

# Week 2

Comm 1133 Writing Strategies

Winter 2016

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# Plan for today

- Hour 1
  - Introduce essay rubric
  - Sentence fragments
  - Argument discussion
- Hour 2
  - Warm-up question
  - Run-on sentences
  - Argument structure & thesis statements

# COMM 1133 – ESSAY RUBRIC

Student Name:

Assignment:

Mechanics		0-1	2	3	4
Draft #1	Draft #2	➤ too many minor and major errors that impede meaning or flow	➤ several minor and major errors that impede meaning or flow	➤ relatively error-free, but 1-2 major errors or several minor errors	➤ error-free or only 2-3 minor errors that do not impede meaning or flow
/4	/4				
Content & Development		➤ insufficient development of thesis or purpose statement ➤ insufficient development of points ➤ lack of any necessary explanations, background information and/or qualifiers ➤ lack of mature sentence structure ➤ concepts not at a post-secondary level ➤ insufficient introduction and/or conclusion ➤ inappropriate tone	➤ sufficient development of thesis or purpose statement ➤ sufficient development of most points ➤ inclusion of some necessary explanations, background information and/or qualifiers ➤ mostly mature sentence structure ➤ most concepts at a post-secondary level ➤ sufficient introduction and/or conclusion ➤ mostly appropriate tone	➤ complete and effective development of thesis or purpose statement ➤ complete and effective development of all points ➤ inclusion of any necessary explanations, background information and/or qualifiers ➤ mature sentence structure ➤ all concepts at a post-secondary level ➤ clear and effective introduction and conclusion ➤ appropriate tone	<b>Comments:</b>
Draft #1	Draft #2				
/3	/3				
Organization		➤ lack of (or indiscernible) thesis or purpose statement ➤ few points unique and well defined ➤ lack of topic sentences ➤ lack of transitions between points ➤ major paragraphing problems ➤ lack of professional appearance ➤ not the assigned organizational mode	➤ inclusion of thesis or purpose statement, but lacks clarity and/or direction ➤ most points unique and well defined ➤ topic sentences lack clarity and/or one topic sentence missing ➤ awkward transitions between points ➤ minor paragraphing problems ➤ mostly professional appearance	➤ inclusion of clear and effective thesis or purpose statement ➤ all points unique and well defined ➤ clear topic sentences ➤ smooth transitions between points ➤ effective paragraphing ➤ professional appearance	
Draft #1	Draft #2				
/3	/3				
Final Grade (lack of fully-developed outline or writing plan results in -2 deduction from draft #1)					
Draft #1		Draft #2			
/10		/10			

## MECHANICS

Major Errors	Minor Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sentence fragment</li><li>• Run-on sentence; comma splice</li><li>• Lack of subject-verb agreement</li><li>• Shift in point of view or person</li><li>• Illogical shift in verb tense</li><li>• General wordiness</li><li>• Overall inappropriate word choice and tone</li><li>• Overall lack of mature sentence structure</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unclear pronoun reference</li><li>• Lack of pronoun agreement</li><li>• Lack of parallel structure</li><li>• Punctuation error</li><li>• Spelling error</li><li>• Slang or cliché</li><li>• Incorrect or imprecise word</li><li>• Misplaced or dangling modifier</li><li>• Problem with capitals or number use</li></ul>

### ATTENDANCE

The college's practice is that attendance is the student's responsibility, in accordance with "Students Rights and Responsibilities." In addition, the following rules apply in COMM 1133:

1. In order to prepare for the final examination and more importantly for the realities of strict deadlines in the workplace, draft 1 for COMM 1133 must be written during the classroom periods. Professors cannot accept drafts that have been written outside the classroom for any in-class assignment. Draft 1 and the rubric **must** accompany any Draft 2 submitted for evaluation. If any part of the writing process is omitted when Draft 2 is submitted, the assignment is considered incomplete and will not be accepted. YOUR PROFESSOR CANNOT CHANGE THESE RULES.
2. If a student misses an in-class assignment, a grade of zero will be recorded for that assignment. Accommodation may be made in cases of sickness or other emergency IF ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION IS PROVIDED.

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The English Department adheres in spirit and practice to the Niagara College Practice for Students with Disabilities. If you are a student with disabilities, please identify your needs to the Centre for Students with Disabilities so that support services can be arranged for you.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic misconduct is a serious offence and will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct includes plagiarism and cheating of any kind. Students who commit such acts will be subject to disciplinary action as described in college practice. College academic practices are available through your student portal or are included in your student handbook.

# The point of grammar

- Define the following words:
  - Break
  - The
- Need *context*.
- Need to see words *in relation to other words*.

# What is grammar?

- Grammar is a set of structural relationships between words.
- Grammar is *necessary* for conveying meaning, which is the whole point of communication.
- E.g.
  - Conveying whole the is grammar *necessary* communication is of point for meaning the which.

# Grammatically complete

- A grammatically complete sentence:
  - Contains at least one **subject-predicate** combination
  - Expresses a complete thought
- E.g.
  - This book summarizes recent criminology research.
  - The smudge tool creates soft effects.
  - My dog, Zorro, ate my paper.

Gurak, L.J. & Lannon J.M. (2016). Strategies for Technical Communication in the workplace. New York: Pearson.

# Sentence fragments

- Sentence fragment = grammatically *incomplete*
- E.g.
  - Although the report was not yet complete.
    - Contains a subject-predicate combination
    - BUT, does not express a complete thought.
- Fixed:
  - Although the report was not yet complete, I began editing.

Gurak, L.J. & Lannon J.M. (2016). Strategies for Technical Communication in the workplace. New York: Pearson.



# Sentence fragments

- Sentence fragment = grammatically *incomplete*
- E.g.
  - DesignPro, a brand-new desktop publishing program.
    - Contains no predicate (which must contain a verb).
- Can fix it by adding a verb.
  - DesignPro, a brand-new desktop publishing program, will be available soon.
  - DesignPro is a brand-new desktop publishing program.

Gurak, L.J. & Lannon J.M. (2016). Strategies for Technical Communication in the workplace. New York: Pearson.

# Sentence fragments—exceptions

- Acceptable in commands or exclamations because the subject (“you”) is understood:
  - Slow down.
  - Give me a hand.
  - Look out!
- Sometimes acceptable in questions and answers:
  - How? By investing wisely.
  - When? At three o’clock.
  - Who? Bill.

Lannon, J. (2012). *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*. New Jersey: Pearson.

# Sentence fragments: practice questions

1. Fred is a terrible math student. But an excellent writer.
2. As they entered the haunted house. The floors began to groan.
3. Hoping for an A in biology. Sally studied every night.

Lannon, J. (2012). *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*. New Jersey: Pearson.

# Argument discussion

Should performance-enhancing drugs be  
allowed in sports?

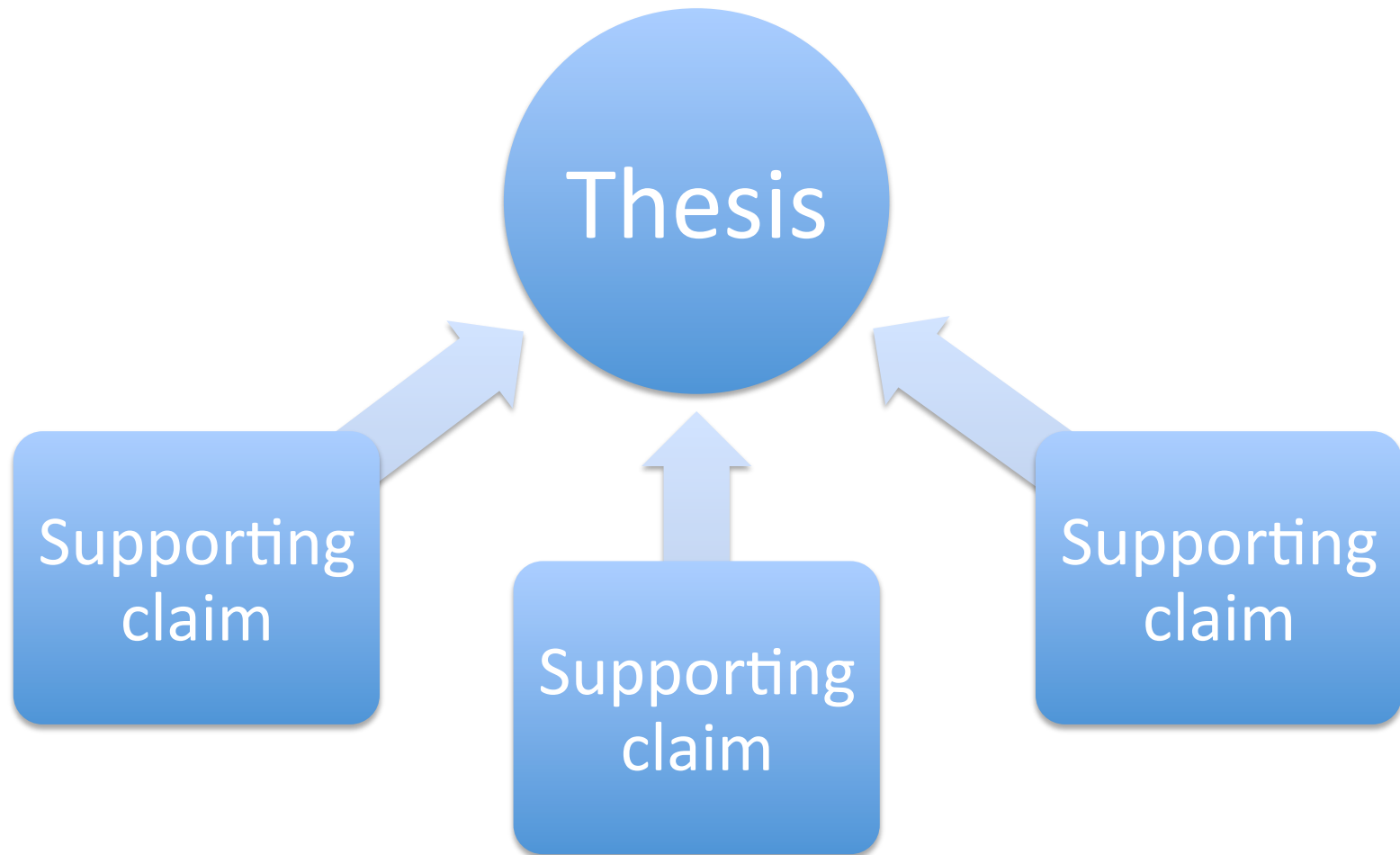
# Monty Python's argument argument

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnTmBjk-M0c>


# Argument



# Argument



# Argument

- [Performance-enhancing drugs should be allowed] because...
    - Reason #1
    - Reason #2
    - Reason #3
  - [Performance-enhancing drugs should not be allowed] because...
    - Reason #1
    - Reason #2
    - Reason #3
- 
- Thesis Statement



# Examples of arguments

- If you want to find a good job, you should work hard. You do want to find a good job. So you should work hard.
- Cutting the interest rate will have no effect on the stock market this time round as people have been expecting a rate cut all along. This factor has already been reflected in the market.

Lau, J. & Chan, J. (2014). What is an argument? *Critical thinking web*. <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/arg.php>

Break

# Warm-up

- Although many students flunk out of this college. Its graduates find excellent jobs.
- Three teenagers out of every ten have some sort of addiction. Whether it is to alcohol or drugs.

Lannon, J. (2012). *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*. New Jersey: Pearson.

# Run-on sentences

- A run-on sentence contains two or more grammatically complete sentences joined together as one without a conjunction or semi-colon:
  - For emergencies, we dial 911 for other questions, we dial 088.
  - Sarah did a great job, she was promoted.

Gurak, L.J. & Lannon J.M. (2016). Strategies for Technical Communication in the workplace. New York: Pearson.

# Run-on sentences

- For emergencies, we dial 911 for other questions, we dial 088.
- Can be fixed by:
  - Dividing into two sentences:
    - For emergencies, we dial 911. For other questions, we dial 088.
  - Adding a conjunction:
    - For emergencies, we dial 911, **and** for other questions, we dial 088.
    - For emergencies, we dial 911, **but** for other questions, we dial 088.

Gurak, L.J. & Lannon J.M. (2016). Strategies for Technical Communication in the workplace. New York: Pearson.

# Run-on sentences

- Sarah did a great job, she was promoted.
- Can be fixed by:
  - Dividing into two sentences:
    - Sarah did a great job. She was promoted.
  - Replacing comma with semi-colon:
    - Sarah did a great job; she was promoted.
  - Adding a conjunction:
    - Sarah did a great job, so she was promoted.
    - Because Sarah did a great job, she was promoted.

Gurak, L.J. & Lannon J.M. (2016). Strategies for Technical Communication in the workplace. New York: Pearson.

# Run-on sentences

- Transitional words (*however, therefore, otherwise, thus, consequently, etc*) are often found in the middle of a run-on sentence:
  - At that point the shock sphere is no longer strong enough to heat the air to incandescence, **however**, the sphere is still very strong.
  - Primary bodies are those that are outside the zone of protection, **thus**, they are susceptible to the effects of a direct lightning strike.

Alley, M. (1999). Recognizing Run-ons and Fragments. University Park: the Pennsylvania State University.

# Run-on sentences

- If you're using a transitional word in between two complete thoughts, separate by a semi-colon or a period.
  - At that point the shock sphere is no longer strong enough to heat the air to incandescence;  
**however**, the sphere is still very strong.
  - At that point the shock sphere is no longer strong enough to heat the air to incandescence.  
**However**, the sphere is still very strong.

Alley, M. (1999). Recognizing Run-ons and Fragments. University Park: the Pennsylvania State University.



# Run-on sentences

- If you're using a transitional word in between two complete thoughts, separate by a semi-colon or a period.
  - Primary bodies are those that are outside the zone of protection; **thus**, they are susceptible to the effects of a direct lightning strike.
  - Primary bodies are those that are outside the zone of protection. **Thus**, they are susceptible to the effects of a direct lightning strike.

Alley, M. (1999). Recognizing Run-ons and Fragments. University Park: the Pennsylvania State University.

# Run-on sentences

- Transitional words sometimes appear in the middle of a *single* complete thought. This is fine.
  - Both sites produce the same three sources of energy: coal, oil, and natural gas. Both sites, **however**, do not produce these sources in the same proportions.
  - We've been good friends since kindergarten. We do not, **however**, see each other frequently.

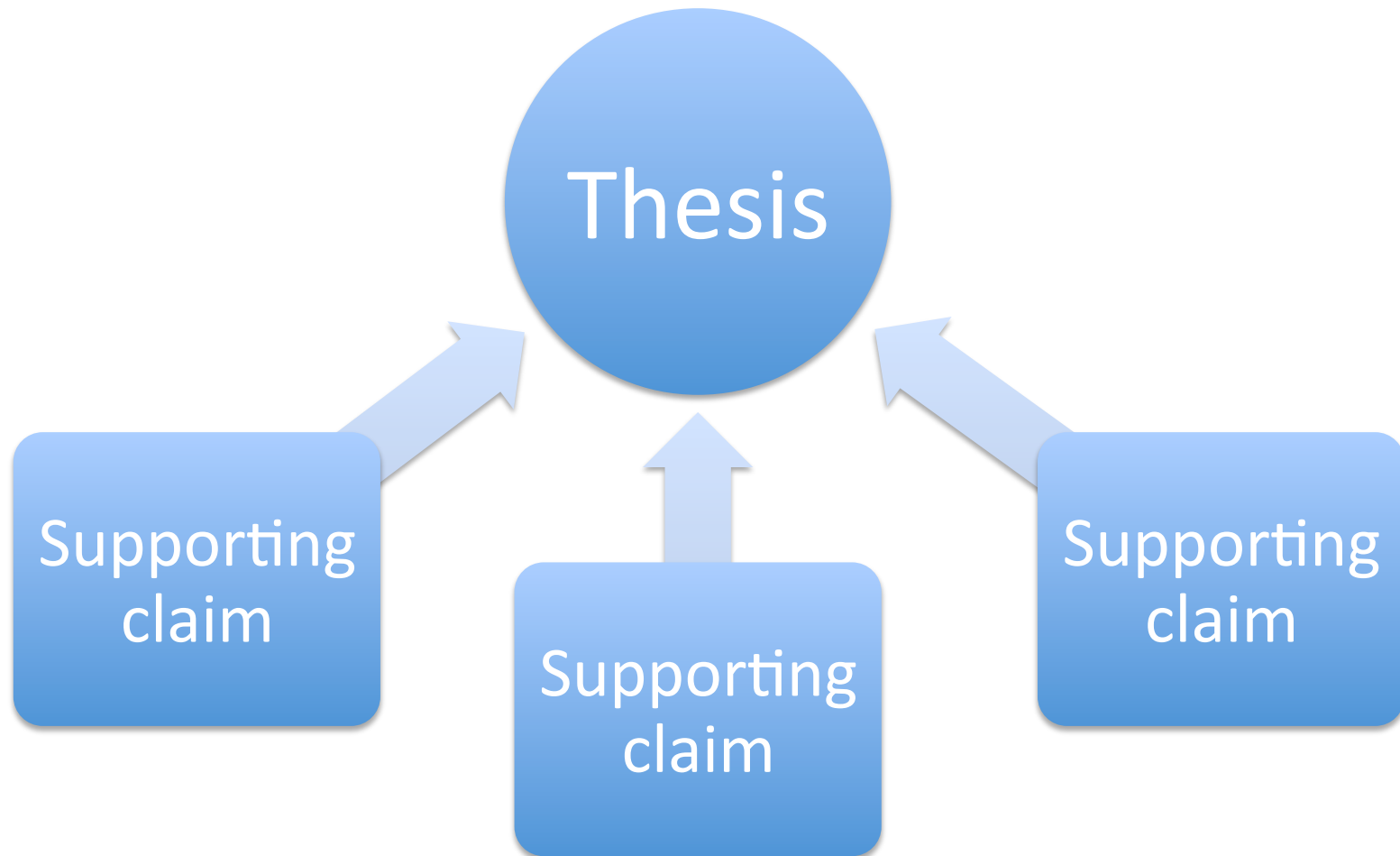
Alley, M. (1999). Recognizing Run-ons and Fragments. University Park: the Pennsylvania State University.

# Run-on sentences: practice questions

1. Efforts are being made to halt water pollution, however, there is no simple solution to the problem.
2. Bill slept through his final, he had forgotten to set his alarm.
3. Pets should not be allowed on our campus they are messy and sometimes dangerous.

Lannon, J. (2012). *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*. New Jersey: Pearson.

# Arguments—recall:



Lau, J. & Chan, J. (2014). What is an argument? *Critical thinking web*. <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/arg.php>

# How to standardize an argument

- Separate the *conclusion* of the argument (or the *thesis*) from the *premises* (or the *assumptions* or the *reasons*)
- If you want to find a good job, you should work hard. You do want to find a good job. So you should work hard.
  - Premise 1: If you want to find a good job, you should work hard.
  - Premise 2: You do want to find a good job.
  - Conclusion: So you should work hard.

Lau, J. & Chan, J. (2014). What is an argument? *Critical thinking web*. <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/arg.php>

# Standardized form:

- P1: If you want to find a good job, you should work hard.
- P2: You do want to find a good job.
- C3: So you should work hard.

# Standardize this argument:

- Cutting the interest rate will have no effect on the stock market this time round as people have been expecting a rate cut all along. This factor has already been reflected in the market.
- P1:
- P2:
- C3:

Lau, J. & Chan, J. (2014). What is an argument? *Critical thinking web*. <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/arg.php>

# Standardize this argument:

- We should not inflict unnecessary pain on cows and pigs. After all, we should not inflict unnecessary pain on any animal with consciousness, and cows and pigs are animals with consciousness.



# How to look for arguments

- Premise (assumption) indicators:
  - Because
  - Since
  - Firstly, secondly, etc
  - After all
- Conclusion (thesis) indicators:
  - Therefore
  - So
  - It follows that
  - This demonstrates that

Lau, J. & Chan, J. (2014). What is an argument? *Critical thinking web*. <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/arg.php>

# Which of these is an argument?

- So it is raining heavily and this building might collapse. But I don't really care.
- Bill will pay the ransom. After all, he loves his wife and children and would do everything to save them.

# Is this an argument?

Most mornings, Park Chang Woo arrives at a train station in central Seoul, South Korea's capital. But he is not a commuter. He is unemployed and goes there to kill time. Around him, dozens of jobless people pass their days drinking soju, a local version of vodka. For the moment, middle-aged Mr. Park would rather read a newspaper. He used to be a brick-layer for a construction company in Pusan, a southern port city. But three years ago the country's financial crisis cost him that job, so he came to Seoul, leaving his wife and two children behind. Still looking for work, he has little hope of going home any time soon.

# Thesis statements

- The thesis statement is the claim that the entire essay exists to support.
- Examples of possible thesis statements:
  - Eating fast food is bad and should be avoided.
  - The U.S. media should update its depiction of traditional families.
- Not:
  - The difference between lettuce and spinach.
  - I'm going to write my essay on the benefits of exercise.



Arguable

Relevant

Concise

Specific

# Arguable

- Arguable:
  - The guitar is the best instrument for children to learn how to play.
- Not arguable:
  - I love to play guitar.
- Test: Imagine telling someone your thesis and then hearing them say, “That’s not true.” Can you take them seriously?

# Relevant

- Relevant in a literature class:
  - Charles Dickens was the best English writer in the nineteenth century.
- Not relevant in a literature class:
  - Charles Darwin was the best English scientist in the nineteenth century.
- Test: if you were in the reader's position, would you care about this thesis?

# Concise

- Concise:
  - The best way to start an essay is to do a session of freewriting.
- Not concise:
  - Writing is hard, especially when you're just getting started, so you might be wondering about how to make the process easier; I'd recommend freewriting, which is where you set a timer [...].
- Test: If someone were to ask you, "What are you trying to prove?", you should be able to respond, "I'm trying to prove that [your thesis here]."



# Specific

- Specific:
  - Albert Einstein made greater contributions to the modern understanding of nuclear physics than any other scientist.
- Not specific:
  - Albert Einstein did lots of good things.
- Test: Can I imagine any evidence that would decisively disprove this thesis?

# ARCS Test

- If someone heard your thesis and then said:
  - “Uhh, yeah, obviously...”
    - Your thesis might not be **arguable**.
  - “So what? I don’t care whether that’s true.”
    - Your thesis might not be **relevant**.
  - “Tell me in one sentence: what’s your point?”
    - Your thesis might not be **concise**.
  - “I don’t see how that claim rests on evidence.”
    - Your thesis might not be **specific**.

# Warm-up

- The gale blew all day by evening the sloop was taking on water.
- I met them on a Cunard liner many years ago. Coming home from Liverpool to New York.
- My part-time job is excellent, it pays well, provides good experience, and offers a real challenge.

Lannon, J. (2012). *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*. New Jersey: Pearson.

# Plan for today

- Subject-verb agreement
- Argument exercise

# Subject-verb agreement

- In every sentence there is a **subject** and a **verb**:
  - I **walk** to school.
  - **The refrigerator** **is** in the kitchen.
- The subject and verb must agree:
  - I walk
  - You walk
  - He walks
  - She walks
  - We walk
  - They walk
  - One walks

# Subject-verb agreement

- If the subject and verb don't match, the sentence sounds funny:
  - I walks to school.
  - He walk to school.
- These are easy to spot, because the subject is right next to the verb.

# Subject-verb agreement

- When the subject is separated from its verb by other words, we can lose track of the subject-verb relationship:
  - The lion's share of diesels are sold in Europe.
  - A system of lines extend horizontally to form a grid.

Lannon, J. (2012). *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*. New Jersey: Pearson.

# Subject-verb agreement

- Faulty: The lion's **share** of diesels **are** sold in Europe.
- Fixed: The lion's **share** of diesels **is** sold in Europe.
  
- Faulty: A **system** of lines **extend** horizontally to form a grid.
- Fixed: A **system** of lines **extends** horizontally to form a grid.

Lannon, J. (2012). *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*. New Jersey: Pearson.



# Subject-verb agreement: practice questions

- The readiness of our conventional forces are at an all-time low.
- The maneuvering in markets for oil, wheat, cotton, and more have brought billions in profits to investment banks.

Pinker, S. (2014). *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: Penguin.

# Recall: standardized form

- Cutting the interest rate will have no effect on the stock market this time round as people have been expecting a rate cut all along. This factor has already been reflected in the market.
  - P1: People have been expecting a rate cut.
  - P2: This factor has been reflected in the market.
  - C3: Cutting the interest rate will have no effect on the stock market this time round.

Lau, J. & Chan, J. (2014). What is an argument? *Critical thinking web*. <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/arg.php>

# Standardize and identify thesis:

There are no hard numbers, but the evidence from Asia's expatriate community is unequivocal. Three years after its handover from Britain to China, Hong Kong is unlearning English. The city's gweilos (Cantonese for "ghost men") must go to ever greater lengths to catch the oldest taxi driver available to maximize their chances of comprehension. Hotel managers are complaining that they can no longer find enough English speakers to act as receptionists. Departing tourists, polled at the airport, voice growing frustration at not being understood.

Lau, J. & Chan, J. (2014). What is an argument? *Critical thinking web*. <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/arg.php>