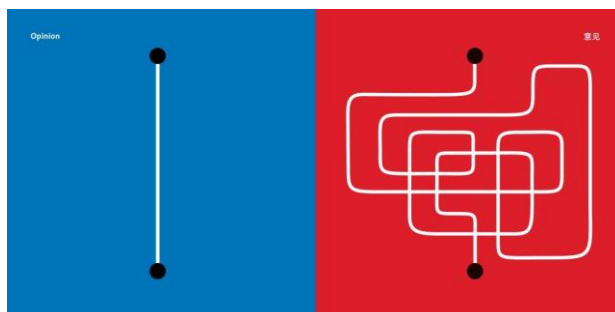
different situations. It is also easy to overstate such differences: structurally, Korean writing conventions are not very different from western ones.

Remember my statement that, whether it's the way the universe hums or it's simple human psychology, how people structurally conceptualize the arrangement of arguments in scholarly writing is reasonably similar in most cultures (this is part of the broader technique of *rhetoric*, a subject we will explore in more depth later.) Nevertheless, in newspaper essays or academic writing Koreans often have a slightly but characteristically distinct form for developing an argument, formally known as *ki-sung-jon-gyul* (기승전결).

*Contrastive rhetoric* is a branch of applied linguistics pioneered by American linguist Robert Kaplan in the late 1960's. This subject concerns how non-native writers of English are affected by the rhetorical conventions and values of their own culture. Thus a Korean writer, brought up in a society traditionally valuing indirectness and politeness, might write in a non-committal manner which obliquely repeats statements indicating the main argument and slowly moves toward a subtle conclusion.

Other cultures have their own rhetorical conventions. A Latinate writer, one from southern Europe or Central America, might have a style which makes arguments with zigzag detours and diversions from the main subject. Middle Eastern writers might tend towards a strongly narrative style.

The predominant rhetorical style of North American academic writing tends toward straight-as-an-arrow directness to the point, though I even see a slight difference between Canadian and American writing, with the former a little more indirect in comparison, reflecting the country's stereotypical politeness. This is a delicate point because no one wishes to imply that one culture's writing practices are wrong or superior to another's, let alone having it balloon into a general critique of that culture. It's rather relative, as well: an Indian writer could argue with full justice that a slow, poetic, reflective progression toward a central idea is more scholarly and elegant than rushed *New-York-minute* American impatience.



Yang Liu, "Expressing an Opinion": Left is Western style, Right is Eastern

I will only gently argue that a paper written in English should be written with at least some awareness of English styles, just as a paper written in language x should in fairness reflect the customs of society x. Good writers need not suppress their natural personalities, but again the purpose of writing the paper is to convince the reader. To do this the audience's cultural expectations and abilities need to be considered, just as you would tailor the academic level of the paper to the audience's knowledge of the subject. Japanese haiku are beautiful, but an economics essay written with an indistinct, subtle wash of an argument would confuse the reader into abandoning the paper.

### *Hedging*

Hedging is a difficult concept to explain because it can be confused with vagueness. In these preceding thesis statement examples I have used rather plain and direct phrasings: x is/are y.

This is because a learning writer of academic argument papers needs to communicate the essay's position clearly.

At the level of a senior thesis you may find that you cannot make such confident or unambiguous claims. In the social sciences especially, where information is contingent on new findings and interpretations, it may even seem arrogant to say "Thus x is definitely caused by y." You may need to hedge or soften your thesis with a more conciliatory verb:

X suggests / indicates a relationship with y

The evidence points to a likely / possible / probable conclusion that x causes y

We can assume / conclude that x seems to cause y

Again, this shouldn't be confused with having an equivocal or unclear thesis where the writer fails to communicate a position. Hedging simply means that you acknowledge that your arguments are offered within a context of new and developing opinions which may add to, modify, or challenge your paper's findings.

### 3.4 Phrasing Thesis Statements

Again, a good thesis statement will state the subject, the position on the subject, and will indicate the topics to be discussed. Thus a thesis statement should not normally be constructed as you would a speech. You might begin a speech with a question: "Should shyness be treated medically?" That is not a useful thesis statement in a paper because the reader is going to say— "Well, you tell *me*. Should it or not? What's your point?" The question tells us the subject (shyness) but says nothing about the speaker's position. A better thesis statement would be "Shyness should not be treated medically because x."

Let's create a sample thesis about sports cars in order to better understand the process of thesis argument design and arrangement. It is again a juvenile subject for an academic paper, but its simplicity serves our purposes as an example.

#### *The Most Common Error: Being Vague*

As you begin your paper and speak generally about sports cars, you end the introduction paragraph with "In this paper I am going to talk about sports cars." This tells the reader almost nothing, simply saying that you will discuss x. Well, what about x?

Your second draft is "Sports cars are good for several reasons," followed by "Sports cars are good for three important reasons." These thesis statements are slightly better as at least they indicate your position (sports cars are *good*), but they still give no specifics. *Good* can mean almost anything. Why are they good? Your thesis statement and introductory paragraph is the time to show your hand and explain your point. The reader should be able to stop here and know in brief what your argument and reasons are.

A last problem is writers who list structural parts of their paper rather than reasons: "In this paper I will discuss whether shyness should be medicated, and in my body section I will discuss social, medical, and educational issues related to shyness, followed by a conclusion." This tells us the subject and something of the paper's direction, but tells us little about the argument or how it will be supported. Should shyness be medicated or not?

#### *The Basic Frame*

If you are stuck and cannot think of a way to phrase your thesis statement, you cannot go wrong with this basic frame:

Your opinion + "because" + reasons

People should do x because a, b, and c.  
 The novel means x because a, b, and c.

Certainly this is a rigid formula for a thesis statement, and one you may eventually outgrow, but most effective thesis statements have reasons. They have a *because*. If y is z, then *why* is y z? Tell me.

The next thesis is this: “Sports cars are good because they are fun, fast, and good for meeting people.” This is an effective thesis statement. The writer 1. Takes a clear position, 2. Gives reasons *why*, and 3. Indicates what will follow. The reader understands that the writer is arguing *for* sports cars and that the paper is going to have three main sections discussing them as fun, fast, and good for meeting people, hopefully in that order.

### *Why Three?*

Notice again there are three elements to my thesis statement, because in our five-paragraph theoretical model it fits the parts. Not all thesis statements necessarily have to have three components. I tend to like them in my own writing, but you’re not me. You can also have:

A is true because of x, y, and z.  
 Experts believe x but the truth is really y.  
 B is better than C because x and y.  
 This law should not be passed because it would x.

A thesis statement might also work well with four elements or reasons: “Sports cars are fun, fast, a good investment, and a good way to meet people,” as two ideas (“fun and fast”), or with one specific, strong idea that makes the position sufficiently clear: “Sports cars symbolize freedom in their owners and passengers.” A crisply specific one-element thesis is far preferable to a vague, evasive three-element thesis: ☒ “Sports cars are nice, fine, and wonderful.”

In theory, the number of elements does not matter and could range from one to infinity. In practice, any more than four tends to get you into trouble:

Sports cars are fun, fast, a good way to meet new friends, a safe investment, a safe way to rebel, beautiful, a symbol of freedom, and a way to learn auto mechanics.

Now we have eight sub-arguments, which is perhaps excessive. The reader may get confused as to whether you intend to discuss each of these eight arguments equally, or if some of them are subclasses of others.

To repeat, and to speak philosophically for a moment, throughout this book I sometimes use the word *rule*, but there are few actions you could take in an academic paper that are actually *illegal*—other than perhaps plagiarism or threatening someone. Most of what we say are ‘rules’ are conventions, accepted and standard formats or ways of doing things that have developed over the centuries.

When I recommend that you have 1-4 elements to your thesis statement, it is even less than a convention. It is merely an observation I have made about the papers I have read in my career, that most people are not cognitively at ease with a longer list of sub-arguments. In the same way, we write telephone numbers in batches of 3’s and 4’s: 82-10-333-4444, because psychologists have concluded that small clusters of numbers are easier for most people to remember.

This is also known as *chunking*, our mental trait of more easily grasping small sets of numbers or ideas. We aren’t crocodiles who can eat an entire hamburger at once—we need to eat in bites—and our brains follow a similar limitation. The same applies to paragraph lengths, and

also thesis statements, and so it's not a rule but only a practical suggestion that more than three elements may cause the reader to forget or to be confused.

### 3.5 Parallel Construction

Let's return to our silly thesis statement: "Sports cars are fun, fast, and good for meeting people." Notice these are all adjectives: fun, fast, good. In my earlier example, "a good investment" is admittedly a noun phrase, but I will probably not go to jail for it. Yet if I start mixing up parts of speech randomly in my thesis statement it will quickly confuse the reader:

Sports cars are fun, I like them, there are some pretty girls who will talk to you if they see one, once my brother had one and it was a good investment, and you can drive fast in one. ☒

Thus when you design a thesis statement (or really any list, for that matter), try to make sure that the elements within it are parallel. This means phrasing each element in your thesis in the same way, if possible with the same word classes and verb tenses:

All adjectives: This is not an advisable law because it would result in a situation that is *unpredictable, inefficient and dangerous*.

All nouns: Macbeth is seduced by *ambition, pride, and fear*, and the witches play on these emotions to corrupt him.

All verbs: We should *fund, advertise, and support* this important program.

All adverbs: Tom's robbery from Bounderby's bank in *Hard Times* is not a sudden act of passion but planned *slowly, carefully, and deliberately*.

These are all ways of constructing a thesis statement (or any list sentence) that is grammatically parallel, and this will help the reader understand your position and where you intend on going with it. The examples above are simple ones, but parallel writing will be increasingly important as your thesis statements become more complex in subject matter. Thus you might have sentences with 2-3 phrases or clauses. The principle is the same: Try to have a consistent pattern to your arrangement. Let's look at some more examples from actual student papers.

#### *Thesis Statement Samples*

Ralph in *Lord of the Flies* is a better leader, because he provides stable rules, he looks to the future, and he takes responsibility.

(This is a classic three-point argument. It provides a good indication of the paper's construction. Note the he + infinite verb pattern for each element.)

Hagrid acts as a father figure to Harry. Seeing Hagrid helping Harry to buy what is needed, taking care of Harry's feelings, and sharing a deep emotional relationship with Harry, it can be claimed that Hagrid has the qualities of a friend and reliable father.

(This is longer, possibly a two-sentence thesis, but the argument is clear. Again, there is a predictable pattern of continuous tense verbs, seeing/taking/sharing.)

Food is important in *Lucky Jim* because Margaret's fussiness about food and Christine's large appetite reflect their personalities and emotional problems.

(This is one-point—food—or at best two points—comparing Margaret to Christine—but it's so specific that the reader is clear on where the paper is going.)

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *White Teeth* the authors use the characteristics and meanings of mice to symbolize meaning for the readers.

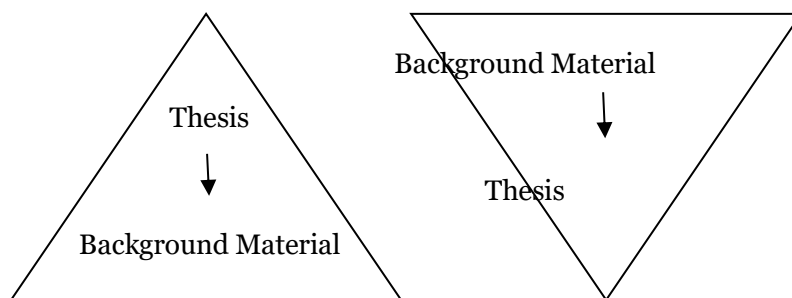
(Here again, the argument is so defined—it's about mice—that the reader understands the paper's direction.)

So far all of our thesis statements have been one literal sentence. Sometimes you might need more, but in practice any more than two or so sentences will be pushing your luck, as the energy of the thesis statement will start to dissipate. The reader may have difficulty determining whether all of these sentences are your thesis or if one sentence is the main thesis and the others are sub-arguments in some hierarchy of argumentation. Some readers ensure their thesis will stand out by explicitly writing "The thesis of this paper is x," and this is fine—but normally this phrasing is redundant and wastes space.

I've had students tell me that their argument is so complex and profound that it cannot be condensed into one sentence, and I don't buy it. My doctoral dissertation was 630 pages and I can distill its central argument into one sentence (granted, a fairly long sentence). Albert Einstein once said something to the effect of "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it." There may be exceptions, but usually a multi-sentence or paragraph-length thesis statement reflects fuzzy thinking.

### 3.6 Placement

Now that we have looked at deriving and phrasing a thesis statement, let's examine an important related question: where does it go within the essay? We will discuss the structural parts of the academic essay more fully in the next chapter, but for now, there are two common ways to build a thesis statement into the introductory paragraph or section:



Some people put their thesis statement at the very beginning of the introduction to have a more dramatic and journalistic effect: "Cigarette smoking should be x because 1, 2, and 3." This introduction moves from the thesis statement to background information explaining the thesis. Other writers turn this pyramid upside down and talk about general or background information before coming to the point. They might discuss World War II generally and its destructiveness, giving some key dates, before coming to the climax: "One of the determining factors in the war's victory was the invention of radar. Radar was a, b, and c."

There is no fixed rule or convention on this matter. Placement of thesis statements depends on your personal style. This is another aspect of writing which is more art than science.

Often the thesis will “feel” better at the beginning or end of the paragraph based on the topic and its immediacy or complexity. You do not need an extensive definition of smoking or abortion, but radar is a more obscure subject perhaps requiring some explanation.

It is possible to put your thesis statement elsewhere in your introduction such as directly in the middle (in effect, a diamond shape). If you do so, try to be especially clear to the reader about what you are doing and make your thesis statement obvious, as such a placement is unconventional and might confuse the reader otherwise. You might even explicitly write, “The thesis of this paper is...,” even though this approach would normally be redundant.

### *The Hypothesis Thesis*

I mentioned earlier that a thesis statement shouldn’t normally be designed like a question, as questions usually don’t give a clear indication of the arguments which will follow. There are exceptions. You might state a central research question as the thesis of your paper and then organize the paper around answering it, in effect providing your position in your conclusion like a detective: “Through examining the evidence, we can find out *who* killed Mr. Fitzwilliam.” This approach is one commonly used in social sciences papers. For example, you might pose a question to the reader:

American presidential elections often tend to be very close. Why is this so?

You might then state how your paper will investigate the matter, and then provide a discussion with evidence, examples, and surveys, ending with a conclusion in which you explain and summarize the answers you have derived. The thesis does not actually indicate the *answer*, but is so specific that the reader understands the paper’s purpose. Your paper might end with something like “Therefore, we can conclude that American elections are usually close because of x.” This is the key element—you must signal your plans in your introduction.

This thesis structure might also explicitly pose a hypothesis which you intend to test. For example, you might seek to answer the question, “Is it a good idea for Denmark to join the euro zone?” Your conclusion might affirm your hypothesis, stating that the evidence has indeed shown that Denmark should do x. It is also possible to write a paper in which the evidence finally shows that Denmark should not do x, but rather y instead. Both answer your hypothesis.

The hypothesis style of thesis is often common in social sciences papers and in science or engineering fields, where a controversial idea or solution to a problem might be under investigation or testing. For example, an engineering paper could posit a hypothesis that some chemical process might make better metals for bridge building. The paper could then lay out the experiments and tests carried out to evaluate the hypothesis. The end section of the paper is where the author asserts that the hypothesis is shown to be true or false. It may happen in such a paper that the hypothesis is falsified. This does not in itself make the paper a failure, as the knowledge obtained from recognizing the failure will help others in learning from the results and moving towards other solutions.

### *Breaking These Rules*

With new writers I tend to insist on certain rules for the formulation of a thesis, for they are still forming habits and becoming fluent with the mechanics and forms of writing. With higher-level students I am admittedly more forgiving as they are more capable at creating text within which the reader can predict the flow of ideas. Again, these structural conventions exist simply to help ease the reader through a familiar and logical pattern. If you feel it fits your essay to write the actual thesis in a different style, there is no crime—but make sure the reader has a clear idea where this train of logic is going at the beginning of your paper.

Students who read scholarly articles might also object that the writers of these articles do not always follow the conventions I describe in this chapter. The journal article you read might not have an explicit thesis, but the author may be skilled enough to carry the reader through the discussion without confusion. But it is also true that the article may break the guidelines indicated here and be very difficult to read as a result. Not all published articles are well-written from a compositional standpoint.

### 3.7 A Note on Titles

A matter related to thesis statements is titles. Inexperienced writers also tend to write short, cryptic titles in order to build suspense: “The Big Problem.” Thanks for that. *Cats* is memorable as the name for a Broadway musical but it would be a childish title for an academic paper. What about cats? The title is not only childish for a scholarly paper but tells the reader almost nothing. It is hardly any better than students who literally name their essay “Assignment #1” with no attempt at describing its contents at all.

Research papers and scholarly books tend to have long titles, perhaps of two or even three lines. Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* was originally titled *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Having an expansive and descriptive title tends to give the paper a professional air, though overdoing it can admittedly look pretentious. Again, the field you are writing in may make a difference, as science and engineering tends to prefer briefer titles and the humanities tends to prefer longer ones—a popular trend lately seems to be two or more clauses linked with colons. I named my first published article “Exodus inverted: A new look at the *Grapes of Wrath*,” using a memorable idea or quote from the text with a description of the essay after the colon.

But more importantly, an informative title makes the subject clear for the reader in advance and makes indexing and finding the paper easier in internet search engines. Academics want their papers to be read by other students and scholars. A paper title with the keywords *school uniforms* will not turn up in many web searches, but if your title was “How short is short?: A longitudinal study of church, cultural, and gender trends in 1980s secondary public school uniforms in the Philippines,” those terms would be found by people who used the search terms *public school*, *gender*, *1980s*, or *Philippines*. Perhaps ‘How short is short’ sounds a bit dirty, but this probably differs based on the readership—I’ve seen some modern English literature articles with racy titles, but this probably wouldn’t be acceptable in linguistics or classics.

Why is a discussion on titles in this chapter on thesis statements? In a way, titles and thesis statements are friends—they both indicate in a few words what the paper is going to be about, guiding the reader to follow your arguments. If your paper is arguing against school uniforms, rather than a dull title like “About School Uniforms,” get a head start on preparing the reader for your position by forecasting it in your title: “Free to be me: Why school uniforms should not be mandatory in middle schools.” This will be covered more in later chapters, but titles are a form of *metacommentary*—this refers to language telling you *about* the paper. A title, along with section headings such as “Conclusion,” give the reader explicit indicators about the sections of the paper.



## 4 Structure

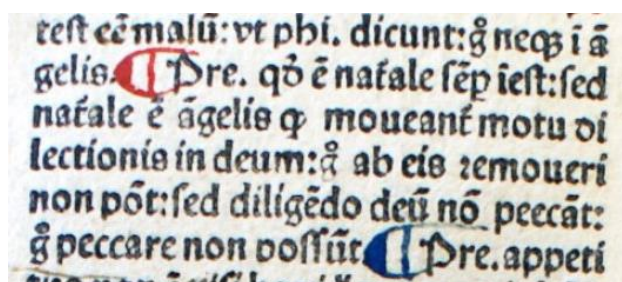


After producing at least a working thesis, we might think about the overall arrangement of the paper. Structure is the second construction block of academic writing, between grammar and content. Structure involves the layout or arrangement of the parts of your essay into sentences, paragraph units, and sections or chapters. Just as buildings have steel frames and wooden beams to hold them together, an effective paper is built on a strong, firm organization. Without structure, both the building and the paper are likely to be failures.

### 4.1 Paragraphs

Korean writing tends to be much less paragraph-bound, and short pieces of writing in English such as e-mails may not use them at all. But they are the essential unit of academic writing. We can define a paragraph as a group of sentences which can stand alone as a connected and complete unit of thought. There is no rule on how long or short a paragraph should be, although as a rule of thumb I try to write paragraphs of between a quarter to half a page, and I rarely if ever let a paragraph go longer than one page. Paragraphs shorter than three sentences in academic writing are rare.

Paragraphs were not always a standard part of western typography. If you see images of handwritten medieval manuscripts there are sometimes divisions between sections, but often there is nothing—there may not even be spaces between words. The ancient Greeks at times used horizontal lines called *paragraphos* to divide sections or point to important lines, thus the modern word. Some late medieval texts used an elegantly-shaped “C” (for *capitulum*, *chapter*), later called a *pilcrow* (¶). By the seventeenth century in Europe, indenting new paragraphs seems to have been standard.



The basic function of the paragraph is to break long stretches of writing into bite-sized pieces, making the text easier to digest. Just like humans aren't built to eat a meal in one bite like lizards, our brains seem to work better taking in information in chunks. Visually, paragraph markers are typographical markers that allow you to stop and process the information, and then easily find where you left off and continue. Paragraphs signal to the reader that you are finished talking about one complete idea, indicating that you can stop, take your eyes off the page, think, and then move on.

For such visual reasons, sometimes paragraph length may be affected by the requirements of your audience. Writing for academic journals or newspapers may call for shorter paragraphs as the page size might be narrow or the text may run in narrow vertical columns. The same might apply to websites. For papers printed on conventional letter-size or A4 paper, however, the practices of the discipline might favor longer paragraphs as a mark of a professional tone.

Nevertheless, having endless multi-page paragraphs tires the reader, just as randomly beginning new paragraphs every few sentences can be visually frustrating. The reader's eye feels jarred as the line of text continually stops and resumes on a lower or indented space. Thus making a well-crafted paragraph involves both cohesion, making sure that every sentence has a logical connection to each other, and having the discipline to divide your chunks of thought into relatively equal-sized pieces.

One crucial skill in editing is the ability to re-read your text and realize that a paragraph is too long or drifts from one idea to another. Often the solution is to find a suitable place near the middle where the topic of the paragraph shifts and the remainder can be separated into a new paragraph, with some additional text to smooth the break if necessary.

A technical question: indent or skip a line between paragraphs? I still prefer indentation in professional writing and believe it is a more efficient use of the page, but I have noticed that more and more writers are skipping a space, perhaps because of the influence of internet text. For some reason html is not very indent-friendly. Indenting may begin to disappear from English writing in your lifetime, but for now either is fine. But do *not* do both.

## 4.2 The Five-Paragraph Essay

English rhetoric has shifted over the centuries toward more awareness of the reader's role. Early modern essays written in the 1700's or 1800's seem to have less concern about the readers' ability to follow—comprehension is thought to be their responsibility. Since the Hemingway-esque directness of the twentieth century there is greater emphasis on making things clear and organized through more or less conventionalized standards. This is perhaps partly a response to a far more varied readership, and partly due to modern distractions such as television and the internet, which have diminished attention spans and reader patience.

Thus once we have paragraphs we need to arrange them into a meaningful sequence. Most native-speaking students in English-speaking countries are taught in school about the five-paragraph essay: introduction, three body paragraphs, and conclusion. You may notice that this corresponds roughly to the Korean writing conventions of *saron-balon-gyeron* (서론, 본론, 결론), introduction, body, and conclusion. You may already also intuit that this model may refer to either five literal paragraphs or abstractly to longer section groups, something we will discuss later in the chapter.

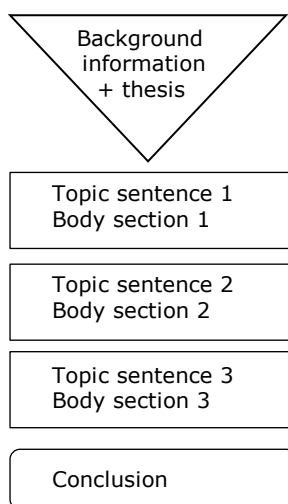
When I was a composition instructor in Las Vegas I observed that North Americans tend to respect and value education less than Asians at least traditionally do. In particular, when I taught composition, some males or students in engineering or the sciences viewed writing courses with contempt, dismissing them as effeminate or impractical. The irony is that engineering or computing science students often excel in academic writing because they understand flowcharts and structure. Such students quickly apprehend recursive steps and the logic of organization. The structure of an academic essay is very process-oriented and normally predictable: an introduction, body, and conclusion which sums up and returns to the main points of the paper or of the thesis statement.

### 4.3 Introduction and Body Sections

The introduction paragraph is obviously going to introduce your subject and give your thesis statement and perhaps some background information, and hopefully give some direction of how you are going to discuss the material in the paper so that the reader understands the sequence of what will follow. As we will discuss in the next chapter, the thesis statement—the sentence which will define the main argument or hypothesis of your paper—goes in your introduction paragraph, usually at the beginning or end.

The body paragraphs are going to contain your reasons, examples, and evidence for your thesis. To use a food analogy, your paper is like a sandwich. The bread on top is the introduction and your conclusion is the bottom slice, but the meat of the paper is the middle, the body. This is where you discuss and support your arguments. Another good reason I use the sandwich analogy is that, just as a diner would be dissatisfied with a sandwich which is nearly all bread, you may eventually need to think about balancing your different sections so that one doesn't totally dominate; a paper which is all introduction and has almost no 'body' argument will also feel dissatisfying to the reader.

We need to explain that there is a difference between the thesis statement and the topic sentence. Thesis statements go inside introduction paragraphs and they introduce the position of the *entire* paper. Topic sentences begin body paragraphs. They simply state what the subject of that particular paragraph will be about. They typically restate the elements of the thesis statement, or at least sub-arguments related to them.



Now, if we have three paragraphs of body material, each one of those topic sentences is going to link back to the thesis statement. Here is a student paper on Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*. Her introduction does a good job of laying out her argument and the basic topics which will discuss that argument:

In the beginning of *Lucky Jim*, Jim appears to be a sad and miserable person who has lots of troubles in his life. He has awful people around him who want to take advantage of him or are simply mean to him. Even in his work his job is unstable and does not pay him much. Moreover, his careless actions drag him into more trouble. But eventually he overcomes all of his unhappiness and gets all that he wishes for. Amis cleverly uses a technique to make unhappy things seem unhappier to emphasize a dramatic happy ending. There are three elements which contrast to the happy ending: the people around him, his work, and his careless actions.

This is another classic three-point thesis, and it breaks down as follows: the paper will show how three unhappy things provide contrast with the happy end to the story. Body paragraph 1 will discuss Jim's friends and coworkers, and provide some form of information, proof, evidence, support, or specifics; then body paragraph 2 will discuss Jim's work, and body paragraph 3 will discuss his careless actions. The resulting outline we can generate looks like the samples we examined earlier:

- I. Introduction paragraph
  - a. Background information
  - b. Thesis: the author emphasizes Jim's happy ending by contrasting it against unhappy things in his life: the people around him, his work, and his careless actions.
- II. Body paragraph 1
  - a. Topic sentence: Jim's coworkers/friends
  - b. Reasons / examples why they make him unhappy
- III. Body paragraph 2
  - a. Topic sentence: Jim's job tasks
  - b. Reasons / examples why they make him unhappy
- IV. Body paragraph 3
  - a. Topic sentence: Jim's careless actions
  - b. Reasons / examples why they make him unhappy
- V. Conclusion

Here we have the first body paragraph.

The first piece of evidence is the people around him. Margaret especially wants to take advantage of Jim's good nature and continually threatens fake suicides. It highlights how manipulative and fraudulent she is when Jim and Catchpole meet and talk about Margaret. "There were two bottles," says Catchpole, who adds, "She forgot to tell a lie there... but she wasn't taking any risks" (Amis 238). From these lines, Margaret, who "battens neurotically on Jim's pity" (Allen), it shows how unlucky it is for Jim to be associated with her, as she is only interested in getting attention. Additionally, as Cassity says, "People who regularly spend about a quarter of their hours each day with family and friends are 12 times as likely to report feeling joyful." Because of Margaret, it clearly shows that Jim is not very happy with his life because he has few good people around him such as Christine.

Here is another example from a student paper on Harry Potter. The thesis is repeated from chapter three, followed here by the third body paragraph:

[Thesis: Hagrid acts as a father figure to Harry. Seeing Hagrid helping Harry to buy what is needed, taking care of Harry's feelings, and sharing a deep emotional relationship with Harry, it can be claimed that Hagrid has the qualities of a friend and reliable father.]

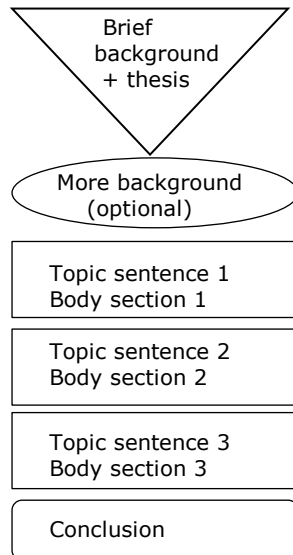
Third, Hagrid seems to share a deep emotional bond with Harry, being a reliable figure, which can be another trait of a father. Throughout the novel, whenever Harry is placed "in a tight corner," Hagrid usually "confidants" him (Tucker 223). For instance, when Harry participates in Quidditch his broomstick moves strangely and Hagrid is the first one who notices the strangeness. This means that Hagrid is always keen to Harry's

safety and health and also that he has the aspect of a father who is always sensitive to his child's danger. In response to this, Harry "couldn't help trusting him" (Rowling 28). Moreover, when Harry wanders around finding platform nine and three-quarters, feeling nervous, he thinks of Hagrid. Seeing these, one can claim that Harry has built trust towards Hagrid. Having a broad view, in building stable trust in child-parent relationships, it is significant to show children that parents will help them avoid "harmful behavior patterns" (Weiss). Because Hagrid seems to ensure Harry that he is always available for any dangerous situations, Harry relies on Hagrid both physically and psychologically. Therefore, it can be argued that Harry and Hagrid have a deep emotional relationship based on the trust which is often found in children-parents relationships.

Paragraphs like these are enjoyable to read—even if I've taught the novel many times I still learn something new from such papers. They are well-written both in content as well as from the geekier but necessary perspective of structure. They come from essays which not only use evidence well to support their arguments, but initially make it clear to the reader how the paper's ideas will branch and be arranged.

### *Variations*

With our simple model there is room in the first paragraph to introduce your subject and state your thesis. If the subject is complex, however, you might need an intervening background or definition paragraph before the body section—a pickle or slice of cheese. The five-paragraph model is just a model, and so we can easily add a background section to add more explanation. This will also allow a shorter, clearer introduction as the detailed explanation will be moved to a later part of the paper.



Here, in a paper on farming co-operatives, a student writer inserts a background section to explain a United Nations policy which will give enough historical information for the reader to understand her following arguments. Few people would want to eat a hamburger that is mostly pickles, and here as well the background 'pickle' is kept brief so that it does not distract the reader from the larger flow of the paper with too much detail.

Facing with a world situation dominated by chronic hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, the member states of the United Nations in 2000 jointly declared in the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targeted that each goal should be met by 2015. Of the eight MDGs, MDG 1 pledged to halve the proportion of hungry people from 20 to 10 percent by 2015: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

With five years to go, the proportion currently stands at 16 percent, however. This continuing high global hunger level makes extreme difficulties in achieving the first MDG but also the rest of the MDGs, because devastating world hunger issue is the underlying factor to pursue the other MDGs. For instance, hunger and malnutrition lead to poor maternal health (Goal 5: Improve maternal health), as well as low birth weight.

Notice that in this background section there is little argumentation, though the subject does relate to the thesis statement of the paper. Typically writers will insert these brief sections to help inform the reader about basic ideas and principles, before returning to the business of pursuing a thesis argument in the body section after.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

##### Tip



A good conclusion answers the question, “Who cares?” Now that you have proven your argument, what is its relevance, and why is it important?

The conclusion restates the main arguments of the paper. It is the last paragraph or paragraphs of the paper. This may not be the best pedagogy, but I would like to begin by listing some *bad* ways that writers typically create conclusions.

☒ 1. *Straight copy-and-paste*. I have seen lazy students copy their thesis statement verbatim and then paste it into their conclusion.

Do not do this for several reasons. One, it insults the reader, who thinks, “How stupid do you think I am to assume I wouldn’t notice this?” The reader sees that you did not put any effort into the conclusion and are simply parroting from your introduction to dash off the job. If you do not appear to care about your paper, why should the reader care either? The second reason not to use the same text is because the way that the reader approaches the subject at the end of your paper is different from its beginning, as I’ll explain below.

Being sneaky and changing a few words from your thesis statement is hardly better, as the reader may see through the attempt to recycle your sentence with synonyms:

In conclusion, sports cars are fun, quick, and effective in attracting new friends. ☒

☒ 2. *Nothing left to say*: In conclusion, sports cars are nice. The end.

This sort of ending is all smoke and no fire. The reader is startled by an ending which gave no closing sense of meaning to what was argued. What is the point of your point? The feeling is much like watching an exciting movie which suddenly and abruptly goes to the credits without giving a resolution to the story.

☒ 3. The *American Idol* oh-so-touching ending:

Ever since I was a boy in my heart I wanted to soar on the wind like an eagle. A sports car is like the smile on a young child's face as he sees the rainbow. Never compromise; taste the passion and follow your dreams. ☒

Such 'wild horses running free' endings nauseate the reader and have no real meaning. Personally, whenever I see the words *dream* or *passion* in a conclusion, alarm bells ring in my head that the writer is simply shoveling in space with pretty words that mean nothing.

☒ 4. *Shocking the reader with surprise key information*: It may also be that Polly is pregnant at the end of "The Boarding House," for several reasons.

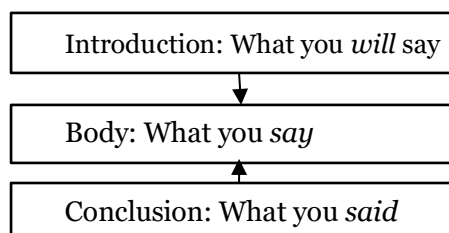
Although you may not know the short story by James Joyce, the idea that Polly may be pregnant is an important point to understanding it, and to drop this bomb without warning onto the reader at the end of the paper is a nasty surprise—it basically changes the meaning of the entire essay retroactively. I've placed this point last because it is a difficult one to explain: Adding a new idea or 'twist' to your paper in the conclusion is often an effective strategy, but it needs to be proportionate to the overall arguments of your paper. In other words, do not introduce anything so *large* in your conclusion that it changes the wider argument or claims of your essay.

### *Advice for Conclusions*

We have discussed ways to *not* write a conclusion. But what are some techniques we *should* use to help improve them?

I confess that I have always found conclusions troublesome to write, but one revelation that has helped me is to think of my paper *chronologically*. In the introduction, your paper is looking forward to exploring and defending your thesis. In this paper, I *will*—future tense—talk about sports cars, which are x, y, and z.

At the end of the paper, in theory the reader now understands your paper's arguments and content, and so how I relate to him or her is different. The reader is now more like an equal, and my task now is to look back and consolidate my position. Another way of looking at this is that when you *write* your paper, you can see all parts of the paper at the same time, and your reader can't—he or she reads from beginning to end. But at the end of the essay your reader can see the full context, how all of the sections fit together to create a final idea.



### *Who Cares?*

Keeping in mind that at the end of the paper the reader looks *back*, I generally try to answer this question in my conclusion: "Now that I've proven x to you, so what?" In other words, you might try to briefly discuss the consequences or importance of the topic or your argument. Why is your thesis useful to readers of the text you discuss, for now or the future, in helping them correctly understand or apply it?

Based on these reasons, we can see that sports cars are a good thing and that every young man or woman should own one.

Although animal testing is now regrettably necessary, computer modeling has been shown to be increasingly effective, and will likely become more so in the coming years.

While these conclusions are promising more research will be necessary to provide a clearer picture of the relationship between Stein's earlier and later poems.

In the sciences and in some social sciences, authors often indicate in their conclusion that the argument evidence will help further other studies:

Further research on library usage in future may help in improved understanding of how the internet search process advocated here can most efficiently reduce wait times.

But how can some topics be made relevant to the reader? It may not be easy to relate the French Revolution or turtle depopulation or *Paradise Lost* to people's daily routines, but you might make a general observation about how the subject's ideas or values apply to present-day concerns, or point to some historical consequences that still affect us. Similarly, whether Shakespeare wrote his plays in his greenhouse or in his bathtub, and how this affects the writing of *Henry V* may not be so connected to most readers' lives, but you might point out that a more accurate understanding of Shakespeare will help other scholars to understand the play or to apply your arguments to other ideas. Keep in mind your audience, which is reading your paper and may find your findings very applicable to their own specific interests.

Here is an attempt I made of this in a conclusion to my *Grapes of Wrath* paper; the essay's thesis dealt with how Steinbeck shows in the novel that the owning of material possessions and money leads to "greed, misery, and spiritual isolation":

The success of *The Grapes of Wrath* is due to its exposition of universal moral principles. Yet Steinbeck's arguments are at times contradictory: the narrator warns that no one has an inherent right to own land, yet the banks are condemned for taking the Okies' land and their family heritage on it. However, the Okies do not 'own' their land so much as they 'use' it, whereas the Californian landholders hold it abstractly for speculation and profit. In other words, the Okies consider the land to be a common resource for all men to use, while the Californians reduce it to a commodity to be hoarded. This is at the root of Steinbeck's thesis, that possessions result in placing self above people or principles. Material wealth and the subsequent lust for it devalues and places barriers between men. His argument is not so much political as it is philosophical. *The Grapes of Wrath* is, as a result, not only an exposé of the Okie tragedy, but a statement on human nature and an attempt to modify social values and ethics.

Conclusions can be surprisingly difficult to write. The writer must create some sense of significance in the paper's subject and argument while avoiding introducing too much new and unrelated material, which would confuse the reader. But conclusions are often, naturally, the last thing the reader reads. If most of the paper is brilliantly and fluidly argued and the conclusion is juvenile or feels like air rushing out of a balloon—you can guess what the audience will remember in forming a last impression about the author and the position argued.



## 4.5 Beyond Five Paragraphs

The basic five paragraph structure is not fixed in stone, and English writers did not always use this format, but it is functional, efficient, and recognizable—all qualities which contribute to a lucid understanding of the thesis and the subject in your reader. Other than that, it is simply a format to help you plan and arrange your ideas, and if a writing situation occurs where the format is a hindrance, alter or discard it.

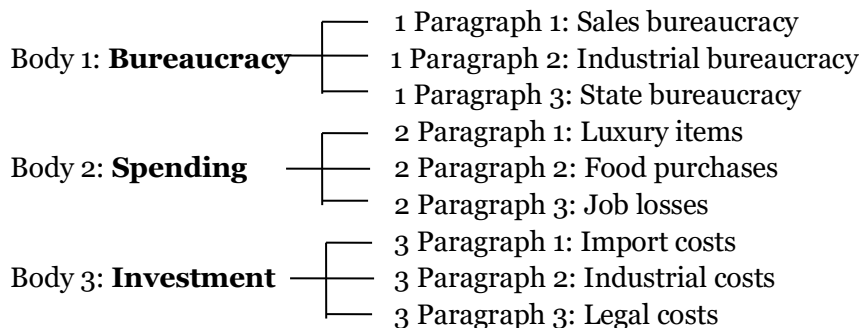
Again, it's of course an abstract model and we need to expand the five-paragraph format when a paper requires more than a *literal* five paragraphs. If your instructor says that you need to write a three page paper, five paragraphs works fine. You obviously cannot write a five-paragraph doctoral dissertation of hundreds of pages. We can think of the five-model as symbolizing five *sections*.

Writers who make longer papers will of course scale this format somehow. One way to structure the paper is to insert additional body paragraphs between the introduction and the conclusion. You are not limited to three body paragraphs—you could as easily have 100, sandwiched in between introduction and conclusion paragraphs.

This does not mean that you now need a thesis statement with 100 reasons why sports cars are a good thing. Rather, you would group paragraphs into as many body sections as you have elements in your thesis—or you could simply find some logical or practical way of subdividing your thesis into subsections. We have perhaps outgrown our sports cars thesis by now, so let's take a more serious topic.

Thesis: The government should not institute a sales tax because it would increase bureaucracy, stifle consumer spending, and reduce foreign investment.

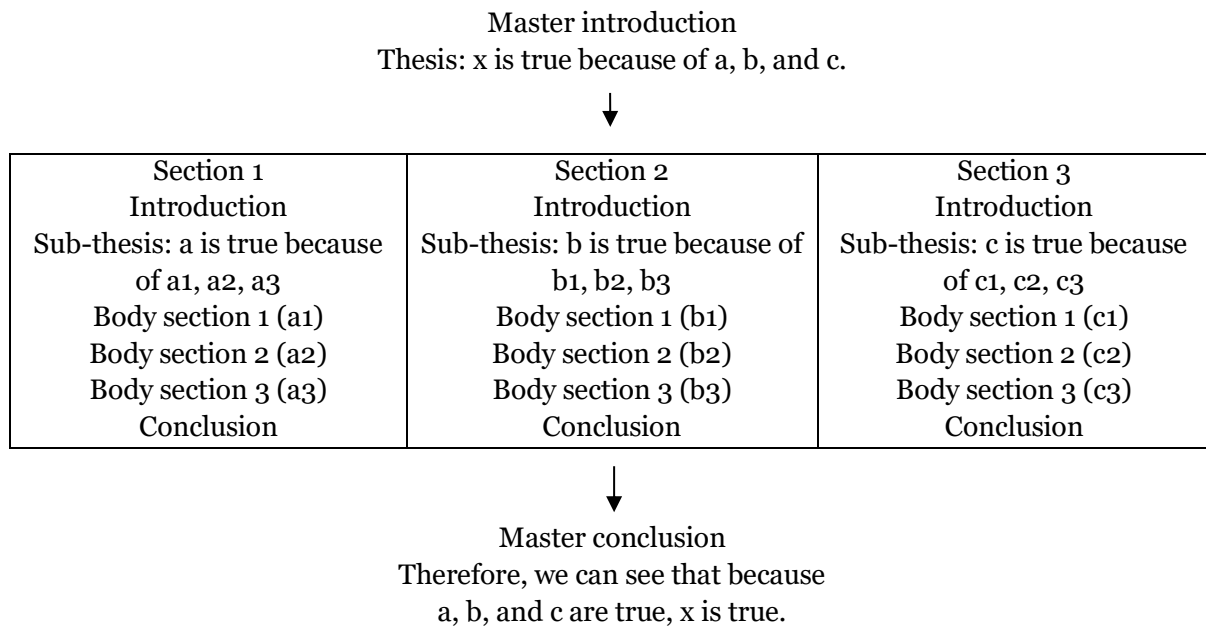
Introduction



Conclusion

We now have an eleven-paragraph paper, with an introduction, three sections of three paragraphs, and a conclusion. This would result in perhaps a 7-page paper. You could scale from there as well by breaking down *1 Paragraph 1: Sales bureaucracy* into its own sub-sub-section of two or three paragraphs (different *ways* in which sales taxes produce bureaucracy in shops and stores), to produce a 29-paragraph paper, and so on.

Another possibility is to have recursive subsections. If you write a fifteen-page thesis, you might have one introduction paragraph that is a master introduction. Then, each section is its own mini-paper which can be written separately and inserted: section 1 with its own introduction, body, and conclusion, section 2 with its own three, and three and on, and then a final master conclusion paragraph which would tie together all of the section mini-papers into one coherent argument. It would look like this:



When I wrote my master's thesis, at first it seemed very intimidating to write a 100 page paper. That is not how it turned out because one of my professors suggested that I imagine the process as writing several smaller papers with a connected idea. I ended up writing an introduction essay to introduce the main issue and argument, three essays about the three parts of the argument, and then a conclusion essay discussing the consequences of the argument. Five papers of 20 pages each equals 100 pages. These segments also organically follow into helping you divide your work into chapters.

You could subdivide each body section into its *own* paper for a much longer product, mathematically toward infinity, assuming you wish to write a 22-book series like Saint Augustine. Although having this sort of system at first seems to make your head spin, it is absolutely preferable to attempting to write a long paper while keeping a large and complex group of ideas ordered in your head. Creating a division of tasks will help you keep your sanity when you write longer papers or ultimately graduate-level projects. In the chapter on thesis and dissertation writing we will have more discussion on scaling these concepts up into multi-hundred page research projects.

For now let's move to something simpler by looking at the comparison paper format as an easier way to look at structure and outlining. Imagine that you are writing a paper comparing big companies to small companies.

We cannot say "both have benefits and drawbacks, and everyone has to decide in the end."  
 ☒ That is *not* a position; that is a cop-out and a tired cliché. Everyone brighter than a hamster knows that most things have benefits and drawbacks. So let's argue that "Small companies are more flexible, exciting, and profitable." There are two ways we might lay out our arguments. We could do subject-by-subject or point-by-point:

**Subject-by-subject comparison**

Introduction

Subject A: Big companies

1. Less flexible
2. Less exciting
3. Less profitable

Subject B: Small companies

1. More flexible
2. More exciting
3. More profitable

Conclusions

**Point-by-point comparison**

Introduction

Subject A: Flexibility

1. Big companies
2. Small companies

Subject B: Excitement

1. Big companies
2. Small companies

Subject C: Profitability

1. Big companies
2. Small companies

Conclusions

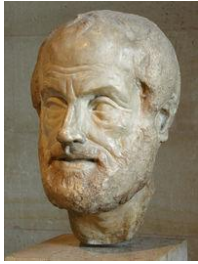
As a literary example, a paper I wrote as an undergraduate compared Jordan, Myrtle, and Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*. The layout I used was subject-by-subject, that is, by character:

1. Thesis: Many personal problems in the novel are the result of the economic and social dependence of women on their husbands.
2. Jordan: Jordan is independent, but this is seen as temporary until she ‘matures’
3. Myrtle: Myrtle dresses independently, but it’s an act to attract Tom’s support
4. Daisy: Daisy is rich, but only because of Tom, whom she doesn’t love
5. Conclusion

A writer could also probably write a sort of hybrid paper combining elements of both comparison formats. I do not list these frames as a prescription you need to follow, but to provide examples of how to create a logical breakdown of your ideas into paragraphs or sections. The only important criterion is not that you follow any particular plan, but that there is *some* rationale or intelligence to how you divide the parts of your paper.

I emphasize this point again: The topics in this chapter are simple ones used to help explain the concepts, but your own writing may deal with increasingly difficult and abstract content. If your paper is topically difficult *and* structurally a random jumble it will be as exasperating to read as it is to write, assuming the reader bothers to finish the essay. In a way a professor is an *easier* audience than a stranger—it’s the teacher’s profession to persist in evaluating your writing, whereas someone who does not know you has no obligation to keep reading and may quit if he or she becomes frustrated.

## 5 Rhetoric and Evidence



Writing is so complex an activity, so closely tied to a person's intellectual development, that it must be nurtured and practiced over all the years of a student's schooling and in every curricular area. – Barbara Walvoord

### 5.1 Aristotelian Rhetoric and Debate

We have talked about three different building blocks of academic writing—grammar, structure, and content—and this chapter will focus on the third. To repeat our discussion in chapter one, all three are necessary to good writing. Think of a camera tripod. If one leg is missing, the whole thing topples over. A paper that is grammatically correct, with a fluid, lucid arrangement of ideas, about a subject lacking a point or proof—is worthless. Again, there are genres of writing intended solely to inform the reader, such as journalism, but most academic papers deal with arguments.

In earlier chapters we examined how to construct arguments and thesis statements, but we have also discussed how to arrange or present your thesis in a paragraph structure in a way that makes it easy for the reader to understand your ideas. This is part of the discipline of rhetoric—the methods and tools of convincing an audience of your viewpoint. In this chapter we will talk about more theoretical principles of rhetoric.

So much of the western tradition of thought came from the sequence of Socrates, his student Plato, and his student Aristotle—in fact many subjects and the western university itself to an extent originates from the academy they founded. Aristotle (384-322 BC), who was in his day a polymath responsible for fostering many fields of inquiry in the western world, from the sciences to philosophy, can also be said to be one of the fathers of rhetoric. 23 centuries later composition theorists still owe a great deal to Aristotle, who along with the Romans set some of the ground rules for successful argumentation. I did a graduate course on rhetoric and the class never really agreed on a definition, but I would describe rhetoric simply as the art of persuasion.

Aristotle was chiefly interested in *spoken* rhetoric, the art of speech in persuading a jury or a group of voters or policy-makers. I keep emphasizing that speeches and academic papers are different, but much of what Aristotle says about making a correct speech also applies to good writing. His methodology breaks down into yet another group of three components, which he calls *modes of persuasion*: logos, pathos, and ethos.

Rhetoric does value a well-crafted argument for its own sake, but essentially rhetoric is audience-oriented—another Greek term in the discipline is *kairos* (καῖρος), which simply refers to choosing the right 'moment' or occasion to persuade. A good rhetorical argument is one which successfully sways the speaker's listeners. As I mentioned in the planning chapter, it is tempting to think of your paper's audience as the instructor and go no further, but ideally you should be visualizing a readership of academic peers. Another useful rule of thumb is to assume that your audience is as knowledgeable as you are about your general subject, but less aware about your specific area of interest in it.

## 5.2 Logos (λόγος)

Logos asks: is the argument logically sound? Does the argument make logical and rational sense? Does it consist of principles that do not conflict and which support a conclusion, however it is framed? Does it derive a conclusion from factual or statistical evidence?

Admittedly, this discussion of logic will be rather western. One of the deal-breakers of classical Greco-Roman logic is the principle of non-contradiction; you cannot argue A is B and also A is not B. A western reader is unlikely to accept an Asian Yin-and-Yang assertion that A is really both B and not B. This is especially so, in my experience, in the United States. Once more, considering your audience before framing your arguments is essential.

Technically, rhetoric is concerned with the *appearance* of sound reasoning in order to convince an audience, and so the formal discipline of logic itself is akin to philosophy or mathematics. For this reason rhetoric often has a bad connotation in popular usage—a politician's speech might be mocked as mere rhetoric, beautiful words that obscure lies or lack of content. Nevertheless, there is a strong overlap between logic and rhetoric; an argument based on solid reason is much more likely to persuade than one knowingly flawed.

For the Greeks a favorite device was the *syllogism*, made of a major premise, minor premise, and conclusion:

Only people wear glasses.  
Fred wears glasses.  
Therefore, Fred is a person.

This is a logical conclusion based on these premises. Logic can of course be faulty, resulting in a false syllogism:

Only people wear glasses.  
Mary does not wear glasses.  
☒ Therefore, Mary is not a person.

Yet the benefit of a logos argument is that if it is logically correct it can be extremely persuasive as it is difficult to refute. A paper based on logos can be a straightforward paper to write because you are dealing with principles that act much like mathematical symbols. This is no accident, for the ancient Greek philosophers thought of logic in exactly such terms, esteeming mathematics as the purest subject.

The problem is that if you have faulty logic the entire paper collapses rather spectacularly. If your paper contradicts itself—you write that women should do military service and later argue that they should not—your paper will crash as well.

## 5.3 Bad Logic

These arguments display faulty logic or are otherwise suspect as evidence. We know that the positions are factually false, but try to determine *why* the reasoning behind them is flawed.

1. *False Analogy / Comparison*. Why do I need to wear clothes in church? I don't have to wear clothes in the bathtub. (The situations are not the same.) Or: Why does Korea have military service when New Zealand doesn't? (New Zealand is not bordered by a nuclear-armed enemy—or bordered by anyone, being an island.) False comparison claims often happen in literature papers when students compare time periods: "The Wife of Bath is foolish to depend on her husband so much when women now can just live on their own." Present-day society is not the same as the one of 1386 was.

2. *False Premise*. Everyone wants to live to old age. Fitness and good eating habits are essential to longevity. Therefore, everyone should exercise and eat well. (This may be true, but not everyone wants to live to old age.) Or: Gatsby's racism causes him to work hard to be rich, and his wealth allows him to try to get Daisy back. (The latter is true, but no proof is given that Gatsby is racist.)
3. *Ad Hominem* ('against the man'). Dr. Jones's opinions can't be believed. He has a strange nose and a creepy mustache. (Dr. Jones's personal appearance has no connection to the validity of his claims.) Similarly, to me criticizing Bill Clinton's presidency because he had an affair is irrelevant, although a student did point out to me that his private morality could affect his presidential decisions. This is a fair claim. But to me this conclusion can't simply be assumed; it requires evidence.
4. *Bandwagon*. In a recent study, 87% of respondents indicated that refugees will cause crime; this is why the new law should be passed. (A belief or conclusion may be interesting but is not correct solely because a majority thinks it is. Crime *might* rise or not, but it would be better to quote a statistician, not a survey of the public. It doesn't matter whether the public thinks gravity is real or not.)
5. *Either / Or Fallacy*. Either you are our nation's ally or you are on the side of Al Qaeda—or the Chinese or Indians or Danish or whoever this week. (The statement pretends only two choices exist.) Or: Your mother tells you, your room can be clean or it can be a pigpen. But this pretends that your room must be one *or* the other, and no gradations between fastidiously spotless and filthy are possible. In literature: "Macbeth is either crazy or he isn't." (Insanity can occur along a wide spectrum; it may also be possible that Macbeth's sanity changes throughout the play.)
6. *Coincidence Fallacy*. All the teenagers at this school with tattoos have discipline problems. Thus tattoos lead to discipline problems. (One event does not necessarily cause the second.) This is a surprisingly common logic error—the problem may be that the order of events is misunderstood (does infidelity cause divorce, or did preexisting marital problems cause both?). Or, there may be no relationship; this is called a *non sequitur*, meaning there is no sequence: If a new iPhone is released and then it begins to rain more, it's unlikely that one action caused the other.
7. *Circular Argument*. A Greek salad is healthier than pizza because it is better for you. (The "reason" simply re-states the first argument.) This argument is also known as 'begging the question' (*petitio principii*). Another example is: "same-sex marriage is wrong because marriage is a bond between a man and a woman." Or: "Bonderby is a villain because he tries to hurt people for his own benefit."
8. *Cherry-Picking*. Hitler was an excellent leader and a good person. Under his government, Germany built the autobahn and introduced the highly efficient Volkswagen. Hitler loved dogs and was kind to his pets. (While true, these are highly selective facts ignoring the larger evidence.) A variation of this is *sample error*: The four engineers we surveyed show that 75% of experts feel the water supply is safe. (There are many engineers and the small number surveyed may not be representative.)

A variation of cherry-picking in literature papers is 'quote mining,' where a single incidence or a small number of excerpts from a text are used to support a large claim; or worse, contradictory textual passages are ignored or discounted. Shakespeare uses the word 'grapes' nine times in all of his writings—to argue that his love of grapes is the key to understanding his plays would be ridiculous. Unfortunately, quote mining is also a very common event in Shakespearean criticism.

9. *No True Scotsman*. “Grelbzians are lazy.” “But look at Susan! She has two jobs and does charity work!” “Then she must not be a true Grelbzian, because Grelbzians are lazy.” (Evidence contradicting the position is discounted *because* it contradicts the position.) This logical error is also called *special pleading*, where you seek to rule out any examples which don’t support your prejudice: A country without religion would be happier—but North Korea, Soviet Russia, and revolutionary France don’t count.
10. *False Equivalence*. “There are many opinions about the moon. Scientists believe it is made of rock. Some people believe it is made of cheese.” (The fact that there are opposing opinions on a topic does not mean you need to give both either equal respect or space in your paper.)
11. *Ad Snarkium*. “Only an idiot would argue that cigarette smoking should be abolished, or a look-at-me PC grouchy-grinch who hates freedom.” (Insulting wordplay and sarcasm are not proof.) Sadly, this is a further logic error which is constantly present in internet discussion threads. A variation on *ad snarkium* is the “scarecrow” argument, where you portray an opposing viewpoint in a deliberately distorted and cartoonish way to make it look foolish: “Gun advocates, who believe that mistaking their pet dogs for burglars and marrying their cousins is more fun than learning to read, argue that...” Of course you can make negative arguments about gun owners, but the statement above is simply insults.
12. *Selection Bias*. The survey we conducted in the Ediya Café shows that 68% of Koreans like jazz music. (But people who drink coffee in cafés are more likely to like jazz music than the general public. The survey erred in only questioning those people.) A variation on selection bias is *sample error*: The four engineers we surveyed prove that 75% of experts believe that the city water supply is safe. (There are many engineers and the tiny number surveyed may not be representative.)
13. *Slippery Slope*. If people are allowed to pirate software files, they will gradually lose respect for all laws, and they will try to do whatever they want. (It is not necessarily true that people will do this in practice.) Or: If small children are allowed to stay up an hour later, they will continually beg to stay up an hour later. (This is true to an extent, but children cannot stay up 24 hours a day—eventually they will stop begging.)

### *Grey Evidence*

I’ve used fairly obvious examples to illustrate these errors, but in life logical flaws in arguments aren’t always so clear-cut. One of the more advanced abilities you will need to develop as a writer while reasoning out problems is that of evaluating *degrees* of factual errors; it may not always happen that a statement is entirely true or false. A slippery slope argument may in fact be largely true (the software pirates may not progress to being mass murderers, but they *may* lose respect for electronic property laws); the sequence of events may be partly but not *entirely* be a coincidence fallacy (what if increased production of new iPhones causes air pollution?) It may very well turn out that the thesis of your paper lies in debating whether an argument made concerning your subject is an error of logic or not.

Moreover, not all survey evidence indicates a bandwagon error. If a majority believes something, it does not compellingly show something to be factual, but you might state the evidence as background support showing there is a good *likelihood* something is true. A study showing 93% of people believe something might suggest a greater probability that it is true—you simply cannot present the study as direct proof that it *is*. This might be called ‘grey’ evidence, and using it carefully is a delicate skill.

## 5.4 Pathos (πάθος)

Aristotle himself argued that logos is the purest form of rhetoric and that other forms are useful but less respectable ways of making an argument. Perhaps a little snobbishly, he saw pathos as an unfortunate necessity for an ignorant public which requires spoon-feeding. A pathos strategy asks: Does the argument move people's hearts to care? Does it have an emotional appeal to bring the audience to agree?

*Pathos* sounds like *pathetic*, which suggests disgust or disappointment: "Every day you come to work drunk! That's pathetic!" In a movie, pathos may simply refer to a sad or tragic story. Like *argument*, the word has an everyday meaning and an academic meaning. What Aristotle means by pathos is using emotions and the power of a dramatic delivery to sway an audience's feelings and make them agree with you.

The USA had a public service commercial in the early 1970s when its highway system was new and there was still a culture of throwing garbage out of the window from cars. Littering is now far less socially acceptable than it was at the time, partly because of advertisements which stigmatized people who litter as irresponsible and selfish. A commercial discouraging litter based on statistics and facts might have convinced people in their heads but not their hearts. Thus the commercial showed not logos arguments about environmental damage but images of forests ruined by garbage and a close-up of a native Indian softly weeping. In a country where people are sensitive about the history of first nations relations this emotional strategy was far more effective in changing people's behavior.



*Keep America Beautiful* ad campaign, 1971

More recently, the Michelin tire company had a series of commercials where babies play on the tires. A series of dull statistics proving that certain tires function better under selected emergency situations could be effective, but the image of the babies raised powerful protective emotions in parents that made them equate the tires with safety. This advertisement campaign was also enormously successful, particularly with mothers. Advertisers can be experts at moving people to identify with a product based on primal emotions of sex, power, adventure, or security. Notice when observing advertisements for alcoholic beverages or other products how the objects are held, what body gestures the models have, and what colors and fonts are employed. These features are often very carefully calculated to suggest sexual meanings or other emotional or physical responses.

The main objection to using pathos is that it has the potential to mislead people, to be dishonest or manipulate them towards accepting positions that cannot be supported through rational or other arguments. That is admittedly sometimes the case. Pathos arguments are much like rich desserts. They can complement a reasoned position very well in small amounts, but an entire meal of rich cake and pie would make people nauseated and unsatisfied. They require judicious use to avoid having a text full of overblown melodrama that convinces no one.



If your thesis statement is *solely* a pathos statement, it may be because it has no basic in reason: “Look at this poor single mother—how can people support sex education in school?” is a stupid statement and based solely on emotional images. There is no firm logical connection between one and the other. Or, to be more ridiculous: “Drunk driving is good because it is fun. Why do some people hate fun?”

A moving argument praising fun as a reason for allowing drunk driving would be at best silly and at worst ethically dishonest. Some readers might be moved to accept a false argument, and others would be annoyed at the attempt to manipulate them. Perhaps at some time in your life you have been irritated after watching a movie which used music and emotions to endorse behavior or ideas you disapproved of—someone had an affair on their spouse as beautiful music played and the two walked through cherry blossoms. A classic example is the Nazi propaganda movie *Triumph of the Will* (1935), which used music and imagery to corrupt its audience into emotionally accepting the Nazi program.

Academic arguments should not be based on pathos alone, but it can be used effectively to support and give flavor to a reasonable argument. A politician who has solid arguments *and* an ear for powerful, moving images that resonate with the crowd’s passions will be more successful. In writing, particularly if the position is controversial, taking a tone which attempts to identify with and find common cause with the reader will likely be more persuasive.

Often personal examples are an effective use of pathos. If you write a paper about alcoholism in university students you could detail a long list of statistics about fatalities, expulsions, broken relationships, or other social or academic problems that result from binge drinking. All this could be very convincing as support and evidence. But if you included a short anecdote about a dormitory roommate of yours who had a drinking problem, and mentioned some of the problems that person experienced, that sort of personal anecdote is not only relevant but highly persuasive in capping your other arguments.

A personal story is also one of the few situations where using “I” is warranted in academic writing. Often ‘I’ should be avoided because it is redundant—we already know you are the writer and something is your viewpoint—but there are circumstances where it is useful. The only danger in using it in a personal anecdote is that you must be careful to keep the story brief and on-topic. The temptation is to continue talking about yourself and to lose sight of the subject of the paper.

## 5.5 Ethos (ἦθος)

Ethos asks: Do I trust you? Does the argument seem to have credibility and authority? Does the paper give the sense that the writer is deeply knowledgeable? Ethos refers to the atmosphere of credibility created in the paper and the level of confidence which the reader has in the writer. Do not confuse *ethos* with *ethics*. There is some overlap in that a good person might be more honest, but ethos is technically unrelated to the personal morals of the writer—it is concerned with the audience’s perception of his or her competence. U.S. President Richard Nixon may not have been an ethical politician, but as an educated and important man his writing would certainly have ethos. There are of course limits; a scholar who committed a horrendous crime might be intelligent but his or her ideas would nevertheless be viewed with distrust.

Aristotle discussed ethos in the speech act and not in writing. In his view, logos ought to be sufficient to convince intelligent people, but in practice it isn’t. Someone who has gravitas and a deep, commanding voice and clear elocution, and a mastery of the rhythms of speech will be more persuasive in swaying an audience than an expert with a halting, shaky voice. In English we say “Gold in the pockets of fools is still gold,” meaning that the truth is the truth no matter who says it; but in daily life reality does not support these beautiful expressions. People pay a great deal of attention to the credibility of the person speaking and how they are perceived by others in a social context.

Textually, ethos reflects a certain intimacy between the writer and the reader. There is a feeling of closeness in the written word not found in a speech to a group of people: You are holding a piece of paper face to face, and there is a kind of bond between you and the reader, who is trusting you with his or her time. You will never put your heart on the line the way you will if you write someone a love letter, committing yourself to a piece of paper. The girl may not accept you, but she will probably keep that letter for the rest of her life.

### *Visual and Textual Ethos*

There are two main forms of ethos. One comes from having a professional presentation, using correct text formats and layout, and a standardized visual appearance. Using clean paper with Times New Roman in clear, black ink gives an impression of authority which Hello Kitty paper and Comic Sans does not. This ought to be obvious. But I have received undergraduate papers with interesting content that visually looked terrible. I have had papers that were dirty, crumpled, smeared with ink or rain, on pink paper, or even smelling of marijuana. Such details are going to detract from the readability of the paper and your reader's confidence in your ideas.

I sometimes have students who use gigantic fonts or supersized margins. They are asked to use 11 or 12 Times New Roman or Ariel fonts, generally the standard for academia, and they use a calligraphy font or some ridiculous typeface in 18-point size. They do this because they were asked to write five pages and they finish three and run out of ideas or effort, and believe that they can simply enlarge the font to stretch the text over more pages. The result looks lazy and unprofessional, and you diminish trust in your reader, who can see what you are trying to do. These actions rapidly undermine ethos.

These statements are not rules for the sake of rules, but a concession to human psychology. The *appearance* of knowing what you are doing will have an effect in convincing your reader that you do know what you are doing and that your arguments are correct. As with many aspects of rhetoric, it's possible to disguise bad writing by prettifying its presentation, and again for this reason *rhetoric* often has a negative connotation; but optimally, professional visual appearance complements professional content.



Allegorical Figure of Rhetoric,  
by Giuseppe Cesari

### *Secondary Ethos*

The other way of building ethos is to use external sources in your paper. This is such a large and important part of academic writing that it requires a separate chapter. An e-mail written to a friend recommending a position requires little secondary support—you should go to Mexico because I had a good time there—and you can rely on my personal experience. But a formal academic paper cannot rely on the reader knowing you, and even if the reader does know you or of you by reputation, you don't have first-hand experience of Victorian England or King Sejong to give yourself authority with.

There is a cliché that U.S. president Ronald Reagan wasn't highly intelligent but he knew to surround himself with gifted people. In the same way, using the conclusions and words of

others who are knowledgeable and well-known in your subject, or who have academic qualifications, will make your ideas not only stronger but also more credible by association with these experts. This is one of many reasons why academic papers quote from secondary sources and refer to outside authorities; it will improve your standing as a legitimate voice in the issue by placing yourself as a member of a community discussing its concepts and ideas.

## 5.6 Entering a Conversation

In 1941, literary theorist Kenneth Burke made the following analogy about a writer as a guest at a party of intellectuals:

You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about... You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you... The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.

I have included this topic here because visualizing yourself as a participant in an ongoing dialogue about a subject is not only a good academic posture to take as a writer, but also may make your paper more interesting and persuasive to read—in short, it is a *kairos* strategy which may appeal to your audience.

The chapter on planning listed the argument move of “challenging conventional wisdom” as a means of designing a thesis for a paper—that is, determining the majority critical opinion on a question and then either challenging it or finding a missing part of the question which has not yet been taken up. In their recent book *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein generalize this to a general strategy for all scholarly writing by recommending that the writer explicitly situate a paper’s opinion among others in the “conversation.” Graff and Birkenstein note that most people have probably sat through class discussions which were nothing more than a series of monologues, with no one responding to anyone else’s ideas—just as these are boring, so a paper which exists by itself without referring to other opinions can be dull.

Entering a conversation as a specific writing practice could be done by laying out some statements made by prominent experts in the introduction or background sections (or formally in a literature review, which I’ll discuss in a later chapter) and then answering them, or very briefly with a “they say/I say” statement—“It may seem heretical to blame obesity on the individual, but there are compelling reasons from statistical studies to do so.” Or: “Although Mr. Darcy is typically seen by fans as a shy but well-meaning heartthrob, he is actually a classist snob as seen in a and b.”

Earlier I stated that one approach to making a conclusion more interesting is to make the subject or your findings relate to the reader’s interests—doing so is also a strategy which tries to make the reader part of the conversation. Thus placing your argument into a context of differing opinions is not only a way to make your paper more relevant and connected to contemporary ideas and writings about your subject, but also may be a good conclusion approach.

In summary, a research paper might use any or all of these lines of argumentation in marshalling evidence: logos, pathos, or ethos—or a *kairos* strategy in introducing or concluding the paper. While some subjects might naturally gravitate toward one rhetorical approach, such as logos in discussing a scientific topic and pathos or ethos for the social sciences, you might incorporate any or all in varying amounts. But there is of course no rule; each element in your thesis could even take a different evidentiary strategy if it works for your purposes.

## 6 Secondary Sources



Doverai, no proveryai [Trust, but verify!] – Russian Proverb

We have discussed using rhetorical techniques of logos, pathos, and ethos in supporting the arguments of your paper via evidence. This will suggest a convincing sense of credibility and professionalism in your paper through the visual presentation of your paper and through examples and reasons. Some of this evidence will be internal, based on knowledge you previously knew about the subject or derived while analyzing it, but much may be external and will take the form of quotations and information from books, journals, websites and other texts written by people who can reinforce your arguments.

If you write a paper *about* a source itself, that source is a primary source. If you write a paper using a source to help support or explain your topic, it is a secondary source. For example, if your paper is about *The Portrait of Dorian Grey* and you want to quote Dorian Grey's words to support your argument, the novel is a primary source; but if you quote from an article or book written about the novel, that is a secondary source.

As noted before, secondary sources build your authority with the reader by placing your ideas within a community of other writers and experts. Even if you have university degrees or a deep grounding in the discipline through a lifetime of experience, discussing the opinions of others in the field will tell the reader that your opinions are well-grounded. For this reason, one of your first steps in writing a paper should naturally be to find books or online sources to inform yourself about the issues. As discussed previously, this helps to establish and narrow a thesis argument at the planning stage, but will also provide materials for evidence and support at the writing stage.

In an academic paper you include a list of these books and sources on the last page, partly to help the reader find these texts for their own use, partly to protect yourself from possible accusations that you have plagiarized information without crediting the authors of the sources, and partly to give the reader a sense that you have read deeply in forming your ideas. This list follows a format and is called the list of references or works cited.

Some papers might only have a list of books, but normally a research paper also includes quotations from those sources in the text of your paper, or gives a summary of a specific idea or piece of information. These are called *in-text* citations. At the end of the quotation you again cite its source, both to indicate that you did not originally write it, and to help the reader to find the original for his or her own uses. All of these actions build ethos in your paper.

### 6.1 Using Evidence: Prove It!

Evidentiary proof may be logos, pathos, or ethos based—a statistic, an emotional anecdote, or a quotation from an expert are all valid forms. A piece of data might even be both logos (in that it presents a material or logical fact) and ethos (in that it is given by an important authority figure in the subject). In the social sciences, case studies and survey data are particularly important in

establishing credibility for an argument, whereas in the humanities close readings of texts and expert quotations about interpretation are likely to carry more weight. A science or engineering paper would favor mathematical equations or experiment results.

Often undergraduates have problems with evidence. They write papers where they have a solid argument, a clear structure, but yet when read there is something missing. The paper's evidence is vague and thin. Sometimes the paper is too short, or is a few pages less than what was requested. Often the feeling is that the writer ran out of things to say and struggled to stretch out space to the word or page count requested. Sometimes students will resort to piling on more claims to add content, resulting in papers which feel more like long lists of statements than analyses of a thesis claim. But lists do a poor job of explanation.

Typically, these essays *assume* too much, because new writers feel that their ideas are so self-evident that no further support is necessary— “Sex education will not change in this country because Koreans are conservative.” In this example, much like the false premise error discussed earlier, the thesis is taken for granted based on a cultural assumption. You will need to first *prove* that Koreans are generally conservative. Such “most people nowadays believe” statements are not necessarily true and their reflexive use reflects lazy writing.

### Tip



Very often, if you have run out of things to say, it is not because you have too few ideas but because you have not provided enough examples or proof.

If you run out of material in your paper and begin to have the feeling of repetition, one way of improving your writing is to have more detail and specifics, more facts, more examples, and more data. If you are going to tell me that policemen should or should not carry guns, give me some statistics and proof. List some case examples of it working or not working. This is going to be far more convincing than simply stating a position and assuming that is enough. Two solid arguments with internal or external evidence will be far more persuasive than a list of ten claims with no support.

### Instead of..

Many Koreans nowadays believe...

There was a case where a girl was assaulted by a teacher and the principal didn't help.

In some countries divorce is still difficult to obtain.

Polly seems aware of how she is trapping Mr. Doran into marriage.

Lots of people are addicted to the internet nowadays.

### Prove it!

In a recent survey, 36% of Koreans believe...

In October 2011 a 13-year-old girl in a middle school in Danyang was assaulted by a male teacher and the principal didn't help.

In some countries, especially those with Catholic traditions such as Ireland, France, and Italy, divorce is still difficult to obtain.

Polly's theatrical tears and the ending where she sits dreamily in her room suggest that she is fully aware of how she is trapping Mr. Doran into marriage.

Some recent studies claim that up to 40% of Americans have some degree of internet addiction.

In 2008 while I was living in the U.S. there was a national debate on lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18. All sorts of arguments were adduced for either position. It was disappointing to me that the American media were so oblivious of the rest of the world that they ignored nearby Canada, which has had drinking ages of 18 or 19 for nearly half a century! Data and statistics on other nations would have made either side's argument richer and more compelling. I see this also with Korean papers, where a social or political issue is examined without any attempt to research whether one of the 238 other countries in the world has grappled with the same problem and tested a solution.

## 6.2 Assessing Secondary Sources

Naturally, some sources will suggest more authority to the reader than others. An article from *Nature* written by a scientist, an editorial from the *Economist* written by an expert, and a blog posting from your roommate are all textual "sources," but obviously the first two have more weight in convincing your reader, just as they would in a real life conversation. Some judgment of secondary texts is fairly commonsense; a well-known academic periodical or newspaper with articles written by a well-known intellectual figure is probably going to be more persuasive. You can visually see that a print journal with small print, a list of professors, and a university sponsor is likely going to be more reputable than a tabloid newspaper with giant fonts and soccer players and bikini girls.

This becomes more difficult with internet sources, where you can't make assumptions based on the professional "look" of a physical book or journal. Yet if you see the phrases "LOL cute cat picture ha-ha" and "Seoul has begun to process primary clearances for its UN human rights initiative," it's not hard to grasp that even if we don't know the sources of these pieces of text, the first is probably more like an online Facebook message and the second sounds like a news article. Partly this is so because the subject matter is different, but also the higher level of vocabulary and sentence complexity in the second text forms clues to its origins—it has a more serious tone.

### How Reliable and Authoritative is This Textual Source?

Credibility	Type of Source	Characteristics	Text Complexity
Highly authoritative	Academic journal Academic monograph (book)	Written by scholars; peer edited Written by scholars; may be peer edited	Highly difficult and abstract terms; written for specialists
"Grey" source	Discussion or news website or journal Serious newspaper Tabloid newspaper Media website or blog	High-end journalism written by experts Written by career journalists Often made by non-career content writers; little oversight	Written for a general educated audience; easier vocabulary
Little authority	Personal blog Social media posts or comments	May be written by anybody; no oversight	Slang or vulgarities; Written for anyone or for friends/family

In making this chart I am not suggesting that social media posts have no value, or that you should never believe something written on a blog. You might have a highly intellectual discussion about an issue on Facebook, or something might have entertainment or emotional value to you. But these forms of text are less likely to be taken seriously by the reader of your paper if you cite them as academic sources. Your readers does not know that your Aunt Nicole is brilliant and knows a



great deal about your subject; they only see that her discussion originates from a personal WordPress blogsite and not from *Paris Review*.



Copyright images from *The New York Times*, *Daily Star*, *Time*, and *Praxis*. You may or may not be familiar with these titles, but it's not hard to tell which one will probably be more scholarly in tone from the graphics, subjects, and vocabulary used. This doesn't make a tabloid newspaper *bad*—some people like bikini girls and celebrity gossip and that's fine—it only means that it is unlikely to be a useful direct source for academic writing.

## Tip



Trust your instincts. A professional source will probably have smaller print, will use a more complex vocabulary, and is less likely to have ads.

The internet as well as many forms of electronic or print media are very, very recent—there simply aren't any established rules for how to evaluate all of the sources available. The following is merely drawn from my experience as both a writer and an reader of student writing at undergraduate, graduate, and professorial levels, as a guide to better selection and evaluation of textual sources.

## 6.3 Have a Variety

Have a wide variety of books, magazines, internet sources, newspapers, journals, interviews, television shows, and so on. There are ways to properly list and cite movies, speeches, e-mail messages, and even text messages on cellphones. Variety also means more than the physical *format* of the text. It also means a wide geographical or chronological sweep. If possible and where applicable, have sources from a wide swath of time periods or countries.

I once sat on a thesis committee for a girl defending her honors thesis on environmental issues in Korea and Germany. She had about twenty sources, but all were by Korean writers. There is nothing wrong with this, and I am not implying that a Korean source is more or less valid than any other, but having only one country's experts talk about another culture's issues on the other side of the world is limited in value and displays lazy work. The audience is going to wonder what a Korean scholar really knows about German issues and may feel that reading the paper is a waste of time. Conversely, a paper on the Korean colonial period with only opinions from British scholars would be unlikely to convince Korean scholars.

### *Opposing Viewpoints*

Having a variety of sources also includes a variety of opinions, some of which may not agree with yours. If you have a number of sources which build a base of support for your position you might also include sources which take an opposing or differing stance. This will build your reader's trust in your arguments. A reader who notes that your paper has ignored a major authority in the field or fails to account for what seems an obvious objection to your position is closer to distrusting your paper. If your paper is about 1930's economics and you leave out John Maynard Keynes because you disagree with him—your reader will notice and dismiss your arguments as cowardly or one-sided.

Including a conflicting viewpoint does not mean you need to *agree* with the opposing opinion. If you do agree with it your paper is in trouble as the reader will question why your position is inconsistent. But you might mention the source as a minority opinion among the larger group of experts: "While Dr. Jones has suggested that  $a = b$ , most scholars disagree." Or, you might be able to argue that Dr. Jones's position is applicable to x situation, but your situation (y) is *different*. A more advanced or confident writer might even challenge the source: "Keynes argued that x happened because of y. However, Keynes failed to notice z."

Doing this requires that you present your opponent's ideas fairly before you confront them. This means avoiding a cartoonish or demeaning summary ("Keynes thinks money will fall from heaven when needed") or committing an *ad hominem* attack ("Einstein is wrong because he had an affair"), but rather stating an opposing viewpoint fairly and then explaining why it is incorrect or inapplicable or no longer applicable. Doing so with collegiality shows that you are capable of maturely defending your ideas among experts in the field.

## **6.4 Use Some Physical Sources**

Do not get everything from the internet. When I was an undergraduate in the 1980's the internet was not yet in common use. As a graduate student in the 1990's I used internet sources in my papers, but very sparingly as my older professors would have been highly skeptical of the internet as a valid academic source. Professors mostly saw the internet as a geeky hobby forum for bikini girls and *Star Trek* chats.

The world has changed and the internet is now considered a serious academic tool. Conferences and meetings are now held online, search engines for publications and primary texts are increasingly powerful, and a wider breadth of sources is now in electronic form. Some journals are no longer published on paper at all. Any professor unable or unwilling to use the internet now would be dismissed as a dinosaur. E-books and readers are quickly growing in popularity; in a generation physical books will still be present, but print newspapers and magazines will be limited to a few traditional readerships.

Having said that, there is still academic respectability and gravitas in having a reference list with printed sources such as books and journals. They show a depth of research, and they show ambition on the part of the writer. If a reference list consists entirely of electronic sources, there is a part of many readers' brains which feels that the writer is lazy and could not be bothered to walk to an actual library and do the physical work necessary to have a variety of sources. Most of the readers of this book are what tech sociologists call *digital natives*, people who have had internet tools their entire lives. Many of your professors are *digital immigrants*, people who began to use the internet as adults. As a matter of tailoring your paper to an audience, older readers will often have less trust in online sources than younger ones.

Another and perhaps the most important reason to use some non-electronic sources is the distinction of peer review. When you write a book for publishing in physical format, the publisher will have some formal system of content checking or approval, because books are expensive to publish and the company does not want to take a loss or injure their reputation by



publishing garbage. Academic journals, even online ones, are mostly peer reviewed, meaning a group of academics or experts with a background in that field will read and approve the article and dispute faulty information or findings.

The best and worst thing about the internet is that anyone can write whatever they want. If you know how to create a web page or blog you can write any nonsense or hate speech you wish and make it resemble a serious text written by an expert. A teenager in Michigan can subsequently view your site and quote from it in his or her high school essay. There is no process for preventing that student from believing and citing false information. Most internet sites are *not* peer reviewed. The technology is simply too new to have reliable mechanisms to indicate such distinctions, though again this will probably develop as the internet matures.

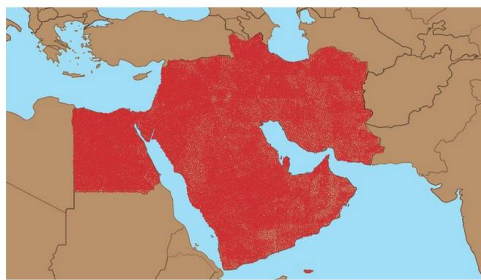
### *Be Careful about Joke News Websites*

Reliability is often a problem when Koreans unknowingly read or quote from western web sources that have fictional and humorous articles, such as *The Onion* or *The Global Edition*. In 2009 the *Korea Times* reprinted an article from the American parody newspaper *Weekly World News* claiming that archeologists had found a space alien gravesite in Rwanda. The *Korea Times* carelessly ran the ridiculous story without any fact-checking on the source. In 2012 the same happened when Chinese media reprinted a joke news story in the *Onion* claiming that Americans had voted Kim Jong-Un the sexiest man of the year.

In fairness, someone who grows up in the west understands the tradition of parody newspapers and websites, and can recognize the obvious clues that the article is not real, such as the presence of slang words and obscenities. A foreign writer is less adept at knowing that the article is meant in fun because he or she comes from a different culture with different standards of humor. For this reason, you should understand the difference between peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed sources and use the latter, such as blog posts or media sites, with more caution.

### Everyone In Middle East Given Own Country In 317,000,000-State Solution

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Our Annual Year 2014



NEW YORK—Marking the latest and most ambitious attempt to bring stability to the region, the United Nations announced Wednesday that every single person in the Middle East will receive his or her own sovereign nation as part of a historic 317,000,000-state solution.



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Intro

1HG

A parody article from *The Onion*.

### Tip



How can someone from a foreign culture recognize a comedy website?

1. Parody websites often have swear words and obscene language
2. Google it! Does another website describe it as a comedy site?

## 6.5 Learn to Use Scholarly Search Engines

Try not to rely entirely on internet search engines such as Naver, Google, and Yahoo, or non-academic encyclopedia sites such as Wikipedia. They are not likely to point you to scholarly journals written by professors, but rather to television or newspaper sites written by journalists. Journalists are not usually trained to be subject experts in rarified fields—their job normally is to report and explain events to a wide readership.

Try to step beyond that narrow bubble of popular news and videos. These search engines are usually going to point you towards junk food media and not journal articles. They will turn up popular websites such as newspapers or media or gossip sites rather than books or scholarly sources, partly because such sites vastly outnumber academic sites and partly because media sites sometimes pay for these links. News ‘stories’ about how “Flirt-E’s new too-spicy music video is raising controversy” are paid for by the record companies, who have manufactured the ‘controversy’ in order to get readers to click on the link to the video. The article somehow never specifies exactly *who* the critics are who find the video controversial, and they may simply have been invented to make the reader curious.

There are exceptions, such as the recent Google Scholar site (<http://scholar.google.com>), which is more likely to link to .edu sites rather than .com ones. But in general, because access to journal articles is unfortunately often paid for, university students may need to use their library websites as portals to journal search engines (Google Scholar does try to recognize if your computer is on campus). Students who complain about the ten seconds of logging in to their campus library websites deserve to be hit on the head with the giant thousand-page periodical indexes I used as an undergraduate in the 1980s.

Google Scholar, and most online university library portals, work like standard search engines; they allow you to type in some key words relevant to your search, and then they display hits in the form of titles of books or articles. Sometimes the hyperlink leads to a website, or to someone’s book or paper which only *cites* that title. But often the link “PDF” is listed next to the Google hit, and clicking on this may allow you to open the file directly on your screen and read it. Again—an academic journal article is nearly *always* the very top quality academic source you are going to find for a research paper. It is well worth learning how to use a scholarly search portal, particularly for those papers which you can instantly view and download.

Hanyang library’s “e-Search” page, which allows you to enter a search term and then choose domestic or international databases. The site displays and allows download of journal articles in .pdf format.

### Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a special matter. In ten years this may be different, but presently Wikipedia is not taken seriously as an academic source. A few years ago I was trying to get an article published on U.S. president Barack Obama’s election and I used some sources from Wikipedia. It was sent back to me with some angry comments that as a professional I should know better. As anybody

can edit a Wiki page, the site has constant problems with hackers creating joke information or vandalizing content.

At present I would not use Wikipedia as an academic source for citation, although in future it may be different. However, Wikipedia is a good starting point to look for books or other secondary sources, as the entries sometimes have works cited lists at the bottom of the page. I admit to using Wikipedia for general overviews of a subject or to find simple facts or data about names and dates. It is also good experience for a writer with some confidence in a subject to contribute to Wikipedia as an editor.

## 6.6 Avoiding Bias

“In a corporate statement, Dr. Bob Rand, spokesperson for Quisling Pulp & Paper, explained that forests are actually healthier without trees.” The ‘expert’ quoted here has an obvious interest in protecting his employer. The example is deliberately silly, but be careful about the objectivity of sources. Do its producers have some ideological or monetary agenda? For example, if I am writing on economics or taxation I want to be careful about using literature or websites sponsored or funded by a political party or advocacy group. A highly controversial issue such as abortion or Tibet may also turn up materials which are not objective.

This does not mean I cannot use or quote from such sources at all, but that I need to limit their influence on my position and perhaps indicate the source’s agenda to my reader if I include them in the text. If the majority of your paper uses objective scholarly sources to support and inform your arguments it is not such a serious problem to have a small number of clearly identified biased opinions.

I receive many case study papers on individual corporations or companies, and coffee chains are a popular topic, perhaps because university students usually like coffee. There’s nothing wrong with this topic, but if your chief primary source is the Starbucks/Angel-in-Us/Café Bene corporate website, you are unlikely to read anything negative or critical about that company. Were you expecting Ediya Coffee to praise Starbucks?

You may also see a great deal of ‘water-is-wet’ claims on a corporate website. To use the coffee example again, you may read that “our company uses only the best Arabic beans” (as does every coffee chain); “our company carefully trains our baristas” (as does every coffee chain); “our company provides baked goods and treats” (as does every coffee chain); “we provide a comfortable, European-styled environment” (as does every coffee chain). These are not unique features. To write a paper relying uncritically on a corporate website without balancing its information with other objective data or evidence is foolish and suggests academic laziness.

### *Korea Fighting Papers!*

I don’t wish to offend Koreans, but reports that Hangul is the best alphabet or that chopsticks make people better at math—are based on claims made by Korean writers. Whether these statements are true or not, non-Korean readers may respond with laughter when they read that the references for these claims are Parks and Kims. If you read a paper reporting that Arabic is the best script or that hummus will cure diseases, or that the world is astonished by ‘The Miracle on the Nile River,’ and noticed that the claims were made by Arab journalists or scholars, you might be equally suspicious of the claims. If you must make such arguments, at least provide some non-Korean scholars to support your assertions.

Two topics that have always been discouraged in my writing classes are Japan-Korea disputes, as students invariably are unable to present the Japanese position fairly without anger or partiality. I hope to be proven wrong on this someday. If you discuss a Korean-foreign cultural or political conflict in your paper, you need not agree with your opposing position, but you need to present it in good faith. I once had a student compare Samsung to ‘sony.’ Was this an accident,

or did the writer have so much scorn for a Japanese company that he refused to use an upper-case letter for its name? The reader may or may not have a firm opinion on the topic, but he or she is likely to feel that such a paper is one-sided.

I often see comparison papers on obesity rating western food against Korean food—except the writer compares a diet of hamburgers and fries to a countryside *hanshik*. This isn't fair, any more than comparing a western diet of vegetables to a Korean one of *ramyen* would be. If your comparison is diets, match equivalent diets: fast food vs. fast food, or traditional vs. traditional; or else the reader may also feel you are making a loaded comparison.

### *The Korean Wave*

Korea is rapidly becoming an economic powerhouse as its IT industry is conquering the world as a global leader. Do you know Samsung and LG? These companies are pursuing markets everywhere with passion as they incorporate super-advanced eco-friendly compact technologies, including their award-winning series of products with the newest ubiquitous features. For this reason Korea is increasingly known as a famous world glocal innovator in the fast-changing business and cultural well-being environment. ☒

Please don't write papers on the Korean wave. They almost *always* sound like advertisements (Do you know K-Pop? Every foreign peoples nowadays...) because writers tend to quote content from Korean newspapers and websites which may be sponsored by government agencies or have a clear political or business interest in promotion. Such articles will be stuffed with clichéd and overworked buzzwords such as *powerhouse* and *global leader*. Every city and every town in Korea has a tourism website stating that it is a global leader in the field of x, and that it is world-famous for y, "which people have compared to the Eiffel Tower."

I know I have instructed you throughout this book that you need to take a clear position. The problem here is not clarity: it is the *motive* behind the position which is suspect—a matter of ethos. When your readers begin to feel by your tone or evidence that the paper is more a commercial than a reasoned set of statements, and has the purpose of selling something rather than informing them you will lose their trust quickly. The reader wants to see you as a source of helpful guidance on the topic, not as a salesperson. If the paper is an advertisement meant to primarily advance the writer's ideological or business interests rather than the reader's, why should anyone read it?

It is of course possible to write on the growing success or popularity of Korean products or culture, but be very watchful that you remain critical of your sources and control your personal enthusiasm. This is only my opinion, but my-country-is-so-wonderful enthusiasm is a very seductive poison; it makes you feel good and patriotic to praise your own nation but annoys and nauseates everyone else. The last place it belongs is scholarly writing.

### *Religion*

Bias is a sensitive issue anywhere, because some journals or sources published by religious or sectarian sources may be questionable, but others are authoritative and respectable. Along with some rather dubious Bible colleges in the United States are religious universities with centuries of academic scholarship and respected print houses and journals. Not many people would dispute the authority of a journal or expert from the University of Notre Dame.

I have had students ask if they can use the Bible as a source. My simple answer is, of course, as long as it is not the *only* source in the paper. Strictly (and respectfully) speaking, it is not an 'objective' text and needs to be used in conjunction with other materials. How would your audience feel if all of your arguments were 'proven' by the Upanishads or another set of sacred writings? This is a sensitive issue—but a good academic reads critically, and any ancient text from Gilgamesh to Shakespeare has some issues of accuracy in its transmission or translation.

Thus I would certainly write a history paper on first-century Rome with scripture as indirect or circumstantial evidence, but I would try to use Roman or Greek texts as well. In a social issues paper you might argue that Southern U.S. Baptists believe in x because of Bible verse y; but please do not use scripture to directly prove your argument— “my thesis is correct because Acts 2:17 says so”—unless the discipline (for example, theology) specifically approves such an approach. As with any paper, your audience will impact your methods.

## 6.7 Watch the Source Dates

Remember the discussion of logical errors: if your paper’s topic is Charles Dickens, a source from 50 years ago is probably still perfectly usable. If your topic is internet social networks, an article from this year is likely much more relevant than one from five years ago, and one from ten years ago might be useless for anything besides a historical overview (e.g. “what did people think about social networks in 2004?”). In certain fields which change quickly the date is important in establishing the respectability of your source. As we’ll see later, this is why citation systems in the social sciences, such as APA, lay so much stress on the year of publication.

## 6.8 The Expert Fallacy

In evaluating sources it is a mistake to take an expert in one discipline as an expert in all fields. If Bill Gates were to give an opinion that grasshoppers evolved from tigers, his credibility as a computer entrepreneur does not give him ethos credibility as an academic specialist in evolutionary science. If I wanted stock advice, I would trust Warren Buffet’s advice. If Buffet wrote an essay predicting who will win the World Series or an analysis of reggae music I would justly feel that he does not know what he is talking about. It would be unethical for him to write on the basis of a reputation earned through unrelated credentials.

Similarly, I like the rock band U2, but I have some misgivings about Bono appearing at political forums with academics and world leaders and preaching to them about social causes, even if I am often in agreement with his positions. If I had worked for some NGO for 20 years and had degrees in foreign policy analysis, I would feel annoyed about having a pop star promoting my cause. It might be highly effective, and admittedly someone like Bono has great emotional pathos in his speeches and songs, but I would perhaps resent him and the millions of people who ignored the issue until someone famous took it up.

As a writer I would also be suspicious of books or resources written by celebrities without deep experience in the field. Recently, a small movement began in the USA opposing childhood vaccination, led by the advocacy of American supermodel Jenny McCarthy. Few things could be as reprehensible as people believing McCarthy’s opinion over thousands of trained physicians because she has the benefit of money and celebrity status and made tearful appearances on television as a worried mother.

To review, having all of these materials gives you greater credibility because the chief task of writing an academic paper is to prove and support your position, and you do this by having secondary evidence which convinces the reader of your authority as a voice within an academic community. But the unfortunate reality is that there are a great deal of questionable sources mixed in with the reputable ones. Your necessary task is to evaluate and judge those sources. Your reader will judge you by the company you keep.

## 7 MLA & APA Format



In the ancient and medieval western world, there was no formal system of acknowledging another writer's text. Often the author would simply mention the person as in conversation: "Socrates: Yesterday I heard a speech by Aspasia. If I remember rightly, she said as follows..." In early printed manuscripts the quote might be printed in a different or smaller font to distinguish it. Quotation marks themselves appeared only in the 1500s.

The system of adding numbers or symbols to a quotation and then referencing them with a note at the bottom of the page started to become standardized by the early 1700s; the writer Edward Gibbon, who wrote *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776) did a great deal to popularize the modern footnote system. But it was only in 1906 that the first academic citation standards were agreed on, the Chicago format from the University of Chicago. Throughout the twentieth century other systems were also introduced. At present MLA style (Modern Languages Association, first printed in 1985) predominates in the humanities and APA style (American Psychological Association, first printed in 1929) is normally used in the social sciences. Chicago format still has adherents in history and linguistics.

APA Citation is primarily used in the social sciences such as psychology, where information tends to change rapidly. Perhaps for this reason, APA emphasizes dates rather than names. If you are writing an MLA paper on Shakespeare, a source from thirty years ago is probably equally valid to one published this year. In the social sciences this would likely not be the case—the reader should know that your source on internet gambling is from 1999 and may not be current research.

There is also a wide range of other notation systems such as Turabian, AMA, IEEE, and England's MHRA. Some systems are for specialized disciplines such as engineering and others are limited to countries or are in-house standards for particular journals or publications. Our discussion will be about standard MLA and APA formatting, but keep in mind that individual departments sometimes have slightly different standards which you will need to follow. Unfortunately, MLA and APA also keep changing. As new technologies such as text messages and twitters appear new citing standards need to evolve, and an old manual might provide you with outdated guidelines. MLA has recently changed, as of the summer of 2016, and has now released their eighth version with significant modifications, sure to cause confusion.

Both MLA and APA citation have their own formats for title pages, references, and citations, which we'll discuss in that order.

### 7.1 Title Pages

#### *Universal Rules for Both MLA and APA*

- Use 1 inch (2.54 cm) margins on all sides except for the header (1/2 inch).
- Attach sheets *only* with a paperclip or detachable pin. Some readers like to separate the pages and lay them out side by side. Do not use a staple.
- Nothing looks cheaper or sloppier than bending the pages into a crinkle to fasten them because you "forgot a paperclip." It screams 'lazy freshman.' Please make the sacrifice and

spend the 200 won on a box of clips. This may be the most cost-effective purchase you ever make in your education—over four years there is a good chance you will at least once get a higher grade on something because of this small gesture.

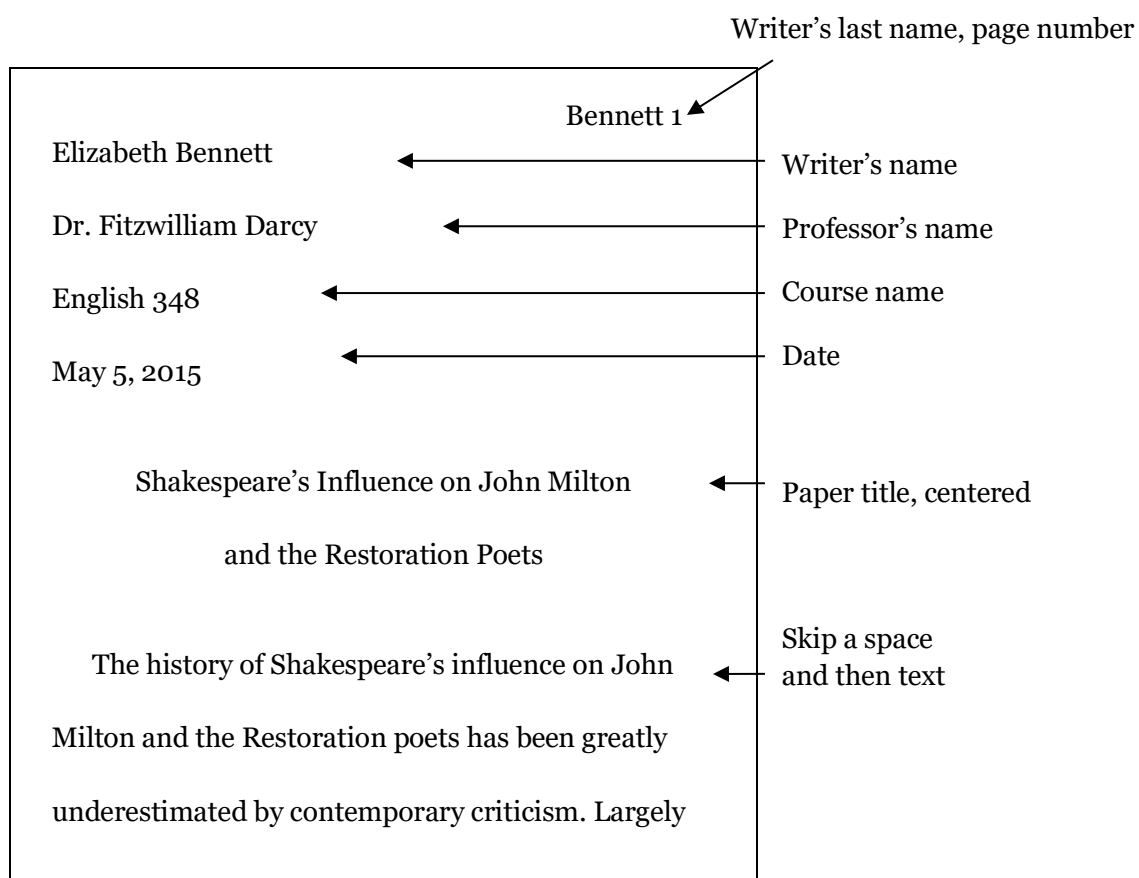
- Everything on the title page uses the same font and size as the rest of the paper. *Do not* use a giant font in your title to make it stand out. An academic paper is not a Hollywood musical.

### *Tip on Making Headers*

I find it easiest to insert page numbers first in a header and then type the header text next to it.

### *MLA ‘Title Pages’*

Like *Fight Club*, the first rule of making an MLA title page is: don’t make an MLA title page. There are none in MLA format. You simply put the paper’s particulars in the upper left of the first page. Some universities might have their own strict thesis regulations which require an additional title page, but this is not part of standard MLA.



### *APA Title Pages*

APA title pages can be confusing because they have a long and short version of the title. The *title* is of course the full title and appears centered on the page. In APA's newest standards the title goes in the top one-third of the page, but older papers will show it vertically centered.

The *running head* is a shorter form of the title in ALL CAPS. It goes in the upper-left of the header. The actual words "running head" go on the title page but are omitted on following pages. Thus the title page would show in its header:

But successive pages would look like this:

DIFFERENCES IN BUSINESS MODELS	2
--------------------------------	---

What if your running head is too long and crowds into the page number? The simple answer is that your running head should not be so long. It is a shortened version of your full title which allows readers (or a machine scanner) to separate the pages but still be able to identify which paper they belong to, or to index the paper within a search engine. Two or three key words is usually sufficient. The APA manual suggests a 40 character limit.

The running head uses words from your title. It is bad practice to write a running head with entirely different text:

Running head: CHINA'S BIRTHRATE ☒

Title: Demographic problems in China after the One Child policy ☒

A better running head might be ONE CHILD POLICY.

Running head: BUSINESS MODELS	1	← Running head and page number
Differences in Business Models Between		← Title
Jet Airways and Air Asia		
Ima Student	←	Name
English 27791		
Acme University	←	Course / University



Page 2

<p>BUSINESS MODELS</p> <p>Differences in Business Models Between Jet Airways and Air Asia</p> <p>In 1989, Jet Airways was introduced as a budget addition to the Qantas fleet in Australia. Along with</p>	<p>2 ← Running head no longer says "Running head"</p> <p>← Important! Title is repeated on the first page of text</p>
--	---

### Tip



You only have to make or download *one* perfect APA title page and save it as a blank file! You can then load it every time you need to and change the text.

### Different Headers

Like MLA, I find it easiest to insert page numbers first in a header and then add the header text to it. Pressing the tab key once or twice should left-align your header text.

Your title page needs to be different from the successive pages, as only this page contains the string "Running Head." On Microsoft Word, under the menu item "Header & Footer Tools," click on the option ☒ Different First Page.

## 7.2 References

References refer to the external sources which you studied or quoted in your paper. This list goes at the end of your paper and is typically on a separate sheet of paper, although sometimes authors continue them on the same sheet following the end of the text if the list is short. Both MLA and APA publish guidebooks, but there are also many good online sources for detailed usage rules. Among the best are Diana Hacker's at <http://www.dianahacker.com> and the Purdue OWL at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2>. Many universities also have guides at their library websites.

Here is a typical MLA reference entry. Again, keep in mind that if you consult a website still referring to MLA 7 or an older style it will differ. MLA 8 (2016) no longer indicates the city of publication for books, and spells out some previously abbreviated terms.

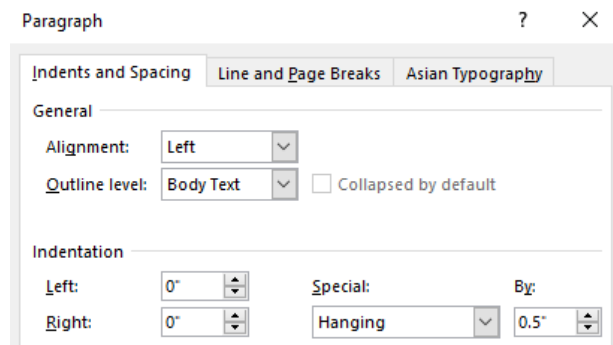
Fay, J. Michael. "Land of the Surfing Hippos." *National Geographic*, Aug. 2004, pp. 100-3, <http://www.ngeog.com/surfhipsampleurl1833620>. Accessed 8 Jun. 2016.

Spark, Muriel. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. MacMillan, 1961.

Here is a typical APA reference entry:

Fiala, D. (2012). Time-aware PageRank for bibliographic networks. *Journal of Informetrics*, 6(3), 370-388.

Notice that first lines of the entry are left justified and following entries use what are called “hanging indents.” These can be formatted in most word processing programs. In Microsoft Word you can type ctrl + tab to do this, but the better way is to format hanging indents (spacing – line spacing options – indentation – hanging indents).



Submenu in Microsoft Word for line spacing options.

Making a list of references is seldom fun as the formatting, especially in APA, is meticulous and inflexible. But it is essential to do this correctly because a sloppy or faulty list of references will reduce the reader’s regard for your paper. A paper with poor formatting may also be simply rejected by thesis or publication committees as unacceptable. The good news is that there are automated citation websites and software plug-ins for word processors which will automate much of the drudgery of this, generating a perfect citation which you can copy and paste into your document. Two useful ones are at <http://www.citationmachine.net> and <http://www.bibme.org>. Newer versions of Microsoft Word also have such functions build in. *Citation Machine* will even help you build a correct title page.

There is nothing wrong or unethical with using citation software to make your work easier (I use it too), but you might still familiarize yourself with the standards and the logic behind them so that you can recognize situations where the software creates a jumbled or faulty entry. People who have some knowledge of how a car engine works will be better drivers, and the same applies to citation as well as to writing generally.

For example, your citation website may not understand that names need to be capitalized. You will need to edit this when you insert the line:

No: ☒ We’re no james bonds say spy chiefs. (1998, July 30). *Daily Record*

Also be careful if you use citation software, or if you copy and paste text from a source into your paper, that it doesn’t look like this:

No: ☒ Experts say that “roses are red” (Smith 46).

Did you notice what happened? If you paste text which was written in a different font, size, or color it will stand out. Select the text and make sure everything is unified with the same typography. Another common error in making lists of references is to forget to alphabetize all sources. This is easily done in Microsoft Word with its alphabetization function.

### 7.3 MLA Works Cited

MLA lists are occasionally still called *Bibliographies*, but the term is gradually disappearing as this literally means “a list of books,” whereas a Works Cited list includes all formats of texts, physical and electronic. MLA now indicates the physical format of the source, such as ‘Print’ and ‘Web.’ Here is an example.

Works Cited	9
Duggan, Stephen, and Betty Drury. <i>The Rescue of Science and Learning</i> . Macmillan, 1958.	
McGonigal, Jane. “Gaming and Productivity.” YouTube, uploaded by Big Think, 3 July 2012, <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E">www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E</a> .	
Patterson, Troy. “The Satire Recession: How Political Satire Got So Flabby.” <i>Slate</i> , 8 Apr. 2008, <a href="http://www.slate.com/id/2188472/pagenum/all/#p2">http://www.slate.com/id/2188472/pagenum/all/#p2</a> . Accessed 3 Aug. 2016.	

#### Reference Formatting

The following is a listing of the more common source formats, though MLA also has formatting standards for unusual sources such as e-mail messages, songs, or Twitters.

The names of books and longer works are put in italics. Short articles and chapters are in quotation marks. You can also underline (which is now a little old-school) rather than *italicizing*, but do not do both. Do not literally write the format of the text in your list, e.g. ‘book’ or ‘academic journal with doi’ in your list—these descriptors are just for information. I’ve had students actually reproduce these headings in their papers.

#### Book

Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious*. Cornell University Press, 1981.

#### Book with two authors

Duggan, Stephen, and Betty Drury. *The Rescue of Science and Learning*. Macmillan, 1948.

#### Book with an editor

McDonald, Nicola, editor. *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*. Manchester University Press, 2004.

#### Chapter or article in an edited book

Bunny, Bugs. “Why I Like Carrots.” *Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Text and Reader*, edited by Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky, Bedford St. Martins, 2008, 2nd ed., pp. 344-49.

If you list another article in the same book later in your list, you can do this:

Mouse, Mickey. “Why Mice Actually Don’t Like Cheese.” Greene and Lidinsky, 358-71.

#### Book from a database

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. 1813. *Project Gutenberg*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1342>.

Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 1596. *No Fear Shakespeare*, <http://nfs.sparknotes.com/msnd/>.

If you are citing one short story from a complete work by one author such as Joyce's *Dubliners*, you cite only the book. You don't need to cite each story in your references.

#### *Kindle book*

Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. *Getting to Yes*. Kindle ed., Penguin Books, 2011.

#### *Wikipedia article*

"Plagiarism." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>. Accessed 16 May 2016.

#### *General website*

Gilder Hacker, Diana. *Research and Documentation Online*, 2006, <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc>.

#### *Academic journal*

Wood, Michael. "Broken Dates: Fiction and the Century." *Kenyon Review*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2004, pp. 22-3.

#### *Academic journal, online*

Corwin, Jay. "One Hundred Years of Solitude, Indigenous Myth, and Meaning." *Theory in Action*, 2013, pp. 112-26. <http://scopus.net/literary-criticism/60307503/>

#### *Academic journal with doi (direct object identifier)*

Peltonen, Kirsi, Helmer B. Larsen, and Karin Helweg. "Violence and Adolescent Mental Health." *Adolescent Psychiatry*, vol. 19, 2010, pp. 813-822. doi: 10.1007/s00787-010-0130.

#### *Newspaper, online version*

"Lack of Direct Talks with N. Koreans Debated Barbs Traded in Messages." *Boston Globe*, 12 Oct. 2006, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-7980792.html>.

#### *YouTube Video*

McGonigal, Jane. "Gaming and Productivity." YouTube, uploaded by Big Think, 3 July 2012, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E).

#### *Ted Talk*

McGregor, Wayne. "A Choreographer's Creative Process in Real Time." *TED*, June 2012. [www.ted.com/talks/wayne\\_mcgregor\\_a\\_choreographer\\_s\\_creative\\_process\\_in\\_real\\_time](http://www.ted.com/talks/wayne_mcgregor_a_choreographer_s_creative_process_in_real_time).

#### *Translated Source*

Jung, Ju-Shin. 한국의 민주화와 군부정권 퇴진 [Democratization of South Korea and Resignation of Military Dictatorship]. Prima, 2009.

Sundberg-Weitman, Brita. "Svenska Journalister Ljuger Om Assange" [Swedish Journalists Lying about Assange]. *SVT Nyheter*, 17 Aug. 2012, <http://www.svt.se/opinion/svenska-journalister-ljuger-om-assange>.

## 7.4 APA List of References

Here is a sample APA reference list page. The heading “References” is centered (though often we say “list of references,” the actual title is “References.”) Note also that the website “Oil price history and analysis” has no author, and so the work is alphabetized under *O*.

The APA guide does not seem to indicate how Korean names should be represented, as technically Koreans do not have first and middle names. The general usage appears to print the family name and parse the first two names as hyphenated syllables with periods. Thus Yujong Choi is Choi, Y.-J.

RUSSIAN OIL	9
<b>References</b>	
Daly, J. (2014, January 10). Russian energy sector “Very successful” in 2013. <i>Oilprice</i> . Retrieved May 9, 2014, from <a href="http://http://oilprice.com/Energy/Energy-General/Russian-Energy-Very-Successful-2013.html">http://http://oilprice.com/Energy/Energy-General/Russian-Energy-Very-Successful-2013.html</a>	
Jun, H.-C. (2006). Energy resources: Oil and natural gas. In <i>Understanding Russia through statistics</i> (1st ed.). (p. 171). Gyeonggi-do, South Korea: Jipmoondang.	
Oil price history and analysis. <i>WTRG Economics</i> . Retrieved May 8, 2015, from <a href="http://www.wtrg.com/prices.htm">http://www.wtrg.com/prices.htm</a>	
Park, C.-J. (1999). <i>Strategic planning of regional resources under the formation of market relations</i> . Amsterdam: Amstel.	

### Reference Formatting

The following is a partial list of reference styles (some of the texts are semi-fictional). As with MLA, book names are italicized *or* underlined, but note that in APA short articles or chapter names are not placed in quotation marks. Also, whereas MLA capitalizes most words in a title, APA does not. Capitalize only first words and words following a colon, as well as names, places, and proper terms. APA also does not identify the full first names of authors in order to provide as much a “nonsexist” entry as possible.

Again, be sure that each entry has the same font and size as the rest of the paper, that you have indented second and following lines, and that your list is alphabetized.

#### Book

Dean, W. (1997). *With broadax and firebrand: The destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic forest*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

#### Book with two authors

Thatcher, M., & Cooke, A. (1989). *The revival of Britain: Speeches on home and European affairs, 1975-1988*. London: Aurum Press.

#### Book with an editor

Kramer, L. (Ed.). (1995). *Classical music and postmodern knowledge*. New York: Faber & Faber.

*Chapter in an edited volume*

Lawrence, J. A., & Dodds, A. E. (2003). Goal-directed development. In J. Valsiner & K. Connolly (Eds.), *Handbook of developmental psychology* (pp. 517-533). London, England: Sage Publications.

*E-book from a database*

Hendriks, J. H., Kaplan, T., & Black, D. (2000). *When father kills mother: Guiding children through trauma*. London: Routledge. Retrieved April 23, 2016, from NetLibrary database.

*Kindle book*

Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers: The story of success* [Kindle version]. Retrieved from Amazon.com.

*Wikipedia article*

Plagiarism. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved August 10, 2014, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>

*Academic journal, online*

Charney, J. (2004). North Koreans in China: A human rights analysis. *Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, 13(2), 75-97. Retrieved from <http://www.refworld.org/47aea34520.pdf>

*Academic journal with doi*

Linhares, A., & Brum, P. (2007). Understanding strategic scenarios: What role do chunks play? *Cognitive Science*, 31(6), 98-107. <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1080/03640210701703725>

*Newspaper article, online*

Ogrodnik, I. (2013, June 13). Prostitution laws around the world. *Global News*. Retrieved from <http://globalnews.ca/news/128029/at-a-glance-prostitution-laws/>

*General website*

Gilder Institute of American History. (2009, 29 October). Gilder history online. University of New York. Retrieved November 4, 2015, from <http://www.gliah.edu/history/ethnic.cfm/>

*Website, no author*

New child vaccine gets funding boost. (2001). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from [http://news.ninemsn.com.au/health/story\\_13178.asp](http://news.ninemsn.com.au/health/story_13178.asp)

*Online blog site*

Miller, L. (2010, October 29). Early American horror show. *Salon.com*. Retrieved October 30, 2015, from <http://www.salon.com/books/2002/102/>

*Conference paper*

Velden, E., Haque, A., & Lagoze, C. (2011). Resolving author name homonymy to improve resolution of structures in co-author networks. *Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 11th annual international ACM/IEEE joint conference on Digital libraries*.

## 7.5 MLA In-Text Citation

*In-text* citation refers to the quotations or summaries from other sources appearing in your essay text. It is possible to have a paper with only a list of references and no mention of them in your essay text, but such a paper may not convince the reader that you have in fact read these books or sources—a dishonest writer could simply patch in a list of books without ever looking at them. Here is an example of a writing segment with in-text quotations and citations.

The Joads in *The Grapes of Wrath* fare increasingly worse as they travel west. Their first meal of the journey is pork, “the very antithesis of the perfect Passover lamb” (Perkin 87), and their diet gradually deteriorates, at one point consisting of biscuits. By the time they reach California Tom has to take on a “servile whine” (309) to sneak his way into Weedpatch. It is difficult to avoid the reality that the Joads begin the novel with everything and end it with nothing (Lisca 306).

As with reference lists, if there were a way I could make in-text quotation fun, I would; but it is a rather dry set of rules and conventions. Unfortunately, it is essential that you learn and memorize some of the basics of citation typography so that your paper will be acceptable to an academic or professional readership, and in order to protect yourself from accusations of plagiarism.

Although some people use the terms differently and they may overlap, here I will distinguish two terms: A *quotation* is the words you are using from someone else; a *citation* is the information about where it’s from. Many people also use *quote* and *quotation* interchangeably, though I will follow convention by using *quote* as a verb and the latter as a noun.

A basic in-text quotation is part of a sentence enclosed by quotation marks (quotation) followed by the source (citation). You must quote *exactly* as the text originally appears, normally with the original capitalization. A quotation flows naturally as a sentence.

Early theologians disagreed on whether “Christ was of one substance with the Father” (Dmitri 7).

Signal phrase

Quotation

Citation

In Europe, people generally use single quotation marks: ‘ ’. In North America, people generally use double quotation marks: “ ”. Use one style *or* the other consistently in your paper, or according to any rules you are given.

The majority of texts will of course have author names. If they do not, do an online search for the names with the name of the text. If you simply cannot find out the author or if it’s anonymous, there is a decision tree:

1. Cite the author’s *last* name (best). (McIlroy 73)  
If you can’t,
2. Cite the title (second best). (*Great Gatsby* 73)  
Or,
3. Cite key words from the title. (“Why Shylock Still Matters” 73)

If it’s website with no page numbers, no problem—no number is required.

(McIlroy) (*Great Gatsby*) (“Why Shylock Still Matters”)

Probably the most common mistake I see in student papers in regard to citation is being lazy and writing the media company's name for a site: (CNN) ☒, or even worse, (Google) ☒. Thanks a lot. A web search engine is *not* a source: It tells the reader nothing. It is the equivalent of citing a book by listing your university library.

The *worst* mistake is to paste in the entire web reference as a citation. This is not only incorrect but suggests to the reader that you are trying to fill up space with meaningless code:

☒ Ford remarks that the number is “closer to four million in New York alone”

([http://health.cts.com/ylt=AooGdbTWSEpOcSUAPE5XNyoA;ylc=X1MDUCMyNzYQRjc3JjcHZpZAUQ2paS3V5VGplRmFsaGs1S1NOQBZyA215LW15eQRmcjIDcbGVzBHNhbwMxBHZoZXNoaWQDQUNCWTAY?p=other+citation+styles&fr2=sb-top&fr=my-myy&type\\_param](http://health.cts.com/ylt=AooGdbTWSEpOcSUAPE5XNyoA;ylc=X1MDUCMyNzYQRjc3JjcHZpZAUQ2paS3V5VGplRmFsaGs1S1NOQBZyA215LW15eQRmcjIDcbGVzBHNhbwMxBHZoZXNoaWQDQUNCWTAY?p=other+citation+styles&fr2=sb-top&fr=my-myy&type_param))

Do your best, but make the effort to find the author's name.

### *Single Author*

Experts say that “blueberries are blue” (Jones 6).

According to Dr. Jones, “blueberries are blue” (6).

### *Multiple Authors*

If there are multiple authors, list them all, normally up to three:

(Lennon and McCartney 30).

(Jones, Smith, and Lee 6).

For a large list of authors you use “et al.,” short for Latin *et alli*, “and others.” Do not italicize.

(Jones et al. 6).

### *Corporate Authors*

If the source was written by an organization, simply use its name instead of a last name. Do not confuse an organization's name (UNESCO) with a publisher's name (CBS).

(Kaiser Foundation 18). (*Economist*).

Your works cited reference will simply alphabetize by the article name:

“South Korean Consumers: Won Over.” *The Economist*. Jan. 2015. Web. 17 Jan 2015.

<http://www.economist.com/news/business/21639579-locals-fed-up-abroad-won-over>

### *Using Keywords*

If the source is anonymous and you must use it, give some keywords from the source's title to refer the reader to the entry in your end-text list.

If the source is: “Binge Drinking a Recurring Problem in UCLA Dorms.”

Cite: (“Binge Drinking” 3).

Which words you use are your decision, but using “a” or “problem” are obviously poor choices as they are likely to also appear in other titles. Key words like “Binge Drinking” will be easier to find in your works cited list. Also note that the key words are in quotation marks. Although it's unlikely that your reader will assume Dr. Binge F. Drinking is the author, if your key words don't have quotation marks and sound like a last name, there may be confusion. For example, with the citation (“Einstein” 6) and (Einstein 6), the first entry refers to an article with the word “Einstein”



in it, and the second refers to something written *by* Einstein.

In your end-text list of references, alphabetize by the article name. The corresponding in-text entry would be ("Famine relief").

"Famine Relief: Just a Simple Matter of Supplying Food?" *Nutrition Notes* 5.1 (2002). Web. 10 Jan. 2015. <http://escholarship.org/uc/nutritionnoteworthy>

#### *A PDF or Archive File*

If you are citing a PDF file, you can use its numbers. If there are no numbers, omit them.

(Jones 4).

If you are using a text from an online archive which has no page numbers at all, try to give as much information as possible, such as chapter headings:

The narrator says that a single man "in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen chap. 1).

In *Brave New World* Helmholtz muses that "Words can be like X-rays, if you use them properly—they'll go through anything" (Chapter 4).

For a short story with no given page numbers, usually the title of the story is enough. Note that short stories are in quotation marks and not italics in MLA.

Joyce's young boy describes himself as "driven and derided by vanity" ("Araby").

#### *Literature*

Often with novels and other fictional works writers will cite a short form of the title of the work instead of the author's last name. This is also useful when you discuss more than one novel by the same author in your paper. Remember that novel names are italicized.

(*Gatsby* 93) i.e. *The Great Gatsby*

(*Sun* 8) i.e. *The Sun Also Rises*

(*Catcher* 76) i.e. *Catcher in the Rye*

For short poems, cite the line number. Use a slash ( / ) to indicate line division.

The narrator intones, "And you, my father, there on that sad height / Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray" (Thomas, lines 16-17).

Biblical scripture indicates book name, chapter, verse:

We are reassured, "Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Matt. 10.31).

Plays are usually cited by act (Roman capitals), scene (Roman lowercase), and line numbers.

Traditionally, Shakespeare's name isn't cited. The text below is from *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act one, Scene one, lines 61 to 62:

The countess pleads, "Love all, trust a few / Do wrong to none" (AWW I.i.61-62)

Shakespeare is a special case in English citation, as there are standard abbreviations for his plays. Here are a few examples:

Ham. : Hamlet	H5: Henry V	Lr.: King Lear
Mac.: Macbeth	MV: Merchant of Venice	Rom.: Romeo & Juliet
Son.: Sonnets	Tmp: The Tempest	TN: Twelfth Night

### *Quoting a Personal Interview*

In-text: His answer was that "I actually don't like carrots" (Bunny).

End-text: Bunny, Bugs. Personal Interview. 6 Oct. 2013.

### *Two People with the Same Last Name*

Add first initials in your in-text citation to differentiate multiple Lees and Kims.

There are several precedents (K. Choi 26). In a different context N. Choi (93) asserts...

### *Two Sources by the Same Author*

If Dr. Justin Bieber has written two books or articles, the reader will be confused as to which one is meant. Indicate the author then the work, with key words:

Book: (Bieber, *Experiential Calculus* 28)

Article: (Bieber, "Transubstantiation" 4)

### *Translated Quotations*

You may include only the translation or both sources in MLA. I personally tend to use both.

The poet notes of Beowulf's father, "þæt wæs an cyning," ("that was one peerless king"; Mitchell and Robinson 107).

### *Repeated Use of a Source*

If you have a series of sentences with quotations from the same author, you can cite the name once and then omit it:

Researchers see a link between headaches and sugar consumption (Rhee 4).

Furthermore, "cigarette smoking adds to the risks" (8).

Avoid doing this from one paragraph to the next, as you might move the paragraph later during editing and break the link. For example, if paragraph A end with a citation from Dr. Floom, and in paragraph B you begin with a quotation from the same source and cite it as (49), if you move paragraph B to a position *earlier* than A later, the citation will have no referent.

There are of course situations requiring some common sense. If your paper is discussing *The Prince*, you don't need to cite (Machiavelli 66) thirty times. As the paper is explicitly about *The Prince*, you might have the full citation once or twice and then have (28) or such, trusting that the reader will recognize when you quote from the text and when you cite a secondary authority on it.

## 7.6 APA In-Text Citation

APA quotation also involves part of a sentence in quotation marks, along with a citation, except that the citation formatting is slightly different in that the year of publication is included.

Early theologians disagreed on whether “Christ was of one substance with the Father” (Dmitri, 2004, p.7).

Signal phrase	Quotation	Citation

If you do not know the last name of the author, there is a similar decision tree as for MLA:

1. Cite the author’s *last* name (best). (Jorden, 2009, p. 73)  
If you can’t,
2. Cite the organization (second best). (UNESCO, 2009, p.73)  
If you can’t,
3. Cite key words from the title (least best). (“Substance Conflict,” 2009, p. 73)

### *Single Author*

Experts say that “blueberries are blue” (Jones, 2012, p. 6).  
According to Dr. Jones (2012), “blueberries are blue” (p. 6).

### *Multiple Authors*

If there are multiple authors, list them all, normally up to three:

(Lennon & McCartney, 1968, p. 30).  
(Jones, Smith, & Lee, 2010, p. 6).

Standards may vary, but in the unlikely case you have a large group of authors, you use *et al.*, short for Latin *et alli*, “and others.” Again, no italics.

(Jones et al., 2010, p. 6).

### *Corporate Authors*

If the source was written by a corporate or non-profit organization, use its name instead of a last name. Don’t confuse an organization’s name (UNESCO) with a publisher’s name (CBS).

(Kaiser Foundation, 2007, p. 18).  
(Doctors Without Borders, 2014, p. 4).

If you have a very long institutional name as a source, type it in full the first time with an abbreviation, and then in following citations use only the abbreviation:

First time: (National Institute of Mental and Social Health [NIMSH], 2002, p. 4).  
Second time: (NIMSH, 2002, p. 28).

But use your best judgment. In an international relations paper you don’t need to define UNICEF or a common organization’s name, and doing so may in fact look a little patronizing.

*Unknown Author*

Typically, when I read undergraduate papers and see no author, there is a mistake—the author or organization is known and the credit is hiding somewhere on the page or at the bottom of the website. But if the source is truly anonymous and can't be searched for, use some keywords from the source's title to refer the reader to the entry in your end-text list.

Source: "Binge Drinking a Recurring Problem in UCLA Dorms."  
("Binge Drinking," 2010, p. 3).

Again, use quotation marks to make it clear that you are citing key words and not a last name or organization name.

*No Date Listed*

If the web page (or any source) does not indicate any year, you can use *n.d.*, meaning "no date":

(Ford, n.d.).

*A Website—No Page Numbers*

If you are quoting from a website, obviously you will not have page numbers, and in APA the solution is easy: you omit them. If you are citing a PDF file, you can use its page numbers.

(Jones, 2010).

*Quoting a Personal Interview*

In-text: Cellist Doris Timms claimed that "the weather keeps getting worse" (personal communication, April 4, 2011).

End-text: **None.** Personal interviews are not listed in an APA reference list.

*Two People with the Same Last Name*

Add first initials in your in-text citation to differentiate multiple Lees and Kims.

There are several antecedents (Paulo, J., 1998). In a different context W. Paulo (1999)...

*One Author with Multiple Texts in the Same Year*

Add *A* and *B* and so on to differentiate the sources if an author has multiple publications in one year. These should correspond alphabetically to your reference list—that is, the first entry by that author for that year in your reference list is *A*.

The disaster was "shockingly expected" (Park, 2003B). The Chinese had little experience with steam power and called it their "Titanic moment" (Park, 2003A).

*Translated Quotations*

You may need to use a source written in a foreign language. The general practice in APA is to write your best translation and then indicate so in the citation with "own translation."

According to Dag Østerberg (1996), "Many of our actions involve changing the materials

which surround us" (p. 136, own translation).

If your sources are clearly Korean ones you can probably safely omit "own translation," but do be sure to write as accurate a translation as you can. In good faith, you need to take care that you are representing the author's meaning and phrasing as close as possible. If you cannot do this you should consider using a paraphrase.

If you feel that the original text is relevant or important, you might include both:

Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955) begins with the confession, "I came to Comala because I had been told that my father, a man named Pedro Páramo, lived there" ("Vine a Comala porque me dijeron que acá vivía mi padre, un tal Pedro Páramo"; p. 9).

In your list of references or works cited, list both the English translation of the title and the original. Or, list 1) the Anglicized title, 2) the original title, and 3) a translation of the title in brackets.

Jung, J-H. (2009). *Democratization of South Korea and Resignation of Military Dictatorship* 한국의 민주화와 군부정권 퇴진. Seoul: Prima.

Murakami, H. 村上春樹. (1987). *Noruegi no mori* ノルウェイの森 [Norwegian Wood]. Japan: Kodansha.

### *Repeated Use of a Source*

If you have a series of sentences with quotations from the same author, you can cite the name once and then omit it:

Researchers see a link between headaches and sugar consumption (Rhee, 2009, p. 4). Furthermore, "cigarette smoking adds to the risks" (p. 5).

As with MLA, be careful that in editing your paper the citations do not become confused if you omit these links.

## **7.7 Tables and Graphics**

Neither APA nor MLA seem totally clear on how non-textual material should be cited. Try to be at least informative and consistent in your usage. Do *not* word-wrap your text to the left or right of the graphic as you might in a magazine or website.

It is your decision whether you wish to place your charts or tables in-text or at the end of your paper in an appendix. My usual advice is to put them in the text so that the reader can immediately refer to them, unless your table or survey section comes to several pages of information—then it might be better to create an appendix section.

### *Graphics*

For MLA format, provide a reference below the graphic. It is not necessary to repeat the reference in the Works Cited list.



Fig. 1. Image from Alice Leighton, *The Sweet and Touching Tale of Floris & Blanchefleur* (London: D. O'Connor, 1922).

For APA, to cite an image, place a reference below the graphic and provide an end-text citation.



Figure 1. Vermeer, J. (c. 1665). *Girl with a pearl earring*. From Mauritshuis Royal Gallery, The Hague. Retrieved from <http://www.mauritshuis.nl/index.aspx?Chapid=2295>.

### *A Table or Chart*

If you make your *own* table or chart you should label it, but no citation is necessary. APA seems to italicize the title and MLA does not.

Table 2

### *Fruit Revenues in Germany*

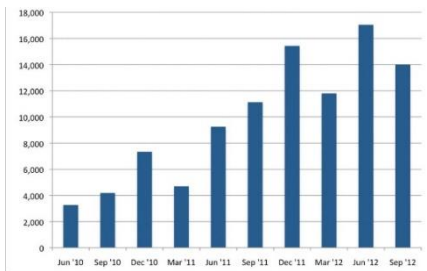
Product	Division A	Division B	Division C	Division D
Pears	123	123	123	123
Bananas	456	456	456	456
Oranges	789	789	789	789

If you are reproducing data from another source, you need to place a reference note *below* the graphic, and list your source in your end-text list.

MLA:

Table 3

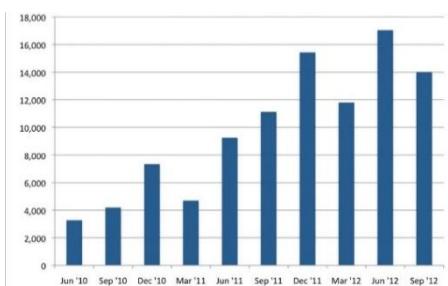
### Household Pet Ownership 1996-2011



Source: American Veterinary Association. "Table 1204: Household Pet Ownership." *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. 129th ed. Ed. U.S. Census Bureau. Washington D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010. Web. 14 July 2010. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/tables/10s1204.pdf>.

APA:

Table 3. *Internet Usage Growth 1996-2011*



Note. From "Best management practices by period" by B. Adams and C. Matthew, 2010, *Journal of Correlational Studies*, 17(1), p. 92.

## 7.8 Chicago Footnotes

Chicago style is now less popular but is still prevalent in some fields, such as history and linguistics, and in some subfields of English literature. In my own field, medieval literature, it is often used. I prefer it myself as it is the least "intrusive" citation standard. It places nothing more than a tiny number in the text, putting the details at the bottom of the page (footnotes) or at the end of the paper (endnotes).

Many editors find that Chicago uses too much space, as full Chicago formatting has both notes and a bibliography at the end of the paper, though in some of my publications only notes were printed. Notes are usually printed in the same or a slightly smaller font size.

Without going into extensive detail, here is some basic citations in Chicago format. The bibliography formatting of Chicago is close to that of MLA and its specifics are easily found online, such as at [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

The word *brother* has a similar form in numerous languages: "broeder (Dutch), Bruder (German), phrater (Greek), brat (Russian), Brathair (Irish), and Bhratar (Sanskrit)."<sup>1</sup>

In the Wife of Bath's tale the Knight is clearly in the wrong, with a ridiculous sense of snobbery in rejecting the woman who saves his life because of her social inequality.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert McCrum, *The Story of English* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), 53.

<sup>2</sup> Robert P. Miller, "'Thy Gentillesse' in Wife of Bath's Tale, D 1159-62," *Modern Language Notes* 57:3 (1942): 102.

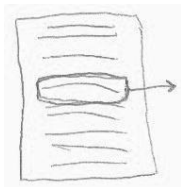
The Wife later makes a joke at the Knight's expense,<sup>3</sup> asking him if all of Arthur's men are such boring bed-partners.

At the bottom of this page you can observe the note citations for these two entries. Notice that Chicago notes place the publication information of the source in parentheses ( ), and that there are very few periods in the citation. Successive references to the same source are shortened. While such textual information is somewhat duplicated in the bibliography, again Chicago has the benefit of offering the least interruption from the flow of the text. I confess that it's my personal favorite, as Chicago style allows you to include a sort of secondary discourse without cluttering the body text.

### *Footnotes in MLA and APA*

While you cannot mix citation systems, MLA and APA do permit you to use a Chicago-style number at the bottom of your page for an extraneous detail or explanation which the writer feels is distracting or only partly relevant to the main text. You might also have a recommendation for a further source in the footnote.<sup>4</sup>

## 8 Quotation



Part of effective quotation is correct MLA/APA style citing, but grammar and style are also important aspects. Quoting will be discussed as an editing matter as well later, but for now it is vital that you understand how to integrate quotations into a sentence or a piece of text.

### 8.1 Seven Different Ways to Cite

Let's look at some common issues and also examine ways to make your quoting more interesting and nuanced.

#### *Signal Phrase – Quote*

This is the most basic format for quoting. State a signal phrase which introduces the quote, the quotation, and the citation.

MLA: According to economist Dan Greer, "No one in the industry is to blame" (8).

APA: According to economist Dan Greer (2006), "No one in the industry is to blame" (p. 8).

This phrasing is also useful where the name is important or recognizable, and mentioning it is of interest to the reader and will build ethos:

According to Albert Einstein (1943), despite the growing numbers of overweight

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<sup>3</sup> Miller, 106.

<sup>4</sup> Footnotes go at the bottom (i.e. the *foot* of the page) and endnotes go at the end of the paper before your end-text notes. For more on the subject, see Jameson (1999), especially chapter x.



Americans, many health providers still “remain in ignorance about the health danger to the poor and young” (p. 5).

In the chapter on editing I list some alternative verbs to “according to” so that your reader will not want to jump off a cliff. It gets tedious to see the same phrasing used over and over.

It’s common to use this format when quoting from a literary text, using a variant of “says.”

Hagrid tries to make Harry feel better when he says, “Come with me an’ see the Great Hall, looks a treat” (212).

### *Quote – Citation*

Here the order is reversed, so that the source is at the end.

MLA: The conclusion is that “No one in the industry is to blame” (Greer 8).

APA: The conclusion is that “No one in the industry is to blame” (Greer, 2006, p. 8).

You might use this format partly to avoid being repetitive, but also for other reasons. Normally the author is not really important to your argument:

☒ According to Walter Keller, a teller at the First Trust branch in New Baker, NV and writer of *The New Mexico Inner Space*, published by Intransigence Press, and a loving father of two children and a dog named Spot, ....

This is a ridiculous case, but often “according to x” author-quote style includes unnecessary details on author names and looks to the reader as though you are padding out space. Thus quote-citation format can be more compact: “Rabbits have big ears” (Keller).

Avoid having a free-standing quotation in its own sentence, what is known as a dropped quote. These often appear awkward or jarring. If you wish to quote a whole sentence you might use a colon. Ordinarily, if you use the complete sentence you reproduce even capital letters:

The 1980 campaign featured a president with dismal approval ratings whose policies had given rise to stagflation and an energy crisis: “The stock market limped along, the auto industry was asthmatic, and the trade deficit was at an all-time high” (Gardner).

### *Split Quote*

As a third alternative, you might place the source’s name in the middle:

“No one in the industry,” argues economist Dan Greer, “is to blame” (8).

You might use this form simply for variation, but also if you have a very long sentence in your source and only the beginning and ending parts are useful for you. You can in this way easily clip out the middle. This also works if you would like to use two separate phrases from the same author from the same paragraph or page:

Norris Lacy calls the poem a “roman rose,” a conflict-less piece of entertainment rather than drama which conveys “not event but the presentation of event” (22)

*Key-word Quote*

A fourth alternative is to use only a few chief phrases or terms from the source and build a sentence around them. This is often favored by advanced writers as it credits the source while using less space. It also works well when the phrasing or verb tense of the original does not match your paragraph:

Despite the growing incidence of obesity, many providers still “remain in ignorance” about the rising health dangers (Ford 5).

Rose of Sharon is so shocked by the loss that she “struggled and pushed herself up” (Steinbeck 469).

With any of these formats, be sure that you do not misrepresent the author’s meaning by accident when you select portions of sentences:

Source: No one can say that I like eating mushrooms! Until the end of my life I will hate them!

Milton (2008, p. 217) writes that “I like eating mushrooms.” ☒

*Block Quotation*

A block quotation is *four* or more lines of text (approximately 40 words or more). Skip a line before and after the block quotation, and indent on the left side. Avoid overusing block quotations to fill space. The reader can see what you are trying to do.

MLA:

Greer makes an important point:

No one in the industry is to blame. There were really no inventors of the modern stock trade system as now used on Wall Street; it is a system which has developed over centuries based on its European, mostly British, ancestors. Rapid expansions and crashes are simply built into the system. (8)

Notice that, for some unexplainable reason, MLA puts the period before the citation in a block quotation. APA does not do this.

Greer (2008) makes an important point:

No one in the industry is to blame. There were really no inventors of the modern stock trade system as now used on Wall Street; it is a system which has developed over centuries based on its European, mostly British, ancestors. Rapid expansions and crashes are simply built into the system (p. 8).

Notice that there are no quotation marks (unless there is a quotation within the quotation). You will see some sources which single-space block quotations, but generally they are double-spaced.

Again, this will be discussed further in the chapter on editing, but blocks are a format of quotation which should be used sparingly. If one-half of your paper is pasted-in block quotations, the reader is going to feel that you have put very little effort or thought into writing it.

*Paraphrase Citation*

You can also rephrase someone's writing in your own words. This is useful if you want to summarize or simplify a long quotation, or if the original is strangely phrased or in a foreign language. Notice there are no quotation marks.

**MLA**

Economist Dan Greer argues that it is a shortsighted public policy to assign blame to any one agent (8).

**APA**

Despite the growing incidence of obesity, many health care providers still refuse to take the risks to young and low-income Americans seriously (Ford, 2005, p. 5).

APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2009) does not require that you list page numbers in a paraphrase citation, but you might still do so if the information comes from one specific place in the book.

*Indirect Citation*

You might have a source where the writer quotes somebody else, and you want to use that quote. Ideally, you should hunt down that original source, but this may not always be possible, especially when a writer is quoting someone speaking and not text.

In your citation you need to indicate that you are quoting someone *else's* quotation and not the author. Note that the formatting is significantly different between APA and MLA.

**MLA**

Before taking off, the pope said he would "pray earnestly" for the victims of the terrorist attack (qtd. in *Newsweek*, 34).

**APA**

Former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher described "a nation of young people seriously at risk of grave but preventable illness" (as cited in Critser, 2008, p. 4).

You can paraphrase an indirect citation as well:

**MLA**

Before taking off, the pontiff promised to pray for the victims of the terrorist attack (qtd. in *Newsweek*, 34).

**APA**

Former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher warns of a culture of young adults in serious and unnecessary danger of illness (as cited in Critser, 2008, p. 4).

In your end-text list, include only the text you took the indirect citation from (Critser or *Newsweek*).

Normally it should not be necessary to cite the year of the indirect quotation, but if you feel it is important you might work it into the signal phrase:

Sullivan (1843) foresaw that England would go “railway mad” long before the rapid expansion of lines (as cited in Bergson, 2001, p. 143).

### *Quoting Fictional Characters*

You also may need to do something like an indirect citation when you quote a character speaking in a work of fiction:

In *Hard Times*, Sissy pleads, “If you please, sir, I’m very fond of flowers” (Dickens 31).

You do not need to write *qtd.* / *cited in.* etc. here as Sissy is a fictional character written by Charles Dickens; but you cannot write: According to Dickens, “I’m very fond of flowers”—because Dickens *himself* did not say this. Thus you need to somehow work the character’s name into the signal phrase.

As a theoretical matter, the narrator in a fictional text is usually technically a created voice and not the author speaking. In older literature there may be little difference between the narrator and the author (and this is a critically controversial issue), and Dickens may give the sense that he himself is speaking in his novels. But in a modern novel the narrator may be clearly an invention—the narrator may be all-knowing, there may be multiple narrators, or the narrator may be villainous. In Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* the narrator is a specific person, Marlowe; in Salmon Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* the narrator is seemingly the devil. Obviously writing “Rushdie says” may mislead a reader unfamiliar with his works into believing that the narrator’s opinions *are* Rushdie’s. It would be better to clarify this: “Rushdie’s narrator says...”

## **8.2 Where it Gets Hard: Citation Grammar**

In using any of these citation forms, remember again that you need to make sure that the quotation makes for a correct grammatical sentence. It is easy to get verb tenses confused:

In future it will be important for the French school system “were flexible enough to accommodate rapid inflows of immigrant students” (Dene 25). ☒

Use only the parts of the original source that will fit the grammar of the sentence. If you are not sure, remove the quotation marks and read the sentence to see if it would naturally make sense.

In future it will be important for the French school system to be “flexible enough to accommodate rapid inflows of immigrant students” (Dene, 25).

My suspicion is that Korean has a definite advantage here! Because the language is less strict about numbers, articles, and tenses, it is probably easier to grammatically work a Korean phrase into a sentence. In English *you cannot change the original text* (with an exception below); you need to write a sentence which fits its grammar, or you need to crop away words until you have a phrase which fits.

Here I’ve clipped “But I’ve no spade to follow men like them” from Seamus Heaney’s “Digging” to fit my sentence:

It is evident through Heaney’s memories and descriptions that he is far removed from his father’s lifestyle and he concedes that he has “no spade to follow men like them” (line 28).

In a pinch you may alter single words in a quotation to make them fit the number or verb tense of

your sentence, but do so sparingly, and use brackets to indicate what you have changed.

Original source: The Company's refusals to release documents obscure the essential problem.

The continuing impasse "obscure[s] the essential problem" (Witte, 1998, p. 55).

*That Dot, Dot, Dot...*

An ellipsis (...) is used if you are leaving out text from the middle of a quotation.

Ford adds that "Despite the growing incidence of obesity, many health care providers still refuse to take the risks... seriously" (9).

Again, as an ethical matter, using an ellipsis should not give a misleading version of the original:

Original: "I have not yet begun to fight." – Captain John Paul Jones.

Captain Jones famously said, "I have... begun to fight." ☒

An ellipsis is also normally used if you want to indicate that an entire sentence is not being used:

Former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher described "a nation of young people seriously at risk..." (as cited in Critser, 2008, p. 4).

It's not necessary to do this if the text obviously does not quote a complete sentence. The reader can see that you have only used a portion:

The French school system will need to be "flexible enough..." to accept large numbers of immigrants (Meryl 91). ☒

#### *Quoting Text with Quotation Punctuation Inside*

Occasionally, when quoting a passage from fiction you may need to account for the quotation marks of characters speaking. To differentiate your marks from those of the characters, change inside marks to single quotes (') or double quotes (") if you use single ones ('):

The barman is perplexed to hear a nonsensical answer: "'No, no,' said Ford, 'it's just that the world's about to end.'"

This also needs to be done in MLA format in your works cited list when a title contains quotation marks:

Lim, G. (2009). "'My horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!': Valuing Arondel in *Bevis of Hampton*." Conference paper. 44th international congress on medieval studies, May 2009. MI: Kalamazoo.

### **8.3 Verb Tenses in Signal Phrases**

One of my graduate students asked me an interesting question once: Why do we sometimes use "Huck says" (present tense) and sometimes "Jones and Lee said" (past tense) when introducing a quotation? There is no absolute rule on this matter in MLA or APA, although there are typical conventions.

*MLA*

MLA usually uses what is called the “historic present” in quotation, particularly in literature where in a sense the fictive character is always speaking newly in the reader’s perspective:

Heraclitus advises, “No one steps into the same river twice.”

The voice sneers to Simon, “We’re going to have fun on this island!”

In a proverbial statement the present tense might also be used:

Churchill tells us, “Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.”

But the past tense isn’t wrong, and there may be situations such as a historic event where it makes sense to use it.

By the late 1200s European patience for crusading had greatly diminished. The descendants of the crowds that had cheered Urban II in 1095 now answered “*Deus non vult*” (“God *doesn’t* will it”).

*APA*

APA prefers past tense (*noted*) or present perfect (*has noted*), which makes sense considering its emphasis on marking the dates of research in scientific disciplines which change rapidly:

Alarum (1998) found

Jordan (2013) has found

## 8.4 Sample Text

Suppose you are writing a paper about internet addiction, and you have the following sample article (“Is the Web Driving Us Mad?,” Tony Dokoupil, *The Daily Beast*, July 9, 2012):

Then there was the University of Maryland’s 2010 “Unplugged” experiment that asked 200 undergrads to forgo all Web and mobile technologies for a day and to keep a diary of their feelings. We may appear to be choosing to use this technology, but in fact we are being dragged to it by the potential of short-term rewards. Every ping could be social, sexual, or professional opportunity, and we get a mini-reward, a squirt of dopamine, for answering the bell. “These rewards serve as jolts of energy that recharge the compulsion engine, much like the *frisson* a gambler receives as a new card hits the table,” MIT media scholar Judith Donath recently told *Scientific American*. “Cumulatively, the effect is potent and hard to resist.”

Again, we need to cite in such a way that the quotation matches the verb tense and phrasing of your signal phrase:

☒ One study discusses “Then there was the University of Maryland’s 2010 ‘Unplugged’ experiment that asked 200 undergrads to forgo all Web and mobile technologies for a day” (Dokoupil, 2012).

☒ One study discusses “the University of Maryland’s 2010 ‘Unplugged’ experiment that asked 200 undergrads to forgo all Web and mobile technologies for a day” (Dokoupil, 2012).

You could try a Quote – Citation form:

Chinese researchers discovered “extra nerve cells built for speed” (Dokoupil, 2012).

You might use an Author – Quote form:

Tony Dokoupil (2012) concludes that “we get a mini-reward, a squirt of dopamine, for answering the bell.”

For increased brevity, key-word citations are often best:

Dokoupil (2012) concludes that “a squirt of dopamine” is the conditioned reward for continued attention to electronic devices.

Remember that indirect citations need to have both sources indicated.

MIT scholar Judith Donath referred to such rewards as “jolts of energy that recharge the compulsion engine” (as cited in Dokoupil, 2012).

### *Paraphrasing*

The central skill in paraphrasing is to explain someone else’s text in your own words, in such a way that it fits your purposes. This may involve shortening, lengthening, or just clarifying the original text somehow.

From “Can Wikipedia Bring the Ivory Tower into the Streets?” by Piotr Konieczny (2015)

Wikipedia emerged in the bloom of what has been dubbed by some as the Academic Spring. This social movement started among reformist academics who viewed current institutional and cultural norms in academia as obsolete in the Digital Age. With the advent of near-free, media-rich asynchronous communication, traditional publishing practices have gained the reputation of being too slow, not inclusive enough, and too profit oriented. It can take years to get a paper published, but it takes only a few hours to get similar information featured on a blog. And published papers are often hidden behind paywalls, making it inaccessible to a majority of world's population. But blogs and Wikipedia articles have no such limitations.

Here you may want to use some of the text as a direct quotation:

New research has shown that traditional publishing models “have gained the reputation of being too slow, not inclusive enough, and too profit oriented” (Konieczny).

Or, you might choose a paraphrase to condense or adapt the text for your own uses:

In his study, Konieczny (2015) found that traditional paper publishing can often be far too slow a process in comparison with blog posting.

New online tools have given scholars the ability to bypass the perceived obsolescence and emphasis on profit of traditional paper publishing, whereas blog sites and Wikipedia are not limited by printing delays or paywalls (Konieczny, 2015).

## 8.5 Advanced Quotation Arrangement

I don't want you to think there is some magical formula for arranging a sequence of quotations within body paragraphs, and having the same pattern would become boring anyway—but I do find there are a few conventions which help for effective use of quotations.

### *Quotation Sandwiches*

Perhaps one of the more common problems I see with external evidence is dumping in a quotation to “prove” a claim and then beginning a new paragraph—composition scholars Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein call this a “hit and run” quotation. In general, don't end a paragraph with a quotation unless it is particularly self-explanatory or reads well. The following excerpt reads a little abrupt because the quotation ends the paragraph with a jump to a new idea in the next one, with no engagement with the quote:

Rowling does not give the children high technology so that their achievements at using spells will be emphasized. Toward the end, Dumbledore tells Ron Weasley, “for the best-played game of chess Hogwarts has seen in many years, I award Gryffindor house fifty points” (Chap. 17).

Another reason that Rowling avoids technology at Hogwarts is to separate... ☒

Here the quote about Dumbledore and Weasley is used as evidence, but there's no explanation of the quote or discussion of how it supports the writer's claims. Graff and Birkenstein would argue that the “they say” of the paragraph is not connected enough to the “you say” part. The reason you quote is to support and give a framework to your own arguments. The reader wants to know how you interpret and respond to the quotation, and a paragraph that ends without this often feels unfinished.

A better practice is to build ‘quote sandwiches,’ where you introduce the source, reproduce it, and then discuss or contextualize it somehow: “What this means is that...”

Rowling does not give the children high technology so that their achievements at using spells will be emphasized. Toward the end, Dumbledore tells Ron Weasley, “for the best-played game of chess Hogwarts has seen in many years, I award Gryffindor house fifty points” (Chap. 17). Here Weasley achieves praise both for utilizing his magic and for understanding an abstract and medieval game.

Putting this together, here's an example from one of my own papers. Notice how there's a fairly natural sequence or flow in the paragraph excerpt: Secondary information is given, there's a qualification, and some discussion follows which analyzes the evidence and relates it to the claims of the paper.

Scholars lack agreement on the value of explicit correction of grammar errors (see Ellis, 2002). Pica (1985) claims that classroom teaching is “of no consequence” in improving usage of <i>a</i> ,	Sources are given
although her sample set is speakers of Spanish, an article language (p.	Pica is qualified



217).	
Some theorists dichotomize mistakes as <i>global</i> , those which cause rejection of the statement as incomprehensible, or as <i>local</i> , phrasings which are awkward but understandable (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998, p. 204). Master claims that article errors “rarely lead to miscomprehension” (1997, p. 216),	More sources are summarized
conceding only that poor usage of articles creates a negative impression in the professor who grades the work.	Master’s concession is given
Nevertheless, one reason article mistakes are prevalent is that articles themselves are so omnipresent - in written English <i>the</i> is the most-used word in the language. While lower-level learners have other priorities, advanced writers grasp with issues of credibility in supporting arguments or writing for professional purposes.	Discussion and some disagreement with the sources

I also take some useful ideas from an excellent new book which might be of use for readers looking for a higher-level discussions of research writing at the graduate level: Eric Hayot’s *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the Humanities* (2014). Hayot recommends building body paragraphs in a rhetorical u-shape, with sentence complexities running from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Such paragraphs begin with an introductory point (4), move down (3) into textual or secondary evidence (1, 2) and then end by raising the level of difficulty and abstractness (3, 4) into some key conclusion (5) that will link into the next paragraph. The sequence runs: 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. A paragraph with only ponderous high-level statements (5) may seem overwhelming; a paragraph with only low-level quotations and evidence (1, 2) may feel flat and dull.

See if you can recognize the ‘u’ here in these examples from my own academic papers and from student papers where external sources are well-integrated into the discussion.

#### MLA 1: *Brave New World*

The frightening dystopia of *Brave New World* “frequently causes modern readers to overlook the fact that it is a rather witty book much of whose parody is amiably comic rather than morally indignant” (Stableford 254). True, “life has imitated Huxley’s art” (Ross vii). Huxley accurately foresaw such technologies as rocket ships, contraceptives, and planned obsolescence; but the point of the novel is to reveal the inadequacies of 1932, not 632. All utopias must have as their basis a real world to be compared against (Watts 73). Just as More’s country was really a ‘nowhere,’ painted to indicate the shortcomings of sixteenth-century Europe, Huxley’s vision of A.F. 632 parodies the world as Ford and Freud see it and is rooted in that mindset; to instead look for a consistent eschatological viewpoint within the novel is problematic. Huxley elsewhere in an essay doubts that scientists can agree to work in concert for international peace without nationalist prejudice (“Scientist” 535). How, then, is the world state to be accomplished?

#### MLA 2: *The Great Gatsby*

In traditional American gender stereotypes, women were not supposed to choose their partner. They were the ones to be picked. But Jordan doesn’t seem to follow these traditional gender roles. At the first Gatsby party that Nick attended, Jordan says to Nick “Let’s get out, this is much too polite for me.”(3), and this shows that Jordan leads the

scene. Jordan also says "I hate careless people. That's why I like you" (3). At the moment Jordan is expressing her attraction to Nick quite directly. And she makes a provocative action to Nick, saying "But I swore I wouldn't tell it and here I am tantalizing you" (3). These altogether make Jordan a very modern character.

### *MLA 3: The Tempest*

It is true that Miranda loves Ferdinand against Prospero's will and makes conflict. Her behavior towards her father changes in a way that is "not as meek and submissive as she is often portrayed" (Vaughan 27). For example, she disobeys her father by meeting Ferdinand and telling him her name. However, Prospero actually wants her to love Ferdinand in reality. He just pretends to disapprove because he does not want their love to be easy "lest too light winning make the prize light" (I.ii.629-630). For that reason, Prospero forces Ferdinand to work for him by carrying logs; "Ferdinand's service is short-lived, however, and he is rewarded with Miranda as a bride" (Vaughan 26). Therefore, it is not a real conflict, rather a fake one that is resolved easily later in the play.

### *APA: An Engineering Paper on CO<sub>2</sub> Storage*

The rock formations can be largely classified into three main types of rock: igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks. Large sedimentary basins are best suited, because they have tremendous pore volume and connectivity and they are widely distributed (Bachu, 2003, p.12). Sedimentary rock can also be further classified into different types of rocks like sandstone, limestone, siltstone, and shale etc. Šperl has presented the physical properties of different types of rocks in Table 2, after performing laboratory testing (Šperl et al., 2008, p. 4). It shows that the average porosity of sandstones is better than other types of rocks which means that the porosity of sandstones is neither too high nor too low for the carbon sequestration. The results obtained after tests also show that the permeability of the sandstones is also better than other rock types. According to Xu, CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration occurs better in the sandstone as compared to shale because the CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration in sandstone resulted in decreased porosity, whereas, increased porosity was observed in shale (Xu, Apps, & Pruess, n.d.).

Notice that the first citation in the first APA sample isn't a quotation at all—in using the word *see* I am simply referring the reader to a useful source for amplification on the topic. Something I have also observed about APA style is that papers in its format tend to have more paraphrase quotations. In the first example there are only two examples with quotation marks.

### *Source "Grouping"*

If you are quoting repeatedly from two or three sources, it may be better to keep them together in groups rather than switching back and forth between authors; doing the latter may confuse your reader. In other words, you might switch from strictly discussing an idea or argument, using multiple sources to support it, to building a standalone paragraph focusing on how one expert or source views the issue. For example, you might write, "Ocampo's ideas are so influential that they might be briefly examined as follows."

If the quotation is only partly relevant to your discussion and feels as though it interrupts the flow of ideas, you might move it to the bottom of the page as a footnote (or endnote). Again, though Chicago style *only* uses foot/endnotes, MLA and APA *permit* them for occasional explanatory notes. This requires a rather expert touch in academic writing, as you are making a careful judgment that your quotation is not necessary enough to be put in the main text, but

important enough to be included in the paper! Some writers do like to have a thicket of footnotes, and others find them distracting and tiresome.

## 8.6 Plagiarism

The creators of the two following internet images are unknown, but suppose I had made them myself in a photo editing program. Would I need to cite them in a paper as da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" or Grant Wood's "American Gothic"?



It is possible that I wouldn't need to, as most readers would instantly recognize these images as parody pastiche images of familiar works of art, and there is obviously no intent to deceive anyone as to who created them. This is a key illustration of the concept of common knowledge: that ideas and facts which we can assume to be familiar and known to an audience do not need to be acknowledged. It is also part of the problem of common knowledge, that we can't always be sure if something is familiar and known.

In brief, you do not need to cite knowledge which is probably widely known (World War I ended in 1918), but you must show your readers that specific information or the words you cite are not yours, both to indicate where they can find the source for their own use, and to protect yourself from charges of plagiarism. Most people would not already know the following:

The Belgium index fell to 2453 in May 1919. Some scholars believe this was the end of Belgium's dominance of the wool industry (Pym 63).

It would seem that making this distinction would be difficult, but in practice your conscience is usually correct—and if you are in doubt, cite. Over-citing is definitely the lesser of two dangers. Your professor can always suggest that you remove an unnecessary citation, but inadequate citation is a potentially dangerous matter.

Plagiarism is not 'theft' in the normal sense of the word, like stealing someone's purse. If you copy from a book into your paper, the original book is untouched. It is not even like software piracy, where you steal the use of a product. Plagiarism steals *authorship* by giving the appearance of information or words which you did not create or write. Another distinction between physical property or software and text is that using the latter is both legal and free—writers may use excerpts of someone's text in academic papers without paying anything, so long as you give credit in order to inform the reader that you did not write it.

In the west, undergraduates may fail the class, graduate students may be expelled, and faculty might lose their positions over prosecutions of plagiarism. Plagiarism charges dating back from college nearly ruined the career of U.S. Vice President Joe Biden in 1987, who had planned to run for president in that year. It is a serious academic crime in western universities and "I didn't know" is usually an insufficient excuse. It is not a pleasant subject to broach, but regardless

of what Korean nationalists believe, the main reason Asian university degrees do not yet command scholarly respect in the west is their casual, everybody-does-it attitude to plagiarism (this is changing).

Something that undergraduates always seem to do—perhaps it reflects human nature!—is to avoid or act embarrassed around professors who have previously given them failing grades. I generally don't have anything against students who failed and may even have affection for them. But nearly every professor has open contempt for the plagiarist, who not only insults the professor's intelligence but mocks the integrity of the subject he or she has spent a career studying. I am even angrier with senior students who lie and say they were "never taught about plagiarism." Unfortunately, you now have what in ethics is called 'guilty knowledge': as of this page, you know what plagiarism is.

Professors and administrators are (usually) human beings and distinguish between accidental and red-handed brazen plagiarists. The people who read books like this one are usually the former: students who want to avoid plagiarizing. For those who want a clearer idea of plagiarism so as to not do it, let's identify what is and is not plagiarism using an example:

### **Original text:**

Although the official pronouncements of the immigration Branch in this period stressed that only farmers, farm laborers, and domestics would be recruited, exceptions were frequently made to accommodate the needs of businessmen in the expanding sectors of the economy. (Avery 16)

Text source: Donald Avery, *'Dangerous Foreigners'* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979). (There are single quote marks because they are in the book title.)

### ☒ **Plagiarism:**

Although the official pronouncements of the immigration Branch in this period stressed that only farmers would be recruited, exceptions were frequently made to accommodate the needs of businessmen.

**Why?** This is plagiarism because the text is a direct copy from the original with no reference.

### ☒ **Direct quotation:**

Although immigration directors instructed that "only farmers, farm laborers, and domestics would be recruited, exceptions were frequently made to accommodate the needs of businessmen" (Avery 16).

This is fine because the author has been credited, and the actual words from the source are indicated by quotation marks.

### ☒ **Plagiarism:**

Even though the public statements of the immigration officials stated that only farmers and house maids would be accepted, allowances were often made for business needs.

**Why?** This is, as Canadians say, stick-handling—a sneaky twisting of facts. It is also plagiarism because some words have been changed to make the text look different, but the statement still has the exact same information and phrasing as the original source.

### ☒ **Paraphrase Quotation:**

Although immigration managers wished to exclusively accept agricultural and domestic laborers to the new country, they often needed to make exceptions for the growing needs of business (Avery 16).

This is good because the information has been rephrased in the writer's own words but still cited.

Regrettably, some students will always believe that plagiarism is only wrong if they are caught. At the university level, such people not only cheapen themselves by living a lie, but waste their tuition money throwing away a chance to learn. A professor does not assign papers for his or her own personal benefit, or to find out what *Macbeth* means, but to train the student's skills and thinking, just as the professor doesn't assign you math problems in order to know the answer. Plagiarizers squander this opportunity and graduate with the appearance of an education rather than the reality of one. I would prefer that the surgeon operating on my heart understood his medical research papers rather than copying them from a website.

### *Common Questions*

I am sometimes asked, "what if a student was so determined to plagiarize without being caught that he or she painstakingly changed the words and phrasing of the source and carefully blended it into the paper?" A student who went to that amount of effort to plagiarize would be an idiot spending twice as long trying to fool the professor as it would take to write the paper. No intelligent thief would spend \$1000 on tools to steal a car which could be bought for \$500. It is usually fairly easy for me to recognize plagiarism as it tends to be poorly done. The people who *could* be skilled plagiarizers wouldn't *need* to.

What if the author's original idea is accidentally the same as one previously written on by a scholar? Again, plagiarism is judged primarily on the basis of intent. Most professors or readers will try to determine whether the writer deliberately copied the work of another author, and the overall pattern of your paper and its writing will usually suggest whether your repeat of someone else's ideas is accidental or through intent or negligence.

Some style manuals and university boards have attempted to make clinical definitions of plagiarism, such as the rule that plagiarism is 'three or more words' taken from a recognizable text. But overall making a case for plagiarism often involves an instinctual sense that the text has unethically borrowed a certain author's characteristic phrasing or original idea. As Supreme Court justice Potter Stewart said about pornography— "I know it when I see it"—plagiarism typically evokes an emotional feeling that something in the text is wrong.

## **8.7 Common Knowledge**

We should discuss the issue of common knowledge further. How do we know if something is commonly known, making its citation unnecessary? There is no clear boundary on what is considered common knowledge. In the chapter on secondary sources I took an image of literary theorist Stanley fish and drew a cartoon around it. Is this fair use, a derived image, common knowledge, or a citable image? Even experts on plagiarism might disagree.

Writers constantly use books, websites, and other sources of information in creating a paper. Does everything the writer learns from these sources need to be cited? Perhaps it would be better to see plagiarism as a spectrum rather than a black-and-white matter. The information you find and consult for your paper should be listed in your reference list, but it is taken for granted that papers are built and strengthened on the general background of knowledge you have accumulated. It is more likely that you have committed plagiarism if you have copied the specific sequence of ideas or sentence phrasing from an original source.

Generally, we consider information common knowledge if it is found in numerous places and known by the general public. Some experts say that a fact is common knowledge if it can be

found in three independent sources. Another criterion that is sometimes used is whether the information can be easily found in a general reference source, such as a dictionary. A good rule of thumb is to acknowledge ideas which are unlikely to be known among your peers who are also writing papers in your class.

Besides common knowledge, there are other types of information that do not require attribution. Anything you know from firsthand or life experience—your own observations—does not have to be documented. Likewise, any information you gain from your own lab experiments or surveys is exempt. Proverbs and popular expressions do not need to be cited, although the person or text that originated the source might be useful information.

Again, if you are not sure, assume that an idea is not common knowledge and cite the source. It is far easier to remove a citation than it is to hunt down a citation and try to add it later, or worse, to be accused of plagiarism. Some of the following examples have fictional data and are used only for illustration.

#### *Information Generally Considered Common Knowledge*

1. The sun is the closest star to our planet.
2. William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and died in 1616.
3. A genome is all the DNA in an organism, including its genes.
4. Most people do not want spam e-mail.

#### *Information which is Not Common Knowledge*

1. William Shakespeare's signature indicates that he was intelligent but possibly had arthritis in old age as suggested by his jagged letters.
2. When water passes through rocks that contain crystalized arsenic, the arsenic may leach into the water. This issue has been a particular problem in larger urban centers in Bangladesh.
3. A 2007 study revealed that Internet access is closely tied to income levels, with households earning \$75,000 or more having the highest rate of access.
4. Istanbul's water system pumps over 68 million gallons of water a day with its peak use falling and rising around prayer times.
5. Park Chung-Hee's assassination was probably not pre-planned, as his killer did not have an escape arranged and was caught trying to hail a taxi.

These opinions, facts, and theories are not likely to be known by a general audience and should be cited so that the reader can both distinguish your own ideas from those of others and find the source you took the information from to learn more about the issue.

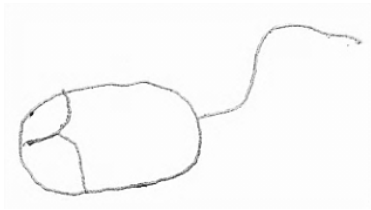
#### *Questionable Cases*

1. Park Chung-Hee was assassinated in 1979.
2. Japan's problems were exacerbated by the earthquake's proximity to nuclear power plants, a large source of electricity for a country with few natural energy sources.
3. It's said to be better to live on the edge of a roof than inside with a nagging wife.

The third sentence is biblical; as a service to your reader, give the reference (Prov. 25.24). Often citation, as with my "see x" example, is again done simply to help your reader.

This chapter will end with an admission that popular knowledge evolves. Someone in Korea knows who President Park was, but someone in Iceland probably doesn't and might appreciate the citation. Before the 2011 earthquakes in Japan its power plants were obscure knowledge, but are commonly known about now—in twenty years it may not be again, and will need to be cited. In 1979 a cited definition for e-mail would have been prudent writing, whereas in 2015 doing so would be insulting to the reader.

## 9 Editing



Substitute *damn* every time you're inclined to write *very*; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be. — Mark Twain

"Cut out all these exclamation points. An exclamation point is like laughing at your own joke." — F. Scott Fitzgerald

### 9.1 Diminishing Returns

Let's return to our 'holy trinity' of academic writing, planning, writing, and editing, and focus on the last component, editing. It also moves in mysterious ways. But editing is an enormously effective and underappreciated way of quickly improving your writing. Editing is the 'secret sauce' that can make a difference between a good paper and an excellent one. Even professional academics, novelists, and journalists benefit from editors—some have egos and especially need someone assertive to reign in their excesses.

Mediocre writers approach writing as a one-step process. One concept that I teach my students regularly is that of diminishing returns. This refers to the fact that output at a certain point does not always match input due to external factors. For example, if you have a bakery that makes 100 loaves in 8 hours, the bakery might make 200 loaves in 16 hours but not necessary 300 loaves in 24 hours. At a certain point output starts to fall because of other limitations such as supply or labor. Similarly, the fifth slice of pizza you eat will not be as tasty as the first—you will have progressively less enjoyment from the *same* pizza.

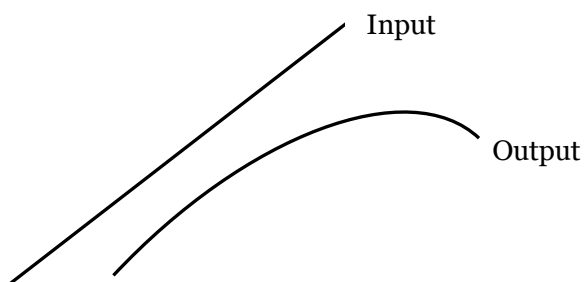


Fig. 3. Law of diminishing returns

Study and writing are much the same. Thus the first thing you should know about editing is to not do it immediately after you write. It is inefficient to edit on the same day because brains need rest. Unless you are writing something very short such as a few paragraphs you will not edit well. In other words, if you work on your paper for 6 hours straight you might achieve 6x, but working on your paper for 10 hours does not mean you will accomplish 10x. For the last few hours you are likely to have trouble concentrating. You might even accomplish 4x, forgetting or muddling together some of what you initially learned or planned.

Let me say it clearly: You are not more productive, nor do you deserve consideration or praise for your effort or "passion" because you worked all night nonstop on a task. No one cares

in professional life how long you spent writing a paper. The only thing which matters is how good the paper is. It is a far better use of time to break up a task into multiple days, or to simply learn to work more efficiently.

The other reason for not doing editing on the same day you write is due to one particular way our brains work. Computer hard drives have write and read heads, and in a way our minds do as well. When you write you are thinking like a writer. If you immediately go from the mental process of writing to editing, you will still be approaching the essay as a writer. You are not going to see the text in the same way you might as a reader. This is a reason for going to bed or doing something else and coming back to the paper fresh.

When you return to your paper after some time you will see all sorts of things that you did not see when you were too close to your text. What I find myself is that while writing I see the paper as a flat whole, but that when I read I can approach it as a sequential series of text in time. Because the reader does not know all of the parts of the paper upon beginning it, he or she experiences it differently from the writer. This is a mindset you need to simulate in yourself when inspecting your paper at the editing stage.

## 9.2 Two Levels of Editing

Now that we have defined *when* you should edit, let's discuss *how* to edit and divide it into two aspects or activities.

The first purpose for editing is obvious. Much of editing is fixing and correcting mistakes. You get up and go to your computer and read your work and find grammatical errors. You express wonderment (or disgust) at carelessly missing a period or misspelling a word, or having a vague pronoun reference, or seeing moved paragraphs that do not make sense or move fluidly, or thin or bad evidence. The first aspect of editing is repairing errors. This is an important and valid part of editing.

In my academic writing classes it is normally mandatory for my students to read their papers out loud while in small peer-editing groups. This is not only to build cohesion in the group by having everyone literally on the same page and acting as a unit, but also because for many people as they read their paper their ears notice things and make connections their eyes do not. Even though text should not be related to sound they do overlap somewhat—the aural parts of our brain may “see” things in the words and sentences that our eyes do not.

As a result, you might try reading your paper out loud to yourself—you can do it alone if you will be distracted by feeling foolish—and seeing if your ears catch mistakes you do not apprehend through reading. Other people have friends look over their papers and suggest corrections or changes. Nothing is wrong with this, though there is an ethical line between helping someone improve their paper and writing it for them. You want to be aware of when you are crossing that line so that the text remains “yours.”

But editing is more than fixing mistakes, whatever the means of doing it. The second level of editing is making the paper *better*. This is the secret sauce of quality editing: improving your text by moving around portions, tightening and bolstering arguments, and most importantly, clearing out dead wood.

The chief principle of improving your paper through editing is: **less is more**. If you can convey the same information in fewer sentences, pages, or paragraphs, that is superior writing. If you can convey *more* information in *less* text, that is even better. Such writing is more compact and more efficient.

I know how many undergraduates feel about this because I was once one as well: if the teacher assigned three pages I thought it was a long essay. If the next paper was five pages I was nearly in a panic—“How can anyone write that much! I need to write a great deal to get up to five pages.” Someone in that mode of thinking is extremely reluctant to take things *out* because it would make the paper shorter, the last thing they want. I can only promise that when you become



more experienced and begin to write for real-world purposes, you may have a different perspective. You will more typically have an editor or publisher who gives you a *maximum* length, such as 1000 words, rather than a minimum. Your thoughts will then be on how you can fit your work within the limit.

This is when editing is going to be more important in terms of reducing. Part of reducing is taking out unnecessary sentences, words, or paragraphs. When you look at a sentence and realize that it adds nothing or repeats other sentences—throw it away. If you read a sentence and realize that the second part repeats the first—throw the first away. If you have a sentence which seems irrelevant to the paper—throw it away. Editing often is less an intellectual problem and more an emotional one. You become proud or sentimental about what you wrote. If it adds nothing: throw it away.

A theoretical objection: is it always necessary to be so Spartan and obsessed with clarity? Must we always worship at the grave of Strunk & White? Aren't there situations where a writer might be deliberately opaque or wordy as a rhetorical device and build the reader's suspense into a revelation? Yes: when you are Picasso, you can break rules. Perhaps this is a cheeky thing to write. I'll simply state that *generally* clarity and concision are optimal goals, while conceding that very accomplished writers are capable of laying in some writerly flourishes to temporarily violate these standards. But these are exceptional situations for deliberate effect, not simply an excuse for sloppy writing.

### 9.3 Cutting Redundant Text

What often happens is that there is redundant information at the beginning of sentences because writers want to have a lofty or pompous tone, and this wastes space. This happens especially with thesis statements:

I firmly believe that  $x=y$ .

We can only conclude that  $x=y$ .

One can assume that generally  $x=y$ .

Sometimes this sort of metacommentary is necessary: "The authors surmise that..." But often such references to yourself are redundant. We know that it is you who believes  $x=y$ . Your name is on the paper. Your dog did not write it. This is again another reason to minimize the use of *I* in the paper, not because there is some war on the individual, but because the *I* is often a waste of space. Instead of saying, "I believe that it may be possibly assumed that children should not carry loaded weapons," "Children should not carry loaded weapons" says the same thing in fewer words. This is editing at its best, as the text is shorter and conveys the same information.

#### *Cheesy Dictionary Definitions*

How many papers have I read which begin with an unnecessary dictionary definition?

Abortion is, according to Merriam-Webster, "the termination of a pregnancy after, accompanied by, resulting in, or closely followed by the death of the embryo or fetus."

Thanks for clearing that up. The reader doesn't need a definition of abortion. Some students perhaps honestly believe that dictionary definitions are a good way of stating the issue. There may be situations where this is true, such as where the term is particularly obscure ("protein folding, according to science.com, is..."), but generally definitions scream "lazy student filling in space." Use dictionary quotations sparingly, or at least restrict their usage to terms or objects the reader is unlikely to know about.

### *Rhetorical Question Addiction*

Smartphones have become popular. Why are they popular? It is because they allow people to have the benefits of a computer without the size. What are these benefits? The benefit is the ability to receive and send information. What type of information do people send? Many young people are addicted to e-mail and text messages. Why are they addicted to....

Stop: shoot me now. Too many artificial speech-like questions in your paper start to sound like an annoying little boy who asks ‘why’ about everything. It also wastes space and halts the flow of your work. Cut these chatty questions and your writing will be cleaner and stronger—the reader can ordinarily be trusted to predict that if you state smartphones are popular you will follow up with a discussion of why or how. Personally, I average about one question mark per paper. The example above is intentionally silly, but I do see essays which begin like this:

Do you know what MSG is? MSG is an additive which is used to give extra flavor to food.

Let’s remove the clutter for a shorter and stronger sentence:  
MSG gives extra flavor to food when used as an additive.

### *Reducing Unnecessary Passives*

Just like the belief that there is something evil about occasional use of “I” in academic writing (there isn’t), the belief that the use of the passive in English is also evil (it isn’t) refuses to die. Passive constructions have been around for centuries, and have a legitimate usefulness in situations where the agent is unknown or irrelevant (“60ml of fluid is added to the solution”). That being said, the passive should not be a default usage in writing—it should be employed where needed. Too many passives make an English native-speaker tired, as the parts of the sentence need to be continually reversed in order to make sense. Passives are also an editing matter in that they tend to result in longer sentences than active ones do: rather than “the mouse is chased by the cat” you can write “the cat chases the mouse,” which has an equal and clearer meaning in fewer words.

### *Verbal as Opposed to ‘is’ Sentences*

Notice that my MSG example above does not have ‘is.’ My dissertation director did not like ‘is’ in papers and encouraged me to reduce them to make my sentences more efficient. Often this can be done by removing passive constructions, as we do with our mouse sentence. But you cannot rephrase *the grass is green* as *the grass hues itself greenly*. The sentence has more words and sounds ridiculous. The principle here is that you should only remove *is* if it makes the sentence clearer or more concise.

But instead of saying “the invention of smartphones is a good thing,” we could say “the invention of smartphones revolutionizes communications.” You can convert this noun statement into a verbal statement, and it will be a more interesting sentence. Or, instead of “the country is changing and this is unsettling for many people,” write “the country’s changes are unsettling for many people.” This again has a pithier tone with the same meaning.

### *Reducing Empty Words*

A related matter is the removing of excess qualifiers:

orange in color  
the field of medical science  
the game of backgammon

Readers already know that orange is a color. Unless these qualifiers have a specific function, throw them away: orange, medical science, backgammon.

The same applies to double synonyms, which are often bad clichés:

each and every  
the last and final  
one and only  
return again.

Remove these and your text will say the same thing in fewer words and less likely to bore the writer with clutter and clichés: every, the last, only, return.

As a last note, one technique I credit writer William Zinsser for is to scan over your text looking for qualifiers such as “somewhat,” “rather,” or “quite.” Often they add useful hints of tentativeness, but they can also betray weakness of conviction. Instead of “the sun was somewhat / rather / quite hot,” write “the sun was hot.” Taxes are high. Winter is cold. Opera is boring. The rumor is foolish. Stand behind your opinion rather than hiding behind the noncommittal pastel-wash of *somewhat*.

Similarly, omit the redundancy of *very* where it is obvious. The music was annoying. The class was long. The argument was heated. The scenery was pretty. Using *very* in these sentences before the adjective does not add to them. If you want a stronger meaning, use a stronger word: The music was irritating, the class was endless, the argument was violent, the scenery was gorgeous. Florid writers who lack discipline put *very* in front of every adjective to make it vivid, but often the word is wasteful or even illogical. Nothing can be “very unique.” It is unique or it is not, just as you can be pregnant or not. I admit to using search and replace in this book to find examples of ‘very,’ and leaving some and removing several.

This practice is as annoying as students who feel they are writing for a travel magazine and describe everything as *incredible*, *fantastic*, and *the most important*. A current disease I notice on Facebook is that every link to an article tells me that it is *amazing*. Not everything requires superlatives. When I assign papers on social issues, I usually receive openings such as “One of the most important issues nowadays is x.” If I have thirty papers, all about different social problems, they can’t possibly *all* be “the most important.” Some need to be simply *important*, and can get on with the business at hand.

I cannot resist stating two more personal irritations in writing. One is the throwaway phrase “as it were.” To me it is not only pretentious and nauseating, but has no meaning whatsoever. The other is ending a list with *etc.*, meaning “and so on”: “We need several ingredients: eggs, cheese, etc.” This looks sloppy and suggests that the reader is too lazy to think of further items—I would write “We need ingredients such as eggs and cheese” or replace *etc.* with “and other things.”

### *Editing Secondary Sources*

Your quotations and paraphrases of secondary sources can usually be reduced and made more lean and efficient by close editing.

Good editing of your quotations may involve putting variation into your formatting in order to avoid repetition. You might switch between citation phrasings (i.e. author-quote, quote-citation, split-quote) where applicable. Yet often the best course is to pare down the quotation into a key-word citation, removing excess words from the original while retaining the essential ingredient of the quotation. I need to be careful in admitting that key-word is my favorite style because it’s not always best, but often it’s the most efficient:

Weisman has complained about critics who “believe that because I have a certain setting that it necessarily comprises a key to the work” (Jagger 120).

Weisman has complained about critics who assume that the settings of his books are “key to the work” (Jagger 120).

Notice also that in my examples I avoid using ‘says’ or “according’ over and over until the reader wants to vomit. Here is a list for which I would like to thank Stephen Brown at UNLV:

List of synonyms for *according to*:

writes, argues, contends, states, notes, relates, describes, remarks, asserts, maintains, implies, suggests, holds, mentions, concludes, announces, declares, insists, observes, discusses, says, relays, finds, surmises, theorizes, ventures.

Note that these words are not only variation on “says” but also add slight nuances that you might wish to impart. *Argues*, *states* gives a strength of conviction; *notes*, *observes* hints at something more factual; *suggests*, *implies* gives the impression of a theory; *contends*, *maintains* intimates that the writer is not generally agreed with or accepted.

All of these communicate more than “according to” and give a subtle indication to the reader that the writer critically evaluates his or her sources. You need not agree with all of the sources in your paper equally, and using verbs to imply strong/weak agreement or doubt in the statement by you or the academic community will make what you have to say more authoritative without making your sentences longer. It may even allow you to delete a sentence by already signaling that, for example, most scholars are skeptical of a certain theory.

In editing a quotation you might reconsider whether it is even necessary to your paper. New writers tend to over-quote, either because of a lack of confidence in their ideas which causes them to cite in support of trivial or obvious points, or because they are lazy writers who string together quotes to fill up space. Very established senior writers in a field often have fairly few quotations; but at a student level, if your paper is mostly quotations linked with connectors, your readers will lose trust in you, and ask themselves why they are bothering reading your paper if you have nothing original to say. Why not just read the same thing on Wikipedia?

## 9.4 Academic Tone

In the discussion on evaluating sources, I noted that we can make fairly accurate guesses about the authority of a piece of text from its vocabulary and sentence complexity. In editing, and in writing generally, it is also possible to cultivate an academic tone by using more scholarly words, phrasings, and sentence formations. The goal is not to create marathon strings of dense clauses, but to masterfully choose from a wider set of sentence constructions and styles to communicate with precision and brevity. I don’t always succeed, but I do try to alternate long and short sentences in my writing—both for the reason I have just stated, but also for the simpler goal of having variety.

This attention to tone also applies at the word level. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Brown at UNLV, my own teacher in the past, for his advice on this additional editing practice, which is *upgrading your diction*.

Not everyone will agree with my example, but there was a certain American president who was addicted to the word “good” in public speeches while in office: “We met with the president of Germany. We had a good meeting. I knew they were good folks. The treaty is a good

one. The war is not good.” These are the sentences that a child speaks, and the written sentences which use *good* over and over are imprecise and monotonous, as is the repetitive use of the word *folks* (people, citizens, individuals). One technique in avoiding such tedious words is replacing them with better synonyms. There is nothing wrong with the word *good*, and I have used it throughout this book, but hopefully where it was succinct or there was a reason to be indefinite. It helped keep our sports cars thesis simple.

But where possible, try to replace *good* with more exact, academic, or interesting words. “We had an *effective* meeting. I knew they were *honest* people. The treaty will be *advantageous*. The war has been *damaging*.” Instead of: Overpopulation is a big problem. → a *serious, critical, dangerous, worsening, treatable, perennial* problem. Such words convey more information. As you pass through the text in your paper, look for those words which are flat or dull and replace them with better ones. This can be done with a thesaurus, or with Word’s built-in thesaurus function. For example, *nice* is boring and vague (unless you mean “a nice distinction,” a precise one). The clerk was *considerate, thoughtful, or obliging*.

The caution I give you is against using the longest and most pretentious word or sentence structure for its own sake. Mastering academic tone is a subtle skill, as overdoing it will make your tone come off as arrogant. The goal is precision. Imagine Martin Luther King saying “I have custody of a personal aspiration.” That has nowhere near the same force as “I have a dream.” It is good to raise the register of your style by using a more sophisticated synonym, but do not overdo it by consciously shoveling in eight-syllable words. This defeats the purpose of higher-level editing, which is to control the text length while maintaining clarity and content.

Second, as a practical matter, there is no crime in using an electronic dictionary to find replacements, but do be careful about false or partial synonyms. I remember a friend in Mexico asking me, “How much do you win at work?” She had typed in Spanish *ganar*, which translates to both *win* and *earn* in English. Similarly, I had someone write in a paper that she was going to meet her *paramour*. The dictionary gave this as a synonym for *boyfriend*. But *paramour* in English is an archaic, Shakespearean word that means a secret, illegal lover and has a sexual nuance—paramours are met in hotels and not movie theaters. A good dictionary will tell you these details.

The last danger that I warn about, for those obsessive types, is overdoing editing by cutting away the text until little remains, in some sort of exercise in personal abnegation. It is good to throw away redundant sentences or shorten unnecessary or vague text, but you do not want to edit endlessly until you have only a summary. If you remove important information from your text you might end up with only a shadow left of the original with none of its detail or flavor, leaving it flat and uninteresting.

## 9.5 Sexist Writing

Some of the new vocabulary terms developed in the 1980’s to combat sexist language now seem ridiculous—“waitperson” sounds silly, and “herstory” is largely now used ironically (Old English used *tale*; Greek *historia* (ιστορία) had nothing to do with *his* or maleness). Other unisex terms such as *flight attendant* and *actor* have become more normative but in essence deliberately obscure meaning.

Yet one aspect of writing which deserves consideration is the use of gender pronouns. Using *he* and *his* exclusively in examples and analogies was once acceptable but is now seen as marginalizing female readers. To be honest, my first response to reading Graff and Birkenstein’s *They Say / I Say* was irritation, as the authors seem to deliberately use female authors for most text samples, and whenever a fictive example of bad writing is presented, it is invariably done by a male. Yet while this sort of Political Correctness is nauseating to me and makes me feel that the book cares little what a man thinks, I can see this is how some women might feel reading books

with endless male sources and references. How can we avoid doing this in English, a language which requires choosing a male or female pronoun?

Grammarians have suggested the hated *s/he* or the use of plural pronouns (they, their) to refer to individuals without marking gender. Some Swedes now use *hen* as a gender-neutral singular. Using *one* (“One must remember to improve oneself”) repeatedly may work but can sound pretentious. Another solution is alternating between *he* and *she*, or switching to all plurals (“Students must remember their books”).

Without taking a polemical position, my recommendation is to treat the matter as an editing matter—how can we state our meaning mostly clearly and economically? Often you simply don’t need to choose a gender at all:

Everyone has a solution he or she thinks is best.  
Everyone has a preferred solution.

Where possible, you might use plurals (“They had to remember their responsibilities”), but in many situations the information can simply be phrased without referring to anyone: “Responsibilities needed to be remembered.” This may require a passive construction (“Theories were tested”) but the result may indeed be more concise while retaining the same content. Again, passives are usually avoided in order to make writing clearer and shorter—but if using them is in fact clearer and shorter, they serve a necessary function.

But if I might briefly sermonize here, to me it is more important to avoid being sexist in content than to obsess about grammar. While choosing secondary sources on the basis of gender is a questionable research strategy and may antagonize the reader, it is also not the 1950’s anymore where only men write scholarly books. Note that APA format does not indicate gender at all in its quoting and citing system, as only first initials are indicated (Mayer says; Mayer, B.F.) as opposed to MLA: (Brian Mayer says; Mayer, Brian F...). Thus APA avoids the possibility of the reader making gender-biased judgments, although there is still the problem that the author might choose books only written by one gender without anyone knowing, unless they recognize the works or last names.

## 9.6 Peer Editing

Peer editing means exactly that, submitting your draft to a small group of three or four people at your skill level who will read the work and comment on it. I sometimes assign peer editing in my writing classes, and there’s no law forbidding students from setting up private meetings to read each other’s work and make constructive criticism. The activity is a way of preparing for future career situations where the all-knowing professor isn’t there, as well as a way of showing students that the professor isn’t always all-knowing—sometimes a freshman’s opinion of an issue is equally valid, or he or she may have subject knowledge the instructor doesn’t. This does happen in those of my classes where students have discipline-specific topics.

*Constructive* criticism does not mean polite evasion (“Everything looks great!”) any more than it means cruelty: “Your paper is stupid and you’re fat and no one will ever marry you.” It means comments meant in kindness to improve your paper or your writing: “This part is good. I don’t understand this argument. Maybe this paragraph would be better here. I know a website that talks about this. I think this comma might be better here.”

If you are very shy about critiquing someone else’s work your group might consider making the evaluations through e-mail or a blog site, perhaps even anonymously. Where possible I try to let students choose their own groups so that they work with people they like and trust. I have no idea why, but in my experience between two and four people in a group works best. Any more than four, and people become nervous and feel they have to ‘perform,’ or worse, the group breaks up into sub-groups.

Group peer editing obviously also doesn't mean that the group writes the paper. When I worked in a campus writing center as a graduate student the most frustrating students were the ones who expected to drop off their essay and have us 'fix' it. The purpose of the writing center is to help the writer's skills, not to simply finish the paper—this act of cheating would defeat the purpose of the assignment, just as doing your friend's mathematics homework does not help her to learn. Similarly, the role of the peer editing group is to suggest changes for the writer to make, not to write the text itself. Again, my experience is that most people are instinctively aware when this line has been crossed; the paper no longer feels like something *you* made.

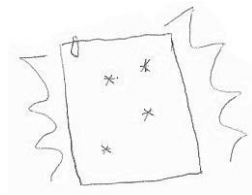
When peer editing works, it works wonderfully. When it doesn't—when students are so afraid of offending someone that they say nothing of value, or the session deteriorates into a shallow grammar-check without any discussion of content—it can be painful. For this reason I find that reading papers out loud is more effective as the shared experience bonds the group together. There really is something deep in us which loves being read to.

Readers also often notice that as they speak out the text their brains 'hear' mistakes that their eyes don't. English, as with most if not all languages, originated in speech and not in writing, and sometimes we know sentences aren't right because they don't 'sound' right. I've also noticed that peer editing someone else's paper improves your own writing by making you think about the rules you apply.

It is not absolutely necessary that your paper should be complete when you bring it to a peer edit session. In fact, sometimes when student papers are complete the writer feels the work is done and can be resistant to making changes in it. At the opposite extreme, if you have half a paragraph done your peer edit team can't help you very much. Perhaps the most productive peer editing is done when the paper is at a late stage but not quite finished.

I once had a graduate student who was so pleased with help he received during the peer edit process that he asked me if he should cite his fellow editors in his dissertation. This normally is not necessary. But it is common for authors to thank individuals for editing advice in their acknowledgement notes, something I have done myself in journal publications after particularly thoughtful comments meant to direct and strengthen my writing.

## 10 Extended Paper Sections



Rather than bundling these topics in earlier and overwhelming the reader, this chapter discusses more advanced structural elements. Beyond the short course paper, writers of longer projects such as an honors thesis or graduate thesis/dissertation will need to be familiar with their typical component sections, such as abstracts and literature reviews, or other marked portions. This chapter will look at these concepts and apply them to MLA and APA papers.

### *MLA*

A classic MLA paper for a humanities or literature subject consists of the following sections—the writer of course can substitute or delete sections as wished.

1. Title and abstract
2. Table of contents
3. Paper (sections may include Introduction; Literature Review; Discussion; Conclusions)
4. Acknowledgements
5. Works Cited
6. Tables and Appendices

### *APA*

A typical APA paper in a social sciences, science, or linguistics discipline will have the following sections, some of which I'll explain in this chapter. Again, these are common components of APA papers, but will vary according to the writer's purposes. APA does tend to be more standardized in having marked sections in a predictable sequence, and so the list is longer than for MLA.

1. Title page
2. Table of contents
3. Abstract
4. Introduction
5. Background information
6. Literature review
7. Methodology
8. Discussion
9. Conclusions
10. Acknowledgements
11. References
12. Appendix

### 10.1 Abstracts

An abstract is a brief summary of your paper, separate from your paper. Abstracts go before your essay text, usually on a separate sheet of paper. It should be a single paragraph in block format, without paragraph indentation in APA. The length depends on the program or journal to which



you are submitting, but abstracts are typically between 100 and 200 words. Abstracts generally do not have citations, as the reader may not have access to the full text of the paper.

In academic writing the abstract is important because many readers first read the abstract on your paper or online to determine if the entire article is worth reading. On internet websites the abstract may be shown with the option of paying for full access to the article for those without university access. You are essentially *selling* your paper by giving a brief overview of its main topics and arguments.

In business faculties and disciplines, the abstract often goes by the name “executive summary.” An executive summary may have bullet points or other non-sentence elements, and might be longer—a usual rule of thumb is 10% of the length of the paper. Otherwise an executive summary is not significantly different from an abstract, and for our purposes we will treat the two as the same thing. Naturally, in different disciplines abstract practice may vary, and a science or engineering abstract might describe the experiment process conducted or the applicability of the results obtained.

### Warning



The most common error in writing an abstract is to use it to replace your introduction. An abstract is a summary *attached* to the paper; it is not part of it.

As above, a common error in abstract writing is to believe it replaces the introduction. I have seen papers where the introduction lacks key information, because the writer believed that these details are already covered in the abstract, and so began the paper assuming the reader already knows the subject and key arguments. Remember that the abstract is *not* technically a part of your paper, but rather a brief synopsis preceding the paper and attached to it.

To use an analogy, before movies start at the theater you will see trailers for upcoming films. These trailers summarize some of the movie’s strengths in order to invite people to view them, but they aren’t part of the actual movie—they do not in any way replace portions of the film itself, and no movie would begin assuming its introduction is unnecessary because people have already seen the trailer.

The analogy is only useful up to a point, as a movie trailer would obviously not tell you the ending of the story, whereas a good abstract does summarize a paper’s key conclusions. Unfortunately, the second common error I see in abstract writing is vagueness. Some poor abstracts report the paper’s *structure* but not content: “The article has an introduction, literature review, discussion, and relevant conclusion section.” Thanks for that. Others give a cursory overview of the content without discussing the actual thesis or support given, or they try to ‘tease’ the reader by keeping its conclusions a secret.

Here is an abstract I wrote based on a paper I once wrote as an undergraduate myself about Japanese civilian internments in Canada during World War II:

Bitterness over atrocities committed by enemy nations during World War II led to resentment of immigrants from those countries, explaining the hostility toward Japanese citizens in Canada during the war. Yet were the Japanese interned for reasons of national security or merely to gratify a desire for revenge? The same question applies to the German inhabitants of Canada and Great Britain at that time. This paper seeks to examine the reasons why the German internments happened, and provides a historical overview and analysis.

This abstract is doable but not terribly inviting because it merely lists the paper's contents. It does not provide details on the main arguments or conclusions. There are few terms likely to be indexed by a search engine. A good abstract is like a good thesis statement. Do not try to build suspense by hiding your conclusions—state your point and indicate your arguments and findings:

Bitterness over atrocities committed by enemy nations during World War II led to resentment of immigrants from those countries, explaining the hostility toward Japanese citizens in Canada during the war. Yet were the Japanese interned for reasons of national security or merely to gratify a desire for revenge? The same question applies to the German inhabitants of Canada and Great Britain at that time. This paper seeks to examine the reasons why the German internments happened, and provides a historical overview and analysis. In brief, the period evidence suggests that whereas the Japanese internments were chiefly motivated by racism and xenophobia, the restraints placed on German Canadians stemmed from a perceived Nazi threat rather than social prejudice.

This abstract is not better because it is longer at 121 words, but because it explains the author's main argument and findings. A reader is more likely to become curious about the reasoning or evidence behind my arguments and to read the paper, even if he or she does not agree with my position.

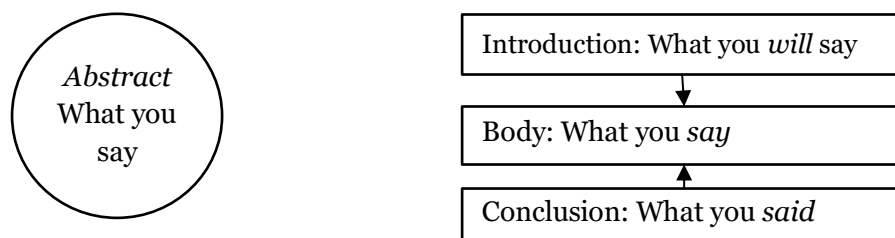
I have had students ask if it is good practice to copy and paste actual sentences from their papers into their abstracts—whether doing so is repetitive or in fact a form of plagiarism. I don't see any professional or ethical problem with using actual sentences, although in practice I tend to change them anyway to suit the needs and length limitations of the abstract.

### *Key Words*

Many writers will include a short addition to their abstract called "key words," where they list some important terms or topics in their paper for search engines or other indexes, usually to a maximum of five or seven. Indent and italicize *keywords* on the line below your abstract:

*Keywords:* European Union, euro, Germany, bailout crisis, economic reform

I have discussed earlier how introductions and conclusions differ in their temporal perspectives. Abstracts also tend to be non-sequential in a way introductions are not, as an abstract would visualize the entire paper as a whole, whereas an introduction anticipates and looks forward to the rest of the paper as a linear sequence. This may be easier if represented visually:



The following abstract example is for an article I published on a Mexican novel. The article was a variation on the "challenging conventional wisdom" move, where I disagreed with the majority critical interpretation of the novel. Notice how the abstract begins by briefly 1) stating the majority view; 2) declaring a thesis opposing that view and giving reasons and specifics; and 3)

stating how the result of this proven thesis helps to understand the novel. Whereas an introduction would clarify what the paper *will be* about, this abstract summarizes what the paper *is* about at a glance. The keywords in MLA are indented.

Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* has been read as archetype, capitalist critique, or modernist surrealism. Its religious interpretations have generally seen the novel as pessimistic and its characters damned. However, the text gains clarity and religious meaning once Comala is understood as a Christian purgatory with an indeterminate geography, physicality, and time, and we realize that Juan arrives already physically dead. Some of the novel's characters spiritually stagnate or decline, as does Pedro Páramo and Renteria, but others are purified and attain self-understanding, as do Dorotea and Juan. Climactically, Susana's death and salvation affirms the purgatorial aspect of Comala as Páramo's defeat results in his dissolution and regeneration for the town's inhabitants.

*Keywords:* Rulfo, Pedro Páramo, Christian purgatory, modernist literature, death literature

The next abstract is from a student's APA honors student paper on agricultural co-operatives. While I think it would be improved by specifying what the "fundamental ideas" are, it does give enough detail and information to give the reader a clear idea of what the paper will discuss when judging whether to access the full text or not.

This paper examines agricultural co-operatives as sustainable development models, in perspective of poverty alleviation models for small-scale farmers in Asia. My analysis first of all concentrates on mapping out the situation of poverty and hunger in Asia, particularly in rural livelihoods where most farmers are small-scale holders, in a way that this paper intends to highlight importance of poverty alleviation focused in rural area and small-scaled famers. In this context, introduced are co-operatives principles and a wide array of co-operatives forms. It gives fundamental ideas and concepts of co-operatives and how it can make contribution to sustainable development. This paper, furthermore, scrutinizes agriculture cooperative in the context of Asia and case studies, thereby giving its empirical impacts on small-scale farmers.

*Keywords:* poverty and hunger in Asia, rural livelihoods, co-operatives, agricultural co-operatives

## Tip



It doesn't matter if you write your abstract / introduction / body / conclusion first / last / in your underwear. Learn what order works best for you.

As a last point, I'll again emphasize that abstracts are different from introductions in another key aspect, which is the writing sequence. Most people write their introductions first, before writing the body sections and conclusion, and their abstracts last. But of course there is no rule for either. For most people the paper will change as they write it, making their abstract draft useless, but for others writing the abstract might help to solidify ideas.

## 10.2 Tables of Contents

Tables of Contents are not compulsory in APA or MLA, and may be a little silly in a three-page paper. My experience is that somewhere around 10-15 pages they begin to become useful, and Hanyang University does require them in graduate level theses and dissertations.

For some reason abstracts and references tend not to be counted in TOCs, although I'm not aware of any rule. Here is an APA example. Place the TOC on a separate sheet of paper.

AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES	2
<b>Table of Contents</b>	
Abstract .....	3
1. Introduction . . . . .	4
2. Literature Review .....	5
3. Methodological Approach.....	6
4. General Analysis .....	6
5. Case Studies ... ..	7
5.1 FAO case in Northeastern Thailand.....	7
5.2 IFAD case in Mid-Western Nepal.....	8
6. Conclusions .....	9
References .....	10

Notice that the student made the table of contents manually, which means typing *dot dot dot dot* over and over and still getting a rough right edge of the table. It is worthwhile learning how to make headings in Microsoft Word and allowing the program to make a table of contents for you. This also allows you to move around portions of your paper easily and not have to continually recalculate and change your page numbers.

## 10.3 Literature Review

A lit review answers this question: What sources do I need to read to gain a basic understanding of this subject or to know about the major opinions on it? It is less typical in humanities papers, and so my discussion and example will be an APA one for the social sciences.

A literature review is simply a short overview of books and sources that other people have written on the subject, which you include to frame your ideas within the community of opinions and texts on the field, but also to indicate to your reader where they might go to learn more. It typically comes near the beginning of the essay before the general discussion. It does not list *every* source in your reference list, only those which you feel are important for a general understanding of your subject. There may be minor statistical or other sources in your reference list which are not essential to this task.

A literature review can be a free-standing paper on its own, but it ordinarily forms a small section of a few paragraphs or a page in a research thesis. To me a good rule of thumb is that your literature review should be about 10-20% of the length of your paper. In a very short essay a paragraph might be enough; in a full thesis you might need four pages. To me anything beyond that is starting to distract from the flow of your paper.

A brief literature review can be simply a summary of the sources, but a more useful one has some sort of organizational pattern or point. Your review might be broken down into different major schools of thought if the subject is controversial, or you might have a direct chronological progression from old to new sources. For example, in a paper on the internet you might point out major works written on the subject in the last twenty years. Another common breakdown is to move from general works to more specific sources focused on your paper's topics.

Literature reviews are generally objective. They indicate the source and give a brief summary of the major arguments or topics, and try to place the source within a continuum of ideas. You might indicate that certain works are more influential or relevant to your subject, but a literature review does not mean that the reader wants you to give your personal opinion on whether you liked the book. These judgments will come later in your paper when you deal with the issue and your positions in more detail.

Two common errors I see for some reason in Literature Reviews is to either confuse the Lit Review with a background section, so that the writer includes far too much historical detail about the subject, or to have too extensive quotation from the sources. The lit review is not the place to discuss your paper's subject or to use your sources to support its argument—it is where you briefly review the leading scholarly viewpoints on the subject so that the reader can refer to these sources or at least have a basic idea of the variety of ideas on the subject.

Part of the lit review may even reference academics who do not agree with your paper's thesis. It is still important that you do this so that the reader can place your arguments in context and understand the nature and background of the opposing ideas which you are arguing against. Here is a literature review for a thesis about natural resources in Mongolia:

### **Literature Review**

The research in this thesis strongly relies on literature which considers how economic growth could be related with the natural resource situation of a country.

S. V. Ciriacy rejects the view that the importance of natural resources for economic growth is decreasing. He also raises the following question: Does the income share which natural resources account for as a percentage of economic growth decrease? His answer was that it is impossible to evaluate the income share because "the market system furnishes prices only incompletely or not at all" (Ciriacy, 1969). In spite of this controversial argument, he concluded that mineral and energy sources contribute to the growth of a domestic economy.

However, the research of Jung Gun-O came to different results regarding this correlation (Jung, Byun & Hwang, 2004). They examined the relationship between natural resources, corruption of the state, and economic growth. Their research set out with examining each country of the world regarding their propensity to develop what is known as Dutch Disease. The conclusion they reached is that as countries have vast resources, the level of corruption becomes intense which eventually has a negative impact on economic growth in developed countries as well as in developing countries.

Jaime Florcruz (2011) uses the term, "Wolf Economy" in regard to Mongolia. It means that the Mongolian economy is a new type of power ready to make a pounce upon the world economy. He argued that one strategy to enhance socioeconomic growth of this country is the exploitation of its vast natural resources such as rich deposits of copper, coal, iron, gold, and other natural resources. He also mentioned one western researcher who is thoroughly acquainted with Mongolia and China.

## 10.4 Methodology & Discussion

The methodology section is another optional section within a thesis project, and again as this is normally done in APA science/social science papers and not humanities, my example will be an international relations one. A methodology section indicates the type of argumentation or evidence process the paper intends to use—how the discussion will be conducted. Typical methodologies are qualitative methodologies, ones which rely on abstract reasoning and examples, and quantitative ones, which emphasize data and statistics. The following emphasizes case studies in a qualitative approach:

In my thesis I concentrate on 'Agricultural co-operatives' as a sustainable solution to address hunger and food security problem, in a way that I intend to explore 'improving rural livelihoods focused on small-scale farmers.' To begin with, I give an overview over co-operatives. Based on this, I explore agriculture co-operatives in terms of its principles, forms, history and status in Asia, referring to a multitude of other dissertations on co-operatives and materials published by international co-operatives alliance (ICA). After all, I rely on qualitative methods, looking over relevant cases from FAO and IFAD in a way that it effectively examines the empirical impacts of agricultural cooperatives on small-scale farmers and finding its potential constraints and problems faced by agricultural co-operatives in Asia region.

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While the background information and lit review portions of papers are important, again, they should not take over the essay. As we discussed early in the book, if we conceive of a paper as a 'sandwich,' allowing your establishing sections to get out of hand will leave you with an nearly all-bread sandwich with little argumentative content. By one-third into your paper, page 8 or so of a 20-page paper, you should be getting into your main discussion section. "Discussion" may be explicitly marked as a meta-reference or simply assumed. You might also choose a different term, such as "Case Study." "Body" is vague and does not tell the reader very much.

GLOBAL WARMING

7

### Discussion

A key reason why CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by human activity is not the main cause of global warming is because temperature change is a natural phenomenon and changes in temperature circulate. It is proved by the existence of a medieval warm period and little ice age (Baliunas & Soon, 2001). The medieval warm period was from the ninth to thirteenth centuries in medieval era, and in this period, the average temperature was much higher than now (Singer & Avery, 2007). Many famous European works of architecture and churches were built during this medieval warm period, which indicates that they had enough food and labor force to conduct such projects (Lamb, 1995). Throughout this period, despite the warmer climate, there were no drastic changes in ecosystem, or the extinction of species as the recent scholars have argued. After this period, as a circulation of climate change, there was 'the little ice age.' From the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries, there was a period of cooling starting from Europe to all over the world, and it demonstrates unpredictable climate change (Fagan, 2000).

This section will usually be followed by a conclusion one, although there could be a "Policy Recommendations" heading or something similar.

## 10.5 Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement sections are a little silly in a short course paper for a professor's course, but are often found in longer works such as graduate theses and dissertations, or published journal or conference articles. In monographs (books) there might be a separate page for this purpose. In papers the acknowledgement section is marked with a header and comes at the end of the conclusion section (i.e. the end of the paper) on the same page—but *before* your reference or appendix sections, if any.

There are few rules regarding acknowledgement sections, as not even the unsmiling MLA and APA rule-makers are petty enough to tell writers the correct way to thank someone they love. Assuming you write grammatical sentences, you may write what you wish—though I do notice that in APA and social science/science disciplines the phrasing is usually third person (“The authors would like to thank x for the many kindnesses shown”). The only advice I urge is to keep acknowledgement sections *short*—in a book or dissertation you are free to thank your spouse, mother, dog, and barber at length, but in a published article where printed space is costly it will seem flippant to go over three lines or so. Thank your readers, editors, professors, or the institution which gave you funding, and be done.

## 10.6 Section Headings

Do you need to explicitly have section headings in a longer paper, or can your paper divisions be assumed by the reader? In the APA example below, is the “Case Study” heading necessary?

BANKING REFORM	4
Essentially, banking reform needs to be implemented at a multinational level if it is to be effective.	
<b>Case Study</b>	
While the modern banking system is in fact centuries old, most literature until the Eighteenth century still focused on the practice of usury. Croydon (1802)...	

Or can the paper just continue to the case study?

BANKING REFORM	4
Essentially, banking reform needs to be implemented at a multinational level if it is to be effective.	
While the modern banking system is in fact centuries old, most literature until the Eighteenth century still focused on the practice of usury. Croydon (1802)...	

The answer is that there is no answer—the writer may do either; you may feel that it is important to give the reader a meta-comment indicating a switch in the paper's direction, or you may decide that the transition is clear and a heading will waste space. The ‘culture’ of APA style papers is to use more explicit headings, and for MLA to use fewer ones, but much of this is according to the

writer's tastes. In both MLA and APA there are a few paper divisions which obviously must be marked with explicit headers—the reader of course needs you to label your title, abstract, acknowledgement, and reference sections—but others are frequently optional, or guided by customs and practices within your subject field. Technical and scientific papers tend to have a large number of nested headings to mark off complex sets of tests, tables, and results, and other fields prefer more uninterrupted text to allow lengthy discussions.

### *MLA Headings*

If you wish to use explicit MLA headings, usually they are numbered, so that top-level headings have one number (1, 2, 3) and second-level headings have two (1.1, 1.2, 1.3), and third have three (1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3) and so on. The formatting is less strict than APA but is conventionally as follows:

**Level 1 Heading: Bold, Left Justify, Initial Caps, One Digit**

*Level 2 Heading: Italics, left justify, two digits*

**Level 3 Heading: Bold, centered, three digits**

## **1. The Crusades**

### *1.1 Theology and practice*

#### 1.1.2 Saladin and negotiations

### *APA Headings*

APA *always* marks titles, abstracts, and references with explicit headings, and usually does so with literature reviews, discussion, and conclusion sections. Other sections can be marked as you wish, such as Case Study 1: Finland, so long as the reader understands them.

Introduction sections should not be marked with a heading, according to APA 6, as they are obvious, but writers seem to insist on using them anyway—it will be interesting to see if APA style in future gives up and permits them. You can still list an introduction in your table of contents if you wish.

If you use them, APA's headings are as follows:

**Title or Level 1 Heading is Centered and Boldface**

**Level 2 Heading is Left-Justified and Boldface**

**Level 3 heading is indented and boldface.** Continue text on the same line. Notice that only the first word is capitalized.

APA directs that writers not put numbers in front of section headings: **3. Literature Review**—although again sometimes writers do anyway, particularly when there is an extensive set of multiple-level headings to keep clear.

You do not need to indent the first paragraph after a new section heading.

## **10.7 Beyond the Class Paper**

While this book discusses writing at the academic level broadly, mostly we're covering what would be more accurately called undergraduate or seminar papers, shorter papers which usually have some sort of prompt from the professor and which are written for the professor's class for course credit. Though later we'll give some attention to honors-level thesis papers, and occasional



references to graduate-level thesis papers, this is perhaps a good place to clarify how these writing genres differ and how they might change one's planning.

Hayot argues that one of the problems with graduate programs as currently structured is that they have little coursework in *how* to write graduate and thesis papers, and almost never teach students how to differentiate between the course papers they write and their future work of writing scholarly publications and monographs (books).

My excuse here is that I don't want to confuse undergraduate or second-language users of English by throwing another set of expectations at them, and so I've generally confined the discussion in this book to class papers, but it might be useful to look at other types of scholarly writing done after graduation. I should also make a note on terminology, as the usage of *thesis* and *dissertation* can vary. Generally in North America a 'thesis' is a shorter paper of 20-100 pages for masters or honors undergraduate programs, and a 'dissertation' is a much longer work for a doctorate degree; typically in the UK and Europe the terms are reversed.

### *Journal Publications*

When professors or other academics talk about 'articles' or 'pubs,' they mean short papers of anywhere from 3-4 to 30 pages on a subject in their field. These articles tend to be at a much higher level of subject knowledge as they are intended for other specialists, and often have what Hayot would call much higher 'citation density': they have extensive and deep citation of evidence and arguments made. Such articles are usually printed physically or online for specialized academic journals, often subsidized by universities or other foundations.

Three typical problems with turning a course paper into a journal article

1. Raising the level of discourse and citation density
2. Dealing with rejection
3. Establishing a 'rationale' for the journal article

A common question advanced students sometimes have is whether they might rework an especially good course paper into a publishable article. It does happen, but the two are not necessarily the same. The course paper will likely need extensive revision to bring its quality and level of discourse up to a much higher level, as it is being written for a professional community of peers who will expect new and original arguments; it will probably need to be reformatted to the journal's in-house typographic and citation standards; it will usually go through several stages of revision from journal editors and readers.

Psychologically, writing academic articles for journals can be wearying. It is discouraging to have an article which you have worked long hours on be rejected, and reviewers vary on how much tact or helpful advice they give. I have had articles take numerous submissions to different journals over years before they were accepted. Unless you just happen to be very lucky or fantastically talented, *beware* of a journal which accepts your paper immediately with no questions asked. Though this may appeal to a writer's vanity, the journal may be less legit, or may later demand large sums of money to subsidize publication—telling you that, in effect, *everything* submitted to the journal is accepted whether it is groundbreaking or garbage.

It is fairly common in Korea for journals to ask for payment for journal publications. I know some foreign professors disapprove of this, but the payments usually aren't high—\$2-300 is not unreasonable—and the payments may help enable the articles to be republished on an open-access website. It is when the payments jump into much higher amounts that you ought to be suspicious that the 'journal' is little more than a money-making venture. A good basic rule is to submit to journals in the Thomson-Reuters indexes for arts & humanities (A&HCI) or sciences (SCI), or the Korean National Research Foundation index (NRF), which are more likely to be honest and reputable.

Another useful point from Hayot is that sometimes the rationale for a course paper doesn't translate well into a publication. The professor might ask you to compare two novels studied in the course, for example: How do *Hard Times* and *The Grapes of Wrath* critique economic systems? But if you submit such a paper, even an excellent one, to an academic journal they may ask you: What in the world is the connection between these two random novels? What seemed obvious within the context of the course makes little sense outside it, and you will need to think about whether it is realistically possible to justify comparing the two novels. The necessity of answering the "who cares" question is considerably more pressing when money and journal reputation is involved than it is in a course paper.

### *Conference Articles*

Scholars or experts in many fields may meet regularly—such as at an annual conference convention—to discuss new findings and to read papers to each other. Some people find them as pleasurable as visiting a dentist, but others do enjoy them. A scholar who has been allotted a session to read his or her paper will typically have a 20-50 minute block for reading, presenting, and questions. Many academics now create a more speech-like presentation with PowerPoint, but some will simply read their paper.

These papers will probably be shorter than journal articles (as they need to be read in real time), and with fewer citations, as the audience can't easily distinguish quotes. Often scholars will read an early draft of an article they are working on, hoping that people will give helpful advice or point them to sources. The conference paper may eventually end up, after a great deal of finishing, as a printed paper in a conference proceedings or in a conventional journal. It may be easier to transition a course paper into a journal article *via* a conference, assuming the participants have a welcoming atmosphere for new graduates. I've been to some that don't.

### *Monographs (books)*

Professors may also write extended books on a research subject, or at least a chapter in one (which may also be a revised article). These go through the normal stages of submission to publishers, reader reports, and revisions. Books aren't necessarily the same as graduate theses/dissertations, as the thesis may be more specialized and directed at the graduate's individual department and committee than a publishable book is. Oddly, in Korean academia monographs are not valued highly by university departments in comparison to journal articles—sadly, this is partly the consequence of too many professors paying vanity publishers to print questionable books with little editing or fact-checking. Yet in some university cultures in the west monographs are essential when promotion decisions are being made.

To reference Hayot one last time, perhaps it's best to design a masters or doctoral thesis as a book, imagining and predicting a larger audience and scope. Many committees will be supportive of a dissertation which has greater potential of publication anyway—published books from former students make your committee members and department look good. Or, you might envision your dissertation as a collection of related chapters on a particular problem or theme. This is what I did myself, envisioning my dissertation as a group of twelve journal articles which I wrote for the project. This made planning easier, and also allowed me to fairly easily revise many of the twelve sections into actual publishable articles.

Publishing a book requires the patience of Job. I began submitting proposals for my first book in 2011 and only saw it go into print in 2015, after some 68 rejections and months of drafts, permissions and clearances, and discussions on art and typography. This may be a reason why monographs are popular in the humanities, which moves slowly, and rarer in scientific fields—books are uncommon in Computer Science, where by the time the book comes out the information would be obsolete. Much of the new findings in this discipline appear in conference proceedings instead.

## 11 Thesis Projects and Defenses



### 11.1 Why a Research Thesis?

One of the graduation requirements for many Korean undergraduate or graduate students, as well as in the west, is to write research thesis of about 15-60 pages on a topic of their own choice related to their majors. Doctoral dissertations may run upward from 200-500 pages. All of the skills and theory discussed so far related to argumentation, research, and editing are entirely applicable to this project.

To repeat some of what I discussed in chapter 1, writing a short thesis as an undergraduate will improve your subject knowledge but will also cultivate your ability to work independently as you plan and reason out your ideas and rhetorical strategies. These are useful skills for your future career, especially one which requires individual problem solving, research, or written communication. A business paper about a certain company could be advantageous when seeking a job with that company.

Writing a thesis will also help you in being admitted to graduate school, as many programs require a writing sample. Additionally, the skills you develop will be useful there. Perhaps you have noticed a progression from high school to university—while you were told what to do in high school and had fewer choices, as an undergraduate you have increasing freedom to pursue courses or subjects that interest you. This will continue if you choose graduate work, where your professors will become less like teachers and more like mentors and peers guiding you as you take growing responsibility for your own research.

In some cases, where the thesis is especially strong, you may even have an advisor who is willing to work with you toward its revision and publication as a journal article. Journals usually publish articles by established academics, but often they try to encourage new and young writers in their discipline. Because it is unusual for an undergraduate to be published it is an especially prestigious accomplishment to include on a resume or graduate school application. Journal articles in the humanities range widely from 15-25 pages, a good match in length to an honors thesis.

### 11.2 Organizing a Committee

Different university programs have different requirements, but the most typical practice is to have students work with an advisor and committee toward an oral defense of the thesis. Hanyang University employs a fairly common process of having an advisor and 3-4 committee members, depending on whether the student is at the masters or doctoral level.

An advisor (sometimes called a director) is a professor or faculty member who helps guide you in researching and writing your thesis. This person will normally help you define your topic and suggest textual sources or lines of argumentation. Writing your thesis will be a process of handing in drafts, receiving comments, and then improving the paper for the next draft. Your advisor will also help you in editing or at least refining the structure of your paper. Usually students choose their advisor and it is important to select someone you like who has similar academic interests in your subject.

The committee is a small group of other professors who are impartial to you. Their function is to read your thesis and make suggestions, but primarily they serve as judges in your defense—often one of them is an outside member, meaning he or she is not in your department and can bring a fresh (and often more impartial) perspective. When your advisor feels that your paper is ready, the defense is a meeting with your advisor and the members, who listen to you present your findings and make a decision on whether your thesis is acceptable or requires some improvement. Oral defenses are thus a test not only of your paper but also your communication skills in being able to explain and justify your arguments.

I know of horror stories of lazy or incompetent advisors who agree to supervise a student and then fail to read drafts or offer constructive help—there are rude and abusive advisors who ask students to wash cars and do menial chores, and professors who give conflicting and inconsistent directions. Choose an advisor that you *like*, someone with whom you have a friendly working relationship, even if their expertise is not exactly in your interest area. I have never “fired” an advisor or committee member, but I know fellow students who have dropped entire committees in exasperation and chosen different people.

But more commonly, my experience supervising or working with thesis candidates is that they have problems with motivating themselves to work independently. University students, particularly Korean students who have typically been told what to do throughout their academic lives, find choosing their own subject and advisor difficult—sometimes as a result departments will suggest or even assign faculty members. I most commonly hear gripes and frustrated comments from other professors about students who cannot decide on a topic and flit from idea to half-baked idea, or who lack the self-discipline to work within deadlines.

How can you combat this as a student? Everyone has their own ways to accomplish tasks, but my advice is to see the project realistically as it is: a short paper, and not a masterpiece or a judgment of your life. Ideally, your thesis is a beginning to your professional career and not its summation. Once you realize this you may feel freer to begin and to experiment. When I was writing my master’s thesis, one of my committee members told me, “you need to stop reading and just *write* the damn thing!” I cannot give better advice on this point. I’ve seen gifted students drop out of their programs because they were such perfectionists that their expectations for themselves stressed them out. It is those students who have lower grades who nevertheless have practical perseverance who are more likely to finish their projects.

The process overall requires some commitment to a schedule. In writing my thesis I put a calendar on my desk next to my computer with dates for when I would have the outline done, or chapter 1 done, or the first draft done, and so on. I have already discussed at length the importance of having a good outline and a clear thesis statement, which will help keep you focused. At some point you need to stop worrying about whether your arguments or choice of subject is the best one and commit to a course of action that is good enough for your present needs—*write the paper*.

### 11.3 The Research Thesis

If you are a freshman or beginning grad student, your thesis year seems a long way away. On the other hand, if you become one of the lucky few to already have an idea of what you want to write about and a slowly evolving plan for your thesis, you will be way ahead of everyone else in the program. I will never understand the Korean culture of doing everything at the last second. How much stomach acid you would save yourself by planning ahead. While everyone else is panicking and whining about how hard it is, you can sit back and say, “It’s done.”

These are things I’ve learned as an occasional committee member on senior thesis projects that will make everyone happier and your project easier to write and better.

1. Take responsibility for the thesis. Sail your own boat. Western professors hate students who need to be constantly nagged to do everything. If you don't write your thesis, you don't graduate, but the professors still get paid. You have to *want* to do this.
2. Choose people you like. Writing a thesis is a sort of initiation toward viewing your professor as less of an all-knowing boss and as more of a peer. Thus you need to develop some confidence in your own decisions. Find a professor you *like* and have a good chemistry with who is interested in your subject.
3. Read. *Read. Read.* Go to the library and find real books. Go to the library website and do research on academic articles. Do surveys or conduct research. Find out everything you can about your subject.
4. However: set yourself a date when you change focus from reading to writing. Write on your calendar, for example, June 1: *Stop reading*. You may still need to read some source your advisor gives you, but set a date when you begin to write. You can spend the rest of your life reading, but you need to eventually put a stop to it or you will never finish.
5. Write an outline to keep yourself on track. I can often tell those writers who scribble a few notes before you begin a paper, or even work from memory. If you think you can write a 17-page plus paper and keep track of everything you need to write in your head, save yourself the grief and shoot yourself now. You need a plan to refer to so that you aren't staring at a computer screen unsure as to what to do. This is the worst feeling in the world.
6. Keep the lines of communication open. Nothing drives your advisor or committee members insane like having them write you e-mails that you ignore because you're embarrassed that you haven't done anything. If you get an e-mail or text message, *answer it*. Your advisor will be happier if you write that you spent the break drinking soju and playing StarCraft than if you simply hide. Your advisor's job is to *help you*. If you're having trouble, ask.
7. Get in your first draft early to each member. Your committee members can make suggestions and help you improve it. Having a paper that isn't perfect is better than nothing. Giving your members papers on the last day makes them annoyed—picking your committee members on the last day makes them *really* annoyed. Irritating your committee during exam days is stupid. If you hand in your draft a week early—We're already impressed and on your side.
8. Plan your defense. To me students typically overdo their presentations with a PowerPoint techno-extravaganza. Keep it short and to the point, and consider using Prezi or no computer aids at all. The best thesis defenses have been held in professors' offices with just the student talking about his or her ideas. Your main concern should be presenting a good paper and being able to respond quickly, coolly, and knowledgeably to difficult or seemingly hostile questions. That's what we're testing you for.
9. If you pass, congratulations. You've done something difficult, but it's yours for the rest of your life. It will also be an excellent writing sample for you if you look for a job or someday decide to go to graduate school.

## 11.4 Defending Your Thesis

Perhaps the dumbest advice given to defense presenters is "Don't be nervous; everyone does this." That usually does not help. Nervousness is not controlled by a switch we can flip. There are ways to minimize stress such as exercise, breathing drills, or small amounts of alcohol (really). As with writing your paper, coffee and caffeinated drinks may either help or hurt you. Yet the best means of lessening anxiety is to be well-prepared.

Some presenters at academic conferences read their actual papers or short versions of such, and older audiences are accustomed to this traditional style. Its downside is that reading your paper makes eye contact with the audience difficult, and is often tedious. The alternative is to take the basic ideas from your paper along with selected graphics or pieces of text and create a visual presentation. If this is your strategy, work out a structure which the audience can easily follow, and be prepared in case time runs short and you need to quickly summarize your points.

Thesis students invariably use PowerPoint or similar software programs to present visuals or slides in their defenses. The following is some guidance for improving your defense visuals. As usual, this advice is not tablets carried by Moses but again only my suggestions based on past experience and on materials given to my Communication Skills students.

**Tip**

I don't know why some people distribute photocopy handouts of their PowerPoints. *No one* ever reads them. If you must, make a brief summary handout of the points you cover with at most a few graphs.

*A PowerPoint Presentation is Optional*

Again, despite the Korean love affair for PowerPoints, you don't actually *have* to do one. You could simply pass out a handout summarizing the main arguments and topics of your thesis and sit down and explain your findings to the committee, taking questions at the end. Many professors actually prefer this sort of intimacy and immediacy.

*Control Body Language*

A presentation with fantastic content, but where your committee can't hear you or you look careless or unmotivated, is a failure. Many cultures have different attitudes towards eye contact—but if possible, try to interact with your committee and address them without fidgeting, wiggling, or looking at the clock. Nothing looks more unprofessional than a presenter who mutters “any questions” at the end and then clenches up as though avoiding a chair thrown at them—this body language tells your committee that you lack confidence in your understanding of the subject.

*Less is More*

In the years that I've sat on thesis defenses, not once did one of us say afterwards, “That was really good, but it would be better if it was ten minutes *longer*.” Do not have extensive material which is not in your thesis. Shoot for 15-20 minutes for your presentation if you are not given a prescribed time space—some professors will even set timers on their smartphones and set a hard time limit. Have a brief presentation and save your energies for the question and answer period which will follow—this for many professors is the more interesting part anyway.

*Tell People the Structure*

A thesis defense isn't an infomercial; it's a serious academic performance. Try to avoid surprising the audience for dramatic effect. As your material is complex and covers various sub-subjects, consider having a table of contents at the beginning of your presentation so that the audience knows exactly what the sequence of topics is, and remind your audience throughout the presentation of where they are in the sequence. Make your table of contents short with three or four main sections so that the audience doesn't forget it all.

### *Use Simple Visuals*

One thing you will notice as you watch Al Gore's or Steve Jobs' presentations is that most of the slides have no text on them; they are visuals. There is a mix of photographs, diagrams, data graphs and added video clips. When they do use a slide with text on it, there is very little text compared to the typical text-overloaded corporate presentation slide. Simple slides allow the eyes of the committee to stay where they should be, on *you*—if the audience is reading long sections of text, they may legitimately begin to wonder why you are there at all.

### *Use Contrasting Colors*

If you want your audience to be able to see what you have on the slide, there needs to be a lot of contrast between the text color and the background color. Don't think that just because the text looks fine on your computer screen that it will look fine when projected. Most projectors make colors duller than they appear on a screen. If in doubt: white text on a black background never goes wrong.

### *Use Big Fonts*

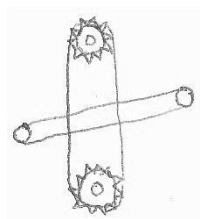
When deciding what font size to use in your presentation, make sure it is big enough so that the audience can read it. I usually find that any font size less than 24 point is too small to be reasonably read, and if your committee members are older and have weaker vision, they will become frustrated. I would prefer to see most text at a 28 or 32 point size, with titles being 36 to 44 point size. The only reason I would use a font less than 24 point is when adding explanatory text to a graph or diagram, where you could use a 20 point font size. Using a large font also helps force you to use fewer words.

### *Do not Put all your References on the Last Slide!*

Don't show a useless "List of references" slide at the end for one second just to show that you have one. This is bad practice for two reasons: 1) Your audience has no time to read the references, and 2) The print will be too small to read. If you wish to include references, put them on the same slide as the pictures or information they refer to. People like me often take photos of the slides for later reference (I use an actual digital camera rather than a smartphone, as presenters sometimes find the clicking sounds a nuisance).

Because students are human, they tend to focus on the oral defense as a source of stress, believing that if their presentation is imperfect they will not be passed. It is unlikely that your advisor will have allowed you to proceed to the defense stage in the first place if he or she believes that your thesis is a piece of trash or is not finished, though I have seen students who were not ready insist on a defense to meet a graduation deadline—typically a very bad idea. I have seen angry faculty walk out of a train-wreck defense and the meeting end in tears. But these scenes are rare; professors usually have some sympathy for students defending because they have had the same experience multiple times themselves. Your priority ought to be the thesis and not its defense. If your thesis is excellent the defense will be fairly perfunctory, as the members are already convinced that your paper is a good one.

## 12 Grammar and Language Interference



It is true that grammarians have the wildest parties, and there is nothing which attracts women like someone who knows the difference between *further* and *farther*.

To be serious, few people really enjoy studying grammar, and English is a particularly torturous language. It is fairly easy to learn the basics of English, as there is a minimum of conjugations and the basic grammar is straightforward—but it is a language impossible to master, even for a native speaker. Why is it so important to get grammar right in writing for a native speaker, when in spoken English close enough is usually good enough? Surely there are deeper reasons for grammatical writing other than obedience to a teacher or a book.

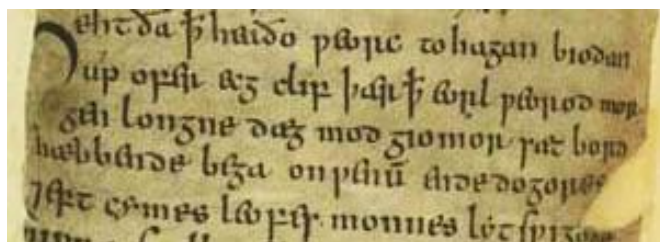
The first reason that reasonably precise grammar is important in academic writing is that it deals with difficult subjects. In real life you will probably not write about sports cars but rather scientific, historical, or political issues of abstract and complex natures. A demanding subject combined with bad grammar can make sentences impossible to understand. If the reader is already saddled with complex ideas, the added burden of vague or faulty sentences will make many readers simply give up.

The second reason that grammar is important in writing is the matter of credibility. Readers will make judgments about your authority based on your control of grammar. It may be unfair, but if you consistently write sentences that are unclear or do not make sense, your reader is going to dismiss you as incompetent. Perhaps you have brilliant ideas which are well-argued with solid evidence and argumentation, but if the grammar is awful the reader may conclude that you lack ability or intelligence, or may at least be skeptical of your arguments.

This chapter is intended more for learners of English, but I'll also address native speakers later on. Even for native users, understanding how your language works will make you a better user of it in speech and writing. Think of a car—we get in a car and we drive it, and we do not really think about how the car works. You are going to be in a better position to use your car to the fullest or repair it if you have a basic understanding of the parts of the car and how they function. Grammar is the engine of English.

English is a challenging language and I feel some sympathy for people trying to learn it. It was not designed by anyone—in fact, nearly all attempts at “improving” English throughout history have been spectacular failures—but has evolved chaotically over centuries. Understanding all of the strange exceptions and variations is very difficult. But it is a human language intelligible to humans with certain standards and conventions which can be learned.

### 12.1 The History of English



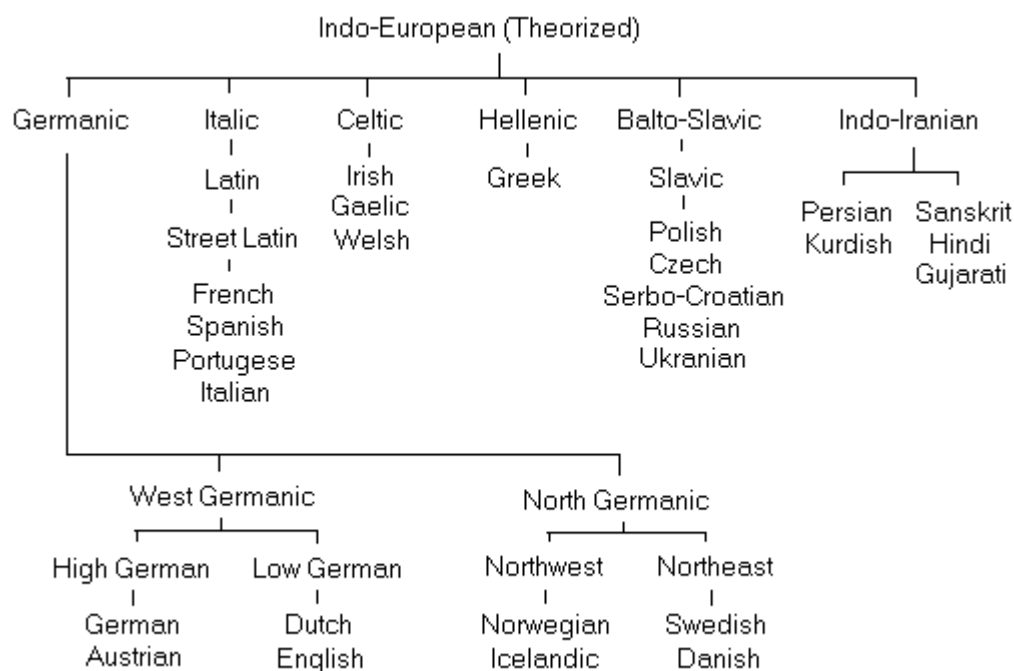


We of course know that English and Korean are different languages. A good way of understanding English is by looking at its history and development, and through this you may understand some of its features as well as the mental logic of its users. This brief linguistic overview might also help native speakers to realize some of the oddities of the language they use.

Koreans and the Turkish have an odd affinity for each other. But there are historical and linguistic reasons. Scholars know surprisingly little about the origins of Korean, but most agree that it comes from a language family called Altaic, which covered a broad swath of northern Asia and descended into Turkish, Mongolian, Korean, and possibly Japanese (the Japanese are less fond of this theory). While Korean has a great deal of words from Chinese, and more recently from Portuguese and English, it is a relatively pure language with not many foreign influences. Though Hangul is a relatively young writing system, the comparative linguistic ‘purity’ of Korean also results in a good match between sounds and characters.

English has a poorer correspondence between sounds and alphabetic letters than Korean—though not as bad as French. This is partly because the writing system is a thousand years older, and partly because English has such a messy mix of influences from different languages. Even someone with a native-born proficiency in English might be confused by someone speaking in one of its many dialects. An elderly English professor might be find a teenager’s cellphone text message with its slang expressions and emoticons totally indecipherable.

Technically, English began as a dialect of medieval German—not Latin. The following is a partial chart of Indo-European’s offshoots, one of which becomes English. Other branches include Celtic, Greek, Slavic, Persian, and Sanskrit languages or descendants. Indo-European thus accounts for nearly all the languages of Europe and some of western Asia. A notable exception is Basque, which is spoken in northern Spain—a language with still mysterious origins which is believed to be the remnant of a lost indigenous European people.



Source: C.M. Millward, *A Biography of the English Language*, 1988.

Again as you can see, English does not come from Latin—something I have to repeatedly explain even to native speakers. What the chart does not show is the constant borrowing of words from other languages. English was heavily influenced by Latin-speaking missionaries, Norse

Vikings, French conquerors, and Greek academics fleeing the fall of Constantinople in 1453. For this reason, English has a huge number of duplicate words re-borrowed from other languages. For example, wealthy French lords in England ate *beef* and *pork*, while English peasants raised *cows* and *pigs*, and so English has separate words for both the animal and its product.

English absorbed all of these words partly by force, but also partly because it has a grammar and sound system which can easily adopt new loanwords. Some languages either have political or cultural resistance to importing foreign words (such as French, or as an extreme example, the xenophobic and stagnant Korean spoken in North Korea) or are grammatically poor at incorporating them (such as Latin—rather than use English *miniskirt*, the Vatican recently rendered the word as *brevissimae bracae femineae*, perhaps semi-humorously).

English, conversely, easily imports and naturalizes foreign words, so much so that people quickly forget their non-English origins. This is wonderful for rendering thoughts in English with power and precision, but not so helpful for new learners who need to absorb words with widely varying sound patterns and endings. Because of their etymological origins, we need to pluralize *church* as *churches*, *child* as *children*, *cactus* as *cacti*, and *deer* as *deer*.

The influence of foreign languages also has pros and cons for English grammar. Old English, the early version of English, had more word endings and conjugations, and these seem to have been lost in the confusion as the language was swamped by foreign words and speakers with conflicting systems between about 900 and 1100. For this reason, English began to rely more on prepositions, articles, and word order. Old English had fewer verb tenses, and began to imitate and modify ones from Latin and French without making them uniform. Thus while Latin has a very efficient tense system:

*Amo* I love  
*Amabam* I loved, I was loving  
*Amabo* I will love  
*Amavi* I loved, I have loved  
*Amaveram* I had loved  
*Amavero* I will have loved

English has a messy and inconsistent verb tense system of using endings (I learn, learned), changing the word (I run, ran), not changing the word at all (it will burst, it burst) or using *have/had*. Some grammarians argue that English does not even technically have a future tense, merely suggesting the future with auxiliary words like *will* or *going to*. My professors used to joke with me that “there’s no future in English.”

The grammar of English results in other oddities. On one hand, English has a spectacularly massive vocabulary, and on the other it seems to overuse a tiny pool of words. A word like *has* does triple duty, as a common verb (She has a smartphone), auxiliary verb (He has to clean his room), and a verb tense marker (He has been to Germany before). One of the hardest words in English for a Korean to use—*the*—is its most-used word. But again, all of these foreign influences have made English a tough and flexible language system.

## 12.2 High & Low Context Languages

In my experience there are four main problem areas that Korean speakers have with English grammar: articles, numbering, prepositions, and confusion of word class. To repeat, these difficulties reflect *language interference*—the tendency to use a foreign language using the thought processes of your native language. They also echo the differing nature of Korean as a high-context language system.

Korean has had a history dissimilar to that of English, and its culture has imparted different features. I earlier mentioned Richard Nisbett's *The Geography of Thought*, which argues that western thought focuses more on analysis, and eastern culture emphasizes context. This is equally so with languages. English is careful to understand things by separating and categorizing them—which person? What type of object?—using articles or prepositions to make these distinctions. Korean has more attention for grammatical levels of respect, reflecting its comparative concern with relationships. This is not a value judgment, but a cultural difference which must be accepted in learning to write either language.

Look at how the two languages order meaning:

#### *English*

The boy eats the apple

Subject – verb – object

#### *Korean*

Boy-subject apple-object eat

(남자가 사과를 먹어요)

Object – subject – verb

Not only are some parts reversed, but there are other differences. Korean has a marker after the nouns (boy-*gah*, apple-*rool*) to tell us that the boy is the subject and the apple is the object. Latin also does this. In a sentence like *canis mordet hominae* (the dog bites the man), the endings *can-is* and *homin-ae* tell us who bites who. In fact, in Latin we could sequence these three words however we like and the sentence would still make sense. We know who bit who from the endings, where in English the word order tells us—the dog is first and the man is second.

In English, with no articles, endings, or prepositions, we would have *dog bite man*, which would be unclear. But in Korean, in many statements we could even omit the endings and people would still understand us. To a native English speaker this seems mysterious. How does one know?

Something I have noticed about Korean speakers is that statements are made within the context of a conversation, eliminating the need for certain words to be used or repeated. If you mention your father, you do not need to use “he” in successive sentences unless you need to distinguish him from other people. If you have been talking about food and wondering what will be in the cafeteria, at that point in Korean you literally say *stomach-empty* (배고파요) rather than “I’m hungry.”

In English, if you walk into a room and say “stomach empty,” people would laugh or look puzzled because it makes no sense. You do not need to previously establish a context so much in English. Saying “I am hungry” would be adequate because English is a low-context language. Sentences tend to be longer and perhaps less efficient, but can stand independently. The literal meaning of Korean sentences can seem astonishingly sparse to an English speaker. Rather than “these grapes are delicious” we can say “grape delicious-is” (포도가 맛있어요), whereas this would be meaningless in English.

Many Koreans find the English obsession with these missing plurals, prepositions, or pronouns curious. An English speaker would say “I am going to the beach.” The Korean would say “beach-go” (바닷가 가요). If you tell a Korean that you do not understand *who* is going to the beach, he or she might think you are stupid—“I am wearing a bathing suit and I have an umbrella on my shoulder, so it is obvious I am the one going to the beach.” But this is the nature of the language. You must indicate who is going to the beach or else no one will understand you.

The lesson for a Korean speaker using English is that you must be *obvious*, much more than you feel is necessary. Sentence meanings must be clear, and the words which explain their parts or relationships must be present. You must be specific about who or what you are talking about. Pronouns, articles, and prepositions cannot be omitted even when they seem totally self-explanatory or trivial. One grape or many grapes? Why does it matter? But native speakers spend their entire lives used to hearing the correct pronoun and are confused when we hear things that to a Korean speaker seem clearly evident. This is even more pronounced in text, where there are no conversational or visual cues to help convey meaning.

This high-context, low-context difference is one reason why when you write something in Korean and paste it into a Google translator and convert it, the output is usually rubbish. Korean university students sometimes attempt to cheat by handing in computer-translated assignments, but even a native-speaking child would immediately recognize it as at best unnatural and at worst unreadable. That essential information that is in an English text is missing. How many grapes? Who is doing x and what is the relationship to y? Any beach? This beach? Beaches in general? Computers are not yet capable of understanding the context of the situation, which would help to attach this information to each individual sentence.

Subsequently, the most common error pattern I see in Korean writers of English is missing words. When I mark papers most of the grammatical corrections on the paper tend to be insertions of words necessary for the sentence to make sense, and less crossing-out of wrong words. I read sections of text and realize that I do not know what the subject being described is, or I become confused when the relationship between two subjects are unclear.

Some of these difficulties foreign speakers of English have can be explained by the term *language interference*—the tendency to use a foreign language using the thought processes of your native language. We will now look at the more common sources of language interference in Korean writers of English.

### 12.3 Articles: A & The

#### Tip



When you write a noun it *probably* will need either a, the, or s. Instead of asking, “Does this noun need something?” ask “Is there a reason why this noun should *not* have something with it?”

Using the indefinite article (a) and definite article (the) in English is probably the biggest problem that Koreans have in writing or speaking English. I have had students who gave up and others who simply put *the* in front of every noun as a *modus vivendi*: “The student in the classroom gave his the classmate her the pencil and then went to the home to eat the supper.” ☒

The main reason why *a* and *the* are so frustrating is that Korean does not have any equivalent. This is not a value judgment. Korean has demonstratives *this* and *that*—this bus (이 버스) and that bus (저 버스), and a sort of medial *that-here* (□) often used for something already mentioned, but in Korean grammatical logic articles would have little use. It would be like learning an alien language and needing to indicate whether the speaker has blue or purple antennae. An outsider might see it as a pointless nuisance. But in English the information signaled by the article is essential to making things understandable to the reader or the audience.

Most of the European languages have an article system, as does Arabic. The Arabic definite article *al* gives us *al Qaeda* but also *algebra*, *alcohol*, *alchemy*, and *alcove*, reflecting the Arabic influence on science and engineering in the west. But many languages have no articles.

Latin had none. Nor does Russian. Most of Korea's neighboring languages, including Chinese, Japanese, and Tagalog (used in the Philippines), get along fine without articles. Old English itself did not technically have articles, only evolving a system around 1100 from its demonstratives.

### *Strategy 1: Consider the Words' Origins*

One strategy that might help make articles more understandable is to look at their origins. *A* comes from Old English *an*, usually meaning "one" (cognate to German *ein*). If *a* meant "one," we can logically think of *a* as a counting word. *A* pencil really means *one* pencil, one out of a possible group of pencils. If I have a pencil there are possibly millions of pencils—nothing is special about mine and I do not hold it tightly at night. It is one example out of many others. *An* also comes from the same Germanic root as *any*.

*The* comes from *that*. Old English had several words for "that" depending on gender and case, including *se*, *seo*, and *þæt* (that). Sometime around 1100 *þe* (the) apparently began to be used as a substitute for these words, eventually becoming modern *the*, while *this* and *that* continued to survive separately. A similar process happened with the romance languages. What we call late Latin or street Latin had a demonstrative called *ille* and *illa* (that). Classical Latin did not use those words so much, but as the dialects diverged they evolved into French *le* and *la*, Spanish *el* and *la*, and Italian *il* and *la*, all meaning *the*.

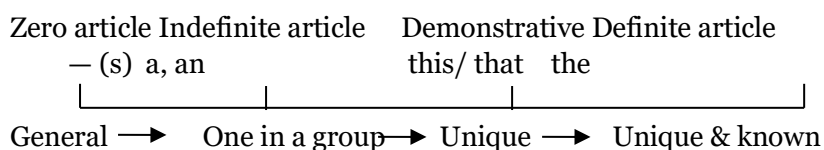
### *Strategy 2: Remember that 'the' is a Visual Word*

Essentially *the*, like *that*, is a visual word which you point with to indicate something, and this might help you to understand its function. *A* bus is any *one* bus—but *that* bus which I am pointing to with my hand is special. There is no other bus in the world that I mean. And after I point to *that* bus, I can continue talking about *the* bus, which is now firmly in both of our minds as one unique bus. *The* is just a further development of *that*, even if the latter was never said.

The problem arises when we use *the* for things we cannot see: the European institutions of democratic reform; the love between a man and a woman; the peace that passes all understanding. These are abstractions, but we still use *the* because they are single entities which can be mentally "seen" and thought about. Often English has this pattern: "I went to a Chinese restaurant and the restaurant was very crowded." Think of this as a sequence: *A* restaurant causes an example restaurant to appear in your head, and then *the* refers to that one mental restaurant presently in your mind.

Imagine looking out your window. We see a building and a man on the sidewalk talking into his cellphone. The building is red and the man is laughing. Several things are going on logically. In my first sentence, "there is a building and a man," I indicate the existence of *one* building and *one* man. In the second, "the building is red and the man is laughing," I establish that this particular building and man are unique. They are unlike any other buildings or men because we can both *see* them and understand that only they are red or laughing in the way I am speaking about them.

So we have two conditions for using *the*: the subject is unique, and it is known by both you and the audience as unique. A little like Korean  $\sqsubset$ , *the* assumes that the object has already been mentioned or is obvious (even by the standards of English!—for example, the sun or moon).



*Strategy 3: Remember that Western Languages Emphasize Categories*

Another way of looking at the problem is to ask yourself when writing any noun—to which category does this noun belong?

Am I writing about something very generally as a group? Probably an *s* is needed.

Computers are very useful.   

Am I writing about one example of an object, but it doesn't matter which one? Probably an *a/the* is needed.

I need to find a computer.   

Am I writing about one specific example of an object, because it's important or because only one exists? Probably *the* is needed.

The computer on my desk is black. 

Am I writing about the *idea* of an object? Probably *the* is needed.

The computer has changed the world. 

Thus there are four usual forms for nouns in English—with nothing, with an *a*, or with *the*, as we move from discussing a general category (grapes are delicious) to one out of a group (a grape rolled on the floor) to a unique example (that grape is small) to a unique example known to both speaker and listener (the grape is rolling down the floor).

As a practical rule of thumb for writers, remember that nouns almost *always* have something—either *a*, *the*, *that*, or a plural *s*:

Many schools require school uniforms.

My daughter has a uniform.

The uniform was very expensive.

Instead of *that*, we could of course also have *this* or *these* or *those*. There are exceptions: “When spring is here the flowers come out.” Nouns might be uncountable, they might be parts of compound noun (“a train ticket”) or have some other function. But usually nouns rarely occur alone without *a*, *the*, *that*, or *-s*. If you write a noun and notice that there is nothing, double-check to see that there is a reason why.

Articles are admittedly frustrating for non-native speakers when they see how native speakers seem to have a reflex ability to use them correctly and unconsciously. There are a host of exceptions that seem to defy consistency in logic—The Mississippi River, The Pacific Ocean, Lake Superior, The Philippines, Indonesia, Mount Everest, The Everglades. Do your best. Some usages can simply be memorized based on your subject discipline. I often see “They were affected by IMF crisis.” ☒ It's not hard to remember: write “*the* IMF crisis” or “the United Nations.” For other situations it is possible to develop a reasonably close intuition.

## 12.4 Number Agreement

The second common problem Korean writers of English experience is the related issue of number agreement. English puts an 's' on plural nouns, or to conjugate verbs:

I am wearing a suit. Those people wear suits.

I say we should drink coffee. She says we should drink tea.

The *s* in the second sentences are necessary and cannot be omitted, no matter how obvious they seem. Korean does not conjugate nouns for numbers: two bottles is “two bottle” (두병, 병두개) and would often not bother distinguishing between numbers at all—one could equally say “cat-is” (고양이 있어요) for one cat or a group of cats, unless the number somehow became significant.

Commonly Korean writers forget to add the plural marker and in correcting I find myself writing *s* after *s* after *s*: “Those people wear hats. Most dogs have tails.” What is worse is when plural markers or pronouns conflict in number, which greatly confuses readers: “That people wears hat. There are a pile of book.” ☒

As always, the oddities and exceptions of English grammar cause additional mistakes. Number agreement can get tricky if we have a sentence like “There is a box of oranges on the table.” We say *is* because the subject is the box and not oranges. You might also hear slang in spoken English such as “I drank four beers last night” where the speaker counts the bottles and not the liquids.

Like other grammar issues, number agreement becomes increasingly vital in longer sentences. If someone writes “She go to the store and pick up her shoe” ☒ the reader can probably work out the meaning, but a more abstract sentence may not be understood at all:

Therefore professor tend to apply for large campus that provide good treatment. ☒

Another particular difficulty for new speakers of English is number agreement with uncountable and countable nouns.

I do a lot of stuffs on the weekend. ☒

I drink some coffees. ☒

This is a nonsense. ☒

All of these nouns are uncountable and take no plurals: *stuff*, *coffee*, *furniture*, *nonsense*. Unfortunately, there often seems to be no logical reason why some nouns are countable and others not—like Germans who simply know whether a noun is male, female, or neuter, native English speakers have an intuition for such judgments that they cannot always explain.

Yet as a general rule, uncountable nouns tend to describe things which logically are difficult or impossible to divide into parts. There are three common categories: liquids (*tea*, *rain*, *snow*, *beer*), abstractions (*love*, *war*, *peace*), and mass nouns which describe classes of objects (*furniture*, *cutlery*, *stuff*).

Of course, English always has to have exceptions—we can speak of *the beers of Belgium*, counting varieties of these liquids as a group. Although *staff* is normally uncountable, for some reason Koreans are fond of *staffs* in writing, perhaps because of the historical American military presence in the country—the US army is so large that it has multiple, separate “staffs” of administrators, leading to a usage rarely used outside of the military.

Lastly, there are also strange situations where number agreement is highly subjective:

My favorite activity is going to cafes, drinking coffee, and meeting people.  
 My favorite activities are going to cafes, drinking coffee, and meeting people.

Which is correct—*is* or *are*? The answer is both, because the speaker might consider these three actions as connected and simultaneous, or they may be three separate activities—today I will meet some people, tomorrow I will drink coffee alone and read. There are valid situations in English where number agreement may differ based on personal logic. In western culture salt and pepper are always placed together on tables, so that a housewife might say “the salt and pepper is on the table,” treating them logically as one unit.

## 12.5 Prepositions

Prepositions are also important in English because they indicate the relationships between parts of the sentence: I am going *to* school. The mail is *on* the table. She did it *by* working hard. They drove *through* the tunnel. Korean indicates this function with particle endings: I am going home is “home-to go” (집에 가요). But often Korean again omits the preposition if the situation makes it sufficiently clear, particularly if the pronunciation is awkward. “I am going to church” would double nearly the same sound (교회에 가요, “church-to go”) and so the *-eh* 에 preposition is typically dropped.

English does not permit omission of prepositions except for a few fixed expressions. “I am going home” is an idiom that is almost unique in the language. It is a grandfathered exception—“I am going home” likely survives from Old English *lc ga ham* when the language used fewer prepositions. But “I am going shopping center” or “I am going movie theater” does not make sense because an English speaker will be expecting a connection between the sentence parts.

“The cat is table.” ☒ What does this mean? The cat is a table? The cat is made of wood? We need to make clear the relationship between the cat and the table. The cat is on, under, beside, near the table. And this is a very simple sentence. If we have a more complex or longer series of elements in a sentence with no information about how these parts relate, the whole sentence fails:

I went mall and mall 2:00 there was a girl standing store pretty dress giving samples perfume. I saw a bug her face but it flew the air. ☒

Getting this correct also unfortunately requires attention and experience, as English has a maddeningly complex preposition system. We say I am riding *on* a bus but *in* a car because of historical reasons related to how these vehicles were made. The most inconsistent prepositional convention in English may be that of time: “I will meet you *at* 2:00 *on* Tuesday *in* June *in* 2011.” The language has different prepositions for these different categories of time. They simply must be memorized.

To make things worse, some sentences seem to arbitrarily call for prepositions and others do not:

I cook with you. I dance with you. I listen to you. I walk with you. I talk to you.  
 I see you. I kiss you. I hear you. I walk the dog. I tell you.

Grammatically, in these cases the preposition signals whether the object (*you*) is direct or indirect. There is a functional difference in meaning between *with* / *to*, “doing something alongside, toward,” and no preposition, “affecting something.” But at other times the preposition merely reflects the etymology or traditional use of the verb, so that usually *see* is used for movies and plays but *watch* is used for television programs.



I admit to finding the grammar of direct / indirect objects difficult, and most native speakers rely purely on intuition and repetition to choose the correct form. New learners who have yet to develop these instincts will write unintentionally humorous sentences such as “I cook you,” suggesting that the writer is a cannibal. In time, like playing the piano, some of these verbs will hopefully become automatic.

To summarize, whereas Korean uses particle endings (e.g. cup + table + on + is, 컵이 탁자 위에 있어요) to indicate prepositional function, English uses separate words. Unlike Korean, in English those words can almost never be omitted.

### *Active and Passive*

A related problem with prepositions is active and passive voice. Passive voice is rarely used in Korean, but appears in English where the “do-er” is unknown or secondary. There is a mistaken belief or snobbish idea that passives should not be used in writing. But ideally they should be used only when necessary, as they tend to make sentences longer or awkward. Use passives only:

1. When the do-er is unknown: “the window was broken” (by someone).
2. When the do-er is unimportant: “30 ml is added to the solution” (by the chemist).

English indicates subjects and objects by word order: The dog bit the man. We convert this active sentence to passive by reversing the word order: The man was bitten by the dog. But without the *by* preposition and the change in verb tense (bit – bitten), we do not know who bit who. Those words are necessary to make the relationship clear. Sometimes we also form passives with auxiliaries or other words other than prepositions: “I changed the oil in my car” becomes “I had the oil changed in my car.”

In conversational slang, an English speaker might say to another “I cut my hair this weekend.” Technically, this is an error—the *barber* cut his hair—but it is a short form of “I had my hair cut this weekend.” I have seen Koreans confuse people by saying “I fixed my car engine this weekend” and having the class answer “You’re an auto mechanic?” For Koreans, our earlier rule to *be obvious* comes back into play here. Use the passive in such a situation, and correctly.

Additionally, for either logical or historical reasons some English verbs are rarely used or simply don’t make sense in passive voice. Korean students seem perpetually fond of these two:

The problem might be occurred. ☒

He was disappeared. ☒

Neither makes sense in English, as things occur by their own force; no one can cause something to occur. The same applies to the verb disappear. You cannot disappear something.

The problem might occur.

He disappeared.

The opposite can also happen, where words that need to be placed in passive are misused as active voice: She concerned about her brother. ☒ This needs to be “She is/was concerned.”

## **12.6 Word Class and Miscellaneous Errors**

The last group of common problems is word class errors. By this we mean the confusion of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and other word categories. Sometimes I have students write that “I was very boring this weekend” ☒ and it sounds unintentionally humorous. What the writer meant

was “I was bored,” a finished action (I had a feeling of boredom), but confused it with *bor-ing*, an action which affects others (I made other people feel bored). The first word is a present participle and the second is an adjective.

This error can easily happen because English is a language where word types are not well-indicated. Nouns, verbs, and adjectives do not have endings or particles which consistently mark them. Adverbs usually have *-ly* endings, such as *quickly*, but even there exceptions abound: “He will do it *soon*.” As well, some non-adverbial words end in *-ly*, such as *costly*.

Another common mistake is the muddling of words such as *almost* and *all*, which are sometimes adverbs and sometimes determiners. The result is sentences like “Almost people like music.” ☒ Students also overcorrect with unnecessary prepositions, such as “Most of students do not want early classes.” ☒ The only real solution here is to memorize the forms:

Almost all people like music.

Most students do not want early classes (students generally).

Most of the students do not want early classes (a specific group of students).

Most of them do not want early classes (a group already mentioned).

Many of these errors ultimately reflect language interference. For example, Korean has a smaller number of modal auxiliaries than English does, and so students write “When the sun sets it should get dark.” In English the sentence is slightly humorous as it implies that the Earth has a choice and *decides* to get dark. In English there is a clearer distinction between modals of *choice* (should, ought to) and those of *necessity* (must, have to, will).

A second example of language interference comes from the lack of an equivalent to “there is” in Korean. Instead, Korean uses something closer to “is” or “exists” (있어요) and ends a statement with it: “there is a mouse” becomes “mouse exists-is.” This sounds strange in English because of the slight difference between *there is* and *exists*. The latter has a more philosophical tone. We say “love exists” but “a mouse is existing over there” sounds strange. This is another situation where you cannot trust a computer translator. They do not understand the nuances of meaning which all languages have in their vocabularies.

As I mentioned earlier, much of these errors stem from the high context - low context difference between Korean and English. This usually results in students thinking out a sentence in Korean and then translating into English while leaving out key words:

Given credit cards, will let teenagers easy to get what they want. ☒

Here the sentence lacks a subject. *What* will let teenagers do something? *It* can be used as a placeholder subject here. The second problem is that *easy* is used as a verb—*ease* is a valid verb, but that is not what the writer intends. We need to insert a verb to go with the adjective:

Given credit cards, it will be easy for teenagers to get what they want.

Koreans also tend to use *easy* as an adjective for people, whereas in English it is normally used for actions: Cooking noodles is easy. The test was easy (i.e. *taking* the test was easy). If you write “As a result, it makes college girls easy,” ☒ the American slang meaning of *easy* (college girls will have sex with anyone) is maybe a pleasant fantasy but is probably not what anyone intended.

### Referent Problems

Gertrude Stein told Alice that she was worried about her mother’s illness. ☒

As indicated, Korean, being a high-context language, would likely find some previous way to make these grammatical relationships clear. While granted that the Gertrude Stein sentence here is an artificial one, we have no idea which person either ‘she’ pronouns refer to.

### *Fun and Funny*

I seem to see this frame regularly in student writing:

The movie makes people fun. ☒

Like the “I was boring” mistake, this literally says that “x causes people to have fun personalities.” Rather, write “x makes people happy, amused” or “x is fun for people.”

Lastly, be aware that *fun* (재미 있다) is not the same as *funny* (웃긴다 or 엽기다). The movie might be enjoyable (fun) without being humorous (funny). Sometimes in conversational English (but rarely in formal writing) “He’s a funny person!” might mean the person is odd or slightly strange.

If possible, one way to combat language interference is to try to transfer your thoughts directly into English sentences rather than thinking out a Korean sentence and then translating it. This is not an easy skill to develop, but in the long term your writing skills will advance (and your conversational skills will *greatly* improve) by being able to think in English without having to pass through that intermediate step of Korean. When students tell me they had a dream in English—I know they are starting to do this.

Just as Koreans are forgiving of a non-Korean who is trying to learn their language, English speakers do not hold a non-native speaker to their own standards. But in academic writing it is a matter of credibility to be reasonably correct, not simply because of arbitrary rules, but because you want people to both understand and have confidence in your ideas. You may not attain a mastery of grammar, but most errors of Korean writers will be these three simple types—articles, numbers, and prepositions. Numbers agreement errors are both the most common and easiest to repair. As for articles, there are usages which can simply be memorized based on your subject discipline. I often see “They were affected by IMF crisis.” ☒ It’s not hard to remember: write “*the* IMF crisis” or “*the* United Nations.”

A last true story. One of my co-workers taught a university camp where a lazy student wrote his paper in Korean and then ran it through a computer translator without bothering to proofread it—except that he chose “Portuguese” and not “English” by accident. The result was unreadable nonsense, and worse, in a foreign language. There is no crime in using computer translators for short phrases, but you will never learn to write proficient sentences in a foreign language if you rely on computers to do it for you.

## **12.7 Grammar and Native Speakers**

When I taught composition in Las Vegas, my highest-achieving students were often not Americans. Sometimes native speakers began the class overconfident and then, after receiving poor grades, treated me or the subject with contempt. The greatest psychological hurdle for native speakers of English is accepting that fluency in speaking does not automatically translate to fluency in writing, let alone writing research papers. There is a skill set in academic writing that must be learned regardless of native proficiency as a speaker. While I enjoy teaching *gyopos* (교포), Korean students who have been raised abroad, often their superior ability is undermined by overconfidence and lack of effort.

**Tip**

The biggest mistake native speakers or  $\gamma\upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$  (gyopos) make in academic writing is overconfidence: “I know English so I don’t need to study writing it.” Language fluency doesn’t mean you can automatically write research papers.

Every language has a gap in style or grammar between the spoken form of the language and the written form. French, in fact, has verb tenses only for writing (*temps littéraires*). English has no exclusively literary tenses but the stylistic difference between its spoken and written forms can be quite large.

You can say things in spoken English that you cannot in writing, partly because in conversation the audience can *see* you. They can see your hands move and your expression, and can determine if you are serious or silly or sarcastic or playful. If you watch a foreign film and there are no subtitles, often you can follow much of the story by watching body language. These cues are of course absent in writing. A common problem I see on English internet discussion boards is people using sarcasm and being angrily misunderstood by others who did not know they were joking. This is perhaps one reason why emoticons have become so common.

Conversely, there are conventions used in writing but not in speech. Academic English usually has a formality and sentence complexity that would sound stiff and awkward if spoken. You would not normally *say* a sentence with multiple subordinate clauses unless you are Jane Austen—your statements would likely be shorter and linked with conjunctions and pauses. Compare the later books of the New Testament, which are mostly church letters written by St. Paul, to the early books of the Old Testament. Even in translation Paul’s letters have a more complex syntax reflecting their written origins, whereas the early books have multiple clauses connected with “and then he...,” mirroring their traditional beginnings as oral narratives.

The most common problem that native speakers have when writing English is that they write as they hear. Their style, grammar, and even spelling reflects English in spoken form. As an example, native students will write “should of” ☒ where “should have” is correct: “They should have been here.” This is because in Standard English this is what “should have” sounds like—the ‘*ave*’ often becomes so elided into the preceding word that it sounds like /ə v/, *of*.

Similarly, *than* and *then* are confused: “Spain has a warmer climate *then* Iceland,” ☒ as *than* (a comparison word, “a is better than b”) sounds much like *then* (a sequence or time marker, “I was at the library, *then* I went home”). A common problem that has become widespread even in journalism is for native students to write *it’s* rather than *its*, two words which also sound the same: “I found the toothpaste but *it’s* cap is gone.” ☒

Grammatically, another key difference between spoken English and written English is that written English tends to have a more precise use of verb tenses. There is a much more accurate sense of when things happen. This reflects the nature of spoken discourse where context and visuals make time relationships sufficiently clear. These indicators are gone in writing.

In spoken English, you might say “I was wet because it was raining and I didn’t bring my umbrella.” The hearer understands the time sequence easily enough, although technically, what are you saying? You saw that it was raining, and *then* you did not bring your umbrella, which is an odd reaction. In written English, being more exact with verb tense would make the sequence clearer: “I was wet because it was raining and I had not brought my umbrella.”

Similarly, “I was in the shower and the phone rang” is close enough in speech, but in writing the reader may be confused about the sequence of events. A more exact statement would be “While I was showering, the telephone rang.” This makes clear that one ongoing activity was interrupted by a momentary one. Again, your papers are not likely to be about showering but

about more complex subjects, where time markers could be essential to explaining your arguments.

There is a joke that Latin is so complex one wonders how the Romans learned it, but an illiterate laborer probably did not need to learn every verb tense. How often do people use the English future perfect continuous in conversation?—“By this time tomorrow, we will have been on this cruise ship for 36 hours.” But a Virgil or Cicero would certainly have known all the Latin conjugations, and a modern writer of English should also be familiar with the complex verb tenses which will add precision and clarity to writing.

Stylistically, native speakers of English tend to mirror the informal speech patterns of conversation in their writing, using short sentences, conjunctions, and slang. Often idiomatic expressions are overused. Rather than “Many people are concerned about the ongoing economic recession” I might get “A lot of guys are just worried about how they’ll put bread on the table.” *A lot* is rather informal, *guys* is outright slang, *they’ll* is a contraction and should be avoided, and “put bread on the table” is a tired cliché that I wish would die and go to cliché hell together with “let’s face it” and “make ends meet.” Clichés do not demonstrate that you are trendy or plainspoken, but that you are too careless to think of your own phrasings.

A common danger in being immersed in a native language from birth is that writers become used to terms misused or misunderstood in spoken or even written discourse. One example is the tendency to use *literally* as an intensifier (it was literally a million degrees in there!) rather than understanding that *literally* means there is no exaggeration or poetic sense at all—the room actually was 1,000,000 degrees Celsius, which would mean all in it was vaporized.

A minor problem is misusing the term ‘beg the question.’ The term is commonly misused to mean ‘invite an obvious question’: “☒ there were many deaths in the nightclub fire, which begs the question of why there were no safety inspections.” But the correct use of the term is to indicate bad logic where a claim is falsely proven by rephrasing it: “She was an ugly girl because she was so unattractive.”

One of my more endearing Korean students was a girl who grew up in California and wrote in a style reflecting Californian slang. Her serious academic papers on the European Union were larded with *dude*, *cool*, and *awesome*. While she had a good intuitive grasp of English grammar her task was to recognize the difference in style between casual speech and idioms and scholarly writing.

I have had arguments with native speaking students who feel that I am being snobbish in insisting on proper grammar. I encountered one idiot who insisted that articles and plurals were a conspiracy of the world elites to oppress the uneducated or foreign speaker. When these people graduate and look for jobs they will discover that perhaps a little elitism is better than being mistaken for a twelve-year-old after writing a terrible personal statement or a conference paper. Again, no one is telling you how to write your e-mails and love letters.

A related issue I’ve encountered online is the idea that using profanities in writing somehow makes the writer more ‘real’ or ‘honest.’ There may be circumstances in blog writing where this is true, but generally using four-letter words indicates a speaker’s verbal or written inability to use more precise language. At any rate, like it or not, academics usually have a fairly low tolerance for profanities in scholarly writing, unless of course out of necessity you are quoting from a literary text in which there is swearing. Even there, older writers from a more polite generation will use dashes to indicate profanities such as f—k and d—n.

## 12.8 Commas

A third common problem that native speakers have is using commas in writing the way they would in spoken English. They use commas as pauses: “I was doing this, then I was doing that, then she said this, and then he said that.” That is fine in speech or in an e-mail or text message, and the grammar police again have no business telling people what to do in informal writing. But

using commas as pauses is not acceptable in academic writing, where it has a specific function, which is to separate elements or sentence parts, such as items in a list.

Because commas are so abused, let's take an in-depth look at them so that we may avoid using them simply as pauses or random dividers:

The internet has changed the world, as it has made communication easier, because of its electronic nature, except in only a few countries, where the internet is still heavily controlled, such as North Korea. ☒

To avoid “comma salad,” let's examine some main uses for the comma.

1. To make lists: “After the rain, there were flooded basements, wrecked cars, and damaged roads.”

That last comma, which indicates the end of the series, is called the Oxford comma. Some writers such as journalists omit it. Marriages have probably ended over whether it should be used. If you are going to leave the last comma out, make sure that the sentence does not become confusing: “There was a minister, and a soccer player, and a young girl eating a sandwich, and a mouse.” Without the last comma it sounds like the girl is eating the mouse.

2. To make introductory statements, or to connect ideas:

My sandals smell really bad, so they will be easy to find.

The troops had run out of supplies, and so they had to retreat.

If the second part of the sentence is not a complete thought, you do not need a comma. Often it can simply be omitted.

You wore a lovely hat but nothing else.

But if you join two sentence parts with a conjunction and comma, make sure you avoid writing a comma splice, which is two complete sentences joined with a comma:

My cat loved to play, I bought him a guitar. ☒

You can test for a comma splice by putting your finger over each half to see if it makes sense as a complete sentence. Both “My cat loved to play” and “I bought him a guitar” can be sentences, and thus linking them with commas is incorrect. There are four solutions:

Change the comma to a period: My cat loved to play. I bought him a guitar.

Change the comma to a semicolon: My cat loved to play; I bought him a guitar.

Add a conjunction such as *and*, *but*, or *so*: My cat loved to play, so I bought him a guitar.

Make one part a dependent clause: Because my cat loved to play, I bought him a guitar.

A special word which often causes comma splices is *however*: “Soccer is my favorite sport, however pizza eating is where I excel.” ☒ Again, use a period or semicolon, or rephrase the sentence. Note that a comma goes *after* “however”:

Soccer is my favorite sport. However, pizza eating is where I excel.

Soccer is my favorite sport; however, pizza eating is where I excel.

Although soccer is my favorite sport, pizza eating is where I excel.

The semicolon (;) is often used in place of a period to link together two sentences with a strongly related idea: “My dog is bad; he barks all night.” Do not confuse a semicolon with a colon (:), which is used to signal a list— “We need three things: a, b, and c” or to indicate some sort of result or emphatic statement— “There was only one thing I could do: give up the fight.”

3. To insert information. Two commas can be used to set off additional information that appears within the sentence. You should be able to take out the section framed by commas and still have a complete and clear sentence.

Dan West, a junior from Nebraska State, was the only American at the festival.  
Dan West was the only American at the festival.

To test if you need commas, try taking them out of the sentence completely. If the meaning is the same, you do not need commas. If the information is not additional but is essential to the meaning of the sentence you do not use commas.

My sisters, who are engineers, are successful.  
My sisters who are engineers are successful. My sisters who are English majors aren't.

These sentences are not the same. The first one says that all of my sisters are engineers and are successful (non-restrictive). The second says that only those sisters who are engineers are successful, and those who are not engineers are not successful (restrictive). Notice that if you say these sentences you would naturally put a pause where the commas are.

But do rely on your common sense. Sometimes commas are optional in a very short sentence:

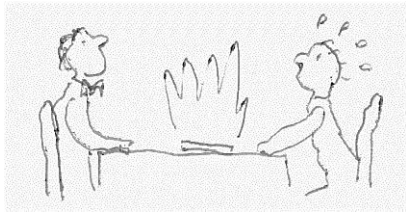
On Saturday, the office is closed.  
On Saturday the office is closed.

My wife, Susan, made me lunch today.  
My wife Susan made me lunch today.

New writers often err by having too many commas. In these sentences you can safely omit them. The first sentence is short enough to be clear, and the reader can probably guess that unless you are King Solomon you only have one wife.

Again, all of these matters are not going to make you the life of the party, but they will make your written English stronger and more readable. Remember the holy grail of writing, which is clarity. Well-written sentences that are easily followed and understood are going to be more convincing to your reader.

## 13 Other Professional Writing



While this book is primarily concerned with academic research paper writing, I'm including this short section on technical and business, both so that you will hopefully understand academic writing better by comparing it to and contextualizing it to other forms of professional writing, and also because after you submit your thesis and graduate you will likely need to use it within an employment or internship application of some type.

### 13.1 Technical Writing

Technical writing is typically writing which describes or interprets a product or set of data, such as a document explaining a mechanical process or instructions for using a machine or program. Common forms are instruction manuals, technical briefs, and engineering summaries. Technical writing differs from academic argument writing in that it tends to emphasize precise information and facts rather than complex arguments or subjective ideas. In style it usually uses short, clear sentences and marked sections or headings.

#### *Advice for Technical Writing*

Be clear, be concise, be complete. Use a minimum of sentences, but make those sentences absolutely specific and factual. Do not describe your own feelings about the issue, and leave yourself out of the text as much as possible.

- Define a technical term in its first occurrence, and put abbreviations in parentheses:

Rosedale Long Pond (RLP) is a vital body of water. Unfortunately, due to an unpredictable influx of saltwater, the delicate ecosystem of RLP is in danger of destabilizing.

- Italicize first occurrence of unfamiliar terms and define them right away:

The *retina* is a light-sensitive tissue, found at the back of the eye, that converts light impulses to nerve impulses.

- Add factual information and statistical data to provide specifics:

No: ☒ The average house in the area has a high radon level.

#### *Better:*

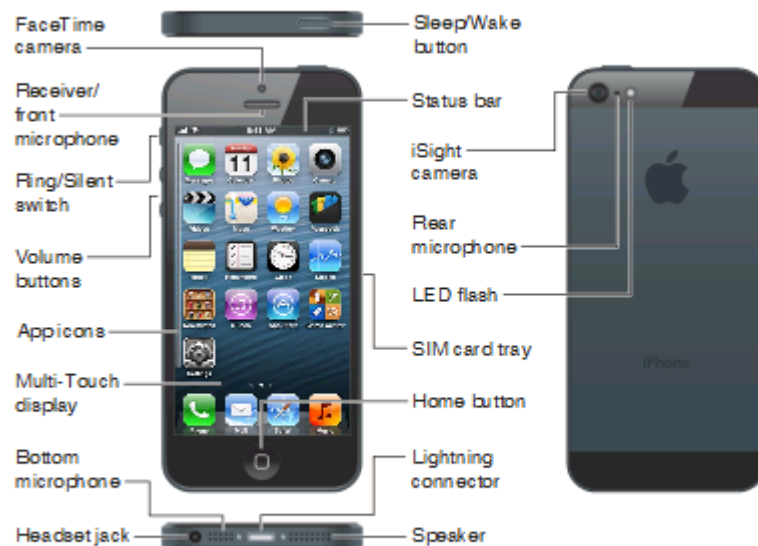
The average house in the area has a radon level of 0.4 picocuries per liter, which is considered low. Levels between 20 and 200 picocuries per liter are considered high, and



levels above 200 picocuries per liter are considered dangerous. For reference, the average radon level in outdoor air is about 0.2 picocuries per liter.

- Use graphs or illustrations to add visual detail:

### iPhone 5 overview



iPhone apps and features may vary based on your location, language, carrier, and model of iPhone. To find out which features are supported in your area, see [www.apple.com/ios/feature-availability](http://www.apple.com/ios/feature-availability).

(Reprinted from the Apple website, <http://www.apple.com/iphone-5s/specs/>)

## 13.2 Business Writing

Business writing offers a strange paradox: sometimes like technical writing, its purpose is to communicate information with a maximum of brevity and clarity, and sometimes its style is abused to be deliberately vague and unclear. Derek Thompson on *The Atlantic* online news site reprints a company brief from US banking firm Citigroup announcing that it is cutting 4% of its workforce:

Citigroup today announced a series of repositioning actions that will further reduce expenses and improve efficiency across the company while maintaining Citi's unique capabilities to serve clients, especially in the emerging markets. These actions will result in increased business efficiency, streamlined operations and an optimized consumer footprint across geographies.

Thompson notes that this jumble of euphemisms cynically obscures a very simple statement: "Citigroup today announced [layoffs]. These actions will [save us money]."

(Source: <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/12/citigroup-eliminates-11-000-jobs-in-historys-most-corporate-jargony-paragraph-ever/265925/>)

While this example is extreme, it should alert you to the fact that business writing is unlike academic writing in that it often reflects legal or marketing necessities or the realities of relationships between clients or customers and corporations.

Other typical forms of business writing are cover letters, résumés, corporate communications, inter-office memos, and grant proposals. These types of writing tend to be formulaic, making use of standardized structures. Typically, a business letter begins by

identifying the purpose of the letter, explaining some request or information, and then ending with some form of contact with or direction to the reader. It may involve point-form writing or incomplete sentences.

### *Advice for Business Letters*

Business writing often involves promoting products or ideas, trying to build a relationship with the addressee, or promoting oneself for career or business purposes. A key issue is the purpose and audience of your letter; what are you trying to do through the letter, and the situation or relationship to you of the person receiving it. Because the writer is typically asking for or communicating something, and because of the legal atmosphere of business writing as mentioned, the style again tends to be formulaic and almost excessively polite.

Dear Mr. Simpson,

In regard to your letter of August 12, I am writing to inform you that the contract information you requested has been arranged to be sent to your office. I enjoyed having lunch with you last week in Seoul, and would like to say again that if I may be helpful in any way or may provide further assistance in your continuing negotiations with the company, please let me know. I thank you for your involvement in this matter and look forward to meeting you at the IQS Conference in Busan on October 8.

Best regards,  
Lynette Truman

## **13.3 Cover Letters & Resumes**

You will normally need a cover letter with a resume if you are applying for graduate school, a job, or internship. Many of these programs will require you to submit a personal statement, transcripts, or writing sample as well, but the cover letter serves as a sort of introduction for you and to explain your reasons for applying. Unlike matters of grammar, there isn't a "correct" way to write a cover letter, and I can only give you some direction to help you make a better one.

You may find my advice rather unserious, but I mean it: approach getting the placement much as you would getting a date. Or, if you are asked on dates yourself, imagine how you evaluate an asker's approach. Generally, when people ask us on dates we don't like charity—saying yes mostly because the person is desperate and begs for a chance, threatening to cry unless we take pity on their situation; we want to have a good time on a date and want something out of the arrangement for ourselves.

Similarly, the person who hires you or selects you isn't primarily interested in making your dreams come true, but in choosing an applicant who will be the most trouble-free and simple match to the opening. In your cover letter and resume, radiate confidence and assurance that you will be that person who can glide easily into the vacancy—that you are already qualified to begin, or with a minimum of preparation or training.

Cover letters in short: It's not about you. It's about answering the question, "What can you offer *me*?" Sorry. Life is not fair sometimes.

*Do not:*

- Do not beg. No one cares how much you want to be in the program, or how crushed your mother will be if you aren't accepted. Do not plead how hard you'll work if you're only given a chance. Why should anyone give you a chance if others are qualified *now*?

- Do not make excuses or condemn yourself. You are selling yourself. If you had poor grades but lots of experience, don't write, "Although my grades are not stellar, I feel that—." Talk up your positive accomplishments by emphasizing only your strengths.
- Do not show off with your vocabulary in order to sound intellectual: "My lugubrious and sesquipedalian bifurcation at HomePlus was an inchoate and jocose coruscation." If no one understands your sentences, your application may simply be thrown away.
- Do not audition for *American Idol*. Weepy introductions which begin with, "Ever since I was a little child I had a dream that I would float upon clouds like the eagles" make people sick. Certainly you want some emotion in your application, but the readers want to see concrete evidence that you have a commitment to the program and not just beautiful words. If you want to be a nurse, discuss the nursing trade magazines you read, the volunteering you've done, and the research you've done about the institution you're applying to. No one cares about your *passion*!
- Do not use an unprofessional e-mail address. If your personal account is [partynaked69@naver.com](mailto:partynaked69@naver.com) or [fuzzywuzzykimmy3622@daum.net](mailto:fuzzywuzzykimmy3622@daum.net), it may be noticed and reflect badly on you. Take out a second e-mail account with a more serious name.
- This is a touchy matter: You have every right to post pictures of yourself on Facebook passed out after drinking beer, or of dirty jokes, or of bikini girls, and your recruiter or potential employer has every ability to view these pictures when evaluating your application. At least think about drawing limits on what you want strangers on the internet to see about you.
- Do not send a Hangul Word file if it's an international position. If the reader cannot open the file it may simply be overlooked. PDF or .doc files are usually best. If your objection is "But I don't have Word" or "But we Koreans use Hangul Word," understand that the recruiter reading your file may not be a Korean, and may give up and select another application.

*Do:*

- Express confidence. Approach the opportunity as something you are qualified to do and deserve. You are not asking for a favor or a special break, but proposing an arrangement that benefits everyone. Explain what *you* can do for *them*. If you accept me, these are the skills I have for you; I would like to make the program better by being committed to doing these things and being active in these other responsibilities.
- Research the program. Show that you've taken the time to find out the specifics. Who works in the program? What are its particular strengths? What is the location like? What is its past history? Get on the internet and find out.
- Have a concrete future plan. What specifically do you want to do while you are in the program, and after you finish? Are there professors or people you want to work with? Where do you want to work after you graduate, and in what specialty?
- Think about having a professional or academic web presence on a site like LinkedIn.com or Academia.edu.
- For e-mailed docs, use A4 formatting for Europe/Asia and Letter for North America.
- Sign your letter. It's an indication of good faith that you have written this letter yourself. If you're submitting by e-mail, if possible print the letter, sign it, and send a PDF scan of the image. Or, scan or take a cellphone picture of your signature and then crop and insert the picture into the page (as the following example shows).

*Sample Cover Letter*

Notice how everything is left-justified, and that in business writing the tendency is to skip spaces between paragraphs rather than indenting. The paragraphs also tend to be shorter in business writing, reflecting its time-is-money-hurry-up-and-get-to-the-point style.

You shouldn't simply copy this letter's sentences, although it is a good formatting model. What are your strong points that you could bring out in the letter, which will give more background to the facts listed in your resume? If you have some special quality, such as leadership, explain how your experiences and education reflect that quality and make it the central narrative of your letter.

Ima Student • 103-456 Pa Bo Apartments, Panggu, Daegu, Korea 10-701-2345 • [imas@naver.com](mailto:imas@naver.com)

December 1, 2015

Dr. Sue Reggie  
Office of Extension Affairs  
United Nations University Institute  
Potterierei 72, 8000  
Brugge, Belgium

Put your contact details in a header (one/two lines), or at the page top (multiple lines).

What are you applying for? There might be multiple programs or openings.

Dear Dr. Reggie,

I am writing to apply for the 2016 internship program (VCB-301), sponsored by the University of Samgetung for a semester in Belgium.

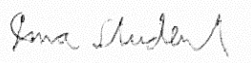
I am presently a senior at Nemseh University majoring in International Sleeping. I was born in Masan, Korea, and moved to the USA when I was a child. In high school I was a treasurer for the student union and a reporter for the newspaper club. In university I am presently a member of the university orchestra. Last summer I went on a volunteer trip to Mexico to help build houses for poor families. I have tried to have a variety of experiences because I believe that people who have a well-rounded life will be better in their careers.

I would like to go to Belgium because I like to travel and I want to see the beautiful buildings in Bruges. I am interested in architecture and photography and I would like to see the Cathedral of Our Lady and the canals in the city in autumn. I also know your program is well-known in the field of International Sleeping and your professors have published several books on napping. I would especially like to work with Dr. Soju on advanced dreaming, which is what I intend to specialize in as a graduate student.

I want to be a good representative for Korea and for the university by promoting them when I am in Belgium. I think the experience would be good for my career and would help the university by showing them that many different people take classes here.

I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about the internship and how my background will allow me to make a positive contribution to the program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ima Student  
Encl. Resume

Important!

Sign your letter  
(here the image  
was inserted).

## 13.4 Resumes

There are three basic types of resumes:

1. Chronological (listing from the present backwards). This is the most common type.
2. Functional (listing by category of skill; for example, divided into 1. Sales 2. I.T. 3. Management). This is good for people who have had a wide variety of careers.
3. Combination (a mix of chronological and functional)

A CV (Curriculum Vitae) is a special type of resume used mostly by professors which emphasizes courses taken and taught and scholarly achievements. It is different from a normal resume and may be many pages in length.

Most resumes have the headings “Education” and “Work Experience,” followed by other headings. Use the categories which best present your experiences. For example, if you haven’t worked at all you might have “Volunteer Experience” instead. Other possibilities in your resume are “Other Activities” or “Awards and Accomplishments.”

As with cover letters, there isn’t one correct way to write a resume, but there are generally accepted formatting conventions—left justifying, professional fonts. You can use arrows or dots or squares as you wish, or put dates on the right or left—it’s no crime for your resume to reflect your personal style. The key rule is that resumes should be visually attractive and clearly organized; someone should be able to scan the paper and find necessary information in seconds.

I’m often asked “how long should my resume be?” My rule of thumb is one extra page for each decade out of high school. When you are twenty, 1-2 pages is probably enough. A forty-year old might need 3-4 pages. Fewer pages is usually better, but do not use tiny margins and 8-point fonts to jam your resume into one less page. The person evaluating your resume may be older and no longer have the vision to read tiny print.

*Do not:*

- Do not include personal information such your age, gender, or marital status (unless it’s somehow relevant).
- Do not include a photograph in North America, unless it’s requested (there are legal reasons in some jurisdictions for this).
- Do not include religious or political information (again, unless it’s relevant to the position).
- Do not lie about your qualifications. If you get busted, you’ve destroyed your chances of ever working for that employer—and perhaps for others as well if it’s a small or well-connected industry.

Don’t be vague. If you worked as a teacher’s helper, don’t add “Duties: helped the teacher.” Thanks a lot. List specific actions you did, such as assisting with exams, helping with paperwork, and so on. Most employers like to see any experience related to managing people or money, even in your classes or in volunteer activities.

Don’t overlook the skills you learned in your courses at university. There are abilities and experiences you have which are not necessarily acquired through paid jobs. If you were in a debate club and learned to speak in public or negotiate disagreements, this is a useful skill; if you were in a class project where you handled money or led meetings of students, by all means consider this an employable skill on a resume.

*Do:*

- Include your contact details at the top or in a running header. You do not want to leave anyone confused about who you are.

- Be brief. The average reader takes only a few seconds to scan your resume and then put it into the “throw away” or the “look at again” pile. Do not waste text on trivial biographical details irrelevant to the position. No one cares that you won a prize in dancing at the talent show (unless you’re applying to be a dancer).
- Use clean paper and have clear text. Make the resume look beautiful. Please... spend the ten cents or hundred won on a paperclip. “Sorry, my ink cartridge was running out” gets your resume thrown away.
- Use lots of *active verbs*. The employer wants to know what you *did!* You served, cooked, supervised, trained, cleaned, helped, managed, counted, prepared, taught, sold, watched... something. Skills are *used*.
- Use past simple verbs for previous experiences, and present-tense verbs for continuing experiences.
- Use a minimum of “I” in your resume. Use condensed sentences or point form rather than complete sentences.
- Rather than listing “References available upon request,” either list your references at the bottom of your resume or attach a separate list.

### Sample Resume

Bo Kim Bap  
333 Territory St. Washington, CA  
702-234-5678  
[bokimbap@gmail.com](mailto:bokimbap@gmail.com)

Specific contact information – in the same font but easy to find. Or, put this in your header.

### Objective

Headings bolded / italicized for easy reference

- To further my experience in the hospitality industry and to become a successful large-hotel sous chef.

Again, specific goal. “Pursue my dreams with passion” means nothing.

### Education

University of Samgyupsal  
Daejeon, Korea  
Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management  
Thesis: “Hotel Security Systems and Staff Retention.”  
Supervisor Dr. G. Macali, [gmacali@samgyup.ac.kr](mailto:gmacali@samgyup.ac.kr)  
GPA: 3.78

May 2014

Newest to oldest

Include GPA only if it’s really good!

Dong Dong Ju High School  
Jinhae, Korea  
Advanced High School diploma

Jun 2008

### Work Experience

South Donut Sound Community College  
Walla Walla, WA

Feb 2009 - Jun 2010

## Baking &amp; Pastry Arts Instructional Assistant

- Helped professors during laboratory and classroom instruction
- Developed new catering menus, including: banquet, buffet and take-out

Data, data! The interviewer might want to contact your previous employers.

Indian Summer Golf and Country Club  
 Riboflavin, CA  
 Bartender

Aug 2008 – Jan 2009

- Provided a high-level service of food and beverage in the clubhouse
- Assisted in training of new team members

Notice how all of the dates are in the same format (month, year) and form a straight vertical column. You might use tables in Word to do this. Some people also omit the months for clarity.

**Other Experiences**

- Volunteer for Chefs on Wheels, Los Angeles, May 2009
- Korea Eats National Scholarship Winner 2013
- Volunteer English translator and guide at Busan Film Festival (PIFF), September 2012

**Other Skills**

- English, Korean, and some French spoken
- TOEIC: 940
- Web design with HTML5 and JQuery script

You need not list Microsoft Word or Office—it's the 21<sup>st</sup> century and your cat can use Microsoft Word. But if you have a specialized computer skill, include it.

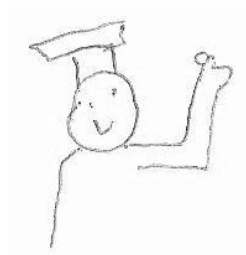
*Reversing Dates and Experiences*

If you like, or if there is some reason that you feel dates are important or more logical for the employer to follow, you can certainly reverse the resume horizontally. I prefer this myself:

2014	University of Samgyupsal Daejeon, Korea Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Thesis: "Hotel Security Systems and Staff Retention." Supervisor Dr. G. Macali, <a href="mailto:gmacali@samgyup.ac.kr">gmacali@samgyup.ac.kr</a>
2011 - 2013	South Donut Sound Community College Walla Walla, WA Baking & Pastry Arts Instructional Assistant

You'll notice that I have omitted the months from the years for brevity. Six years after the fact the recruiter probably doesn't care about whether your job began in June or July. People will often entirely omit positions which are more than ten years old, unless it involved chairing the UN or something especially prestigious. Another slight cheat is, if some much older job gave you a peculiarly useful skill, to place it in the "Other Skills" category.

## 14 Final Comments



### 14.1 Afterword

We have talked about the planning, writing, and editing of academic research papers (with a small detour into technical and business writing). Hopefully, through all of these procedures you have gained some techniques for making your writing more efficient, clear, interesting, and most important, more believable by cultivating a trust in your reader that you know what you are talking about. If so you will be on your way to convincing him or her of your arguments and becoming a part of the academic discussion.

The best-case scenario is where the reader accepts your position. The next-to-best case scenario is where the reader does not accept your position but appreciates and respects your reasoning. The worst-case scenario is where the reader rejects your reasoning or does not even understand your position or evidence. Poetry can be opaque and evasive. Literature can play games with sequence and meaning. The chief purpose of such genres is to entertain, which is honorable work. But the business of academic papers is to inform and persuade with clarity and transparency.

The craft of writing is based on rules and conventions, but at its best it reflects individual personality and style—once again, it is part science and part art. Developmental psychologist Howard Gardner posits that all humans have multiple intelligences. That is, we all have multiple skills of learning and thinking in varying degrees. Among them are linguistic, logical, musical, visual, body, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences.

Although Gardner's theories are not accepted by mainstream psychologists, you will find that you do have familiar ways of conceptualizing or phrasing things in writing—you favor certain euphemisms or allegories or comparisons. You find certain sentence patterns more natural than others. You prefer adjectives of sight, or hearing, or touch, or smell, or taste. The argument looks fishy; it sounds fishy; it smells fishy; it tastes fishy.

These differences are good things. It would be a boring world if everyone wrote exactly as I do. There are certain newspaper columnists whose style I immediately recognize, just as there are musicians whose new songs I know instantly. People seldom say that writing is “fun” in the same way that a party on Saturday night is fun. But there is a certain type of special feeling in clicking on a print icon and seeing a text in your hands which adds to a community of thinkers and readers, which is fixed and permanent, and which is totally yours, for the rest of your life or even beyond.

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## 14.2 Acknowledgements

Though I am breaking my own rules somewhat in not citing fully or properly, I would like to acknowledge both the books below as well as the large number of grammar and style handouts which I have absorbed over the years while a graduate student at UNLV and while teaching in Mexico and in Korea. ESL can be a slightly shady industry, but I am grateful for all those co-teachers who freely traded around their handouts and materials in the spirit of making things better for everyone.

My thanks to students at Hanyang who have given me permission to use anonymous excerpts of their course papers as writing examples. Additional thanks to Georgeanna Hall at Keimyung University (<http://ghall.me>) in Daegu, who in earlier drafts made editing suggestions, corrected my Korean, and smoothened my coarse sense of humor. I am responsible for remaining mistakes.

The opinions expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent Hanyang University.

### *Works I Have Referred to*

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