NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY SINGAPORE

CC0001

Inquiry and Communication in an Interdisciplinary World

Student's Course Guide

AY 2021/2022

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION CENTRE
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

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Writing is a tool for thinking. Through the process of organising our thoughts into words, we often stumble upon ideas and figure out what we mean. At its best, this process yields new insights. One of the aims of this course is to give you this experience of discovering ideas through the process of writing.

While you will have the opportunity to practise the genre conventions of your discipline later in your studies, this first common communication course is designed to help you form habits of thinking that will serve you across the university and even in the world outside the university. Taken by all first-year undergraduates, this foundational course will develop your written and oral communication skills, as well as your ability to read and analyse texts. It will help you to understand revision as integral to the process of composition, to convey your interpretations and ideas with confidence and clarity, and to consider audience and purpose when you communicate.

Contents

Course Description

Introduction

CC0001 Inquiry and Communication in an Interdisciplinary World is a 2-credit course, which is part of NTU's Interdisciplinary Collaborative Core.

For this course, you will be asked to explore a topic for your own research. Your choices are:

(1) a place in Singapore;
(2) a community within Singapore; or
(3) your own writing practices.

You will begin by closely observing your chosen topic, recording your data, and analysing interesting patterns or puzzles in what you observe. In class, we will practise how to come to a question to which you do not have an answer. This question will become the motivation for your writing in the course. Eventually, you will be asked to find two sources that can help you respond to your question. Your final goal will be to draft an op-ed (short for "opposite the editorial page"), a piece of writing usually found in a newspaper or magazine that expresses an author's opinion on a current topic. Your op-ed will be peer workshopped and revised substantially over two to three weeks. You will also consult with your teacher and receive feedback on your draft. At the end of the semester, you may decide to send your op-ed to a newspaper or online platform.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

(1) closely observe and analyse texts and phenomena;
(2) design questions or puzzles that can motivate further exploration;
(3) summarise, paraphrase, and quote from sources accurately and ethically;
(4) compose complex arguments that build on the ideas of published authors as well as your own analysis and thinking;
(5) express your ideas orally through presentations;
(6) discover writing as a tool for thinking;
(7) use peer and teacher feedback to revise your thinking and communication; and
(8) recognise audience and rhetorical situation as significant factors in communication.

Course Schedule

Week	Tutorial Topic	Focus	Assignment Deadlines
1	No Tutorial		Read Scudder's "Look at Your Fish" from Unit 1
2	**Unit 1:** Close Reading	Introduce larger course goals; how to close read a written text and an image.	Watch video, "How to Come Up with Good Ideas"
3	**Unit 2:** Analysing Data & Descriptive Writing	How to gather data and analyse a place, a community, and your personal writing practices.	Choose your topic and conduct your research

Week	Tutorial Topic	Focus	Assignment Deadlines
4	**Unit 3:** From Observations to Questions	Moving from observations to analysis to a question or puzzle worth researching	**Blog 1 Due**: Observations and analysis of your chosen topic
5	**Unit 4:** Working with Sources	How to summarise, paraphrase, and quote ethically; how to analyse and reflect on your sources	
6	**Unit 5:** Finding Reputable Sources	How to find reputable sources; thinking outside the box	**Assignment 1 Due**: Observation to a Question Length: 500 words
7	**Unit 6:** Putting Texts into Conversation & Argument	Putting texts into conversation and forming an argument Mid-semester Reflection	
	Recess		**Blog 2 Due**: Summaries of 2 sources and reflection on how they help you respond to your question
8	**Unit 7:** Student Draft Critique & Pitching to an Audience	Student draft critique; three-minute pitch contest	**Online Activity:** **Citation and APA Format**
9	**Unit 8:** Peer Workshop	Critique of a student essay; peer workshop	**First Draft Due** **Consultations begin**
10	**Consultations**	*Consultation replaces class tutorial	Consultations ***Upload a photo or meme.**
11	**Unit 9:** Presentation Skills	How to organise a presentation; develop awareness and control over paralanguage	Consultations Keep revising!
12	**Presentations**	6-8 minute in-class presentations with Q&A	**Assignment 2 Due**: Upload slides before class.
13	**Presentations**	6-8 minute in-class presentations with Q&A Final Reflection	

Assignment 3 (1200-1350-word op-ed) is due on Monday of Week 14 on NTULearn.

Course Assessment

There is no end-of-semester examination for this course. Instead, we will use continual assessment, which takes into consideration the development of your written and oral communication skills throughout the semester.

Blogs and Drafts: Blogs and drafts are not graded, but offer you a space to practice techniques, experiment, and stumble onto ideas. You will find that the more effort you put into the blogs and your revision, the better your assignments will be.

Assignment	Word Limit/Duration	Type	Weighting
Assignment 1: Observation to a Question	**500 words**	Individual	**20%**
Assignment 2: Presentation	**6-8 minutes**	Individual	**25%**
Assignment 3: Op-Ed	**1200-1350 words**	Individual	**40%**
Class Participation Including consultation, 2 blogs, three-minute pitch, peer workshopping and weekly class discussion	**Weeks 2 - 13**	Individual	**15%**
Total			**100%**

The instructions and guidelines for each course assignment, along with submission details, are included at the end of this course guide. You are required to submit your written assignments through *Turnitin*, a plagiarism detection system.

A Note about our Discourse Community

"Academic language … is no one's mother tongue" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1994, p. 8).

Learning to read, think, and write as an academic is like learning a new language. As we practise academic writing, keep in mind that this is simply one way of communicating. You use different forms of discourse when you speak with your friends and possibly another when you speak with your family. The discourse of academia offers another set of conventions and habits for thinking and communicating. One discourse is not better than another; they just serve different purposes. We hope you leave this class with an introduction to academic discourse that enhances rather than diminishes the discourses you already value and use.

In class, we may wander into topics on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality that might make you feel uncomfortable. We strive to make our classroom a place where you can express your views and emotions. All we ask is that we try to be respectful of one another and be thoughtful about our various backgrounds and worldviews. While we will inevitably find degrees of overlap and difference in our ideas and backgrounds, it would be presumptuous to assume that we can really know another's worldview. Yet, the beauty of our academic setting is that here we are encouraged to open ourselves up to the ideas and feelings of others. We read and listen to others primarily for this reason: to expand our horizon of experience and develop a sense of compassion for what might feel strange to us at first. If any materials or discussions offend or upset you, please voice your concerns to your tutor.

The Communication Cube

LCC's CommCube offers one-on-one tutoring sessions and is an invaluable resource! We encourage you to make use of it when you are preparing for your presentation and drafting your op-ed.

https://www.ntu.edu.sg/lcc/about-us/lcc-communication-cube/about-lcc-comm-cube

References

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J-C. (1994). Introduction: Language and the relationship to language in the teaching situation. In P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, & M. de Saint Martin (Eds), *Academic Discourse* (pp. 1–34). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Unit 1

Close Reading

An essayist is "a writer interested in human stories, watching, remembering, and sticking around long enough to be generally hospitable to otherness."

– James Wood, "Reality Effects: John Jeremiah Sullivan's essays," *The New Yorker*

Introduction

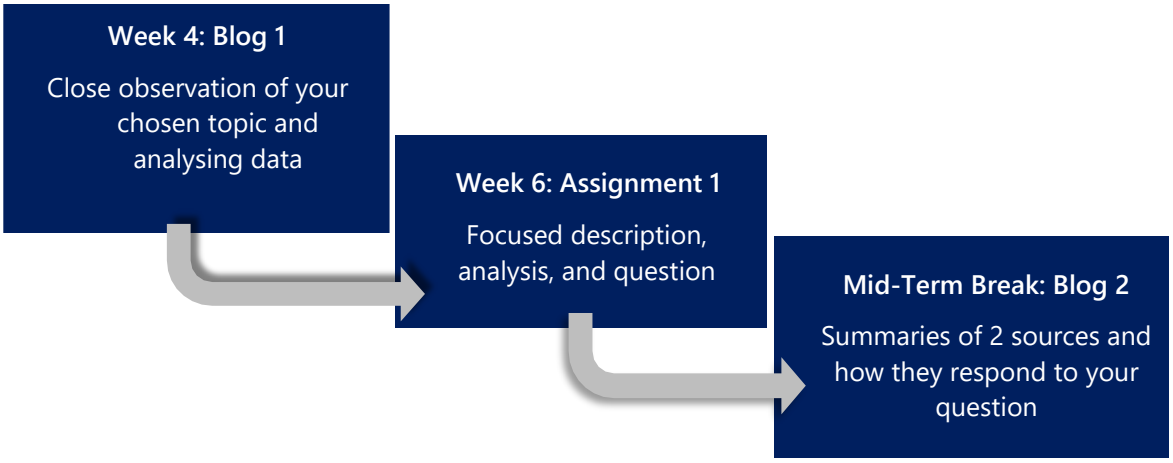
In this unit, we will review how the assignments of this course build on one another throughout the semester. More importantly, we will practise how to close read a text and conduct observational research using an image of a place.

Learning Outcomes

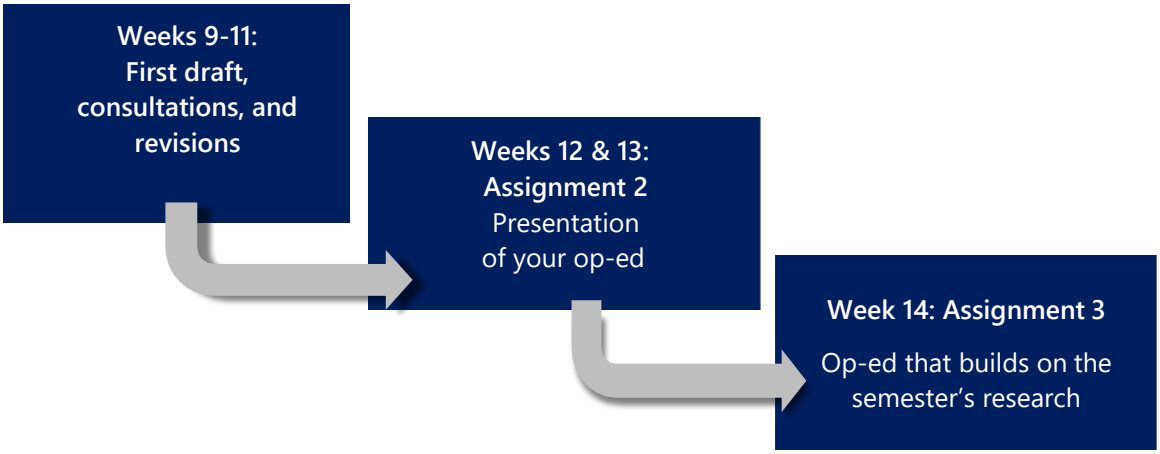
Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

(1) identify the goals of the course; and
(2) close read and critique written and visual texts.

Overview of the Semester's Work



Mid-Term Break



Your final goal for this course is to write an op-ed, which is short for opposite the editorial page. Op-eds are usually found in magazines and newspapers, and, at the end of this course, we would like you to consider editing and submitting your op-ed for a wider audience beyond the university.

You will begin by choosing your topic of research and spending a week recording your close observations. You can choose:

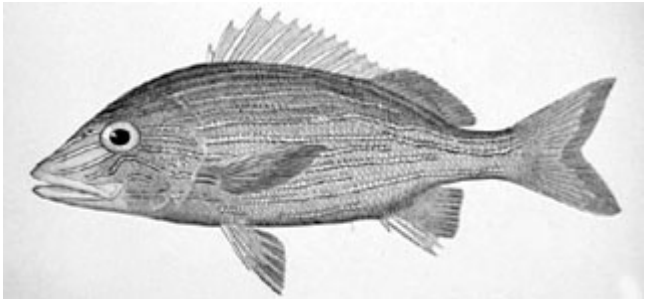
(1) a place in Singapore

(2) a community in Singapore
(3) your own writing practices

Choose wisely, as you will be working with this topic for the rest of the semester!

You will work toward your op-ed gradually. First, you will submit a blog, where you present your data and analysis. What did you observe? What patterns or significant details did you notice? After getting feedback from your teacher, you will submit Assignment 1, where you will organise your observations into a piece of descriptive writing, including analysis and a question prompted by your observations. During the break, you will submit a second blog that summarises and reflects on two sources that might help you respond to your question. After getting feedback from your teacher, you will draft your op-ed, and revise it based on teacher and peer feedback. Then, you will present your op-ed in Assignment 2, a formal six to eight-minute presentation. This will give you more feedback as you make the final revisions to your op-ed, Assignment 3, which is due on Monday of Week 14.

But let's not rush ahead! First, let's consider how you go about close reading a text!



Hæmulon elegans, NOAA, Drawing by H. L. Todd

Activity 1.1
Close Reading

The essay below was written by the founder of American insect palaeontology, Samuel Scudder, in 1874. Read the essay actively, highlighting passages that seem important or interesting and jotting down thoughts and questions in the margins. This type of active reading, called **annotation**, is the first step of close reading.

Once you are done reading, do the following on your own:

(1) In your own words, summarise this essay in three to five sentences. What seems to be the most essential idea that Scudder wants his reader to understand?
(2) Highlight two to three quotations from this essay that you think are the most important. In other words, if you wanted to share this essay with a friend, what passages would you show your friend to help her grasp the essay?
(3) Characterise how this writer writes. List two adjectives that describe Scudder's tone or style.
(4) Pick one moment in the essay that confuses or interests you. Write a few sentences to explain why it confuses or interests you.

After you have written a little for each question, share your findings with your group and note how your responses are similar or different.

"Look at Your Fish" by Samuel Hubbard Scudder

[1] It was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz, and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterward proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire, and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter, I replied that while I wished to be well grounded in all departments of zoology, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

[2] "When do you wish to begin?" he asked.

[3] "Now," I replied.

[4] This seemed to please him, and with an energetic "Very well," he reached from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

[5] "Take this fish," said he, "and look at it; we call it a haemulon; by and by I will ask what you have seen."

[6] With that, he left me, but in a moment returned with explicit instructions as to the care of the object entrusted to me.

[7] "No man is fit to be a naturalist," said he, "who does not know how to take care of specimens."

[8] I was to keep the fish before me in a tin tray, and occasionally moisten the surface with alcohol from the jar, always taking care to replace the stopper tightly. Those were not the days of ground glass stoppers, and elegantly shaped exhibition jars; all the old students will recall the huge, neckless glass bottles with their leaky, wax-besmeared corks, half eaten by insects and begrimed with cellar dust. Entomology was a cleaner science than ichthyology, but the example of the professor, who had unhesitatingly plunged to the bottom of the jar to produce the fish, was infectious; and though this alcohol had "a very ancient and fish-like smell," I really dared not show any aversion within these sacred precincts, and treated the alcohol as though it were pure water. Still, I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. My friends at home, too, were annoyed, when they discovered that no eau de cologne would drown the perfume which haunted me like a shadow.

[9] In ten minutes I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor, who had however left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, my specimen was dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate the beast from a fainting fit, and looked with anxiety for a return of the normal, sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed—an hour—another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around; looked it in the face—ghastly; from behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three-quarters view—just as ghastly. I was in despair; at an early hour I concluded that lunch was necessary; so, with infinite relief, the fish was carefully replaced in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

[10] On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow-students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation again looked at it. I might not use a magnifying glass; instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish: it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my finger down its throat to feel how sharp the teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me—I would draw the fish, and now with surprise, I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.

[11] "That is right," said he; "a pencil is one of the best of eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet, and your bottle corked."

[12] With these encouraging words, he added, "Well, what is it like?"

[13] He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me; the fringed gill-arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips and

lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fins, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body. When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then, with an air of disappointment: "You have not looked very carefully; why," he continued, more earnestly, "you haven't even seen one of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plainly before your eyes as the fish itself; *look again, look again*!" and he left me to my misery.

[14] I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish! But now I set myself to my task with a will and discovered one new thing after another until I saw how just the professor's criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly, and when, towards its close, the professor inquired:

[15] "Do you see it yet?"

[16] "No," I replied, "I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before."

[17] "That is the next best," said he earnestly, "but I won't hear you now; put away your fish and go home; perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you before you look at the fish."

[18] This was disconcerting; not only must I think of my fish all night, studying without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be; but also, without reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had a bad memory; so I walked home by the Charles River in a distracted state, with my two perplexities.

[19] The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring; here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw.

[20] "Do you perhaps mean," I asked, "that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired organs?"

[21] His thoroughly pleased "Of course! Of course!" repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he had discoursed most happily and enthusiastically—as he always did—upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

[22] "Oh, look at your fish!" he said, and left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour he returned and heard my new catalog.

[23] "That is good, that is good!" he repeated; "but that is not all; go on"; and so for three long days he placed that fish before my eyes; forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. "*Look, look, look*," was his repeated injunction.

[24] This was the best entomological lesson I ever had—a lesson, whose influence has extended to the details of every subsequent study; a legacy the professor has left to me, as he has left it to many others, of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part.

[25] A year afterward, some of us were amusing ourselves with chalking outlandish beasts upon the museum blackboard. We drew prancing star-fishes; frogs in mortal combat; hydra-headed worms; stately crawfishes, standing on their tails, bearing aloft umbrellas; and grotesque fishes with gaping mouths and staring eyes. The professor came in shortly after and was as amused as any at our experiments. He looked at the fishes.

[26] "Haemulons, every one of them," he said; "Mr. — drew them."

[27] True; and to this day, if I attempt a fish, I can draw nothing but haemulons.

[28] The fourth day, a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblances and differences between the two; another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves; the odor had become a pleasant perfume; and even now, the sight of an old, six-inch, worm-eaten cork brings fragrant memories!

[29] The whole group of haemulons was thus brought in review; and, whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, the preparation and examination of the bony framework, or the description of the various parts, Agassiz's training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement, was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them.

[30] "Facts are stupid things," he would say, "until brought into connection with some general law."

[31] At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects; but what I had gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

Activity 1.2
"Dwelling with the data"

Now that we have a sense of Scudder's message from Activity 1.1, we are going to look at the essay more closely. This "Notice and Focus" exercise, described by David Wasserman and Jill Stephen (2009) in *Writing Analytically*, can be applied to any object of study and can help you look more closely when you find yourself stuck. They emphasize the importance of "dwell[ing] with the data" and being comfortable with uncertainty (p. 35). In other words, do not rush to form a claim, argument, or opinion of a text. Resist worrying about what is right or wrong, and just let yourself notice details in the text. There are three steps:

(1) List at least **10 details** about "Look at Your Fish." Be sure to refer to actual details and quotations in the essay. Avoid judging, interpreting, or generalising. Just make a list of interesting details that you can point to in the essay.

(2) From your list, pick **3 details** that you think are most interesting, strange, significant, or revealing. You might even notice a pattern or contrasting details. Write a few sentences for each of the three details, exploring what is interesting, strange.... Here, you are moving from observation to interpretation.

(3) Try to draft a question or perhaps even an insight based on the writing you just did.

Activity 1.3
Close Observation of Images

Let's now apply this process of close reading to the close observation of Raghubir Singh's 1991 photograph *Pavement Mirror Shop, Howrah, West Bengal*.

(1) Take 5 minutes to jot down details—what do you see?

(2) Zoom in on a few details that you find most interesting and puzzling and write more about them.

(3) As a group, choose a few details to analyse more closely. Try to point to:
   a) a seemingly small detail that could actually be significant
   b) a pattern (repetition or contrast)
   c) a break in the pattern (an anomaly)

(4) Brainstorm on how you might analyse and interpret what you have noticed. What concepts or ideas might they lead you to question? What interesting puzzles or problems could they open up? Move to consider the implication of these details. Ask yourself, "So what?"

(Singh, 1991)

You might be wondering why we bother with all this close reading and analysis. Perhaps we are reading too much into things? Perhaps texts are better left just experienced? It is true that your first encounter with a video, painting, essay, novel, the news, or a speech can be just on the level of experience – what is the message and how does it make you feel? But to really engage with a text so that you can discuss it, you need this deeper level of analysis. You must go beyond just *what* a text is saying (its message) and examine *how* it says it. This is especially important when it comes to discerning "fake news" or the possible propaganda of a political speech.

Over the next week, do some brainstorming to help you begin to think about your research topic for the op-ed that you will write this semester.

Before you start brainstorming, get inspired by watching Mark Rober's TEDxYouth talk from 2015.

How to Come Up with Good Ideas | Mark Rober | TEDxYouth@ColumbiaSC
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1kbrlZRDvU

After watching the video, put pen to paper and consider what sparks your curiosity.

(1) List at least 10 things that you care or are curious about.
(2) Of this list, pick three that seem most interesting to you.
(3) Do some writing on why you find these things interesting. What about them appeals to you?
(4) How might these interests be nurtured by your choice of topic for your op-ed? See below for details.

With this personal reflection in mind, begin to think about what topic you would like to research this semester. You can choose:

(1) A specific place in Singapore. This would require you to go to the actual place and observe the place, taking lots of notes and even some photos or video.

(2) A community in Singapore. This would require you to observe this community firsthand and interview a member.

(3) Your own writing practices across different mediums. This would require you to keep a journal of all the writing you do in a week, from texts to online posts, to notes in classes. You will also have to do reflective writing each day.

You will need to do this research and submit your observations in a blog in Week 4. For now, just start putting thought into what interests you. What do you want to explore and think about? What sparks your curiosity? You can find a list of suggested places and communities on the course main site.

Summary

In this unit, you reviewed the work and goals of the semester, practised how to close read a text, and closely observed an image of a place.

References

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Unit 2

Analysing Data & Descriptive Writing

One trick to becoming a better observer and thus a better thinker is to *slow down*, to stop trying to draw conclusions before you've spent time openly attending to the data, letting yourself notice more. Better ideas grow out of a richer acquaintance with whatever it is you are looking at. Observation and interpretation go hand in hand, but it helps greatly to allow yourself a distinct observation stage and to prolong this beyond what most people find comfortable.

– David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen, *Writing Analytically*, p. 33

Introduction

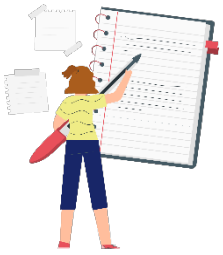
As former NASA engineer and YouTuber Mark Rober (2015) claims in his TEDxYouth talk, the first step of the scientific method is observation. In this unit, we will practise how to observe and gather data for the possible topics you might explore this semester. To prepare you for Assignment 1, we will also examine models of descriptive writing and practise how to *show* your reader your chosen topic.

As you move forward to your own research in the coming week, keep in mind Rober's advice for how to come up with a good idea: (1) be curious by observing and questioning (2) work hard, and (3) get lucky!

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

(1) conduct your own close observing and gathering of data for your research topic; and
(2) identify the qualities of effective analysis and descriptive writing.



Ethnographic Research and Analysis

In her study of rental flats and low-income Singaporeans, *This Is What Inequality Looks Like* (2018), Teo You Yenn explains how she visited HBD rental flat neighbourhoods over three years, making ninety visits and talking to two hundred people. For each visit, she would stay for three to four hours, speaking with two to three families. She describes her process in this way:

> "After each visit, I spent another two to three hours writing fieldnotes, recording as closely as I could the details of what people shared with me, and the specifics of what I heard and saw. Over time, I began to identify patterns and salient themes, and to more systematically code my data" (p. 274).

Discussing her methodology, Teo clarifies that her research is ethnographic, meaning that her data comes from repeated, informal conversations and observations.

> "With certain types of questions about the social world, where there are things we do not understand well, where there are phenomena that are hidden, stigmatized, sensitive, or complicated, the ethnographic approach generates valuable data and insights that alternative approaches to asking questions, such as survey questionnaires, cannot" (p. 275)

While you will not have the time in this course to repeatedly observe your chosen place, community, or writing practices, Teo's ethnographic process still applies to what you will be doing for your first blog. You will be observing as much detail as possible, writing it all down, and then looking for significant patterns. At first, you may feel overwhelmed and not know what to focus on. Or, just the opposite, you might feel bored and not see anything worth noting. Regardless, you should put pen to paper and just start observing. What do you see, hear, smell, feel around you?

Imagine you are a human recording machine and take as many notes as possible. This is the phase in which raw data is gathered. Do not try to interpret the data just yet. Instead, just like Scudder with his fish, keep looking, smelling, listening, and feeling. After observing for an extended period of time, you will begin to identify patterns and see how the seemingly insignificant might become significant. Gradually, you should begin to focus your observations, narrowing in on a particular aspect of your chosen topic that you find most interesting.

Vocabulary: Analysis

Analysis entails closely examining, interpreting, and commenting on evidence. You begin analysis by looking at details, rather than making general claims. When you analyse, you go beyond just telling the reader what the explicit message of a text is, and you consider what is implicit. This could include analysing HOW an author conveys a message. What are the limitations of the text? Are there logical fallacies or appeals? Analysis is important because it is how your voice as a writer is heard.

Adapted from Rosenwasser and Stephen (2017) in *Writing Analytically*, the four analytical moves are:

(1) Suspend judgement.

(2) Look for patterns of repetition, contrasts, and anomalies.

(3) Make the implicit explicit. Push observations to implications by asking "SO WHAT?"

(4) Keep reformulating questions and explanations.

Keep this in mind as you do your blog!

Activity 2.1
Descriptive Writing and Analysis

Actively read the two extracts below, highlighting details and imagery you find effective and jotting down questions and thoughts. As you read, do the following:

(1) Highlight any sensory details or descriptive language such as active verbs, adjectives, adverbs, metaphors, and imagery.

(2) Mark an example of each author *showing* rather than simply *telling* the reader about the place.

(3) Do you see either of these writers making any of the five analytical moves listed above in our definition of analysis?

(4) Where do the authors analyse specific details and how does this interpretation prompt a question?

This Is What Inequality Looks Like (Teo, 2018)

If one is not paying attention, it is not immediately obvious when a block of flats is made up mostly or entirely of rental units. But once you start paying attention, there are a few clues observable from street level.

First, doors. The way to tell a block of rental flats is to look at the space between front doors. Rental flats are either so-called 1-room or 2-room HDB flats. This means they have either no separate bedroom or one bedroom respectively. 1-room flats have a living area, a kitchen, a bathroom; they have no separate bedroom; they are roughly 35 square meters. 2-room flats have a living area, a kitchen, a bathroom, and one bedroom; they are about 45 square meters. For comparison, HDB 4-room flats—the modal type of housing in Singapore—are double the size at 90 square meters. Each rental flat is thus relatively narrow and the doors in close proximity. Looking at the facade of a HDB rental block, one is struck by the high density of units.

A second feature of rental flats that is striking is smells. Many rental blocks I have visited, particularly in older neighborhoods, have distinct and not entirely pleasant smells. It is difficult to say what the smells

are of, but again high density is at play here. The smells are accompanied by the sight of trash in common areas—including abandoned mattresses and furnishings—and sometimes cat urine in stairwells. The limited space within flats means people need to air clothes, mattresses, and upholstery in corridors, and so damp textiles contribute to smells. One gets used to the smells and yet it never leaves one's consciousness entirely. When I first started my fieldwork, it was one of the most salient experiences of being in rental neighborhoods: my brain switched to fieldwork mode as the scents hit my nostrils; if I had spent some weeks away, the smells brought me back to the memories and feelings associated with that space and my work there. Taking the stairs, especially if there was cat pee, I found myself holding my breath as I walked past.

I do not think the trash/smell situation is there because rental-flat dwellers are inherently less capable of taking care of their environments. Around Singapore, there are high-density areas where a great deal of trash is generated. The reason many other areas remain clean is because there are many workers doing the work of cleaning up. The point that strikes me here about smells is this: going home to these smells is going into a space that is distinct, a little apart from other spaces in Singapore. Whether or not it is thought of consciously, when a rental flat resident goes home, she or he enters into a zone marked not only by the visual but also by something quite primal and physical.

I did not feel unsafe when I was doing my fieldwork. Admittedly, I was initially wary. In retrospect, that must have been because I too carried in my consciousness negative prejudices about low-income neighborhoods. As happens with unfair biases, they are forced to retreat when confronted with empirical realities and complexities. Once I met people who had been in prison or had gotten in trouble with the law, they became full-fledged persons rather than caricatures. Quite apart from what I carried with me as preconceived notions about low-income persons, then, it was a third feature of rental neighborhoods that perpetuated a sense of insecurity and danger, distrust and surveillance: the presence of police, both literally and metaphorically. Compared to non-rental neighborhoods, one sees police cars and policemen in rental neighborhoods more frequently. Residents also tell me that there are always police as well as narcotics officers around. Signboards and posters in rental neighborhoods are also constant reminders of the dangers lurking and the proximity of one's everyday life to serious problems.

There are probably empirically-sound reasons that the police and these signboards and posters exist to a greater degree in rental neighborhoods than in other neighborhoods. Perhaps it is the case that there are more incidences that require police attention here than in other neighborhoods (although it also may be the case that it is easier to get caught for even minor transgressions here than in other neighborhoods precisely because of police presence). Nonetheless, one has to wonder if it is necessary to create such a palpable sense of danger and insecurity when the majority of this population are law-abiding citizens. More poignantly, we should also ask, if the signs that we see in our everyday lives contribute to our sense of who we are, and are indeed aimed at getting us to think about our behaviors and habits, what are the implications for people when the only message they are getting about who they are revolve around crimes and problems? For kids who grow up in these neighborhoods, in particular, what are the effects of being surrounded by messages that remind them not to do this or that?

(Teo, pp. 48-54)

(Maxwell Food Centre, Singapore)

Singapore Hawker Centers: Origins, Identity, Authenticity, and Distinction (Tam, 2017).

ENTER MAXWELL FOOD CENTER, a hawker center located near Singapore's Central Business District. It is home to more than one hundred hawker stalls, all arranged in rows flanking the common seating area. There is no air-conditioning; on a typical weekday afternoon the heat is palpable. But this does not deter the local faithful: dozens of professionals, dressed in shirts and dresses, stand in line for their favorite stall. One immediately knows which stalls offer the best food by the length of the queue. Many, among them locals and tourists, are willing to sacrifice forty-five minutes in line for a plate of Tian Tian Hainanese Chicken Rice. This stands in stark contrast to Heng Heng Hainanese Chicken Rice, whose owner is perched against the counter waiting for those who are deterred by the queue to patronize his stall. The auntie of the latter is rather curt, having been up since dawn preparing to feed the hundreds of hungry faithful for the day. In exchange for a mere $3.50, one receives a generous portion of poached chicken on oily rice served on an olive-green plate.[1] You also get a plain broth (in which the chicken was cooked), a dark, sweet soy sauce, and the famed chili sauce without which the dish is incomplete. There is no pretension about Singapore's national dish. It is efficient and rustic in both preparation and presentation. The first bite in and one knows that the hype is justified. The chicken is tender, albeit not the tastiest—Wee Nam Kee's and Boon Tong Kee's chicken is sweeter. But the fluffy rice is infused with the fragrant aromas of garlic, ginger and pandan.[2] It is simply sublime when mixed with the rich dark sauce, the sweet and savory combining wonderfully. The chili, with its combination of sweet, sour, and tangy, lifts the palate and accentuates the chicken. It is little wonder why Gordon Ramsay bowed to the maestro behind this humble plate of rice.[3] Singapore is all about food.

To document the nation's history without attending to the single most-loved and talked about aspect of life is to completely miss the point. Why do Singaporeans eat the food that they do? What does it mean to them? Food is never just about physiological sustenance, nor choice about environmental availability (Trubek, 2014). Hawker food in Singapore is a trope for multiculturalism and a tool for nation building, yet a demarcating line for racial inclusion and exclusion. Its origins have colonial and immigrant influences, yet it is heralded as authentic and local. Hawker food reveals the aspirations and anxieties of this unique cosmopolitan, multicultural city-state.

(Tam, p. 44)

Activity 2.2
Gathering, Analysing, and Describing Data

With your group, do the following:

(1) Gather: Jot down phrases you find interesting, images you find compelling, and any details that jump out at you. Discuss the raw data you have gathered. What was most interesting?

(2) Analyse: Note any patterns (repetition or contrast), anomalies, or seemingly insignificant details that could be meaningful. Consider the implications of these details. How can they be interpreted? Ask, "so what?"

(3) Describe: Write one to two sentences that would SHOW a reader this place, rather than merely tell a reader about the place.

(4) Direct your attention to the interviews in the video. If you wanted to represent this person's ideas for a reader, what dialogue might you quote? How would you interpret the implications of this dialogue?

China's Web Junkies
https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000002657962/chinas-web-junkies.html?playlistId=video/opdocs-sundance

Growing Up in a One-Room Rental Flat
https://ourgrandfatherstory.com/video/growing-up-in-a-one-room-rental-flat/

Observing your Writing Practices

If you choose to observe yourself as a writer, you will need to do the close observation and analysis of details we have practised with your own writing. You will:

- Keep a journal where you record the types of writing you do each day.
- Note the different mediums or apps that you use to communicate.
- Consider how your purpose and audience vary with each communication.
- Write a short paragraph at the end of each day, where you reflect on your writing habits.

Activity 2.3
Reflections on Writing

Read the excerpts below and sum up each one in your own words.

Excerpt from Joan Didion's "Why I Write," *New York Times Book Review* (1976):

> I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear. (p. 2)

Excerpt from Sondra Perl's "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers" (1979):

> Writers know more fully what they mean only after having written it. In this way the explicit written form serves as a window on the implicit sense with which one began. (p. 331). [... For student writers] editing intrudes so often and to such a degree that it breaks down the rhythms generated by thinking and writing.... Thus, editing occurs prematurely, before students have generated enough discourse to approximate the ideas they have, and it often results in their losing track of their ideas. (p. 333)

Excerpt from Virginia Woolf's "Professions for Women" (1942):

> I want you to figure to yourselves a girl sitting with a pen in her hand, which for minutes, and indeed for hours, she never dips into the inkpot. The image that comes to my mind when I think of this girl is the image of a fisherman lying sunk in dreams on the verge of a deep lake with a rod held out over the water. She was letting her imagination sweep unchecked round every rock and cranny of the world that lies submerged in the depths of our unconscious being. Now came the experience, the experience that I believe to be far commoner with women writers than with men. The line raced through the girl's fingers. Her imagination had rushed away. It had sought the pools, the depths, the dark places where the largest fish slumber. And then there was a smash. ...she had thought of something, something about the body, about the passions which it was unfitting for her as a woman to say. Men, her reason told her, would be shocked. The consciousness of--what men will say of a woman who speaks the truth about her passions had roused her from her artist's state of unconsciousness. She could write no more.

Excerpt from Richard J. Riordan's "Scriptotherapy: Therapeutic Writing as a Counseling Adjunct" (1996):

> Reports have consistently cited writing as a method for clearing the mind and giving perspective to troubling thoughts and feelings that stand in the way of important tasks. Writing helps in the acquisition and retention of new insights and encourages problem solving. It uses expression and creativity that allow the writer to analyze and integrate feelings in a personal manner. (p. 267)

Activity 2.4
Personal Writing Practices

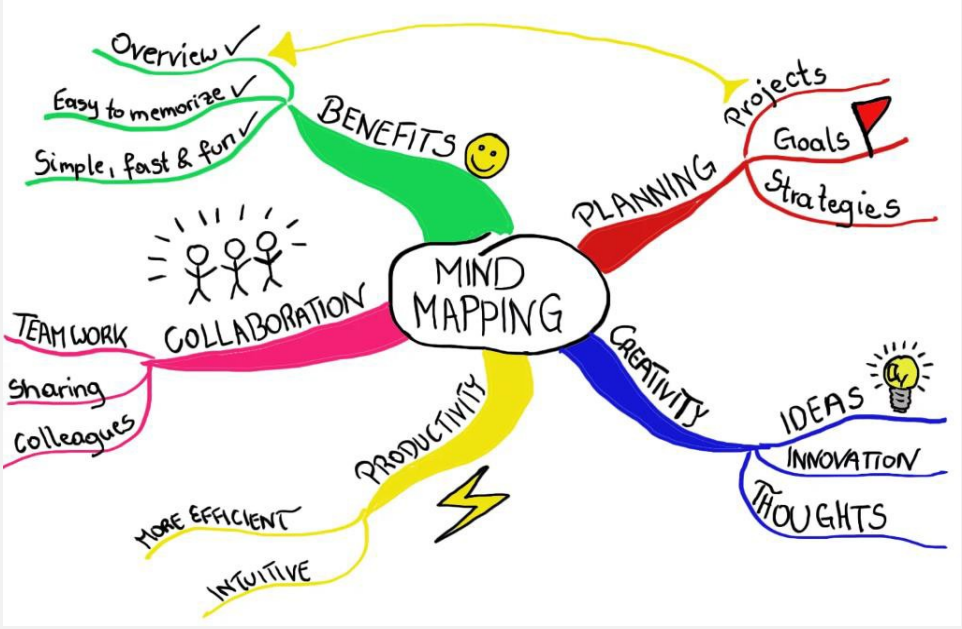
Watch this 5-minute video on discourse and take notes on the meanings of *primary discourse*, *secondary discourse*, *dominant discourse*, and *meta-knowledge of a discourse*.

Gee: What is Discourse
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEB4rAZanpM

Jot down what discourses you are literate in. Try to step outside of each discourse and consider how it shapes meaning.

Lastly, create a mind map, with "Personal Writing Practices" at the centre. What branches should come from this centre? As you choose words, consider the excerpts from Activity 2.3 and the ideas about discourse from the video. Consider what tones, words, or expressions you use in one piece of writing (or discourse) that you would not use in another. **What do these differences imply about the values inherent in the different discourses you use?**

If you are unsure what a mind map could look like, you can base yours on the example below. However, you should feel free to design yours in any way that feels right to you.



https://www.mindmeister.com/blog/why-mind-mapping/

Blog 1: Observations and Analysis

Due Next Week (Week 4)

300-500 words

Choose ONE topic from the three possible options below and gather data. Keep in mind that this choice will eventually become the springboard for your op-ed. Choose wisely and thoughtfully – what would you like to further explore over the course of the semester? For examples of possible places and communities in Singapore, see the list on the course main site. You can email your tutor to double-check if your place or community seems like a good topic.

There are two important steps for your blog.

(1) Observe and take copious notes and recordings (photos, videos). These fieldnotes should be written down in either bullet points or paragraphs. Your goal is to record as many details as possible – what you hear, see, smell, and touch.

(2) Analyse your observations, highlighting details and patterns you find most interesting. Specifically, point out:

- a seemingly small detail that could actually be significant
- a pattern (repetition and/or contrast)
- a break in the pattern (an anomaly)

This is the beginning of your analysis and should highlight anything you found interesting or confusing. Include a photo at the start or end of the blog.

(1) A Place in Singapore	(2) A Community in Singapore	(3) Personal Writing Practices
Go to your chosen place for an extended period and observe the place in great detail (what do you see, hear, smell, feel). Take notes on your observations and take some photos and videos.	Pick a specific community (subculture, group) and research it online. Contact a member of this community to find out if you can observe the community and interview a member. Draft 3-5 questions, though also be flexible within the interview so you can have a conversation with your interviewee. (See interview tips below.) Observe the community in as much detail as possible and record your interview, if given consent.	Keep a daily journal for the week to record your writing – texts, messages, notes, in school, out of school, formal, informal— along with their intended purpose and audience. Write a reflective paragraph each day in your journal, which considers: • What values are implicit in each discourse? • How did the medium shape what you wrote? • Did your writing help you discover any ideas? • If you wrote for a school assignment, how did the requirements or discipline conventions require you to think in certain ways?

Tips on Interviewing:

- After you ask a question, pause to let your interviewee think; don't interrupt!
- If you do not understand something your interviewee says, ask them to explain more.
- Listen carefully to your interviewee. Do not ask questions mindlessly from the list you made; try to improvise based on your interviewee's responses. Make the interview feel like a conversation, not an interrogation!

Summary

In this unit, you looked at models and practised how to record your observations of a place in Singapore, a community in Singapore, and your own writing practices.

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Unit 3

From Observations to Questions

> I want to suggest that to write to your best abilities, it behooves you to construct your own toolbox and then build up enough muscle so you can carry it with you. [...] Put your vocabulary on the top shelf of your toolbox, and don't make any conscious effort to improve it. (You'll be doing that as you read, of course...but that comes later.) One of the really bad things you can do to your writing is to dress up the vocabulary, looking for long words because you're maybe a little bit ashamed of your short ones. This is like dressing up a household pet in evening clothes. The pet is embarrassed and the person who committed this premeditated cuteness should be even more embarrassed.
>
> – Steven King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, pp. 114-117

> Do not select evidence only to help you say what you already know. Select it also because there is still something confusing about it, something that needs figuring out or interpreting, something rich enough to surprise you, even as you continue to write about it.
>
> – Pat Hoy and Robert DiYanni, *Frames of Mind: A Rhetorical Reader With Occasions For Writing*, p. 616

Please upload your blog to NTULearn before class.

Introduction

In this unit, we will practise how to move from your observations to a question worth researching.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to form a compelling question based on your observations and analysis.

Vocabulary: Question or Line of Inquiry

A question is what motivates a piece of writing. Without a sincere question or puzzle—something to figure out—your writing will not have purpose or focus. A good question is both rooted in research and helps to direct your research.

It is important to ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a simple online search. Yet, you also need to pay attention to the scope of your question and make sure you can respond to your question in the space of a given assignment. Some questions require a book-length study for a response!

Rather than beginning a piece of writing with a **thesis**, where you have a preconceived argument that you try to prove, **writing from a question** allows you to use writing itself as a tool for thinking. The goal for this course is that, instead of writing with a preformed thesis in your head that you aim to prove, you will engage with your topic deeply to develop a question, something you do not have an answer to and that cannot be answered easily. By the end of this semester, you should learn something new about your topic through the process of research and writing. Through the process of forming a question and responding to it in your draft, you should develop an idea that was not in your head before you started this journey.

If, in another course, a teacher asks for a clear thesis in a paper, this process of starting with a question is implied. For a paper that requires a thesis, you begin with your question, do your research and analysis, and figure out your thesis through the process of all that work. Then you revise your beginning to indicate your thesis.

Activity 3.1
Effective Questions

For your op-ed, your question should ideally ask *"What does x and/or y mean?"* or *"Why does x and/or y matter so much to us?"*. You should avoid formulations such as *"Which is better, x or y?"*; *"How can we best achieve x and/or y?"*; or *"Why should we stop doing x and/or y?"*. This is because such formulations will often lead to policy papers that try to solve a problem, rather than exploratory op-eds that consider an issue from a fresh perspective.

An effective question should:

- give motivation to one's writing
- be open-ended
- be manageable in scope
- spark research
- not be definitively answerable
- be rooted in your observational writing
- be interesting to you and your audience

Fill out the table below by assessing each question.

Sample Question	Open-ended or closed-ended	Manageable in scope?	Not definitively answerable	Interesting enough to spark compelling research
What makes people happy?				
Should uniforms be mandatory in Singapore schools?				
How can Singapore balance urban development and environmental conservation?				
What needs to be done to save Singapore's hawker centres?				

Activity 3.2
Student Examples

As you read over the three examples of student writing:

- Highlight sensory details that **show rather than tell** the reader about the chosen topic.
- Underline where the student moves to **analysing** her or his topic. What details are focused on?
- Using the chart above, assess the students' **questions**.
- How would you revise one of these examples to make a more vivid description, more relevant analysis, and/or a more effective question? As a table, pick one of the below examples and revise it.

Example 1: Observing a Place in Singapore

The tension in the room is palpable as students with their ten-year series books furrow their brows and sigh when they face yet another difficult question. I can hear the incessant "click-clacking" of university students and researchers furiously tapping away at their laptops. A man limps in, his greasy grey hair disheveled and sallow face sagging. His grubby yellow t-shirt hangs on his body as the cuffs

of his pants drag along the carpeted floor of the library, the muffled slapping of his flip-flops on the floor ringing across the mute room. He plops down onto a sofa unaware or uncaring of the glances thrown at him, some filled with pity, most with disdain or annoyance. His eyes droop and he quickly falls into a slumber as everyone turns back to their work shiftily. Silence once again prevails and the sounds of the library return...Only to be shattered by the jackhammer-like snoring emitted from this old man. Heads snap towards him and rage-filled glares are shot. I feel the annoyance well up in myself, a manifestation of my A-level fueled anxiety. "How rude! Can't he see everyone here is trying to work?" I think to myself as I turn up the volume of my music.

That evening, I trudged to the MRT from the library. Without the stress-induced frustration, my thoughts were granted clarity. Why was I so upset with him? In fact, why were we all so upset with him? Perhaps on some level we believed that what we were doing was more important than him finding a place to sleep. Our academic and intellectual pursuits were more important than his attempt to fulfil his basic needs. We had abandoned kindness or any semblance of empathy. It led me to question then, why do we place more importance on intellectual and academic pursuits as compared to altruistic ones?

Example 2: Observing a Community in Singapore

Food has always played a crucial role in constructing the Singaporean identity. The diverse range of cuisines and fusion cuisines available here resulted in the nickname 'rojak' – a mixed salad of various fruits and vegetables. While the multicultural food available in Singapore can bridge ethnic and cultural barriers and like true 'rojak' fashion "highlights the way various foods have become potent national symbols that speak to diversity and unity" (Tarulevicz ,2013, 6), it can also prove to be barriers of integration of certain communities into the general Singaporean society. One such group is the vegan community.

Veganism- defined as the way of living where one excludes any form of meat and dairy in their diet and abstains from any animal products - is no longer an unfamiliar word here. Many mainstream restaurants are offering new vegan-friendly options and many new vegan dining places have popped up in Singapore in recent years. The vegan community in Singapore has also grown stronger in number over the years and even organise their own events such as the Earthfest -an annual vegan food festival- to publicise veganism.

An interview with Lishan, a 20-year-old vegan who has been actively promoting veganism and environmental awareness on her Instagram page, allowed me to know more about the vegan community in Singapore. Being vegan in Singapore hasn't been easy especially since popular dishes such as chicken rice and chili crab all feature meat as the star of the dish. Flip the menu in any restaurant and you'll be sure to see meat being highlighted as the key component that makes the dish shine. Even for a simple dish like Hokkien Mee, different places compete by advertising how premium the prawns are and how generous they are with the squid.

As such, one problem the vegan community in Singapore faces is the lack of choices available. As quoted from Lishan, "You don't typically see eateries selling vegan food, it's almost impossible to eat out together with friends sometimes and I feel left out because I can't enjoy and comment on the food with others." Indeed, the invisibility of vegan food in eateries like hawker centre which is supposedly representative of Singapore's inclusivity, attests to the barriers of integration of vegans into the general community.

Some see her 'like an alien'. Since local food acts as an aspect of cultural expression, it is no wonder that vegans may be seen as socially different as they are perceived to be rejecting the collective cultural identity. "That's frustrating since food has always been central to the Singaporean identity and an important way for people to bond!" Lishan told me. It seems apparent that Singapore's diverse and 'multi-cultural' food spirit is not so all-encompassing, but is it really so?

Example 3: Observing One's Own Writing Practices

Have you ever noticed how you write and what it says about you? Neither did I. It is only when I started recording my writings throughout the week, did I realised how much I actually write - in messaging applications, emails, note-taking and my reflections. The audience of my writing varies, mainly my family and friends, parents of my tutee, teachers and myself. As I looked back at my writings, it was interesting to note the difference in my writings when writing to different people. When texting my family and close friends, I tend to use slang, short forms and incomplete sentences. However, despite using the same texting application, when messaging the parents of the student that I tutor, I make sure I use complete sentences with the correct grammar and a formal tone.

Across different mediums, the style of my writing is also different. For note-taking, I tend to be concise with my words, making sure that they are structured and to the point. When it comes to writing my reflections, I write inconsistently, in long unorganised paragraphs, which is understandable since reflecting is a time when I dump my thoughts onto the page without thinking about how I write. Being mindful and observing my writings has allowed me to see how different audiences, mediums and purposes have shaped and influenced it. Using a casual tone when talking to people I am comfortable with, while a much more polite and formal tone with people with some form of authority over me reveals how I relate to each person in my life. Despite audience being a huge factor in how I write, it is interesting to see how sometimes the medium can overwrite my "default" way of writing when targeted to different people. This is seen from the case of writing emails, where I still write formally even to a close friend. This is most likely due to how I have been trained by my English teachers the proper way to write an email since young, so much so that I feel uncomfortable when I do not follow the correct format. On this train of thought, it makes me wonder, what is the role of the medium in shaping the way we write? How exactly does it affect our writing?

You might be thinking that descriptive writing seems a lot like creative writing and showing (rather than telling) requires you to write in "fluffy" prose. However, this is not the case. Showing (rather than telling) is fundamental to discipline-specific and general writing.

- In the Humanities, you must show your reader evidence and examples from primary sources such as archival materials, philosophical texts, or literature.
- In the Sciences and Social Sciences, you must show your reader your results and data, and often have to describe your methods clearly.
- In Engineering, you must show your reader the processes and products in problem-solving, and be prepared to verify procedures, design ideas, and create instructions for relevant stakeholders.

By showing, rather than just telling your audience, you assure that they do not have to 'take your word for it.' They can really see where your claims are coming from, making your writing more persuasive and effective.

Activity 3.3
Description, Analysis, Question

In *Writing Analytically*, Rosenwasser and Stephen (2015) argue:

> "Writers who leap prematurely to thesis statements typically find themselves proving the obvious—some too-general and superficial idea—and worse, they miss opportunities for the better paper that is lurking in the more complicated evidence being screened out by the desire to make the thesis 'work'" (p. 18).

They encourage writers to become comfortable "not knowing," so they can be open to the interesting and complicated ideas their data and texts offer (p. 18).

For this activity, we will dwell with your data from your blog for a bit. With your partner, you will discuss the most interesting details from your blog and how they might be described and analysed.

(1) Trade your blog with a partner and highlight the details that jump out as the most interesting. Note any patterns or unusual, curious details.

(2) With your partner, discuss the significance of these details. What could they imply? In other words, think about the possible unspoken social rules, ideas, or meanings your observations might suggest, even if they do not explicitly indicate them. Remember what Teo You Yenn (2018) discussed about exploring "phenomena that are hidden, stigmatized, sensitive, or complicated" (p. 275). What research question might be sparked by this analysis?

(3) Begin to draft your own description and analysis. Just as with the examples above, you will not be able to include *all* the details you noticed. Select the most important sensory details to focus on, based on what you want to analyse. How much context will your reader need, so they can follow your description? Assume that your reader is educated and smart, with a general knowledge of Singapore.

(4) After drafting your description, write out a question that is open-ended, manageable in scope, and interesting to you. One you do not have an answer for.

(5) Share your writing with your partner. Look for the vivid, sensory details that *show* the reader your chosen topic. Which details seemed important to highlight and interpret? What is implied by these details? Did you notice a pattern (contrasting or repetitive) or a seemingly insignificant detail that could be significant? Is the question compelling? Make some suggestions for revision.

(6) As a table, nominate one person's question to share with the rest of the class.

Summary

In this unit, you learned the significance of developing a question that springs from your observational research and motivates your writing. You also began to draft your Assignment 1.

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Unit 4

Working with Sources

Academic writing "resides not just in stating our own ideas but in listening closely to others around us, summarising their views in a way that they will recognize, and responding with our own ideas in kind."

– Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, p. 3

Introduction

In this unit, you will learn the importance of academic honesty – avoiding plagiarism. You will also learn some practices that can help you avoid plagiarism in your writing – summarising, paraphrasing, and quoting. Lastly, we will consider the important role of analysis and reflection when incorporating sources into your writing.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

(1) understand the concept of plagiarism;
(2) summarise, paraphrase, and quote; and
(3) consider the importance of analysing and reflecting on your sources.

Academic Honesty – Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to using someone else's ideas, information, or graphics in your writing without acknowledging the source(s). Usually, it occurs when one copies the exact same wording from a source without quotation marks and acknowledgement, or when one does not paraphrase information from a source properly. Without careful practice, some students may easily commit plagiarism. Therefore, it is important to learn ways to avoid plagiarism in your writing – paraphrasing, quoting, and acknowledging your sources through proper citation and referencing. To better prepare yourself to be part of the academic community, you should familiarise yourself with NTU's Academic Integrity resources.

See: https://www.ntu.edu.sg/wkwsci/admissions/useful-links/undergraduate/academic-integrity

Academic Integrity Handbook: https://www.ntu.edu.sg/docs/default-source/tlpd-documents/academic-integrity-handbook_july-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=fc5a5b24_2

Activity 4.1
What Is Considered Plagiarism

To examine your understanding of plagiarism, discuss whether the following scenarios are considered plagiarism. Put a tick if you think it is plagiarism and discuss with your group members the reason why.

	Plagiarism
(1) Cutting and pasting information from the Internet without due acknowledgement.	
(2) Using summarised sentences from different sources in my paper.	
(3) Changing the sentence structure, vocabulary, and sequence of sentences of the original passage without acknowledging the source.	
(4) Acknowledging the source of a sentence that has minimal changes related to vocabulary (using synonyms).	
(5) Using my own words to summarise a passage and acknowledging it.	

	Plagiarism
(6) Quoting a few sentences from a source using quotation marks and acknowledging the source.	
(7) Acknowledging the source of sentences that have been rephrased extensively (vocabulary, sentence structure, and sequence).	
(8) Modifying an assignment done by myself and submitting it to another course.	

Vocabulary: Summary

If you were asked 'How was your day?' How would you respond? You would quickly reflect on all the events that happened during the day and talk about the one that best represents your mood, or one that highlights your day. You probably wouldn't mention those trivial things that occur in between the 'most important moments.' This same method applies to summarising.

When you have collected reliable and credible sources, it is time to engage in close reading and to think about what the main claims or ideas in a text are. When you summarise a text, you think critically and include the most essential information and argument(s), rather than detailed explanations (or, supporting details). 'Details' may refer to numbers, statistics, dates, figures, quotations, or examples. Do not include the details unless they are absolutely essential for understanding. More importantly, summarising is not simply trimming down the length of a text; it is, mainly, using your own words to objectively represent the original ideas.

A good summary will represent the parts of a text and consider how they function together. In this way, writing an accurate and clear summary can help you understand your text, putting you in a better position to move to analysis.

Activity 4.2
Summary

As you read this student op-ed below, consider how this student **summarises the sources**.

Note the types of sources the student has chosen. *Do these sources give the student IDEAS rather than just information?* How does the student let the reader know that these are *reputable sources*? Keep this in mind as you choose your own sources!

Read the piece of writing below and follow this basic procedure for summarising:

(1) Read the text carefully.
(2) Discern the main ideas from supporting details.
(3) Highlight key words or phrases.
(4) In 4-5 sentences, write out the ideas of this piece of writing based on those highlighted words.

Once you are done, share your summary with your group. Nominate one summary from your group to share with the class. Additionally, as a group, come up with two to three features that you think make for an effective summary to share with the class.

Writer vs Reader: Is it the Right Question to Ask?

[1] 7:30 a.m., Monday morning begins with the daily ritual of any self-respecting Gen Z member. While I lay in bed, I pick up my phone to respond to the plethora of Snapchat and WhatsApp notifications that cumulate over the night. As the day passes, the severity of the writing tasks increases. Open mailbox, compose an email, make a concise request for an extension, send. As I embark on a busy college day, I log into my online-microeconomics lecture and diligently take notes for two hours. Soon after, I start working on my Op-ed writing down a persuasive argument to sell the reader my stance on the topic at hand.

[2] Upon nightfall, I sit under the moonlight and the sky full of stars with a cup of freshly brewed coffee. In the silence of the night, I open a black-hardcover diary with rough handmade paper and record the highs and lows of the week and important events and memories that I seek to cherish. To top it all off, occasionally, I am a self-acclaimed poet writing about life, success, love, hustle, or any other emotion that my heart holds dear at that moment.

[3] I find writing to be an effective way of expressing and understanding thoughts and ideas. The engagement of the concept and the writer, through the act of writing, aids the writer to develop a better understanding of the concept. For example, it is easier for me to grasp a concept in math or develop my argument in a debate if I write down the necessary information rather than directly conceptualizing it in my mind.

[4] Amongst texts, formally drafted emails, lecture notes, research articles, and occasional journal entries and poetry, what remains common is that they are all subject to interpretation. At times, the same words can convey multiple messages. My mother often misinterprets my texts. My collegemate is unable to comprehend my notes as they are customized to suit my understanding. The arguments in my Op-ed might seem shaky to some and solid to others as the same words induce different perspectives. In light of this, I find it compelling to explore one of the most persistent questions in the world of literature – how important is the reader's interpretation of the text in relation to what the writer intends the text to mean.

[5] In an essay, 'The Death of the Author' published in 1967, the French literary critic and philosopher Roland Barthes argues that the glorification of the writer in history has been misplaced. Barthes takes somewhat of an extreme point of view. Referring to each text as a 'tissue of citations', he proposes that the writer's "only power is to combine the different kinds of writing, to oppose some by others" (Barthes,1968, pg 4). Barthes implies that the writer is not a creator but a plagiarist, who picks the ideas of others and moulds them in a different manner. Furthermore, he claims that writing is a reader-centric process, where "the unity of a text is not in its origin" but "in its destination" (Barthes,1968, pg 6).

[6] Barthes (1968) provides a rather intriguing perspective on interpretation being in the hands of the reader. However, Barthes' (1968) unmoderated theory has its limitations. If all writers are 'copyists', then who is to be held accountable for the ideas and ideologies that a particular text might propagate? Writers need to be recognized, praised, and ridiculed for their work. Without the opportunity to seek glory and credit for their work, several writers will be soon looking to change professions. This would bring a halt to the process of literary communication and the spread of knowledge.

[7] Written 50 years ago, 'Death of the Author' has gained both recognition and criticism. However, it is important to take into consideration the opinion of contemporary literary critics before reaching a conclusion. In a 2015 article published in *The New York Times*, world-renowned literary critic and poet Adam Kirsch wrote about the extent to which a text can be free to interpretation by the reader and whether these interpretations add to the understanding of literature. Kirsch (2015) shows that the interpretation of a text can radically evolve over a period of time, as per the understanding of the readers and critics at that time. Upon this finding, he questions whether readers understand the text better than the explanation of the writer himself when he says, "The idea that readers could know an author's intentions better than she does herself is, of course, deeply destabilizing to our usual ways of thinking about literature" (Kirsch, 2015). He admits that even though there are restrictions on the interpretability of a text, the reader's interpretation of it has been held superior to the writer's intentions throughout

history. Describing qualities of renown literature, he comments, "It allows itself to be endlessly reinterpreted" (Kirsch,2015). He concludes that over time the writer's intended meaning loses importance to the addition of varied interpretations by readers and critics.

[8] Kirsch (2015) helps us understand how the importance of the intention of the writer in relation to the interpretations of the reader constantly evolves. However, the intentions of a writer are always going to be pertinent to any discussion related to the text being deciphered, as the act of reading becomes meaningless without taking the writer's ideologies, theories, and literary background into account. A primary characteristic of great literature has been surviving the ravages of time. The article makes a compelling case that it is a combination of rich literary writing and the ability of society to accept and further develop its meaning through their engagement with it.

[9] Barthes (1968) and Kirsch (2015) stand at two different ends of the spectrum. While Kirsch (2015) believes that the importance of the interpretation of a text matures over time, Barthes (1968) rejects any standing that the author has in regard to the interpretation of the text. Although both authors assume that the reader is more important, they forget to account for the fact that a writer's intention is subject to change too. The writer is also a consumer of his writing, making him a part of the class of readers. It is difficult to speak to a writer's mindset while he was writing a piece and they won't always be available to comment or give clarification in regard to the interpretations of their writing. But one thing is clear, the scope of Barthes' (1968) and Kirsch's (2015) arguments is limited and assumes that between the reader and the writer, one is more important. As a self-acclaimed writer myself, I would not know what I would want my writing to mean 10 years from now. As a writer grows, their perspective on their own writing continues to develop too.

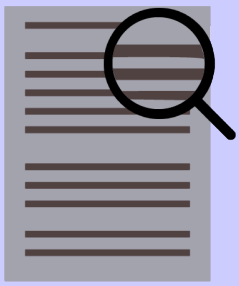
[10] While two world-renowned literary critics try to make the reader's interpretation and writer's intention compete, it is not a competition at all. It brings forth a need to acknowledge that the writer and the reader are not two mutually exclusive identities and both have constantly evolving perspectives of any literary piece. The purpose of writing lies in the process of kindling discourse, and the beauty of it remains that there is no correct answer.

References

Barthes, R. (1968). The death of the author (R. Howard, Trans.). https://writing.upenn.edu/~taransky/Barthes.pdf

Kirsch, A. (2015, March 10). Should an author's intentions matter? *New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/15/books/review/should-an-authors-intentions-matter.html

Vocabulary: Paraphrasing



Paraphrasing involves re-writing the idea(s) from a source in your own words. 'Using your own words' does not mean replacing some words with synonyms. You must consider how to restate the original ideas using different sentence structures. And of course, you will also need to acknowledge the sources you paraphrase with an in-text citation. While a summary is shorter than the original text, your paraphrased text can be approximately the same length of the original text. Paraphrasing is an essential skill in an academic community, as it shows that you fully understand the ideas of a source, that you can accurately represent them, and more importantly, it helps you to avoid plagiarism.

Below, you will see an example of poor paraphrasing. The plagiarism software used in this course, Turn-it-in, picked up places where the student did not paraphrase correctly. If the student had used quotation marks around the borrowed words or put the ideas in her/his own words and sentence structure, she/he would have been fine, although the citation (The Epoch Times, 2020)

is still needed with either paraphrase or quotation. How might you revise this paraphrasing to make it better?

(The epoch times, 2020). Secondly, arts and culture can help enhance one's learning ability as well as stimulating one's creative thinking. Examples as such would be that different visual-thinking methods are now being employed in schools. As mentioned, students who have been exposed to these methods noticed a significant improvement in their vocabulary, reading and math skills, as well as their visual faculties (The Epoch Times, 2020). Thirdly, art

Activity 4.3
Paraphrasing a Paragraph

Look back over the op-ed above, and **paraphrase paragraph 3** using the steps below.

Here is the citation information for this student essay:

> Gupta, Y. (2020). Writer vs reader: Is it the right question to ask. (HW0111 Assignment). Unpublished manuscript, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

(1) Read the information carefully, possibly several times, to fully understand the details.

(2) Jot down a few phrases about the main idea and supporting details.

(3) Represent the original idea(s) with the phrases you just noted but in a completely different sentence structure.

(4) Compare the paraphrased text with the original one and make minor adjustments if certain parts are too similar.

Your paraphrase:

Once you are done comparing your paraphrasing, fill out the chart below of paraphrasing dos and don'ts.

Paraphrasing Dos	Paraphrasing Don'ts

Vocabulary: Direct Quotations

There are situations where you want to include the exact wording of a passage in your paper rather than summarising or paraphrasing it. Usually, writers use direct quotations when they are introducing:

- A definition or part of a definition
- A theory, law, regulation, principle
- A specific term or expression created by the author
- A particularly effective, powerful, or controversial statement or argument
- A well-known quote
- An idea rendered in stylistic and engaging language

However, quotations should be used sparingly. You lose your voice when your paper is filled with quotations. Remember, quotations should be included to support your argument, not to replace your thoughts.

There are different ways to quote, depending on what information you intend to focus on. Below, the underlined part is the information you want to emphasize.

- "A flexible mind is a healthy mind," according to Palladino and Wade's (2010, p. 147) longitudinal study.
- According to Palladino and Wade (2010), "a flexible mind is a healthy mind" (p. 147).
- According to a longitudinal study, "a flexible mind is a healthy mind" (Palladino & Wade, 2010, p. 147).

Always use quotation marks when you borrow the words of another and remember to add the citation (see the online guide). A quotation should be integrated into your writing, rather than being a stand-alone sentence. For example, the following is incorrect:

> This policy successfully boosted the economy and increased Singaporean's competitiveness. "Quite amazingly, a society destined to fail in 1965 has become one of the world's greatest success stories" (Mahbubani, 2016, p. 1).

You always need to introduce a quotation and give context if needed:

> This policy successfully boosted the economy and increased Singaporean's competitiveness. As Mahbubani (2016) concludes, "Quite amazingly, a society destined to fail in 1965 has become one of the world's greatest success stories" (p. 1).

Activity 4.4
Direct Quotes

Using the student op-ed above, find a quotation that you think best represents the writer's argument. Write out a sentence where you introduce the quotation and quote it directly.

Your direct quote:

Activity 4.5
Analysing and Reflecting

While it is essential in academic writing to summarise, paraphrase, and quote your sources ethically and accurately—showing your reader that you are not just "cherry-picking" select quotes and that you truly understand your sources—it is just as important to *evaluate* your sources. Unless your assignment specifically calls for it, you often need to go beyond summary to:

(1) **analyse** the evidence; and

(2) **reflect** on its relevance to your argument.

Analysis entails closely examining, interpreting, and commenting on the evidence you present. This is what we did in Unit 1, when we looked at Scudder's "Look at Your Fish" and what you did with your observational research in Unit 3. When you analyse, you go beyond just telling the reader what the explicit message of a text is, and you consider what is implicit. This could include analysing HOW an author conveys a message. What are the limitations of the text? Are there logical fallacies or appeals? Analysis is important because it is how your voice as a writer is heard in a paper.

Reflection is when you pause in your presentation of evidence to consider how your argument is developing. How does this evidence help you respond to your question? Have new questions cropped up? When you reflect, you might direct your reader to a different perspective not considered by the evidence presented thus far; you might return to your topic to clarify a new insight; you might draw out an implication or the larger significance of your evidence; or you might clarify an important claim within your larger argument. Basically, it is when you let the reader know WHY you are presenting all this interesting evidence.

Look back over the student op-ed in Activity 4.2 and do the following:

(1) Locate examples of analysis and reflection. What purpose do they serve in this op-ed?

(2) Analyse the student op-ed. What are its limitations, gaps, or shortcomings? You can use the list of logical fallacies and appeals below to help you analyse the student writing.

Logical Fallacies and Appeals

Often when we close read a text, it is helpful to have some tools that can aid us in revealing and naming how a text works. The way one chooses to present an argument can have a powerful effect on the audience. We are often persuaded by an argument not just because of its message, but also because of the way in which it is presented to us.

Fallacy Examples
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5QdzqbCxgI

The video above shows examples of the 6 logical fallacies listed below.

Slippery slope: A claim that views one change as inevitably leading to a series of more drastic changes.

> **Example**: Allowing university students to consume alcohol on campus will lead to them hosting wild parties, getting in fights, and taking drugs.

Hasty generalisation: When an argument is justified based on too few examples or insufficient or biased evidence.

> **Example**: Three pupils showed great improvement with this method of teaching, so all school children should be taught in this way.

Non sequitur, Latin for "does not follow": Non sequiturs do not follow a logical chain of thinking.

> **Example**: Singapore has succeeded despite all odds. The country's future certainly looks bright.

Post hoc ergo propter hoc, Latin for "after this, therefore because of this": A claim that mistakes a sequential relationship for a causal relationship.

> **Example**: John ate a bowl of laksa and fell sick, so the laksa must have caused John to be sick.

Ad hominem, Latin for "to the person": Avoiding discussion of the substance of the argument by discrediting the person making the argument.

> **Example**: Why do we have to learn the ideas of this writer? Everyone knows he was imprisoned.

Appeal to false authority: Drawing on evidence from sources that have no credibility or expertise in a given area.

> **Example**: This cereal must be great, since the cover shows that Michael Jordon eats it!

Appeals

Logos (Greek for 'word') "refers to the internal consistency of the message--the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence" (Ramage & Bean, 1998, p. 81). When considering a text's logical appeal, look at its use of facts, statistics, deduction, and induction.

Ethos (Greek for 'character') "refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer or speaker. Ethos is often conveyed through the tone and style of the message and through the way the writer or speaker refers to differing views. It can also be affected by the writer's reputation as it exists independently from the message--his or her expertise in the field, his or her previous record or integrity" (Ramage & Bean, 1998, p. 81).

Pathos (Greek for 'suffering' or experience) "is often associated with emotional appeal. But a better equivalent might be 'appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination.' An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally but to identify with the writer's point of view--to feel what the writer feels.... Perhaps the most common way of conveying a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story, which can turn the abstractions of logic into something palpable and present" (Ramage & Bean, 1998, p. 82).

More Logical Fallacies

A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning that could be made intentionally or inadvertently. Fallacious claims weaken your argument because they could be invalid, irrelevant, or lacking in supporting

evidence. The following are some common logical fallacies:

Circular reasoning (or 'begging the question'): An argument that provides a reason by simply restating the claim in different words.

> **Example**: A mother's love is unconditional because a mother loves her children without expecting anything in return.

Red herring: A deliberate attempt to throw the audience off track by changing the subject or introducing an unrelated or irrelevant point to divert the argument from the real issue.

> **Example**: Students should not be penalised for late submission of assignments as there are more serious offences such as plagiarism and cheating in the examination that deserve punishment.

Bandwagon (ad populum): An argument based on popular sentiment, deducing that if everyone believes a certain claim, it must be true.

> **Example**: Everyone knows that vanilla ice cream is superior to chocolate.

False analogy: A comparison that oversimplifies what is being compared or becomes misleading when overextended. Two concepts or items may be similar in one aspect, but the comparison can become distorting if it is extended to all aspects. When analysing an analogy, ask yourself: are these two items or concepts more alike than they are different? Are they alike only superficially or deeply?

> **Example**: People who must have a cup of coffee every morning before they can function have no less a problem than alcoholics who must have alcohol each day to sustain them.

Straw man: When a writer presents someone else's argument in an overly simplistic or inaccurate manner. By exaggerating or misrepresenting the other side of the debate, the writer is more easily able to dismantle or expose the shortcomings of the other side.

> **Example**: Liberals want to take away the right to free speech.

Euphemisms: Phrases or words that are less offensive or explicit for the reader. In his 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell writes that euphemisms can be used as a "defense of the indefensible." Here are Orwell's examples:

> Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called *transfer of population* or *rectification of frontiers*. (Orwell, 1946)

Absolute claims: Arguments that use words such as "all," "every," "never," which indicate a claim to a universal truth.

> **Example**: All children enjoy candy.

Dualistic or Binary opposition: An argument splits a debate into two opposing sides, making each seem mutually exclusive. It fails to take into consideration multiple points of view or grey areas.

> **Example**: You are either for or against animal rights.

Summary

In this unit, you have learnt how to summarise, paraphrase, and quote ethically. For more guidance on how to cite sources (in-text citation and reference list), see the online activity on the course main site. You also considered how to analyse and reflect on the sources you cite.

Assignment 1

Due Week 6

Length: 500 words

The blog that you posted in week 4 was the first step for Assignment 1. Now, you need to revise and refine your observational research into an organised and focused piece of descriptive writing. In addition, you will include a compelling **question or puzzle** that has been sparked by your observational research. If you feel you need more data, you should revisit your place, community, or personal writing practices, and do more observational research.

Later, you will respond to this question by searching for sources and developing an argument. For now, your goal is to compose a focused, organised, and eloquent piece of writing that SHOWS rather than TELLS your reader about your chosen topic. Try to use sensory and descriptive language and be sure to focus your description on what is most relevant to your question.

Grading Rubric:

Content
Description of chosen place, community, or personal writing practices • Is there a vivid description that shows rather than tells the reader about this topic? **Analysis** of observations • Is there analysis of the place, community, or personal writing practices, in which significant details and/or patterns are shown and reflected on? Research **Question** • Is there a clear and compelling question that derives from the observations? • Is the question open-ended and yet specific enough to be discussed in a 1200-1350-word op-ed?
Language & Style
• Is the description organised and focused? • Is the writing clear and eloquent, with minimal grammatical errors and no plagiarism? • Are appropriate photos, if relevant, included at the beginning or end of the assignment.

References

Brown, N. (2015, July 14). *Fallacy examples* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5QdzqbCxgI

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Unit 5

Finding Reputable Sources

"Professor, I want to believe you, but my facebook friends, twitterers, wikipedia, Dan's law blog and comment #34 on Above the Law beg to differ."

– Sarathy,

Please be sure to upload Assignment 1 to NTULearn.

Introduction

In this unit, you will learn how to identify and find reputable sources. We will also brainstorm on which types of concepts or ideas could be worth researching.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

(1) identify reliable sources;
(2) know where to find reputable sources; and
(3) brainstorm on ideas worth researching.

Information Literacies

What do you usually do when you need to look for information for an assignment? Do you use Google and use resources from the first few entries, or do you use other search tools and do crosschecking? You may have been in a situation where you have many resources but find it hard to decide which ones to include in your writing. It is true that, in this information era, we can find resources to answer almost any question. However, the information we find might not always be reliable. In order not to drown in the immense sea of information, we need to develop 'information literacies.' Information literacies, or digital literacies, is a set of skills needed to effectively search, evaluate, synthesise, and communicate online information in a problem-solving context (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008).

In this unit we will focus on *searching for* and *evaluating* online information and learn how to discern reliable sources from those that might be biased or contain logical fallacies (discussed in Unit 4). To begin, let's reflect on your information literacy practices.

Activity 5.1
Your Information Searching Strategies

Work in groups of 3 and pick <u>one</u> topic from the list below. Find <u>two sources</u> on the topic and note the author, year of publication, article title, and the source in the table below. If you wish, you can use a topic of your own for the information search.

(1) Capitalism
(2) Gender stereotypes
(3) Income inequality
(4) Tobacco control
(5) Climate change

	Author	Year of publication	Title	Source
1				
2				

When you have completed the search, share the information with your group. Discuss why you decided to include the source and compare your information searching strategies with each other. Use the following guiding questions:

(1) What is the search tool that you usually use?

(2) Why do you think this is a credible and reliable source?

(3) Are there sources you have doubts about? Specify why you are hesitant to include the source.

Activity 5.2
An Academic Search

Some of you may have been relying only on Google to find sources. This can be a good start, but you are guaranteed to find more reliable sources if you search an academic database. For this activity, use the same search terms you used in Activity 5.1 but with the search engines listed below.

- OneSearch: NTU Library's Discovery Tool and/or Nexis Uni, an NTU Database for newspapers and magazines.
- Google Scholar: A freely accessible web search engine for academic and scholarly studies across disciplines.
- Government or accredited institutional websites (e.g. Singstat, Singapore Red Cross, Ministry of Health, etc.): If you need statistics, the best source is always the official sites.

What differences do you notice between your first search and this one?

Activity 5.3
Refining Search Terms

The articles you found in Activity 5.2 were most likely general, since you were using general concepts for search terms. For this activity, refine or specify your search terms. For example, instead of just "capitalism," you might search capitalism and minimum wage or capitalism and gender. When you do research, you need to use specific search terms, to make your findings more relevant and manageable.

(1) Do another academic search with your same topic plus a specifying term.
(2) Discuss with your group how the sources you found differed from the sources in Activity 5.2.

Activity 5.4
Reliability of Sources

Work in groups to identify the type of sources in the table. Discuss the reliability of the sources: what are the possible issues and concerns of each source?

	Sources	Type of source	Issues and concerns?
1	Longenecker, J. G., Moore, C. W., & Petty, J. W. (2000). *Small business management: An entrepreneurial emphasis.* Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western College Pub.		
2	Bayley, R. (2013). Variationist sociolinguistics. In R. Bayley, R. Cameron & C. Lucas (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of sociolinguistics* (pp. 11-30). Oxford University Press.		
3	Roco, M. C. (1999). Nanoparticles and nanotechnology research. *Journal of Nanoparticle Research, 1*(1), 1-6.		
4	Mashal, M. (2020, May 13). Born into carnage, 18 Afghan babies face an uncertain fate. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/world/asia/afghanistan-maternity-ward-attack.html		
5	COVID-19 pandemic in Singapore. (2020, April 7). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Singapore.		
6	Singapore Ministry of Education. (2019, December 6). *Speech by Mr Ong Ye Kung at the opening ceremony of Bookfest@Singapore 2019*. https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/speeches/20191206-speech-by-mr-ong-ye-kung-minister-for-education-at-the-opening-ceremony-of-bookfestsingapore-2019-suntec-singapore-convention-and-exhibition-centre		
7	Cinone, D. (2020, May 15). Check twice: President Trump will sign off on a new round of coronavirus stimulus checks, White House sources say. *The Sun*. https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11628281/trump-new-round-coronavirus-stimulus-checks/		

	Sources	Type of source	Issues and concerns?
8	Kazidomi. (2020, April 22). *Vitamin D3 benefits.* https://www.kazidomi.com/en/blog/vitamin-d3-benefits-n380		

Helpful Guides on Source Credibility

The C.R.A.A.P. Test offers a series of questions you can ask to discern if a source is reliable.

C	**Currency**: ***The timeliness of the information.*** • When was the information published or posted? Revised or updated? • Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
R	**Relevance**: ***The importance of the information for your needs.*** • Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question? • Who is the intended audience? / an appropriate level?
A	**Authority**: ***The source of the information.*** • Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor? • What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations? • Is the author qualified to write on the topic? / contact information?
A	**Accuracy**: ***The reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content.*** • Where does the information come from? / supported by evidence? • Has the information been reviewed or refereed? • Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
P	**Purpose: *The reason the information exists.*** • What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade? • Does the point of view appear objective and impartial? • Are there political, religious, institutional or personal biases?

https://www.academic-englishuk.com/evaluating-sources
(Academic English UK, 2018)

Reliable sources may include:

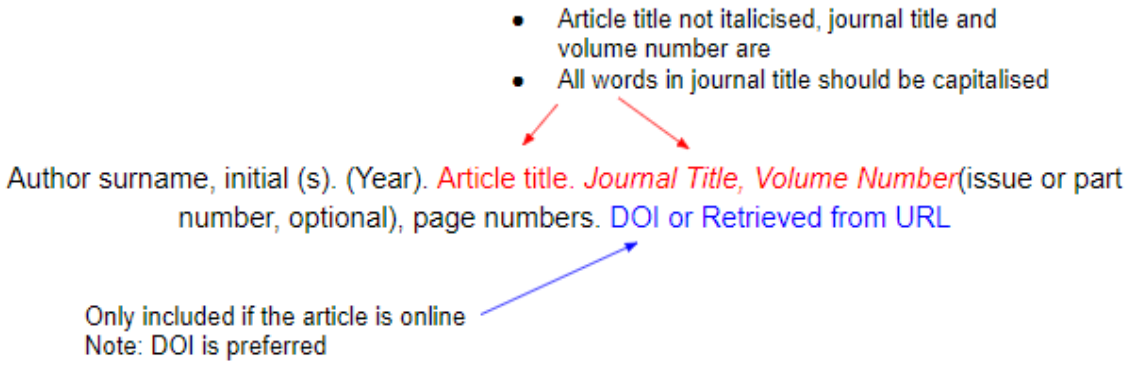
- **Books or book chapters**

Academic books undergo rigorous editorial review, usually by experienced practitioners or professionals. University presses are particularly reliable for academic writing.

- **Journal articles**

A journal is a collection of academic articles published periodically. A journal presents the most recent research, and journal articles are written by scholars and researchers. Like books, journal articles are rigorously reviewed by an editorial board composed of scholars and professionals. Journal articles can be published online, in print, or both.

Note: A journal citation in a reference page in APA should include the following:



APA Format Citation Guide, https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide

- **News articles**

When you refer to news articles, make sure they are from credible sources, rather than tabloids (e.g. *The New Paper*). In addition, each newspaper publisher has their own perspective, which may influence the way they frame a piece of news. You always want to read multiple sources on the same issue to identify and avoid possible bias, and to gain a more balanced view. Be a discerning reader!

- **Statistics and reports**

Statistics and reports conducted and published by reputable agencies (e.g. UN) or institutions (e.g. Pew Research Centre) can usually be considered reliable sources.

- **Government documents**

Statistics and reports conducted and published by government agencies (e.g. SingStat) are usually considered reliable sources.

- **Conference proceedings**

A collection of academic papers presented in an academic context such as a professional workshop or conference. They are usually considered reliable sources.

Here is a humorous remake of a song, which can help you remember to use academic search engines instead of just Google:

Viva la Library (The Information Literacy Song)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMlDQlsna1U
(McGrath, 2013)

Activity 5.5
The Purpose of an Op-ed

Before you brainstorm on what sources could help you compose a compelling argument for your op-ed, let's think about the purpose of an op-ed. Listen to the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Thomas Friedman, speak about his purpose in writing.

Thomas Friedman Explains How to Write an Op-Ed for the New York Times:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kD3eHClpnI0

With your table, discuss the following questions:

- What are your values and how do you think "the machine" works?
- Could your op-ed bring heat or light? How so?
- Based on your blog and what you might eventually research, what could a reader learn about people and culture from your op-ed?

Activity 5.6
Thinking Outside the Box

Now that you know how and where to find reputable sources, the question remains: what sorts of concepts or ideas should you look for? This activity will give you a chance to think more deeply about your chosen topic. How can you go beyond the most obvious interpretation of your topic and bring some heat or light to your reader?

While there are many ways to do this, we will review three approaches to thinking outside of the box: defamiliarisation, interdisciplinary questioning, and debunking myths.

(1) Defamiliarisation: Making the Familiar Unfamiliar

Weber, B. (2016)

Eating Popcorn with Chopsticks

In a 2018 study, researchers asked participants to eat and drink familiar foods in unconventional ways. Half the participants in the study were asked to eat popcorn with their hands; the other half were asked to eat popcorn with chopsticks. They were then asked to rate the experience according to several measures such as flavor and enjoyment. The people who used chopsticks reported greater enjoyment eating the popcorn. According to Robert Smith co-author of the study: "When you eat popcorn with chopsticks, you pay more attention and you are more immersed in the experience. It's like eating popcorn for the first time" (Smith as cited in Grabmeier, 2018).

This study demonstrates a concept that has been familiar to artists and writers for centuries. A way to engage or immerse your audience on a topic is to find a novel or unfamiliar way to present it. In other words, you need to defamiliarise your topic.

This term, defamiliarisation, was coined by the Russian literary critic, Viktor Shklovsky, in his essay, "Art as Technique" (1917) to explain what he thought the purpose of art was. He writes:

> Habitualization devours work, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war. "If the whole complex lives of many people go on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been." And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar"....

Tolstoy makes the familiar seem strange by not naming the familiar object. He describes an object as if he were seeing it for the first time, an event as if it were happening for the first time. ... example, in "Shame" Tolstoy "defamiliarizes" the idea of flogging in this way: "to strip people who have broken the law, to hurl them to the floor, and to rap on their bottoms with switches," and, after a few lines, "to lash about on the naked buttocks." Then he remarks: "Just why precisely this stupid, savage means of causing pain and not any other - why not prick the shoulders or any part of the body with needles, squeeze the hands or the feet in a vise, or anything like that?" I apologize for this harsh example, but it is typical of Tolstoy's way of pricking the conscience. The familiar act of flogging is made unfamiliar both by the description and by the proposal to change its form without changing its nature.

(2) Interdisciplinary Questioning

One way to defamiliarise a problem or topic is to question how someone from a different discipline might perceive the topic. For example, you might ask: What would an engineer notice about this topic? What might a poet notice? What would a historian see as most interesting here? What might a scientist find significant? As you find sources, you might want to find sources from different disciplines, which will offer different perspectives.

In her essay "The Trouble with Empathy," Molly Worthen (2020) refers to a psychologist, literature professor, philosophers, and social scientists. Based on your own disciplines, what other perspectives could complicate this discussion?

Our capacity to see one another as fellow humans, to connect across differences, is the foundation of a liberal pluralist society. Yet skeptics say that what seems like empathy often may be another form of presumption, condescension or domination. In his 2016 book *Against Empathy,* the psychologist Paul Bloom argued that empathy can cloud rational judgment and skews toward people "who are close to us, those who are similar to us and those we see as more attractive or vulnerable and less scary." The scholar and activist bell hooks put the matter more starkly. White desire to feel Black experience is predatory, exploitative, "eating the Other," she wrote.

It's impossible to perfectly inhabit another person's experience. The important question is the value of the effort, and whether it leaves us separated by an asymptote or a chasm. Can a straight TV writer create an authentic gay sitcom character? If an author of European descent writes a novel from the perspective of Indigenous people, is it an empathic journey, or an imperialist incursion? "I don't want to throw out what empathy is trying to do," Alisha Gaines, a professor of African-American literature at Florida State University, told me. "I'm very critical of it though. Empathy has to be considered in the context of institutions and power." [...]

Yet, as a literature professor, she wants students to see books as passageways to experiences unlike their own. "I love books because I'm learning something about people I didn't understand. I'm connecting," Ms. Gaines told me. "I wasn't reflected in books I read as a kid. I understood myself through 'Anne of Green Gables' and 'Little Women' — little Black kids often have to understand themselves through white protagonists. At the same time, for me as a little girl reading 'Anne of Green Gables,' as much as I saw myself in her precociousness and her deep feeling, I also knew there wasn't something speaking exactly to me. It was not a perfect mirror. We want to connect to the material on an emotional register and make space for the fact that each story tells a particular story."

The impulse to participate in the feelings of another may be biological, rooted in our neurology. In the 19th-century German philosophers wrote of Einfühlung, or "in-feeling" — first translated in 1909 as the new English word "empathy." They did not mean simulating someone else's feelings, but projecting your own sentiments and memories in the course of an aesthetic or emotional experience, mingling your consciousness with the thing you are contemplating — whether it is a crying child, Picasso's *Guernica* or a howling mountain landscape.

In the hands of the social scientists who rule our own time, empathy has become one piece of "emotional intelligence," a term coined in the 1960s and developed by the psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990. The journalist Daniel Goleman popularized that phrase in his 1995 best seller *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*, which argued that focusing on emotional skills would reduce

school violence and equip students for greater success in life. Research has shown that these capacities are at least as important for long-term happiness and economic security as "hard" skills like reading and math.

(3) Debunking Myths

In the Introduction to *Living with Myths in Singapore*, the editors Loh, Thum, and Chia (2017) declare that "Singapore is a mythic nation" (p. 1). They draw on French critic Roland Barthes' theory from his collection of essays, *Mythologies* (1957). In this collection, Barthes attempts to draw our attention to how the stories we tell ourselves as a society make our reality seem 'natural.' In other words, our world, which is a product of history and culture, is assumed to be 'just the way things have always been.' Loh, Thum, and Chia (2017) explain:

> What Singaporeans take to be 'reality' or 'common sense' are in fact shaped by a group of myths. The popular idea that good, robust government policies are the main reason for Singapore's success—and thus should remain mandatory—is an example of such a myth. This myth astutely combines fact (Singapore is successful) and claim (the success is due mostly because of government policies) to make a strong case for the country's future orientation (the policies should continue). (p. 1)

Myths are not necessarily bad; however, they can inhibit other versions or interpretations of a story. Moreover, as they are perceived to be 'natural' or just 'common sense,' they can limit how we see the world and what we think is possible. For example, the myth of the American Dream, which asserts that anyone can succeed if they only work hard, keeps many from seeing the systematic racism that keeps people of colour from having access to the tools needed for success.

For this activity, do some writing to explore the following questions:

(1) How could you defamiliarise your chosen topic? Name two possible concepts that you might research that would help to make what is most familiar about your topic unfamiliar and newly appreciated by a reader of your op-ed. You might try to formulate an analogy for your topic, which could spark alternative views.

(2) How would different disciplines view your topic and respond to your question? Pick two different disciplines that could have an interesting perspective on your topic. Experiment with search terms and begin to research through Google Scholar and NTU's OneSearch.

(3) What is the mythic or conventional interpretation of your topic – the one that would seem most obvious? Write this out and consider how the myth of your topic naturalises certain ideas and values. What is assumed to be 'common sense' when it comes to your topic? Then, brainstorm on how you can go against the grain and present a different interpretation.

These approaches are not required for your op-ed but are techniques you might consider as you analyse your topic and find interesting sources. How can you shed a new light on your chosen place, community, or personal writing habits?

Summary

In this unit, you reflected on your own information literacies and learned how to locate and evaluate reliable sources. You also explored what concepts could be worth researching as you prepare to do your second blog over the recess.

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Unit 6

Putting Texts into Conversation & Argument

> Because we have not found that practicing argument-as-debate leads to good academic writing—or to good journalism or good literary nonfiction—we propose, in its place, practicing argument as journey. What is the difference? In practicing argument as journey, you begin with the goal of answering a question or solving a problem (that's your destination); you ponder possible trajectories; you do research and rethink your plan; you learn more and more; you write, make mistakes, and head off in new and unanticipated directions; you make discoveries; you define a clearer purpose and path you figure out how you want to answer your central question or solve your problem. Finally, the finished essay takes your readers on a journey to new ideas.
>
> – Richard E. Miller and Ann Jurecic, *Habits of the Creative Mind*, p. 228

Introduction

In this unit, we will practise the steps for putting two texts into conversation. This means connecting the ideas of the authors in different ways – perhaps showing how they complement each other, how they agree, or how they disagree. By putting texts into conversation, we combine and connect ideas, allowing us to develop our own argument.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will have considered:

(1) what makes a compelling argument;
(2) how to connect the ideas of writers; and
(3) begin to search for your own sources.

Activity 6.1
Going Beyond "Argument-As-Debate"

Watch the skit, "Argument Clinic," below from Monty Python and jot down notes on what it claims about argument. Discuss with your group what types of arguments have convinced you in the past and why.

Argument Clinic - Monty Python
https://vimeo.com/47833797

Vocabulary: Argument

An argument is a response to a writer's question. It is a position, insight, or idea on a topic or text that a writer comes to after the hard work of asking a real question, citing texts, and doing rigorous analysis and thinking. If we jump too quickly into an argument, we limit what we can see of our subject and are blind to what does not fit with our preconceived idea. An argument, thus, should be gradually developed after closely observing, questioning, analysing, and researching your topic.

Ideally, rather than simply arguing one side of a debate or conceding a counterargument only to dismiss it, the most persuasive arguments **go beyond a for/against stance** and ask the reader to see an issue or topic from a fresh perspective. An effective argument seeks to understand its topic more deeply rather than prove a point. Yet an argument should also be a position that someone could argue against, rather than a cliché or truism that no one would dispute.

While you slowly build an argument as you introduce new evidence and analysis, your argument should be clearly articulated and should not be left for your reader to deduce.

Activity 6.2
Reading Barthes

Read the following essay, "Toys," by Roland Barthes. As you read, annotate the text. This means that you read actively with a pen in hand, noting any thoughts or questions that are sparked as you read, considering the text's strengths and weaknesses, underlining particular words or phrases that stand out to you as interesting, charged, or unclear, and marking quotations that you think clarify the writer's motivation and argument.

Once you are done reading, with your group, make a list of Barthes' claims about toys.

Roland Barthes, "Toys" (1972, from Mythologies)

[1]French toys: one could not find a better illustration of the fact that the adult Frenchman sees the child as another self. All the toys one commonly sees are essentially a microcosm of the adult world; they are all reduced copies of human objects, as if in the eyes of the public the child was, all told, nothing but a smaller man, a homunculus to whom must be supplied objects of his own size.

[2]Invented forms are very rare: a few sets of blocks, which appeal to the spirit of do-it-yourself, are the only ones which offer dynamic forms. As for the others, French toys *always mean something*, and this something is always entirely socialized, constituted by the myths or the techniques of modern adult life: the Army, Broadcasting, the Post Office, Medicine (miniature instrument-cases, operating theaters for dolls), School, Hair-Styling (driers for permanent-waving), the Air Force (Parachutists), Transport (trains, Citroens, Vedettes, Vespas, petrol-stations), Science (Martian toys).

[3]The fact that French toys *literally* prefigure the world of adult functions obviously cannot but prepare the child to accept them all, by constituting for him, even before he can think about it, the alibi of a Nature which has at all times created soldiers, postmen and Vespas. Toys here reveal the list of all the things the adult does not find unusual: war, bureaucracy, ugliness, Martians, etc. It is not so much, in fact, the imitation which is the sign of an abdication, as its literalness: French toys are like a Jivaro head, in which one recognizes, shrunken to the size of an apple, the wrinkles and hair of an adult. There exist, for instance, dolls which urinate; they have an oesophagus, one gives them a bottle, they wet their nappies; soon, no doubt, milk will turn to water in their stomachs. This is meant to prepare the little girl for the causality of house-keeping, to 'condition' her to her future role as mother. However, faced with this world of faithful and complicated objects, the child can only identify himself as owner, as user, never as creator; he does not invent the world, he uses it: there are, prepared for him, actions without adventure, without wonder, without joy. He is turned into a little stay-at-home householder who does not even have to invent the mainsprings of adult causality; they are supplied to him ready-made: he has only to help himself, he is never allowed to discover anything from start to finish. The merest set of blocks, provided it is not too refined, implies a very different learning of the world: then, the child does not in any way create meaningful objects, it matters little to him whether they have an adult name; the actions he performs are not those of a user but those of a demiurge. He creates forms which walk, which roll, he creates life, not property: objects now act by themselves, they are no longer an inert and complicated material in the palm of his hand. But such toys are rather rare: French toys are usually based on imitation, they are meant to produce children who are users, not creators.

[4]The bourgeois status of toys can be recognized not only in their forms, which are all functional, but also in their substances. Current toys are made of a graceless material, the product of chemistry, not of nature. Many are now moulded from complicated mixtures; the plastic material of which they are made has an appearance at once gross and hygienic, it destroys all the pleasure, the sweetness, the humanity of touch. A sign which fills one with consternation is the gradual disappearance of wood, in spite of its being an ideal material because of its firmness and its softness, and the natural warmth of its touch. Wood removes, from all the forms which it supports, the wounding quality of angles which are too sharp, the chemical coldness of metal. When the child handles it and knocks it, it neither vibrates nor grates, it has a sound at once muffled and sharp. It is a familiar and poetic substance, which does not sever the child from close contact with the tree, the table, the floor. Wood does not wound or break down; it does not shatter, it wears out, it can last a long time, live with the child, alter little by little the relations between the object and the hand. If it dies, it is in dwindling, not in swelling out like those mechanical toys which disappear behind the hernia of a broken spring. Wood makes essential objects, objects for all time. Yet there hardly remain any of these wooden toys from the Vosges, these fretwork farms with their animals,

which were only possible, it is true, in the days of the craftsman. Henceforth, toys are chemical in substance and color; their very material introduces one to a coenaesthesis of use, not pleasure. These toys die in fact very quickly, and once dead, they have no posthumous life for the child.

Activity 6.3
Putting Texts into Conversation

Miller and Jurecic (2016) argue that "beginning writers are more likely to make connections via addition (A and B and C) than via qualification (A and B but not C). [...] Consciously introducing *but* and *or* to your mental activity is a surefire way to generate new thinking" (pp. 101-105). The goal of this activity is to let you try out using *but* and *or* when putting texts into conversation.

As you eventually draft your op-ed, you will want to figure out ways to put your two sources (chosen in Blog 2 over the break) into conversation. You will also want to consider how the ideas of these sources can help you to reveal something in your chosen topic–something we could not see without the help of these sources. For now, however, we will practise these moves with Barthes' essay.

Watch the video from the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts) based on a speech by Sir Ken Robinson, a world-renowned education expert and recipient of the RSA Benjamin Franklin award.

RSA Animate - Changing Paradigms - RSA (thersa.org)
https://www.thersa.org/video/animates/2010/10/rsa-animate---changing-paradigms

Before you try to put Robinson and Barthes into conversation, you need to chart the different ideas of each text to see where they connect. Building from the list you already made in Activity 6.2, add the claims you discerned in Robinson's talk. Look for ways that the claims from each column can connect and draw lines connecting them. Maybe two claims complement one another? Maybe they are similar or oppositional? How can they talk to one another?

Claims from Barthes' "Toys"	Claims from Ken Robinson's "Changing Paradigms" video

Once you are done with this chart:

Write a sentence that explains how Barthes and Robinson share a concern or discuss a similar topic. Be as specific as possible.

Write a sentence where you explain a **difference** you see between how Barthes and Robinson approach this topic. How do their specific ideas on the topic differ?

Reflect on how the comparison above helps you to reveal something about Barthes or Roberinson. Write a sentence where you use the work above to come to **a claim**.

Activity 6.4
A Professional Example

In the article, "The Repressive Politics of Emotional Intelligence" from *The New Yorker*, Merve Emre (2021) questions the theory of "emotional intelligence." Popularized by Daniel Goleman's 1995 best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, the term refers to one's ability to manage emotions, discern different emotions in others, and emotionally adapt to various situations. In the article excerpted below, Emre argues that this theory is actually repressive, as it guides us to see problems in and regulate our own behaviours and emotions, rather than be critical of historical inequalities and injustice.

Here is an excerpt from Emre's analysis of Goleman's argument:

> Goleman promises to show his readers how to free themselves from the "emotional hijacking" of the brain by biochemical surges, the body's unwitting tendency to set off its own "neural tripwire." This language, with its hints of terrorism and home invasion, encourages readers to stay alert, continually monitoring their reactions in order to bring them in line with accepted rituals of emotional expression.

In this longer excerpt below, note how Emre puts Goleman's theory into conversation with a different theory from Arlie Russell Hochschild. As you read, do the following:

- Highlight where Hochschild is introduced. Why do you think the writer chose certain quotations to share? How much space does the writer take to summarise Hochschild's concept of "emotional labor"?
- Highlight sentences where Goleman and Hochschild are connected and note the verbs Emre uses to connect the two sources.
- What is the writer able to claim about Goleman by putting his ideas in conversation with Hochschild's idea of "emotional labor"?

The concept of emotional intelligence arose when the global economy was undergoing a sharp structural transformation, with the decline of manufacturing and the expansion of the service sector in the world's largest markets. Anyone who has visited a retail store or sat in a classroom knows that service work is a mode of production organized around communicative interactions. It places Goffman's arts of impression management—the friendliness of a saleswoman's voice, the elegance of a teacher's gesture, the charisma of an executive's presentation—at the heart of productivity. Arlie Russell Hochschild, in her 1983 book *The Managed Heart*, coined the term "emotional labor" for this kind of work. "Day-care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, airports, stores, call centers, classrooms, social welfare offices, dental offices—in all these workplaces, gladly or reluctantly, brilliantly or poorly, employees do emotional labor," she wrote. "The poor salesclerk working in an elite clothing boutique manages envy. The Wall Street stock-trader manages panic."

Since most service work cannot be made more efficient with machines, the productivity of emotional labor can be increased only by encouraging workers to cultivate displays of emotion that are more convincing—both to others and to themselves. As Hochschild notes, "The pinch between a real but disapproved feeling on the one hand and an idealized one on the other" becomes an economic liability. Emotional labor involves minimizing that pinch, transforming a surface display into a deep conviction.

What appeared in Hochschild as a Marxist feminist critique of alienation among service workers resurfaces in Goleman as earnest advice for what one must do to get ahead, or perhaps simply to survive. By turning "emotional labor" into "emotional intelligence," Goleman replaces the concrete social relation between an employee and her employer with a vague individual aptitude. Hochschild's envious, inflexible salesclerk reappears in Goleman's book, now adapted for his purposes. She has grown irritable and depressed. "Her sales then decline, making her feel like a failure, which feeds her depression," Goleman explains. His proposed solution is more work, better work, more enthusiastic work, first as a superficial distraction, then as a deep salve: "Sales would be less likely to decline, and the very experience of making a sale might bolster her self-confidence." Her ability to control and channel her negative emotions will reap both economic and moral rewards. Besides, what choice does she have if she wants to keep her job and make her living?

Activity 6.5
Finding your Sources

Over the break, you will be asked to find, summarise, analyse, and reflect on two sources that might help you build an argument that responds to your question. You may find that, as you revise, you need to change one source for a better one. This is a normal part of the research process, so don't be discouraged. Keep in mind that there is no easy way to do research. You need to read abstracts or skim many articles until you find one that you think could be worth reading more closely. It takes time!

For this activity, draw on the skills we practised last week, and do the following:

- Looking over your first blog and Assignment 1, brainstorm on concepts that could be interesting to research. Do not just try to directly research your chosen place, community, or writing practice. Instead, consider concepts or ideas that are not directly about your topic, but could shine an interesting light on your topic. Make a list of possible search terms.
- Do not look for sources that simply affirm something you already know. Try to find sources that **complicate** your thinking! Look for ideas that can defamiliarise your topic, offer a different perspective, or debunk the conventional, mythic interpretation of your topic.
- In OneSearch and Google Scholar, search these terms. You can also try the NTU databases,

Factiva or Nexis Uni, which have newspapers and magazines. Sources might include: *Chicago Tribune, Chronicle of Higher Ed, London Telegraph, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Straits Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Atlantic Monthly, The Economist, Hudson Review, The Nation, National Review, New Criterion, New Yorker, Paris Review, Scientific American, Forbes, Wired.* You can also use sources from Academia SG: RSA Animate - Changing Paradigms - RSA (thersa.org)

Reflection

Please take five minutes to respond to the following questions:

(1) What can you do now as a reader and writer that you could not do before this class? List and explain some of the skills you feel you have learned.

(2) What would you still like to learn to do as a reader and writer?

Your responses should be sent to your tutor.

Summary

In this unit you practised putting sources into conversation to form an argument.

Blog 2: 2 Sources

Due Recess Week

For this blog post, you must find two sources that help you respond to the question you came up with in Assignment 1. You can of course *revise this question*, if you have changed your mind about the direction of your op-ed – as long as this question still comes from the observational research of your chosen place, community, or writing practices.

The most important thing to keep in mind as you find sources: try to make sure that at least one of your sources is not directly about your topic, but instead is about a concept that can shed new light on your topic and help you form your argument. Your argument will be built NOT by summarising other people's ideas on your topic, but by you doing the work of applying an interesting idea to your topic.

(1) Select your search terms and find two interesting sources.

- In 1-3 sentences, **write out the question** prompted by your observational writing.
- Do some brainstorming on concepts that would be helpful to research to respond to your question. They might be the concepts that are already part of your question. Or you might consider new search terms that can take your research in a different direction. What would be interesting to explore? Remember to specify your research terms to refine your search. Do not look for articles that simply repeat what you already know and believe. Look for texts that offer you intriguing ideas.
- Using NTU's OneSearch or Google Scholar, find **two sources** that can help you respond to your question. Aside from academic journal articles and book chapters, you can also consider using **opinion pieces** from reputable newspapers and

magazines such as: *Chicago Tribune, Chronicle of Higher Ed, London Telegraph, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Straits Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Atlantic Monthly, The Economist, Hudson Review, The Nation, National Review, New Criterion, New Yorker, Paris Review, Scientific American, Forbes, Wired.* You can also use sources from Academia SG: https://www.academia.sg

- One of the sources must be a written text. The other can be a video such as a documentary, an RSA video, or Ted Talk.
- As you search, do not just go with the first page of entries. Explore different sources, read abstracts, and don't settle for a source that is not interesting and helpful.
- Make sure that your two sources offer ***different perspectives***. The sources do not have to have opposing opinions (you do not want point/counterpoint/synthesis or "argument-as-debate"). However, you should avoid sources that repeat the same idea. Each source must do work in your op-ed to develop your argument. Find sources that complement each other to create a new idea on your topic.

(2) Summary and reflection for **your first source**

- Write a paragraph of approximately 200 words that summarises the argument and main claims of this source. Include some of the most essential quotations of the source.
- Write a paragraph of approximately 150 words that considers how this source could help you respond to your question. Do you agree with the ideas of this source?

(3) Summary and reflection for **your second source**

- Write a paragraph of approximately 200 words that summarises the argument and main claims of this source. Include some of the most essential quotations of the source.
- Write a paragraph of approximately 150 words that considers how this source could help you respond to your question. Do you agree with the ideas of this source?

(4) Add a Reference page that gives the citation information for your two sources.

Word Count: Approximately 700 words

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Unit 7

Student Draft Critique & Pitching to an Audience

While novice writers "translate their ideas directly into words, paying no attention to the text as a whole and failing to take the audience into account (a so-called 'knowledge-telling' strategy), skilled writers can transform their ideas and the manner in which they are expressed by anticipating their impact on the reader ('knowledge-transforming' strategy). Thus, while text composition is mostly dependent upon topic and domain knowledge in novices, in experts it is controlled by pragmatic knowledge and audience awareness."

– Denis Alamargot, Gilles Caporossi, David Chesnet, and Christine Ros, "What makes a skilled writer? Working memory and audience awareness during text composition," pp. 505-506

Introduction

At this point, you have observed a place, community, or your own writing habits; you have analysed your findings and come to a question; and you have two sources that you found over the break to help you respond to your question. Next week, you will be asked to bring in the first draft of your op-ed. To prepare for this, we will do two tasks in this unit. First, we will review a sample student op-ed to pinpoint typical pitfalls and problems in first drafts. Second, you will begin to put the parts of your op-ed together and think about what you have to offer to a reader that could spark interest. How might you pitch your op-ed idea to an audience so that they quickly grasp the relevance and significance of your op-ed?

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

(1) critique a student op-ed and consider some common mistakes;
(2) put your two sources into conversation;
(3) discern the gist of your op-ed and recognise what is interesting about it; and
(4) pitch your op-ed idea to your peers.

Activity 7.1
Op-Ed Critique

The op-ed below is a made-up example of a student's first draft. It has some common mistakes that students tend to make in their first draft. Review this draft with a partner and see if you can make a list of the main mistakes.

As I alighted at Raffles station, I made my way towards Exit B and headed for UOB Plaza. The most distinctive feature of the Plaza would be the bronze statue located at the front. I was deeply intrigued by this statue when I saw it for the first time. Upon doing further research, I found out that the statue was created by a renowned Columbian artist, Fernando Botero. The statue is a shiny, oddly proportioned, fat bird, simply titled "Bird". The bird has huge legs and talons, which look more like human feet than a typical bird claw. All the surfaces are rounded and smooth, there are no hard angles or rough spots. This gave off a stuffed animal vibe, something not meant to look like a real-life bird. The bird seemed funny and whimsical, and you wanted to laugh when you looked at it. As I admired the artwork while sitting down on a bench, I had a realisation. I realised that I was the only one who took the time to admire and understand the statue whereas people who were either clocking off work or school just walked past it obliviously. This led to me further thinking, is appreciation of arts in Singapore a dying trend?

To learn more about art culture in Singapore, I decided to do some research when I reached home. I came across two sources that were of great relevance to the topic. The first source, CTES Consulting, mentioned several reasons as to why people are paying less attention to art. As Singapore is an economic hub, everybody is pursuing a career that would enable them to earn an optimal salary. "Singaporeans strive to earn a position in 'safe option' money-making industries that can provide financial security." Many people deem art to be a fleeting trade and the salary as not as stable compared to a job in the engineering or banking industry. Hence this would lead to them choosing a different study path in tertiary education. However, this is very much a myth as statistics gathered paint a very

different picture. As mentioned in the source, data has shown that students that graduated from Laselle are drawing a median starting salary of $2,500 which is comparable to graduates from NTU. Another success story is Singaporean artists Adrian Pang and Ivan Heng who "both graduated with law degrees and plot twisted to pursue a career in theatre." Thus, although people assume that artists cannot have a comfortable and stable job, this is not necessarily the case.

The second source that I happened upon explains the benefits that comes with the appreciation of art. The Harvard Medical School claims that making art can help people suffering from dementia, and people in general. As quoted from the source, "Studies have shown that expressing themselves through art can help people with depression, anxiety, or cancer" (Harvard). This is because the process of making art has been proven to "reduce stress and promote relaxation in people who are hospitalized or homebound due to illness" (Harvard), as research shows that when making art, time goes by faster, people have fun, and they are able to cope with illness and end of life issues better. The art therapist interviewed in this article says that "it's the process, not the product" that counts (Harvard). Thus, the act of making art clearly benefits all people.

With these new insights, I feel that the appreciation of art in Singapore is on a declining trend. However, this can be salvaged by having schools teach about the benefits of art appreciation. Furthermore, schools can also place greater emphasis on art lessons and maybe even teach students about the health benefits of making art. Lastly, the government can work with art agencies and create more advertisements for art.

Activity 7.2
Putting your Sources into Conversation

Look at the blog you did over recess and your teacher's feedback on the blog. Are you satisfied with the sources that you picked? Will they help you to present a new perspective on your topic? Do they offer different views that can somehow be connected to form a new view? Recall our approaches to thinking "outside of the box" if you feel stuck.

Just as we did in our last class, we will now think about how your sources can be connected.

(1) Just as you did with Barthes and Robinson in Unit 6, make a chart with two columns, one for each of the sources you picked in your blog. In each column, list the claims or ideas of each source, even the ones you think might not be important.

(2) Draw some lines where you see connections between your two sources (your two columns). How do their ideas complement each other, conflict, or share concerns?

(3) Write some sentences where you try to articulate these connections. You may want to begin with the concerns your sources share. But then, try to move to highlight a difference or tension in their ideas. Or consider how their ideas can merge to form a new thought.

*Use the last names of your authors as you connect their ideas. Do not use "source one" and "source two."

(4) Share your sentences with your group and consider what connections are most interesting and productive. As you draft your op-ed for next week, work these connections into your draft.

Activity 7.3
Features of Effective Listening and Pitching

In an article about listening, Ralph G. Nichols and Leonard A. Stevens (1957) claim:

> "It can be stated, with practically no qualification, that people in general do not know how to listen. They have ears that hear very well, but seldom have they acquired the necessary aural skills which would allow those ears to be used effectively for what is called listening."

They cite a study conducted on thousands of students and hundreds of business professionals, which concluded that after closely listening to a professor give a short talk, only about half of what was said could be remembered. According to Nichols and Stevens (1957), this is because our speech (at about 125 words per minute) is much slower than the human brain. Hence, while we listen to people, we tend to have side thoughts, which can derail our listening. From their own research, they suggest 4 skills of good listeners:

(1) Try to anticipate what the speaker will say and how the talk might conclude.

(2) Listen critically. Ask yourself if the speaker is presenting adequate evidence and clear logic.

(3) Periodically review and summarise the claims of the talk mentally.

(4) Pay attention to paralanguage (the nonverbal aspects of facial expressions, gesture, vocal tone) to "listen between the lines" of the speech.

Why are we going on about listening when our activity is the pitch? We mention this study to encourage you to consider: 1) what will you do to make your talk stand out and be remembered? And 2) how can you be a better listener when it is your turn to *listen* to someone's pitch?

Let's put these ideas to practise, as you listen to these three pitches and respond to the questions:

(1) What are the different audiences for these pitches and how might those differences affect the form and content of the pitch?

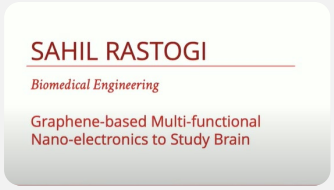
(2) Name three features that you see in one or more of these pitches. Try to have specific examples.

Katie Orenstein (2008), pitching the Op-ed Project at Echoing Green's selection weekend

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VE7wibsHijQ

Leslie Rith-Najarian (2017), winner of the UCLA Grad Slam Championship, "Making mental health more engaging and accessible"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hey6Lzalx58&feature=emb_title



Sahil Rastogi, (2019), winner of the Alumni Choice Award at Carnegie Mellon's Three-Minute Thesis Championship: "Graphene-based Multi-functional Nano-electronics to Study Brain"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5ybEuzQCdY

Activity 7.4
Speed-pitching your Op-ed Idea

This practice borrows from the idea of the elevator pitch in the film industry—you fortuitously meet (such as in an elevator) someone who could give your career a boost and have only the short span of an elevator ride to sell your idea and interest that person. Every writing venture has something interesting about it, and it is your duty as the writer to discern what that is and articulate it.

Now it is your turn to pitch your op-ed idea to your group. As an audience, how do you think you could get their attention?

(1) Consider all the writing you have done so far: Blog 1, Assignment 1, Blog 2, and today's Activity 7.2. What feedback did you get from your peers and teacher? Highlight the most interesting or important discoveries you have made so far in your data gathering, analysis, and source summaries.

(2) Outline your pitch. Think about what could grab your audience's attention – why is your analysis, question, and research important to your audience? Why should they care about this topic and your findings?

(3) Take turns pitching. Be sure to time your pitch so that you do not go over three minutes.

(4) With your table, discuss which pitches were most effective and why. Consider:

- Could you understand what the op-ed will be about?
- Was there a sense of why this op-ed is important, relevant, and worth reading?
- Were you intrigued enough to want to read the longer written version?

Vote on your favourite pitch. Depending on how the voting goes, at least one student from each group will pitch to the whole class.

After these pitches are done, we will discuss why these pitches were the most effective. Some questions that could be discussed are: "What makes an effective summary?" "What makes for an interesting element in the pitch?"

Summary

In this unit, we discussed some of the typical pitfalls of the first draft. We then put our sources into conversation to begin to sketch our op-ed. Lastly, we practised pitching our op-ed ideas to our table to get a better sense of the significance and relevance of our op-ed topics.

First Draft
Due Week 9
1000-1350 words

Come to our next class with a first draft of your op-ed. Do not worry if it feels incomplete or not polished. This is just a first draft; it will be heavily revised as you get feedback from peers. For this first draft, you should begin by reviewing all the writing you have done so far this semester.

Look at the feedback you received on your two blogs and Assignment 1. This work will all contribute to your first draft. You can cut and paste some parts of these assignments into your first draft, but we recommend that you try to reconceive and revise these materials as you draft your op-ed.

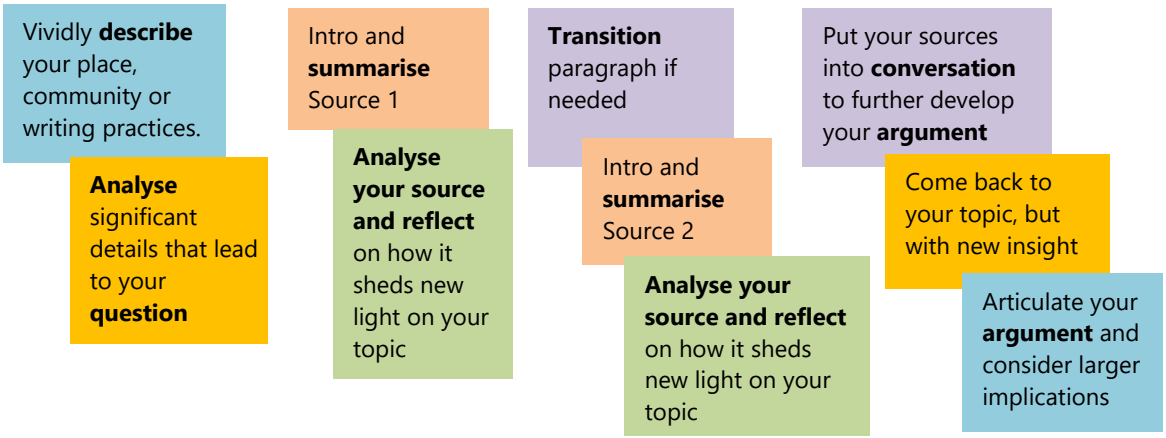
Your first draft should include:

- A vivid rendering from your **observational research** of your place, community, or personal writing practices
- **An analysis** of these observations
- A **question** that is prompted by your observations and motivates further research
- **Summaries** that introduce your reader to your two sources, clarifying their main arguments and ideas.
- **Reflection** on how each source helps you to respond to your question – what insights do these ideas allow you to reveal about your place, community, or personal writing practices?
- Your *developing* **argument** composed from the ideas borrowed from your sources as well as your analysis and thinking. Try to put these texts into conversation.

These can be in any order that seems organic to your thinking and logic. For your first draft, you might not have the argument fully developed yet. That is fine. It will come as you revise! It is actually better not to jump too quickly to a position.

Please upload your draft to NTULearn and bring a copy to class for workshopping.

Beginning	Middle	Ending
• Get the reader's attention • Why is this important and relevant? • Vividly describe and analyse your topic • Clarify your motivation/purpose for writing	• Summarise the arguments of your sources to your reader • Analyse and reflect on the ideas from these sources that help you to shed a new light on your topic • Develop your argument and connect your sources & topic	• Clarify your argument • Consider the larger implications • Leave the reader thinking



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Unit 8

Peer Workshop

> Very few writers really know what they are doing until they've done it. Nor do they go about their business feeling dewy and thrilled. They do not type a few stiff warm-up sentences and then find themselves bounding along like huskies across the snow. [...] We all often feel like we are pulling teeth, even those writers whose prose ends up being the most natural and fluid. The right words and sentences just do not come pouring out like ticker tape most of the time.
>
> – Anne Lamott, "Shitty First Drafts," *Bird by Bird*, p. 1

Please upload your first draft to NTULearn before class.

Introduction

In this Unit, we will review a student essay to see what it can teach us about writing an op-ed. We will then do a peer workshop so that you can receive feedback on your draft. Lastly, you will test your own developing argument to see if it is effective.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will:

(1) analyse a student essay;
(2) understand the need to structure a piece of writing with a beginning, middle, and end;
(3) receive peer feedback on your draft; and
(4) review what makes an effective argument and test your own developing argument.

Activity 8.1
Collaborative Analysis

Read the student essay, "The Purpose of Travel," below and do the following:

(1) Highlight some descriptive writing and sensory language.
(2) *Italicize* a moment where the student analyses her observations.
(3) Underline the question that motivates this writer. Hint: the question should always be in the beginning, so the reader can know what focuses a piece of writing. Does the question change, evolve? Where?
(4) What sources does the student draw on to respond to her question? Are they summarised effectively? List each source and jot down the ideas borrowed from the sources.
(5) **Bold** a place where the two sources are put into conversation. How do they connect?
(6) What is this student's argument? Write it out in your own words.
(7) Draw lines where you think the beginning, middle, and end of this essay are.

Share this work with your group. Compare your responses and think about how you might revise this essay if it was your draft.

[1]The sun shone mercilessly over the people, its rays were like arrows, piercing through their skin. Sweat trickled down their necks as families gathered hurriedly below the shadows of the trees, trying to shield their picnic mats away from the sun. The pungent smell of sweat mixed along with the floral scent of the garden filled the air. The now unidentifiable patches of grass were stained as yellow as hay, making the park look as if a sepia filter was applied across the scenery. Bright colourful flowers in bushes remained intact even though they were wilting. Despite the scorching heat and the unappealing state of the once vibrant grass, tourists were streaming in through the metal gates, adorning themselves with straw hats and sunglasses while chatting. They wandered around the park, trying to find a pop of colour amongst the dull scenery. Multiple consecutive shutter sounds were heard as the tourists posed non-stop against the bright magenta flowers in beautiful outfits, their dresses flowing against the occasional

passing breeze as their friends squatted down to capture the perfect angle for them. After capturing the photos, they squinted at the tiny phone as they sieved through hundreds of photos trying to find an 'acceptable' shot. 'Millennials these days', one would sigh.

[2]Being a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Botanic Gardens is known to be one of Singapore's oldest and well-known tourist attractions. The setting up of Botanic Gardens also played a huge part in contributing to Singapore's identity of being a Garden City. The dull scenery during this season, however, did not prove worthy of whatever qualifications Botanic Gardens has attained. Yet, I was intrigued by the fact that tourists, despite the unappealing state of the grass and plants, continued to take numerous photos. This made me wonder if people these days are so into capturing the moment on camera that they might miss the actual moment in front of them. It made me question if tourism has lost its purpose and is becoming a bragging right to others rather than a form of learning or enjoyment. There is nothing wrong with taking photos as photos can be a way to keep memories. But is it really for our benefit or to show others how 'interesting' our lives are?

[3]In *On Photography* (1973), Susan Sontag discusses the evolution of photography, from being first viewed as a form of art before transforming into an essential part of family life, followed by playing a key role in the tourism industry. According to Sontag (1973), "A way of certifying experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it—by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir" (p. 6). She believes that taking scenic photos of travel for a prized collection disrupts the tourist's overall experience as one would spend a lot of time (and effort) to attain the so-called perfect image. She also states that "photographs will offer indisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the program was carried out, that fun was had" (p. 6). This further supports her argument that people take photos as a way of proving that they have been to certain places, to prove to others and themselves that the travelling was eventful despite that maybe not being the case.

[4]Sontag's (1973) view of tourism and photography is reflected in the current society of Singapore, where going overseas is seen as a 'bragging right.' People upload and showcase photos--from extravagant structures of European buildings to creative foods offered at night markets--on social media to prove that they are having an interesting life. Many want to uphold the perception that their life is perfect or at the bare least eventful. This, however, disrupts the entire experience they have when they travel as they are constantly reminded to take 'Instagram worthy' photos that fit today's trends. With the constant nagging to take flawless images at the back of their mind, travellers cannot fully relax or immerse themselves in the experience. But does this mean that they are missing the purpose of travel? What is travel for?

[5]Rick Steves, a well-known American travel author, expresses his thoughts about the purpose of travel in his TED Talk in 2011. He explains how travel opens us up to the wonders of our world, by allowing us to appreciate nature more and, especially, to learn about other people's culture. He states, "It's people that really make your experience vital." Steves's (2011) main stand is that tourists should get to know the lives of the locals and a fulfilling trip would be one where the tourist empathises with the locals. As someone who has been travelling for over 30 years, his experience is worth hearing.

[6]Steves (2011) states that travelling "has helped [him] to become a little better citizen on this planet." This is something I resonate with. I feel that with the increasing focus on ourselves, we tend to forget to appreciate nature and the people around us. That goes the same for travelling. We are too preoccupied on capturing beautiful infrastructures that we miss the history behind it, the stories of locals, and how the infrastructure came about in the first place. If we take effort to better understand the locals this will not only widen our horizons but as Steves (2011) expresses, "Travelling helps to reduce misunderstanding about other people," turning something we may perceive to be the truth to be something very different in the end. With a little more appreciation for others, our behaviour will change to understand what baggage people are carrying. In return, our actions will change, becoming more considerate towards others and therefore becoming a better person.

[7]Of course, as much as I believe travelling should allow you to immerse yourself in another country's culture, that is not all travelling is about. Relaxation is another purpose of travelling and is quite valuable too. As travelling allows you to get away from society's fast paced life here in Singapore, it is an important way to de-stress. This has become increasingly significant these years, as we have become more aware of burnout. Therefore, travelling does not necessarily need to be thoughtful. Just as Sontag

(1973) argues that taking photographs is a form of "certifying experience," one may feel compelled to interact with the locals as a final tick off the checklist before concluding that their trip is meaningful. They might see learning about a country's culture as a form of accomplishment instead of genuine interest. Or the tourist might see travelling as a form of self-improvement work on themselves which will supposedly make them become a better person. Listening to Steves (2011), tourists might worry that if they are just relaxing, and not talking to the locals, then "the program was" not "carried out" (Sontag, p. 6).

[8]Travelling is a privilege, but people take it for granted. People end up more focused on certifying the experience with photographs or "authentic" local experiences instead of fully enjoying the trip. This is mainly due to the increasing social media pressure where one sees the need to flaunt their travels. Thus, to fully enjoy their trip one may choose to explore another country's culture and get to know the locals which may turn you into a better person. However, travelling may not necessarily be confined to only such ways. It could be a form of relaxation as well. The key part of travelling is when one lives for the moment while they are there and to slowly appreciate everything around them. That is the true purpose and beauty of travelling.

References

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Steves, Rick. (2011). The value of travel [video]. TEDxRainier, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYXiegTXsEs

Activity 8.2
Peer Workshop

For this peer workshop, you will do the same reading that we did with the student essay above for your partner's draft:

(1) Highlight some descriptive writing and sensory language.

(2) *Italicize* a moment where the student analyses her observations.

(3) Underline the question that motivates this writer. Hint: the question should always be in the beginning, so the reader can know what focuses a piece of writing. Does the question change, evolve?

(4) What sources does the student draw on to respond to the question? Are the sources summarised effectively? List each source and jot down the ideas borrowed from the sources.

(5) Draw lines where you think the beginning, middle, and end of this essay are.

(6) What might this student's argument be? Write out what you think it is or could be.

(7) Note one way that you think this student's two sources could be put into conversation.

Once you are done reading and marking up your partner's draft, have a conversation about what was interesting, what confused you, and, most importantly, *what you learned* by reading this draft.

What did reading your partner's draft make you realize about your own draft?
Make a revision plan: jot down a list of revisions that you feel are most important.

Activity 8.3
Argument Test

It is normal that, as you draft, your argument might not be fully formed or too simplistic.

What do you think might be the problem with the following arguments?

- While Singapore must keep up urban development, they must do it in the most sustainable way possible.
- As a multiracial country, Singapore must put effort into making sure certain groups are not segregated or oppressed.
- The government must put financial incentives in place to ensure that Singapore's hawker centres remain.
- Parks are important to both the locals for social welfare, and the government in urban planning as it improves economic growth.

Take a moment to test the complexity of your argument:

- Write out your argument.
- Ask yourself: Would anyone in their right mind disagree with this? (If you are unsure, ask your group.)
- If your answer is "no," then you know you have some revising to do! Defamiliarise your topic. Maybe you need a different source? Maybe you need to add your own voice and thinking into your op-ed?

The goal of this op-ed is not just to summarise the ideas of others on your topic, but to bring those ideas as well as your own thinking together to form a new idea on the topic.

Second Draft
Due in your consultation

As you revise your draft for your consultation with your teacher, consider your peer's feedback from class, as well as what you learned by reading your partner's draft. You may want to focus on:

- The structure and logical flow of your op-ed, making sure there is a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Possibly changing sources to create more tension in your op-ed, so your evidence does not all point in one direction but takes turns and develops.
- Consider disagreeing with one or both of your sources, revealing shortcomings in their ideas.
- Putting your two sources into conversation. Explore ways in which the ideas of your two sources can be brought together to form a new idea of your own.

For Week 10, we will not meet in the classroom. Instead, you will have a one-on-one consultation with your teacher to review your draft.

For our class in Week 11, we will review presentation skills. To prepare, please bring an online meme or one of the photos that you took for your blog.

Summary

In this unit we examined a student essay, workshopped your draft, and tested our arguments to see how we might complicate them.

References

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Lamott, A. (1995). *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Unit 9

Presentation Skills

"He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word. The power of sound has always been greater than the power of sense... Give me the right word and the right accent and I will move the world."

– Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record*

"The success of your presentation will be judged not by the knowledge you send but by what the listener receives."

– Lilly Walters

Please upload a meme or blog photo to NTULearn before class.

Introduction

This unit offers strategies for improving presentation skills, which will help you prepare for Assignment 2.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

(1) make strategic choices about the content and organisation of your presentation; and
(2) increase awareness and control over paralanguage (vocal technique and body language) during your presentation.

Preparing the Content of your Presentation

Now that you have a draft, you have plenty of good content for Assignment 2. You may even have some great images from your blog post that you can reuse for your presentation slides. However, because you are now *speaking* to an audience instead of *writing* for them, you have to adapt this content for a different genre--a task easier said than done! Let's break down our concerns into three major categories:

(1) scope;
(2) audience; and
(3) sensory overload.

Scope

Scope refers to how much material your presentation covers. Because you have only six to eight minutes to speak, you have much less time (and fewer words) at your disposal to communicate complex ideas to the audience. You will have to make difficult decisions about what content to cut to fit comfortably within this time limit. You will have to be concise without oversimplifying your ideas. Begin by identifying your main message. If your audience remembers only one thing about your presentation, what should it to be?

Audience

The following activity will help you analyse your audience, which in turn will help you make smarter choices as you prepare your presentation content. The activity is even trickier once you consider that you are dealing with multiple audiences (i.e. students from different disciplines, not to mention your tutor) who all have different levels of knowledge and interests. You will have to develop a strategy for dealing with diverse audience members, even as you try to identify broad trends among them to better inform your approach. Taking the time to answer these questions will help you to articulate your own goals for your presentation, and to brainstorm smart ways to achieve them.

Activity 9.1
Who's my Audience?

Fill out this chart and then compare your answers with a partner.

Question	Answer	Questions for further thought
Who is in my audience?		*How do I get my audience to understand my presentation?*
What do they already know about my topic? Do different people have different levels of knowledge?		
What do they not know? What could they learn from my presentation?		*How do I get my audience to pay attention and stay interested in my presentation?*
How do I want the audience to think and feel at the end of the presentation?		

Sensory overload

Most of your content will be spoken, but visual aids can bring emphasis to key ideas and help keep your audience on track with your presentation. A common temptation is to copy and paste passages from your written work into your slides. Resist this temptation! This can result in sensory overload: the audience will stop listening to read the slide. Try to boil down ideas into phrases, rather than cramming full sentences into your slides. Anyone reading the slides alone won't grasp the full meaning you intend; but remember that you'll be explaining the meanings of each phrase as you speak. This way, you reduce sensory overload for an audience who may otherwise be forced to decide

whether to read every word on your slide, or to listen to every word you're saying. Most people can't do both at the same time.

For more on how to avoid sensory overload and design slides that make the most effective use of text, font, colour, images, and layout, see the online tutorial on the course main site.

The Art of Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to the use of body language, facial expressions, vocal intonation, etc. to communicate with another person. To put it another way, paralanguage is everything we use to convey meaning aside from our actual words. The following series of activities are designed to help increase your awareness of how you move and sound when you speak. This can feel awkward and embarrassing at first, but repeated practice will help you grow comfortable with this heightened awareness, and help you exert more control over your body and voice as you present.

Activity 9.2
Something To Talk About

In the space below, spend three minutes preparing notes for a three-minute speech which you will deliver in class. Your topic should relate somehow to the **meme or blog photo** that you uploaded before class. This will also serve as a visual aid for your speech. You will not be able to plan the entirety of your speech in three minutes. Some of the content will be made up on the spot. However, drafting a quick outline can provide helpful scaffolding for surviving this impromptu speech!

Your speech can be as serious, fun, or silly as you like, as long as you speak for three minutes and follow the structure below.

Introduction: State your topic and preview your speech--that is, state your main claims in the order you plan to present them. Begin on a strong and confident note. Get the audience's attention with a greeting, joke, story, question, or example.

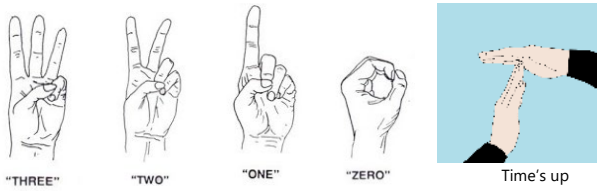
Body: Include two or three main claims in support of your topic. Support each claim with explanations, reasons, or examples. Reintroduce each main claim as you go along, and use transitions (i.e. first, second, next, finally) to guide your audience. This is also called *signposting*.

Conclusion: Repeat your topic and main claims. This is your last and best chance to get your message across. End on a strong and confident note. Thank the audience or otherwise engage them as you did in your introduction.

Notice that this structure will lead you to repeat your main claims three times, and your topic twice. Such repetition can help the audience understand what your speech is about and remember your content. You should use a similar strategy for Assignment 2.

Activity 9.3
Feedback

Increasing self-awareness of your public speaking ability relies on good feedback. To get good feedback, you'll need some help from your classmates in the next few activities. Find three classmates to help you, and assign them roles in the following table:

Role	Name	What they'll be doing
Timer		They'll time your speech (3 minutes maximum) and give you hand signals to help you keep track of time. Make sure you look up and take note of these signals!  "THREE" "TWO" "ONE" "ZERO" Time's up
Videographer		They'll record you on your phone. Use this video as a benchmark for improving your paralanguage as you prepare for Assignment 2. Keep recording new videos as you practise.
Critic		They'll offer constructive (i.e. friendly, honest and helpful) criticism and give you suggestions for improvement. This feedback will have a different focus for each round of speeches.

Activity 9.4
Practice Makes Perfect

Now that you have a speech prepared and people to give you feedback, the only thing left to do is to deliver the speech! You can volunteer (or your tutor will choose students at random) to speak, and your assigned helpers will provide feedback.

For each round, we'll hear one speech. After your speech, your assigned critic, tutor and other classmates can offer feedback on any aspect of organisation or paralanguage, but each round will have a special area of focus, as follows:

Round	Focus	What you should do	Question for the audience
1	Structure	Give a 3-minute speech with the following structure: **Introduction**: State your topic and preview your main claims. **Body**: Introduce each main claim with transitions (i.e. first, second, next, finally)	What were the speaker's topic and main claims?

Round	Focus	What you should do	Question for the audience
		and try to smoothly transition from one claim to the next. **Conclusion**: Repeat your topic and main claims.	
2	Body language	(1) Keep **good posture**: Stand straight and tall but not rigid, feet shoulder-width apart. Avoid slouching, leaning to one side, shifting your feet, or making floppy or uncontrolled movements. (2) **Face the audience**, not your slides or notes. (3) **Use varied facial expressions**: Look interested in your own speech. Allow your eyes to come alive and your face to communicate your message. (4) **Be pleasant but professional**: Smiling is encouraged, but not necessary. Convey a pleasant but professional demeanour. (5) **Maintain eye contact**: Remember to look at different sections of the audience. If this makes you nervous, aim your gaze at the forehead. (6) **Be careful while holding notes**: Hold your notes at eye level so you can maintain eye contact. Keep your notes on something easy to see (a phone screen might make you squint) and firm (a notecard or piece of paper bent in half). Hold notes in one hand, so the other is free to gesture. Remember, your notes are only reminders of important points, not a script. Avoid reading notes word for word.	How was the speaker's use of posture, face, eye contact and notes?
3	Movement and use of space	(1) **Reduce your distance from the audience**: Get closer, move furniture. (2) **Make purposeful movements**: Avoid nervous, repetitive movements. (3) **Use deliberate gestures**: Have a crisp beginning and end to each movement.	How was the speaker's use of gestures, movement and space?

Round	Focus	What you should do	Question for the audience
		(4) Convey energy, confidence and poise: Look alive and interested in your own speech. (5) Show **self-awareness, comfort and control**.	
4	Vocal technique: clarity	(1) **Keep a moderate pace**: Not too fast, not too slow. When in doubt, slow down. (2) **Pronounce words correctly**: Practise (or avoid) difficult words. (3) **Articulate words clearly**: Avoid slurring and exaggerate your mouth movements slightly.	How was the speaker's pace, pronunciation and articulation? Could you easily understand every word?
5	Vocal technique: comfort and expression	(1) **Explore the quality of your voice:** We're all born with a certain type of voice but try experimenting with how much you can comfortably change your voice at will. Deep, resonant, and mellow voices are generally preferable to shrill, tinny, or nasal voices. (2) **Comfortable volume and intensity**: Project your voice so that people in the back of the room not only hear you clearly, but also feel your presence. Don't shout. Breathe from your belly and support your voice with enough air for it to carry comfortably throughout the room. (3) **Use varied pitch and intonation**: Avoid a flat monotone. (4) **Stress placement**: Emphasize important words and syllables.	How was the speaker's vocal quality, volume, intonation and stress placement?
6	Avoiding fillers	When you forget your next word, it's a natural instinct to use a filler such as *um, uh, yeah, OK*, etc. Try to avoid these. This can be difficult at first, but here are a few suggestions to help you: (1) **Slow down your pace** to let your thoughts catch up with your mouth. (2) **Don't be afraid of silence**. (3) **Use pauses instead of fillers**: Use silence for dramatic effect. If you forget your next thought, simply pause and look like you meant to pause. No one will know the difference.	In this round, audience feedback is immediate: *Clap* every time the speaker uses a filler word.

Taking Questions from the Audience

For Assignment 2, you'll need to answer a few questions from the audience. Here are a few suggestions to help you prepare:

(1) Come up with the **most obvious questions** people might have after your presentation and think about how you might respond. Prepare extra slides, if you like.

(2) **Begin the Q&A confidently** and ask if there are any questions. If no one wants to ask the first question (a very common scenario), you can begin with your own question to the audience. You can also **plant a confederate** in the audience who will come prepared with a question you want to answer. Once your friend asks the first question, others usually follow.

(3) Listen attentively to each questioner and **repeat the question** to confirm that you heard the question correctly and ensure that the entire audience knows what you're talking about. Ask for clarification if necessary.

(4) Remember that **you're in charge** of the Q&A. You can choose to give a long or short answer, depending on the importance of the question or questioner. You can also (politely) interrupt questioners that are speaking too long and rephrase or reframe questions in ways that are easier to address.

(5) **If you don't know the answer** to a question, honestly admit that you don't know the answer *at the moment*. **Delay** giving an answer by asking the questioner to speak with you after the presentation, or delay even further by offering to research the answer and responding later via e-mail. You can also **crowdsource** the answer to the question by **asking the audience, asking a known expert** in the room or even **redirecting the question back to the person** who originally asked it. Instead of being responsible for answering every possible question (an impossible task), think of yourself as **facilitating** discussion of any questions that arise.

(6) **End the Q&A** by announcing that there is time for one or two last questions. This avoids an awkward or abrupt end to the Q&A.

Activity 9.5
Q&A

In this last round, you'll give your speech and take questions from the audience after. Review the tips above before you start.

Questions from the audience: If you're not speaking, come up with at least two questions to ask the speaker during Q&A. Write these in the space provided.

Reflection

Please take five minutes to respond to the following questions:

(1) What can you do now as a reader, writer, and presenter that you could not do before this course? List and explain some of the skills you feel you have learned.

(2) What would you still like to learn to do as a reader, writer, and presenter?

(3) What would you do differently the next time you compose an argumentative piece of writing?

Your responses should be sent to your tutor.

Summary

In this unit, you learnt to consider audience, scope, sensory overload, and structure as you prepare presentations. You also practised various elements of paralanguage (i.e. voice and body language) while delivering a short impromptu speech. To review slide design strategies to create visual aids that will add to (but not distract from) your presentation, please see the tutorial on the course main site.

Assignment 2: Presentation

Upload your Slides Next Week (Week 12)

Assignment 2 should present to your audience the most interesting and significant findings from your observational research, the question or puzzle that these observations sparked in you, the two sources you have chosen to respond to your question (including any quotations that are relevant), and your argument.

Complete the following to help yourself prepare:

- Create 8-12 presentation slides to accompany your 6-8-minute talk. Review the guidelines for creating effective presentation slides on NTULearn (course main site).
- Schedule a time with your partner this week to practise your presentation. Exchange feedback on your presentation, using the checklist at the end of this coursebook to guide you.

Before Assignment 2, you should practise, practise, practise. For every minute of speaking, expect to spend an hour or more in preparation. Set aside time to rehearse so that you feel comfortable and confident during the actual presentation. Rehearse in the actual setting where you'll be speaking and test out all the equipment. Rehearse in front of a mirror, with a friend or CommCube coach (book an appointment at https://www.ntu.edu.sg/lcc/about-us/lcc-communication-cube/making-appointments), or while recording yourself with your phone or laptop.

Coming to your presentation well-prepared is the surest way to calm your nerves. Also, just before your presentation, take a few deep breaths and slow down your heart rate. Try a meditative or mindfulness technique, if you're familiar with any. The goal is to switch off your sympathetic nervous system (flight or fight response) and to activate your parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest system). You'll gain greater control over your nerves and body and minimise any nervous shaking of your body and voice. Relax: you'll do a great job.

Grading Rubric:

Organisation and Content
• Appropriate beginning • Elaborates main claims • Effective closing and adherence to time limit
Presentation Delivery
• Effective use of voice • Appropriate body language • Establishes rapport with the audience
Visual Aids
• Appropriate slide design • Appropriate use of text • Appropriate number of slides

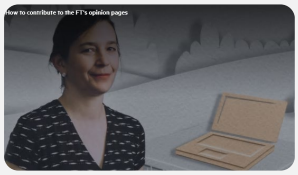
One Last Option!

Although it is not a requirement of the course, we encourage you to explore print and online avenues for the publication of your op-ed assignment. These can be local or international, niche, or well-known publications. We recommend that you carefully research and analyse the audience, purpose, and context of each publication before selecting a relevant and appropriate one for your work.

Identifying and Editing for Publication

Part I

Watch this video from the *Financial Times Opinion* page, which explains what they are looking for in an op-ed:



Want to Write a Piece for the Financial Times Opinion Page? : https://www.ft.com/content/b927be8a-198a-11e5-8201-cbdb03d71480

This is just one example from one publication. Each publication will have its own advice and guidelines. If you'd like, you can also look at this essay by the opinion editor at the *Straits Times*, which explains how she chooses what to publish: https://www.asiaone.com/singapore/how-st-editor-picks-news-publication

As you explore possible sites for publishing your op-ed, consider the publication's/website's audience, purpose, or mission, and contexts (such as publication frequency, media, details of ownership and history), identify 2-3 that fit into your sense of purpose, audience and context as writers.

Part II

Consider the guidelines of the publication's/website's op-ed editor carefully. For example, the following outline is from the *Financial Times*:

> We welcome letters to the editor so do share your opinions and experiences.
>
> - Please keep it short — it should be at most 400 words long, and has a better chance of success if it is even shorter.
> - Tell us what you know.
> - Avoid jargon, keep the wording clear and remember that most readers will not share your inside knowledge. We like wit and civility, but not abuse or tirades.
> - We accept only exclusives.

Part III

Now edit your piece according to the guidelines given on the print or online publication of your choice. As you're editing your assignment for the selected publication, keep in mind that if you have written about Singapore issues and want to publish in the op-ed pages of the *Financial Times* or *NY Times*, you have to include more details on the context of those issues. You also have to bear in mind what those audiences (international or American) want to read about Singapore and the language (style and expressions) that will be effective in communicating to them. If you choose to send your article to the *Straits Times*, you can use more direct, local examples but you may have to consider certain constraints like race and religion.

When you're ready, submit your op-ed piece to the print or online publication.

Reference

Masters, B. (2019, April 2). *Want to write a piece for the Financial Times opinion page?* Retrieved May 29, 2020 from https://www.ft.com/content/b927be8a-198a-11e5-8201-cbdb03d71480

CC0001

Inquiry and Communication in an Interdisciplinary World

Course Assignments

General Instructions

(1) Submit soft copies of your written assignments (blogs, workshopped drafts, and Assignments 1 and 3) through the *Turnitin* link on your tutorial site. Send or upload a soft copy of your Assignment 2 presentation slides to your tutor. Follow your tutor's instructions for possible hard copy submissions.

(2) Although there are many citation formats, depending on your discipline, we will use APA for this course. We encourage you to use a citation application such as EndNote, or follow the guidelines for APA at the Purdue Owl website:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

(3) Attach the Declaration of Academic Integrity form to your assignments before submission.

(4) Please note the following penalties that will be imposed for late submission of assignments:

- Your marks will be dropped by 10% per day that your assignment is submitted late. After the 5th day, no assignments will be accepted for grading (unless a valid reason is given).
- The submission date is based on the date your assignment is either submitted through Turnitin in soft copy, or received by your tutor in hard copy, whichever is earlier.

(5) Read the guidelines on academic dishonesty, which can be found at http://www.plagiarism.org/. Please take note of the following penalties for academic dishonesty, before submitting your assignments:

- A student who is suspected of academic dishonesty is requested to attend an interview with the course coordinator along with their course tutor. If the student refuses the interview they will receive a 'fail' grade.
- If the extent of the academic dishonesty is found to be serious (e.g. a plagiarism score of 30%-50%), your grade for that assignment will be lowered by a letter grade. In extreme cases, (e.g. a plagiarism score of over 50%), your assignment will be graded as a 'fail'.

Declaration of Academic Integrity

CC0001 Inquiry and Communication in an Interdisciplinary World

Assignment title:

Student's (official) name:

Tutorial group number:

Tutorial day/time:

Tutor's name:

Declaration

I have read and understood the guidelines on academic dishonesty as found at http://www.plagiarism.org/ and the penalties for academic dishonesty (see 'general instructions'), and declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion according to the University's honour code and pledge. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced. I have also not submitted any part of this assignment for another course.

I give consent for my assignment to be used for teaching or research purposes.

Student's signature: **Date:**

Note: Your assignment will not be marked unless this form has been completed and signed.

Assignment 1

Observation to a Question

Overview

Type:	Individual
Word limit:	500 words
Weighting:	20%
Deadline:	Week 6

Description

The blog that you posted in week 4 was the first step for Assignment 1. Now, you need to revise and refine your observational research. In addition, you will include a compelling question or puzzle that has been sparked by your observational research. If you feel you need more data, you may revisit your place, community, or writing practices, and do more observational research for this assignment.

Ultimately, your goal is to:

(1) vividly render your place, community, or writing practices in an organised and focused way;
(2) analyse your observations, highlighting the most significant details and/or patterns;
(3) move to a compelling question that logically follows from your analysis.

Later in the semester, you will respond to this question by searching for sources and developing an argument. For now, your goal is to refine, focus, and organise your blog into an eloquent 500-word piece of writing.

Before submitting Assignment 1, you must make sure that *Blog 1: Observations and Analysis* has been uploaded to NTULearn.

Blog 1: Observations and Analysis

Due Week 4
Length: 300-500 words

Choose ONE topic from the three possible options below and gather data. Keep in mind that this choice will eventually become the springboard for your op-ed. Choose wisely and thoughtfully – what would you like to further explore over the course of the semester? For examples of possible places and communities in Singapore, see the list on the course main site. You can email your tutor to double-check if your place or community seems like a good topic.

There are two important steps for your blog.

(1) Observe and take copious notes and recordings (photos, videos). These field notes should be written down in either bullet points or paragraphs. Your goal is to record as many details as possible – what you hear, see, smell, and touch.

(2) Analyse your observations, highlighting details, tensions, and patterns that you find most interesting. Specifically, point out:

- a seemingly small detail that could actually be significant
- a pattern (repetition or contrast)
- a break in the pattern (an anomaly)

This is the beginning of your analysis and should highlight anything you found interesting or confusing. Include a photo at the start or end of the blog.

(1) A Place in Singapore	(2) A Community in Singapore	(3) Personal Writing Practices
Go to your chosen place for an extended period and observe the place in great detail (what do you see, hear, smell, feel). Take notes on your observations and take some photos and videos.	Pick a specific community (subculture, group) and research it online. Contact a member of this community to find out if you can observe the community and interview a member. Draft 3-5 questions, though also be flexible within the interview so you can have a conversation with your interviewee. (See interview tips below.) Observe the community in as much detail as possible and record your interview, if given consent.	Keep a daily journal for the week to record your writing – texts, messages, notes, in school, out of school, formal, informal— along with their intended purpose and audience. Write a reflective paragraph each day in your journal, which considers: • What values are implicit in each discourse? • How did the medium shape what you wrote? • Did your writing help you discover any ideas? • If you wrote for a school assignment, how did the requirements or discipline conventions require you to think in certain ways?

Tips on Interviewing:

- After you ask a question, pause to let your interviewee think; don't interrupt!
- If you do not understand something your interviewee says, ask them to explain more.
- Listen carefully to your interviewee. Do not ask questions mindlessly from the list you made; try to improvise based on your interviewee's responses. Make the interview feel like a conversation, not an interrogation!

Final Assignment 1

Due Week 6

Length: 500 words

Grading Rubric:

Content

Description of chosen place, community, or personal writing practices

- Is there a vivid description that shows rather than tells the reader about this topic?

Analysis of observations

- Is there analysis of the place, community, or personal writing practices, in which significant details and/or patterns are shown and reflected on?

Research Question

- Is there a clear and compelling question that derives from the observations?
- Is the question open-ended and yet specific enough to be discussed in a 1200-1350-word op-ed?

Language & Style

- Is the description organised and focused?
- Is the writing clear and eloquent, with minimal grammatical errors and no plagiarism?
- Are appropriate photos, if relevant, included at the beginning or end of the assignment.

Assignment 2

Presentation

Overview

Type:	Individual
Weighting:	25%
Deadline:	Performed Weeks 12 & 13; slides due Week 12
Description:	6-8 minute academic presentation

Instructions

Assignment 2 should present to your audience the most interesting and significant findings from your observational research (posted in your blog, but adapted for an audience), the question or puzzle that these observations sparked in you, the two sources you have chosen to respond to your question, and your argument. You should succinctly summarise your sources for your audience, including any quotations that are most relevant.

To prepare, you should:

- Create 8-12 presentation slides to accompany your 6-8-minute talk. Review the guidelines for creating effective presentation slides on NTULearn (course main site).
- Exchange feedback on your presentation with your partner, using the checklist below.

Before Assignment 2, you should practise, practise, practise. For every minute of speaking, expect to spend an hour or more in preparation. Rehearse in the actual setting where you'll be speaking and test out all the equipment. Rehearse in front of a mirror, with a friend or CommCube coach (book an appointment at https://www.ntu.edu.sg/lcc/about-us/lcc-communication-cube), or while recording yourself with your phone or laptop.

Coming to your presentation well-prepared is the surest way to calm your nerves. Also, just before your presentation, take a few deep breaths and slow down your heart rate. Try a meditative or mindfulness technique, if you're familiar with any. The goal is to switch off your sympathetic nervous system (flight or fight response) and to activate your parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest system). You'll gain greater control over your nerves and body, and minimise any nervous shaking of your body and voice.

Academic Presentation
Checklist

Organisation & Content	✔
An appropriate opening: • Gets attention • Briefly previews (i.e. signposts) the main claims of the presentation	
Elaborates main claims • Introduces each main claim with an appropriate transition signal (first, second, next, etc.) and in the same order used in the opening preview • Vividly renders the topic of observation • Highlights significant patterns and analysis of observations • Logically comes to a compelling question that is prompted from the observational research • Provides summarised information from two sources in response to the research question • Establishes the relevance of each source and provides reasons for agreeing/disagreeing with the ideas in the sources • Puts the sources in conversation and develops an argument that sheds a new light on the topic	
An effective closing • Briefly summarises your main claims and question • Closes with memorable statement / ends on a strong note • Leaves the audience with a clear idea of what your presentation was about and why it was important • Adheres to time limit	
Presentation Delivery	**✔**
Effective use of voice • Employs appropriate volume/projection • Uses correct pronunciation and clear articulation of words • Uses appropriate word stress and avoids a monotone • Avoids fillers (i.e. um, uh, like) • Employs appropriate pace	
Appropriate body language • Uses appropriate posture, movement, and gestures • Uses appropriate facial expression and maintains eye contact with the whole audience • Appropriately handles notes, remote presenter, and other props • Displays self-awareness, comfort, and confidence	

Establishes rapport with the audience • Engages audience • Speaks with appropriate energy • Adopts a pleasant and professional demeanour	
Visual Aids	✔
Appropriate slide design • Shows appropriate background, colours, fonts • Shows neat design and relevance to topic	
Appropriate use of text • Uses short, clear key points • Uses appropriate formatting • Uses error-free language	

Assignment 3

Op-Ed

Overview

Type:	Individual
Word limit:	1200-1350 words
Weighting:	40%
Deadline:	Monday of Week 14

Description

Your final goal for this course is to write an op-ed, which is short for opposite the editorial page. You have been working on your op-ed all semester, gathering materials in your blogs and submitting a tentative draft of your beginning with Assignment 1.

Your final op-ed should include:

- A **vivid rendering from your observational research** of your place, community, or personal writing practices
- **Analysis** of these observations
- A **question** that is prompted by your observations and motivates further research
- **Summaries** that introduce your reader to your two sources, clarifying their main arguments and ideas.
- **Reflection** on how each source helps you to respond to your question – what insights do these ideas allow you to reveal about your place, community, or personal writing practices?
- A **conversation between your two sources**, in which your sources are connected to help you compose an argument that is your own. Ideally, there should be some tension or clear differences between your two sources.
- Your own **argument** composed from the ideas borrowed from your sources as well as your own analysis and thinking.

Your argument and use of sources are key for an effective op-ed. Your argument should be capacious and multifaceted, building on the ideas of your cited sources and using your own analysis and thinking on the topic. Ideally, your texts should be put into conversation and connected to form new threads of thought. Your goal is to get your reader to see this place, community, or writing practices in a new light.

Your grade for this op-ed will be based on the final written product. However, there are a few sequenced assignments that will help to get you to your final op-ed. These should all be uploaded to NTULearn before the submission and grading of the final op-ed. They are:

(1) Blog 2: 2 Sources

(2) First Draft: Peer workshopped

(3) Second Draft

Blog 2

Due Recess Break

Length: Approximately 700 words

For this blog post, you must find two sources that help you respond to the question you came up with in Assignment 1. You can of course *revise this question*, if you have changed your mind about the direction of your op-ed – as long as this question still comes from the observational research of your chosen place, community, or writing practices.

The most important thing to keep in mind as you find sources: try to make sure that at least one of your sources is not directly about your topic, but instead is about a concept that can shed new light on your topic and help you form your argument. Your argument will be built NOT by summarising other people's ideas on your topic, but by you doing the work of applying an interesting idea to your topic.

(1) Select your search terms and find two interesting sources.

- In 1-3 sentences, **write out the question** prompted by your observational writing.
- Do some brainstorming on concepts that would be helpful to research to respond to your question. They might be the concepts that are already part of your question. Or you might consider new search terms that can take your research in a different direction. What would be interesting to explore? Remember to specify your research terms to refine your search. Do not look for articles that simply repeat what you already know and believe. Look for texts that offer you intriguing ideas.
- Using NTU's OneSearch or Google Scholar, find **two sources** that can help you respond to your question. Aside from academic journal articles and book chapters, you can also consider using **opinion pieces** from reputable newspapers and magazines such as: *Chicago Tribune, Chronicle of Higher Ed, London Telegraph, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Straits Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Atlantic Monthly, The Economist, Hudson Review, The Nation, National Review, New Criterion, New Yorker, Paris Review, Scientific American, Forbes, Wired*. You can also use sources from Academia SG: https://www.academia.sg
- One of the sources must be a written text. The other can be a video such as a documentary, an RSA video, or Ted Talk.
- As you search, do not just go with the first page of entries. Explore different sources, read abstracts, and don't settle for a source that is not interesting and helpful.
- Make sure that your two sources offer ***different perspectives***. The sources do not have to have opposing opinions (you do not want point/counterpoint/synthesis or "argument-as-debate"). However, you should avoid sources that repeat the same idea. Each source must do work in your op-ed to develop your argument. Find sources that complement each other to create a new idea on your topic.

(2) Summary and reflection for **your first source**

- Write a paragraph of approximately 200 words that summarises the argument and main claims of this source. Include some of the most essential quotations of the source.
- Write a paragraph of approximately 150 words that considers how this source could help you respond to your question. Do you agree with the ideas of this source?

(3) Summary and reflection for **your second source**

- Write a paragraph of approximately 200 words that summarises the argument and main claims of this source. Include some of the most essential quotations of the source.
- Write a paragraph of approximately 150 words that considers how this source could help you respond to your question. Do you agree with the ideas of this source?

(4) Add a Reference page that gives the citation information for your two sources.

First Draft
Due Week 9
1000-1350 words

Next week, you will come to class with your first draft of your op-ed. Do not worry if it feels incomplete or not polished. This is just a first draft; it will be heavily revised as you get feedback from peers and your teacher. For this first draft, you should begin by reviewing all the writing you have done so far this semester. Look at the feedback you received on your two blogs and Assignment 1. This work will all contribute to your first draft. You can cut and paste some parts of these assignments into your first draft, but we recommend that you try to reconceive and revise these materials as you begin your op-ed.

Your first draft should include:

- A **vivid rendering from your observational research** of your place, community, or personal writing practices
- **An analysis** of these observations
- A **question** that is prompted by your observations and motivates further research
- **Summaries** that introduce your reader to your two sources, clarifying their main arguments and ideas.
- **Reflection** on how each source helps you to respond to your question – what insights do these ideas allow you to reveal about your place, community, or personal writing practices?
- Your own developing **argument** composed from the ideas borrowed from your sources as well as your own analysis and thinking. Try to put your texts into conversation.

These can be **in any order** that seems organic to your thinking and logic. For your first draft, you might not have the argument fully developed yet. That is fine. It will come as you revise!

Please upload your draft to NTULearn and bring a copy to class for workshopping.

Second Draft
Due in your consultation
1200-1350 words

As you revise your draft for your consultation with your teacher, consider your peer's feedback from class, as well as what you learned by reading your partner's draft. You may want to focus on:

- The structure and logical flow of your op-ed, making sure there is a clear beginning, middle and end.

- Possibly changing sources to create more tension in your op-ed, so your evidence does not all point in one direction but takes turns and develops.
- Putting your two sources into conversation. Explore ways in which the ideas of your two sources can be brought together to form a new idea of your own.

Assignment 3: Final Op-ed

Due Monday of Week 14

Length: 1200-1350 words

Grading Rubric:

Content

Descriptive Writing, Analysis, and Question

- Is there vivid description of the place, community, or personal writing practices? Is the rendering too general or unfocused?
- Have the significant details been analysed?
- Is the question or puzzle specific enough for a 1200-1350-word op-ed, and yet open-ended enough to be worth discussion? Does the question come from the writer's analysis of her or his observations? Does the question offer a clear motivation for writing?

Source usage

- Quality of sources
- Are the two sources summarised, paraphrased, and quoted accurately and ethically?
- Does the writer analyse the sources and reflect on how they contribute to the argument, helping the writer respond to her or his motivating question?
- Do the two sources repeat one another or do they offer differing or complementary ideas? Are the two sources put in conversation, coherently forming a larger argument?

Argument

- Does the writer come to a compelling and complex argument, shedding a new light on the topic?

Style, Structure & Referencing

- Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Is the op-ed clearly written, using standard grammar and thoughtfully chosen vocabulary?

APA Citation Format

Class Participation

Class Participation includes: Peer workshopping, quality of 2 blogs, three-minute pitch, and weekly class discussion and preparedness.

Your class participation will be assessed according to the following criteria, with (1) being poor and (7) being excellent:

(1) No participation; unsubmitted blogs or drafts; half-hearted peer workshopping, and/or three-minute pitch.

(2) Infrequent/inconsistent participation; partially submitted blogs or drafts; minimal engagement with peer workshopping and/or three-minute pitch.

(3) Occasional participation (answers questions when asked); submitted blogs and drafts, though of poor quality; minimal engagement with peer workshopping and/or three-minute pitch.

(4) Average contribution (in terms of frequency & quality); average blogs, drafts, peer workshopping, and three-minute pitch.

(5) Voluntary and good quality participation; good blogs, drafts, peer workshopping, and three-minute pitch.

(6) Always voluntary, frequent and very insightful participation — shows understanding of the subject; integrates ideas from the readings. Insightful blogs, drafts, peer workshopping, and three-minute pitch.

(7) Consistent (every single session), insightful and quality participation — shows good understanding of the subject; analytical integration of ideas from the readings; significant effort and insight in blogs, drafts, peer workshopping, and three-minute pitch.