Academic Writing Basics

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SURREY, BC

Contents

1.

Acknowledgements

Academic Writing Basics draws on and synthesizes the contributions of the [Kwantlen Polytechnic University Learning Centre team](#), including source materials, learning aids, and workshop content created and updated by Learning Strategists, Learning Centre Staff, and Peer Tutors. Thanks to Karen Meijer-Kline, Mustafa Mohammed, and Rajiv Jhangiani for their technical assistance on this project. Kim Tomiak provided helpful editorial suggestions.

Academic Writing Basics adopts and adapts Open Access material from a variety of sources including:

- [College of DuPage Library](#)
- [Department of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Mississippi](#)
- [The Excelsior College Online Writing Lab](#)
- [Mount Royal University Library](#)
- [University of California Los Angeles Library](#)
- [University of Guelph Library](#)
- [University of Laurier Library](#)
- [University of Northern British Columbia Academic Success Centre](#)

- [Saylor Academy](#)

- [*The Word on College Reading and Writing*](#) by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear

These sources are credited where the material appears.

Material in "Types of Academic Writing" is reproduced with permission from [The University of Sydney Learning Centre](#).

2.

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- [Planning Your Writing – Overcoming Obstacles](#)
- [Revising Your Writing](#)
- [Review and Next Steps](#)

3.

How this Resource Works

By reading and completing activities in this resource you will be able to:

- Consider the process of academic writing;
- Determine the type of academic writing you might be asked to complete;
- Review approaches to developing and structuring ideas using concept mapping and outlining;
- Work on how to develop a thesis statement or controlling idea;
- Consider strategies for planning your writing assignment, including:
  - Drafting paragraphs
  - Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing
  - Incorporating evidence, and
  - Overcoming obstacles;
- Use key questions for revising and editing.

There are activities for you to do throughout this resource. Each activity will have this banner above it:
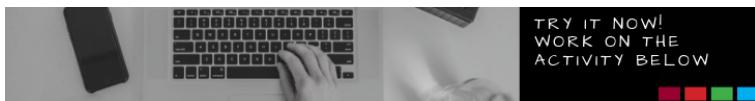
4.

Assessing Current Knowledge

If you are new to academic writing, have done some academic writing, or are already an experienced academic writer, there is always more to learn!

Reflecting on your current writing process can help you decide what steps to take next.

Take the quiz below to determine if you are currently at the beginning stages of academic writing, the intermediate stages, or in the experienced stages.
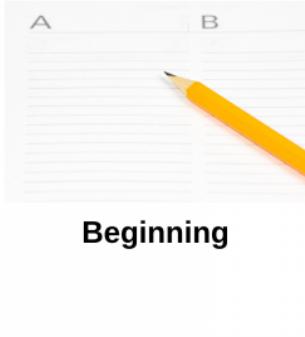
An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=27#h5p-1

5.

Building Basics

As we cover academic writing basics, you'll see tips and suggestions especially for beginning academic writers. Intermediate and experienced academic writers can also use these strategies and approaches.

Based on your current stage of academic writing, consider how the information and examples used in this Pressbook may be applied for your specific background and experience:

Beginning

Beginning writers may want to closely follow templates and resources to learn more about conventions and expectations of academic writing. This can help you become more familiar with the basics of academic writing.

Intermediate writers may have some knowledge of the conventions and expectations of academic writing. Adapting and extending examples used in this workshop can help further develop your writing skills and your own voice as an academic writer.

Creatively reflecting on the material in this workshop can help experienced academic writers further refine ideas. By experimenting with different approaches that complement your existing writing process, you can learn more about how to best showcase your research and discussion.

6.

Thinking About Your Assignment

"[The Thinker](…)" by Auguste Rodin [CC0 1.0](…)

When you receive your writing assignment from your instructor, it's important to stop and think. What are the requirements? What is the purpose of this assignment? What is your instructor asking you to write? Who are you writing for?

Before you begin to write any part of an assignment, think about the requirements and how you plan to meet those requirements. It's easy to jump into an assignment without stopping to think about and analyze the assignment requirements.

What does it mean to think about and analyze assignment requirements?

It means that you're considering the purpose of the assignment, the audience for the assignment, the voice you

might want to use when you write, and how you will approach the assignment effectively overall.

With each writing assignment, you're being presented with a particular situation for writing. Learning about assignment requirements and expectations can help you learn to make good decisions about your writing.

Every writing assignment has different expectations. There is no such thing as right, when it comes to writing; instead, try to think about good writing as being writing that is effective in that particular situation.

Adapted from "Thinking about Your Assignment" by Excelsior Online Writing Lab CC BY 4.0

7.

Keyword Clues - Determining the Type of Writing

When you receive an assignment from an instructor, paying close attention to the assignment description and expectations can help you determine what will be most effective for your writing.

Looking for and highlighting keywords in your assignment can help you know what your instructor expects. Try it out! Match the keywords below with their definitions:

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=36#h5p-4*

1

These are just some of the keywords that you might see in an assignment. Review the KPU Learning Aid "Terms that may be used in essays or examinations" to see more

Beginning, intermediate, or experienced as an academic writer, if you are uncertain about assignment requirements – ask your instructor! You can also visit the KPU Learning Centres for help with determining what type of writing you are being asked to do.

In the next section, we'll take a closer look at four of the common types of academic writing that you might encounter and the keywords that are associated with each type of writing.

1. [2]
2. [1]

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1. From "College Success: "Chapter 8, Section 8.1: What's Different about College Writing?" by Saylor Academy (2012) CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 ↵

8.

Types of Academic Writing

"Taking Notes with a Pencil" by Thought Catalog on Unsplash

Identifying the keywords in your assignment instructions can help you understand the type of writing that you are expected to do.

If you are a beginning academic writer, in your first semester of university studies, you will likely start with some descriptive writing.

By the end of your first semester, you may be expected to include analysis, persuasion, and critique in your writing. Most of the academic writing you will do as a university student will include a combination of these different types of writing.

Beginning

If you are an intermediate or experienced academic writer, you may already be familiar with these type of writing.

Intermediate

Experienced

Below, we'll look more closely at the four different types of writing (descriptive, analytical, persuasive, and critical) and consider strategies for developing ideas.

Click on the titles to expand the sections.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=59#h5p-2

1

1. Description and discussion of types of writing reproduced, with permission, from "Types of Academic Writing" by University of Sydney Learning Centre https://sydney.edu.au/students/writing/types-of-academic-writing.html

9.

Breaking Down an Assignment

Once you know about the expectations related to the type of writing that you are required to do, you can make a plan to gather information and develop your ideas.

Let's look at an example, we'll come back to this example throughout the different sections of this Pressbook…

An instructor in a first-year communication course asks students to complete the following assignment:

Write a 1,500 word persuasive essay that responds to the question: "Are transit services effective for Kwantlen University students?" Include your own perspective in your analysis and draw on two academic sources.

In my assignment, I'll need to ***describe*** transit services. Once I have my description, I can include some ***analysis*** of those services, based on my own perspective and sources that I'll need to identify. Because this is a ***persuasive*** essay, I want to make sure that I'm presenting a clear argument. I can already see that I'll be using three types of academic writing in this one assignment!

As I work on my assignment, it is important that I keep checking back with the assignment instructions; I want to make sure that I'm staying on topic and responding to the question.

Now that I have an understanding of the type of assignment that I'm working on, I can begin to develop ideas, gather information, and organize what I want to say. We'll look more closely at brainstorming and concept mapping, next.

What are Academic Sources?

Academic Sources:

- Are published in a peer-reviewed journal or by a reputable publisher

- Use academic or scholarly language

- Include a reference list

- Include the author's credentials

- Report the results of some kind of research or study

From "General Education: Scholarly and Popular Resources" by Mount Royal University Library CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

10.

Concept Mapping

Creating a concept map is a way of organizing your brainstorming around key concepts.

This video from the University of Guelph offers a brief and helpful overview of concept mapping:[1]

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=44#oembed-1

Ready to get started with a concept map? This KPU learning aid can also help guide you through the process.
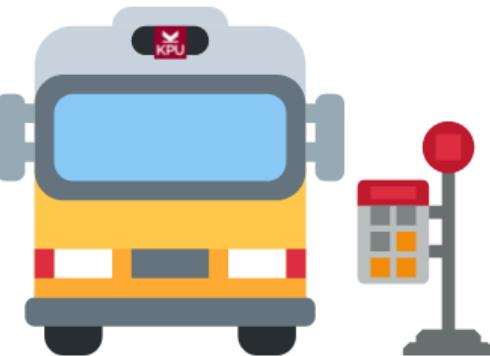
  Let's use our example where an instructor has given us the assignment: *Write a 1,500 word persuasive essay that responds to the question: "Are transit services effective for Kwantlen University students?" Include your own*

1. [2]
2. [1]

perspective in your analysis and draw on two primary and two academic sources.

"Are transit services effective for Kwantlen University students?"

We'll follow the seven steps of concept mapping outlined in the video above and I'll include some examples.

If you have your own assignment that you are currently working on, use the steps below to make your own concept map for your assignment.

Step One:

- Identify the main topic
- Brainstorm everything you know about the topic
- Use relevant content from course, lectures, textbooks, and course material

Sticky notes can be a great way of jotting down ideas – you can move the notes around as you begin to identify similarities and differences. You can also ask questions and include reminders of work that that you need to do. See the example below of some sticky notes I might use to start my assignment:

I'll add more sticky notes with key questions that relate back to the assignment – I'll need to find primary and academic sources:

I can use these questions as I begin my research process and identify the primary and academic sources I need to support the argument that I will make.

To find out more about the research process, visit any of KPU's libraries to get help from a librarian, or review one of the helpful guides here to get started.

This video, included in KPU Library's Research Help page, provides a good overview of working with an assignment to make sure that you develop a response that is specific and well-supported:

Step Two:

- Organize information into main points

After noting down what I know about my topic and identifying key questions that I'll need to research everything, I can focus on a few things that will be

important to describe and analyze in my essay. I've made a list of some that I can use:

Effective Transit for KPU Students

What is effective?
- Saves money
- Safe - less likely to be in an accident
- Translink numbers - what % of KPU students take the bus?

What is not effective?
- Bus takes too long, not on schedule
- Too crowded
- No easy connection to SkyTrain
- Article by Jasper (2018) says Surrey has reached capacity for buses, but no alternatives planned
- Driving makes it easier for students to get to work - able to take shifts > make $ > pay tuition

Based on what I've done so far, I'm setting up a descriptive comparison of transit options for KPU students, but will emphasize that current transit options are not

effective. I want to look for further connections between ideas and see how I can shape my argument.

Step Three:

- Start creating map
- Begin with main points
- Branch out to supporting details
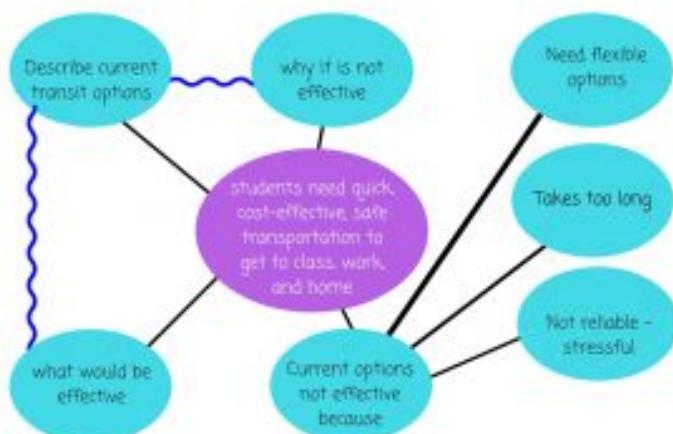
Give it a try! Based on your experience of public transit and the ideas that I've outlined so far, how might you start to create a concept map? You can use a piece of paper, or concept mapping software, to make note of ideas and start to connect them.

Step Four:

- Review map and look for more connections
- Use arrows, symbols, and colours, to show relationships between ideas
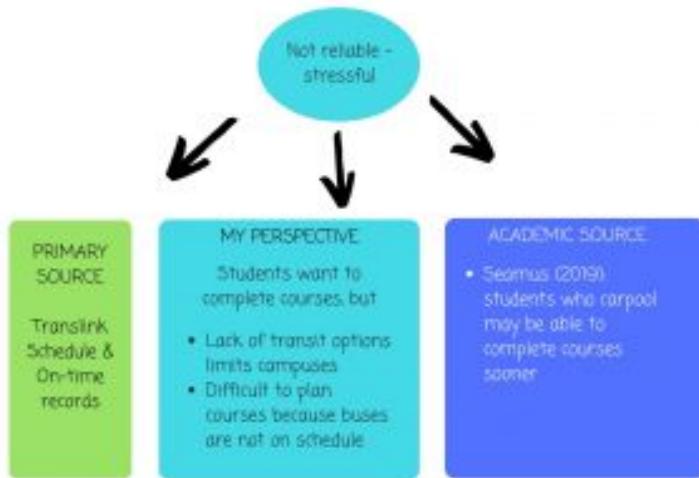
I start to build layers of connections and relationships in my map:

Step Five:

- Include details

This is where I can provide more information about each point – below, I've taken one of the points and added to it:

Step Six:

- Analyze and improve map by asking questions
- How do ideas fit together?
- Have all necessary connections been made?

This is where I can step back and review my map and keep the purpose of my assignment in mind. This is also a good time to follow up on questions that I might have – I can talk through my ideas with a classmate or visit my instructor as I continue to develop and refine my ideas.

Step Seven:

- Update concept map as you learn more
- Ask key questions about connections between

ideas

    I'll keep my map with me as I meet with my instructor to discuss my ideas and when I visit the library to locate any academic resources that I might need; this way, I can keep everything together.

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1. "[How to Create a Concept Map](#)" by University of Guelph Library [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0↵](#)

11.

Outlining

Once you have your concepts and know how you are going to connect your concepts, you can start to shape your essay by working on an outline. An outline can help structure your writing – but it is flexible! Imagine that your outline is your travel plan for what you want to do on your vacation – you know which sights you want to see, which pictures you want to take, and where you want to go. Once you know this, you can then decide *how* you're going to do these things: what do you want to visit first? How will you travel between destinations? How long will you stay in each place?

"My work space" by oxana v on Unsplash
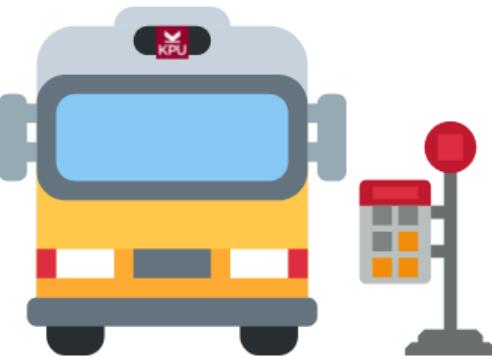
For your writing journey, an outline can help you answer similar questions: which concept do you want to discuss first? How will you travel between different concepts? How much will you write about each concept?

Your outline helps you plan and structure what you want to say and in what order you will say it. As your ideas develop, you may adjust your outline so that it better fits with the concepts you want to connect and the evidence you will use to support your ideas.

You can follow this KPU learning aid to learn more about structuring your outline.

Using our example writing assignment, I can get started on my outline.

"Are transit services effective for Kwantlen University students?"

I'll group ideas and concepts into paragraphs:

Introduction
- Describe what it's like to take the bus

Thesis Statement

Paragraph 1
- Time
- Students have many things on their schedule
- Buses late, don't come

Paragraph 2

- Distance - travel between campuses
- Not reliable
- Limits course options
- Carpooling quicker, easier

Paragraph 3

- Tranlink and Surrey not prepared for KPU students
- Students not a priority

Paragraph 4
- Counterpoints
- U-Pass is good, but it's not just about money
- While some can study/sleep on the bus - not the best place for either

Conclusion

- Keypoints
- What would effective transit look like?

Right now, I haven't written my thesis statement, but that will be my next step.

If you are an intermediate or an experienced academic writer, you might want to try creative graphic approaches to outlining.
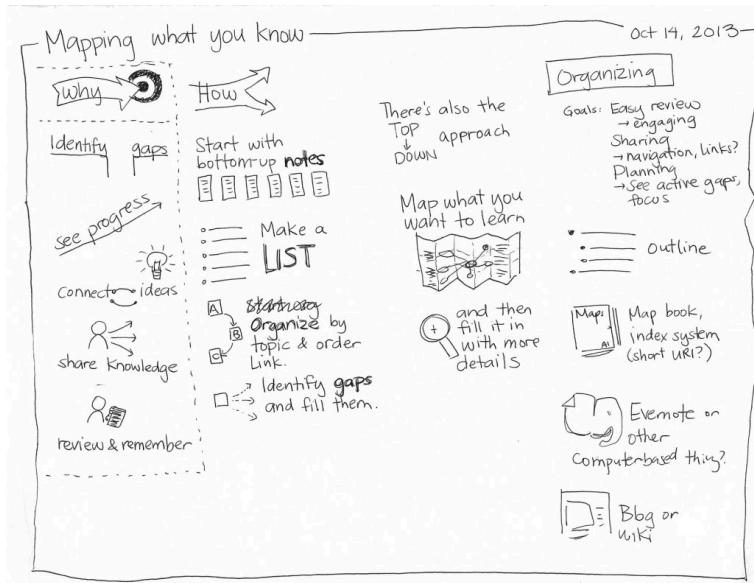
Intermediate

Experienced

Below you can see an example of using text and drawing to organize key ideas and assess options when putting together a project.

"2013-10-14 Mapping what you know" by Sacha Chua
CC BY 2.0

12.

Developing Your Thesis Statement

After you have started to develop your ideas and mapped out the main concepts that you will cover in your assignment, it can now be a good time to consider what will be your thesis statement.

Remember that your thesis statement can change as you continue to develop your ideas – using an outline can help you keep checking on the connection between your body paragraphs and your thesis statement.

Sometimes, thinking of a question can help you focus your ideas and make connections.

In this video[1], you can see how a question can be used to structure and develop a thesis statement (Note, video has no narration; a transcript of the text used on screen is available below):

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

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1. "How to Write a Thesis for Beginners" CC BY 4.0

https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/
academicwritingbasics/?p=47#oembed-1

The three steps outlined in the video:

- Creating a question about your topic
- Finding reasons, and
- Putting it all together

are a good place to start if you are a beginner academic writer.

Another strategy to developing a thesis statement is to use the template suggested in this KPU Learning Aid on "Thesis Statement Design:"

Using the KPU Learning Aid, we can return to our example:
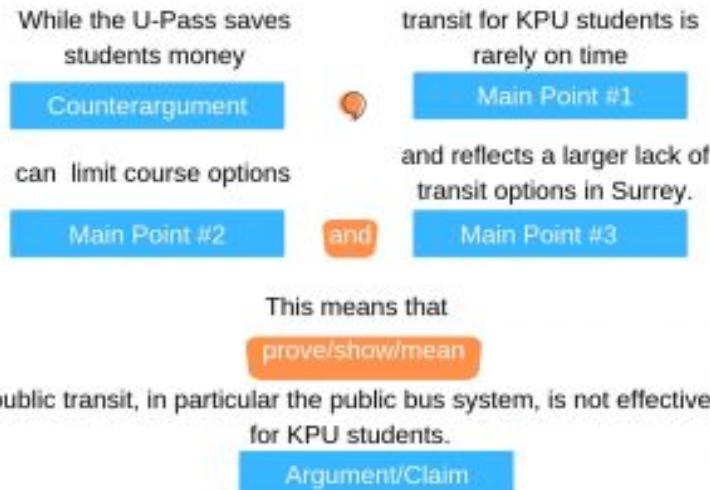
"Are transit services effective for Kwantlen University students?"

Here is the suggested template:

By beginning to to organize my ideas about effective transit and KPU students, I can say:

While the U-Pass saves students money

Counterargument

transit for KPU students is rarely on time

Main Point #1

can limit course options

Main Point #2

and reflects a larger lack of transit options in Surrey.

Main Point #3

and

This means that

prove/show/mean

public transit, in particular the public bus system, is not effective for KPU students.

Argument/Claim

Right now, my thesis is two sentences:

> While the U-Pass saves students money, transit for KPU students is rarely on time, can limit course options, and reflects a larger lack of transit options in Surrey. This means that public transit, in particular the public bus system, is not effective for KPU students.

My thesis may change as I continue to write and revise my essay. In the next chapter, we'll look at more questions

suggestions you can use to further refine your thesis statement.

Transcript for Text from "How to Write a Thesis for Beginners"

Writing a Thesis Statement

Step 1 (creating a question about your topic)

What is your topic?

Superman

Form a question

Why is Superman so cool?

Step 2 (finding reasons)

What are some of the reasons that Superman is cool?

(Try to think of at least 3 reasons)

Superman can fly!

He saves people from danger

Superman is really strong

That's why he is Superman!

Step 3 (putting it all together)

We need to take the information from step 1 and 2 and combine it Make sure to answer your question Why is Superman so cool?

Superman is so cool because

(part 1)

he is strong, helps people in danger, and he can fly.

(part 2)

Remember your thesis is the road map for writing your paper.

Make sure you write about what your thesis says. Whether you are writing about Superman, China, or Australia.

13.

Refining Your Thesis Statement

As you develop experience and confidence as a writer, you can consider more steps to improve your thesis statement, like those ones discussed in the University of Laurier Library video[1]:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=204#oembed-1

If you are able to:

- Make an argument
- Answer 'so what?'
- Be specific
- Have only one idea
- Make it supportable

You can make improvements in your thesis statement.

See if you can identify strong thesis statements:

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1. "Improving Your Thesis Statement" by Laurier Library CC BY 4.0

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=204#h5p-6

2

2. Adapted from [Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#) (OWL) [CC BY 4.0](#))

14.

Planning Your Writing - Drafting Paragraphs

Once you have an outline and a thesis statement, you can work on the paragraphs in your assignment and start writing your first draft.

Following the MEAL plan can help you structure your paragraphs:

MEAL Plan Paragraphs

Click on the sections below to find out more about the MEAL plan for paragraph drafting:
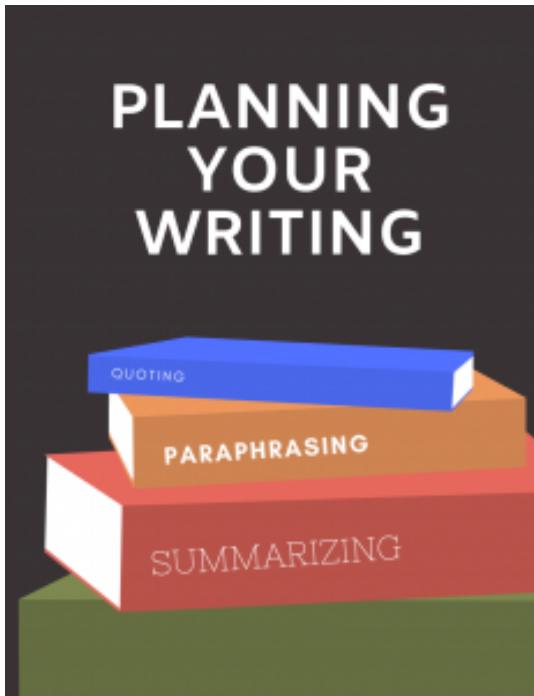
An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/ academicwritingbasics/?p=48#h5p-7

1

1. Paragraphing: MEAL Plan by Excelsior Online Writing Lab CC BY 4.0

15.

Planning Your Writing - Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

An important part academic writing is incorporating evidence. To do this, you will need to know the basics of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

Making sure that you are using evidence properly, through quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing, will

ensure that you are giving necessary credit for other peoples' words and ideas and will help you avoid plagiarism.

The table[1] below describes three different ways of using evidence:

Quoting	Using the author's exact words. Always cite it and use "quotation marks."
Paraphrasing	Restating, in your own words, the author's words or ideas without altering the meaning or providing interpretation. Paraphrases are about the same length as the original. Always cite it.
Summarizing	Condensing the author's words or ideas without altering the meaning or providing interpretation—you use your own words for this. Basically, presenting the original information in a nutshell. Always cite it.

Effectively quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing always includes citation.

We'll review some examples of how you can effectively incorporate evidence to support your ideas in the next section. Before we get there, make sure that you are familiar with the citation style and reference style that you

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1. "Quoting, Summarizing, and Paraphrasing in a Nutshell" by University of California Los Angeles Library CC BY 4.0

are using for your assignment – these can be different for different courses and assignments.

The KPU Library has guides to help you with make sure that you are citing your work correctly, according to the style that your instructor wants you to use. Visit their page here.

If you have questions about how you should be citing evidence, ask your instructor or check with one of the KPU librarians.

Complete the KPU Plagiarism Awareness Tutorial to learn more about academic integrity and earn your Moodle badge.

Properly Summarizing and Paraphrasing[2]

When you summarize, you should write in your own words and the result should be substantially shorter than the original text. In addition, the sentence structure should be your original format. **In other words, you should not take a sentence and replace core words with synonyms (different words with the same meaning)**.

You should also use your own words when you paraphrase. Paraphrasing should also involve your own sentence structure. However, paraphrasing might be as long or even longer than the original text. When you paraphrase, you should include, in your words, all the ideas

2. Material in this section is reproduced and adapted from "Making Ethical and Effective Choices" by Saylor CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

from the original text in the same order as in the original text. You should not insert any of your ideas.

Both summaries and paraphrases should maintain the original author's intent and perspective. Taking details out of context to suit your purposes is not ethical since it does not honor the original author's ideas.

Review the examples in the table below to see the difference between quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and plagiarizing.

Here is a page from a book written by Maelle Jasper:

Online Lives - Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century

Some dramatic differences were obvious between online and face-to-face classrooms. For example, 73 percent of the students responded that they felt like they knew their face-to-face classmates, but only 35 percent of the subjects felt they knew their online classmates. In regards to having personal discussion with classmates, 83 percent of the subjects had such discussions in face-to-face classes, but only 32 percent in online classes. Only 52 percent of subjects said they remembered people from their online classes, whereas 94 percent remembered people from their face-to-face classes.

Similarly, liking to do group projects differs from 52 percent (face-to-face) to 22 percent (online) and viewing classes as friendly, connected groups differs from 73 percent (face-to-face) to 52 percent (online). These results show that students generally feel less connected in online classes.

Quoted Text	The study showed that personal discussions are much more likely to take place in face-to-face classes than in online classes since "83 percent of the subjects had such discussions in face-to-face classes, but only 32 percent in online classes" (Jasper, 2016, p. 82).
Paraphrased Text	Study results (Jasper, 2016, p. 82) show a clear difference between online and face-to-face classrooms. About twice as many students indicated they knew their classmates in face-to-face classes than in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes were about two-and-a-half times more likely to have discussions with classmates than were students in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes were about twice as likely to remember classmates as were students in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes viewed group projects as positive about two-and-a-half times more often than did students in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes saw class as a friendly place 73 percent of the time compared to 52 percent for online classes. Summing up these results, it is clear that students feel more connected in face-to-face classes than in online classes.
Summarized Text	Students report a more personal connection to students in face-to-face classes than in online classes (Jasper, 2016, p.82).

In the example of plagiarized text, so

| **Plagiarized Text** | Some major differences were clear between Internet and in-person classrooms. For example, 73 percent of the study participants felt they were acquainted with their in-person classmates, but only 35 percent of the participants indicated they knew their distance classmates. |

me of the words from the original text are replaced with synonyms (different words with the same meaning).

Below you can see how the words that are <u>underlined</u> in the original text have been replaced in the plagiarized text with <mark>synonyms</mark> (highlighted in yellow).

| **Original Text** | Some <u>dramatic</u> differences were <u>obvious</u> between <u>online</u> and <u>face-to-face</u> classrooms. For example, 73 percent of <u>students</u> responded that they felt like they <u>knew</u> their <u>face-to-face</u> classmates, but only 35 percent of the <u>subjects</u> <u>said</u> they <u>remembered</u> <u>people from their online classes</u>. |
| **Plagiarized Text** | Some <mark>major</mark> differences were <mark>clear</mark> between <mark>Internet</mark> and <mark>in-person</mark> classrooms. For example, 73 percent of <mark>the study participants</mark> felt they <mark>were acquainted</mark> with their <mark>in-person</mark> classmates, but only 35 percent of the <mark>participants</mark> <mark>indicated</mark> they <mark>knew</mark> their <mark>distance classmates</mark>. |

The only noticeable difference between the original text and the plagiarized text are the synonyms. This form of plagiarism is also known as "patch writing." The original

and the plagiarized text are identical, except for "patches" where synonyms have been used.

Patch writing [3]

You copy a short passage from an article you found. You change a couple of words, so that it's different from the original. You carefully cite the source. It is still PLAGIARISM because even though you have acknowledged the source of the ideas with a citation, your new passage is too close to the original text. This form of plagiarism is called patch writing. In patch writing, the writer may delete a few words, change the order, substitute synonyms and even change the grammatical structure, but the reliance on the original text is still visible when the two are compared.

3. "Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing & Patchwriting Quotations" by College of DuPage Library CC BY 4.0

16.

Planning Your Writing - Incorporating Evidence

In the previous section, we reviewed quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Academic writing uses quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing, together with your own word and ideas to communicate your perspectives.

One way to think about incorporating evidence is to imagine that the person reading your writing visits a bakery to pick up a pie. Your reader is expecting something like this:

*"Pie on wood slab" by Rebecca Matthews
on Unsplash*

As a writer, your reader expects you to combine and incorporate all of the ingredients in the proper order. If your reader is expecting a well-made apple pie, but you don't combine the ingredients, like the picture below, the reader might not be sure what to do with them.

"Baking a Pie" by Andy Chilton on Unsplash

Even if you have good ingredients, you need to blend them together! When you are working on a writing assignment, even if you identify good evidence to support your thesis, you need to organize and incorporate that evidence and supporting material with your own ideas and your own writing.

So, how can evidence be incorporated with your own ideas and your own writing?

There are three basic elements to keep in mind when incorporating evidence:[1]

Effectively using evidence is not just about properly documenting your evidence, but also where and how you

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1. From "Integrating Evidence into Your Writing" by University of Northern British Columbia Academic Success Centre

incorporate evidence into your writing, and how you explain its significance to your argument.

To effectively show the reader how evidence supports your claims, use a well-organized
paragraph structure in combination with language signals. Language signals such as "for example," "therefore," and "in contrast," for instance, help make connections and transitions between ideas more clear to the reader.

Use this basic pattern as a guide to incorporate evidence into your paragraph:

1) State your claim, and define any terms that may not be known to your reader
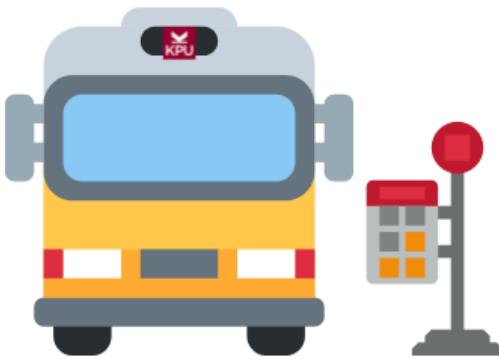
2) Provide evidence that supports your claim

3) Comment on how the evidence supports your claim

The third element is where you clearly explain the connection between your claim and the evidence to the reader. Do not assume the reader automatically understands the connections between your ideas—you must explain them!

Using our example of a writing assignment that asks us to discuss effective transit options for KPU students, we can now do the following:

"Are transit services effective for Kwantlen University students?"

State your claim, and define any terms that may not be known to your reader

While Surrey has one of the largest populations in Metro Vancouver, the "federation of 21 municipalities, one Electoral Area and one Treaty First Nation" in southwest British Columbia (Metro Vancouver, 2019, para. 1), it is under served by public transit. Surrey's current Skytrain service, in particular, does not support the transportation needs of Kwantlen students or the city's residents.

- In the paragraph above we have:

- ◦ Defined a key term – "Metro Vancouver"
- ◦ Incorporated a quotation from a source into our sentences

Provide evidence that supports your claim

Skytrain service extended to Surrey following Vancouver's hosting of Expo '86 and by 1994, the 'Expo Line' included 20 stations stretching from Downtown Vancouver to Surrey's King George Station – one of fours Skytrain stations in Surrey (Translink, n.d.). The City of Surrey website notes that the city "has had an average annual growth rate of 2% over the last 10 years" (City of Surrey, n.d.). By 2021, an estimated 600,000 people will call Surrey, but Skytrain service is not scheduled to expand.

- • In the paragraph above, we have:
  - ◦ Used specific evidence related to our claim
  - ◦ Incorporated evidence into our sentences using quotation and paraphrase

Comment on how the evidence supports your claim

The lack of Skytrain stations in Surrey, and with no current plans to build more, means that both Surrey residents and

Kwantlen students will struggle with reliable transportation. Because of this growing population base, more and more Surrey residents will make use of transit. Regardless of where students attending Kwantlen's Surrey campus live, this growing population will create more overcrowding on existing transit lines.

- In the paragraph above, we have:
  - Explained why evidence matters – see where we have used "means" and "because"

17.

Planning Your Writing - Overcoming Obstacles

When you are trying to write your first draft, it can be challenging to get started when facing a blank page!

"[MacBook Pro near white open book]" by [Nick Morrison] on Unsplash

So what can you do?

Just write. You already have at least one idea. Start there. What do you want to say about it? What connections can you make with it? If you have a working thesis, what points might you make that support that thesis?

   Review and update your outline. Write your topic or thesis down and then jot down what points you might make that will flesh out that topic or support that thesis. These

don't have to be detailed. In fact, they don't even have to be complete sentences (yet)![1]

Create Smaller Tasks and Short-Term Goals. Your assignment might seem too large, and maybe the due date is weeks away. These factors can contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed or with the tendency to procrastinate. But the remedy is simple and will help you keep writing something each week toward your deadline and toward the finished product: divide larger writing tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks and set intermediate deadlines.

Collaborate. Talk to your friends or family, or to a peer tutor in [The Learning Centre](#), about your ideas for your essay. Sometimes talking about your ideas is the best way to flesh them out and get your ideas flowing. Write down notes during or just after your conversation. Classmates are a great resource because they're studying the same subjects as you, and they're working on the same assignments. Talk to them often, and form study groups. Ask people to look at your ideas or writing and to give you feedback. Set goals and hold each other accountable for meeting deadlines (a little friendly competition can be motivating!).

Talk to other potential readers. Ask them what they would expect from this type of writing. Meet with a tutor in [The Learning Centre](#). Be sure to come to the appointment prepared with a copy of the assignment and a clear idea of what you want to work on.[2]

Try to start writing well in advance of your deadline so

1. ["Writing the First Draft"](#) in *The Word on College Reading and Writing* by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
2. Adapted from "[Overcoming Writing Anxiety and Writer's Block](#)"in *The Word on College Reading and Writing* by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

that you can continue to improve your assignment before you need to hand it in.

Remember that you can [submit your assignment for a peer tutor to review](#) through the Learning Centre Website or through [WriteAway](#).
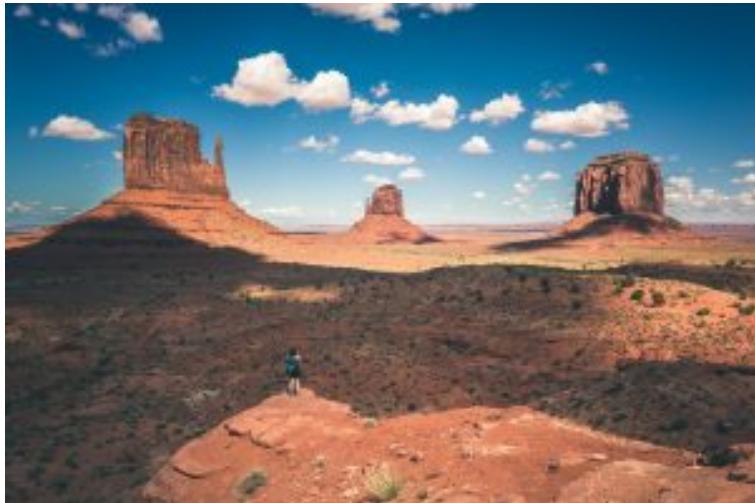
18.

Revising Your Writing

Once you've worked on your draft, you need to revise and edit your work. Revising will help you check if you've responded to the assignment instructions and clearly communicated your ideas. Revising will also help you will help you correct grammatical, punctuation, and presentation issues. When you are revising, try moving through three different stages:

- Checking in on the Big Picture
- The Mid-view Review
- Editing Up Close

We'll look first at Checking in on the Big Picture…

Revising Stage 1 – Checking in on the Big Picture

"[Seeking Adventure](#)" by [Jasper van der Meij](#) on Unsplash

When you first begin revising, you should focus on the big picture. The following questions[1] can help guide you with this:

- Do you have a **clear thesis**? Do you know what idea or perspective you want your reader to understand upon reading your essay?

- Is your essay **well organized**?

- **Is each paragraph a building block** in your essay: does each explain or support your thesis?

- Does it need a different shape? **Do parts need to be moved?**

- Do you fully **explain and illustrate the main ideas** of your paper?

- Does your **introduction grab the reader's**

1. [Revising Stage 1](#) by [Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#) [CC BY 4.0](#)

interest?

- **Does your conclusion leave the reader understanding your point of view?**

- Are you saying in your essay what you want to say?

- **What is the strength of your paper? What is its weakness?**

Revising Stage 2 – The Mid-View Review

"[The south of Mexico]" by [Mitch Lensink] on Unsplash

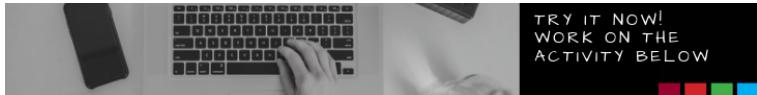The second stage of revising requires that you look at

your content closely at the paragraph level. It's now time to examine each paragraph, on its own, to see where you might need to revise. The following questions[2] will guide you through the mid-view revision stage:

- Does each paragraph contain **solid, specific information, vivid description, or examples** that illustrate the point you are making in the paragraph?

- Are there are other **facts, quotations, examples, or descriptions** to add that can more clearly illustrate or provide evidence for the points you are making?

- Are there sentences, words, descriptions or **information that you can delete** because they don't add to the points you are making or may confuse the reader?

- Are the paragraphs in the **right order**?

- **Are your paragraphs overly long**? Does each paragraph explore **one main idea**?

- Do you use **clear transitions** so the reader can follow your thinking?

- Are any paragraphs or parts of paragraphs **repetitive** and need to be deleted

Take a look at the paragraph[3] below and click the hot spots to see suggestions for revision:

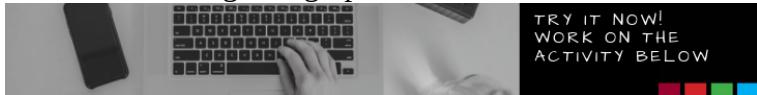2. Revising Stage 2 by Excelsior Online Writing Lab CC-BY-4.0
3. "Revising Paragraphs" in Writing Skills Lab by Department of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Mississippi

TRY IT NOW!
WORK ON THE
ACTIVITY BELOW

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=116#h5p-10

Practice: Revising Paragraphs

TRY IT NOW!
WORK ON THE
ACTIVITY BELOW

Review the paragraph[4] below and select the most important revision that Sophie, the student writer, should focus on in her revisions:

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/academicwritingbasics/?p=116#h5p-8

4. "Revising Paragraphs" in Writing Skills Lab by Department of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Mississippi CC BY 4.0

Revising Stage 3 – Editing Up Close

Photo by *Andrew Pons* on Unsplash

Once you have completed your revision and feel confident in your content, it's time to begin the editing stage of your revision and editing process. The following questions[5] will guide you through your editing:

- Are there any **grammar errors**, i.e. have you been consistent in your use of tense, do your pronouns agree?

- Have you accurately and effectively used **punctuation**?

5. Revising Stage 3 by Excelsior Online Writing Lab CC BY-4.0

- Do you rely on **strong verbs and nouns** and maintain a good balance with **adjectives and adverbs**, using them to enhance descriptions but ensuring clear sentences?

- Are your words as **accurate** as possible?

- Do you **define any technical or unusual terms** you use?

- Are there **extra words or clichés** in your sentences that **you can delete**?

- Do you **vary your sentence structure**?

- Have you **accurately presented facts**; have you copied quotations precisely?

- If you're writing an academic essay, have you tried to be **objective** in your evidence and tone?

- If writing a personal essay, is the **narrative voice lively and interesting**?

- Have you **spellchecked** your paper?

- If you used sources, have you **consistently documented all of the sources' ideas and informatio**n using a standard documentation style?

19.

Review and Next Steps

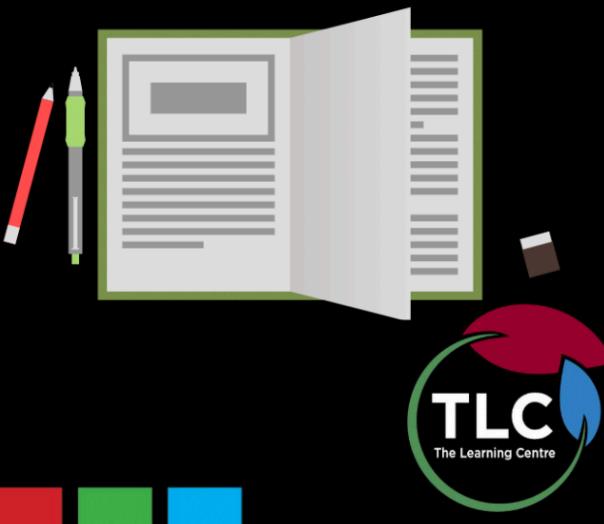**In this resource you have had the opportunity to:**

- consider the process of academic writing;
- determine the type of academic writing you might be asked to complete;
- review approaches to developing and structuring ideas using concept mapping and outlining;
- work on how to develop a thesis statement or controlling idea;
- consider strategies for planning your writing assignment, including:
    - drafting paragraphs
    - quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing
    - incorporating evidence, and
    - overcoming obstacles;
- use key questions for revising and editing.

As you work on your writing assignments, the KPU

Learning Centre is here for you!

Visit the Learning Centre website: https://www.kpu.ca/ learningcentres