

# Being Critical



Writing 2101

Dr. Andrew Chater

Week 11

# Comparison

First and Second Year Writing	Upper-Year Writing
Goal is to make a convincing argument drawing from quality research	Goal is to make a convincing argument that contributes new or unique insights
Goal is to draw from a certain number of scholarly sources	Goal is to draw from all of the relevant scholarly sources
Task is to understand and cite relevant evidence.	Task is to understand and cite relevant evidence while offering unique critiques
Task is to make credible arguments by citing credible authors	Task is to make credible arguments by citing credible evidence with evaluation
Goal is to avoid logical fallacies and address several counter-arguments	Goal is to avoid logical fallacies and address all of the relevant counter-arguments
Goal is to create a well-organized paper that is easy to read	Goal is to create a well-organized paper that is interesting to read
Presentation of information is consistent	Presentation of information is professional quality

*Anything else?*

# Scholarly Sources

- Advantages of scholarly sources
  - Share original or new results of research
  - Written by experts
  - Peer review process ensures accuracy and originality



# Scholarly Sources

- Problems with scholarly sources
  - Peer reviewers are not compensated, which is a disincentive for thorough reviews.
  - Journal editors usually edit journals (very) part-time, and so mistakes are made.
  - The growth of universities and the Internet has led to a proliferation of journals, as well as job requirements to publish.
    - The number of journals is increasing at nearly 4% per year (source: Mabe, 2003).
    - At most institutions, the most important factor in determining hiring and promotion is publishing.
  - Potential for fraud exists
    - There are up to 400,000 “predatory” journals publishing out of places such as China and India, which will publish anything for a fee (source: *The Economist*, 2018).
    - Diederik Staple, a social psychologist from the Netherlands, admitted to fabricating data for his entire career in 2011; the peer review process did not catch him for a decade (source: *The Washington Post*, 2015).

# Scholarly Sources

- Proposed changes to scholarly sources to ensure validity:
  - Professional credit for Peer Reviews via websites such as Publons
    - It still is not a very important consideration in hiring and promotion.
  - Requirement to make datasets and codebooks available
    - Controversial because it opens data to other researchers who did not pay to conduct the research
  - Requirement to make interview transcripts available
    - Controversial because it might make interview subjects less open.

# Scholarly Sources

- The debate over open access
  - Open access = free to access
  - Articles could be available for free for all time, for a limited time or after a certain time (perhaps one year)
- Pros
  - Some argue that all journals should be open access because most research is done by researchers working at public institutions drawing on tax dollars (even private researchers draw from tax dollars).
  - The government of Canada now requires that journals receiving government funds create an open access option.
  - Open access articles are cited more frequently than other articles.
- Cons
  - It costs thousands of dollars to publish journals and subscription fees are really their only revenue source outside of government grants.

# The Media

- Function of the media in a democracy:
  - Provide accountability for governments at all levels
  - Promote debate of political issues among the public
  - Inform the public of the activities of government and events in their society
  - Provide politicians and other actors a platform for communication



# The Media

*Do you trust the media?*

- Criticisms of the media:
  - Biased coverage
  - “Fake news”
  - Media concentration
    - In Canada, five companies make more than 90% of TV revenue (Bell, CBC, Corus, Quebecor, Rogers)
    - In Canada, two companies own more than half of all newspapers (Postmedia and Torstar)



Donald J. Trump @real... · 5h ▾

It is amazing how the Fake News Media became “crazed” over the chant “send her back” by a packed Arena (a record) crowd in the Great State of North Carolina, but is totally calm & accepting of the most vile and disgusting statements made by the three Radical Left Congresswomen...

💬 13.5K ↺ 16K ❤️ 67.5K ↗



Donald J. Trump @real... · 5h ▾

...Mainstream Media, which has lost all credibility, has either officially or unofficially become a part of the Radical Left Democrat Party. It is a sick partnership, so pathetic to watch! They even covered a tiny staged crowd as they greeted Foul Mouthed Omar in Minnesota, a...

💬 4,112 ↺ 11.2K ❤️ 51.8K



*Why don't people trust the media?*



# Newspapers

1. Includes many types of stories
  1. Reports
  2. Editorials
  3. Reviews
  4. Features
2. Begins with a catchy lead (i.e. the focus of the story)
3. Inverted pyramid (i.e. the most important info goes first)
4. Short paragraphs (just one sentence)



*Why don't people  
read the news?*

# Newspapers

## Red-light cameras in London catch dozens more infractions even with partial rollout



By [Hank Daniszewski](#), The London Free Press  
Tuesday, September 5, 2017 3:06:47 EDT PM

More than 200 drivers were nabbed by London's new red-light cameras to the end of July, even though only four out of 10 of the cameras were in operation.

From mid-June when the first camera went into operation until the end of July, 205 tickets were issued for running a red light, said Shane Maguire, the city's manager of roadway lighting and traffic controls.

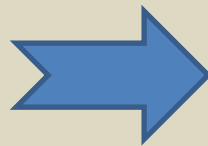
London police Sgt. Amanda Pfeffer said there were only 159 warnings and tickets issued for traffic light infractions across the entire city in July 2016, compared to 205 at just four intersections in July this year.

"You can see efficiency demonstrated at these four locations. This technology enables enforcement at locations that historically have been difficult to enforce using traditional methods" she said.

Pfeffer said red light enforcement at busy intersections can be difficult and dangerous for traffic officers driving cruisers.

# In Closing

- Whenever you are reading something, be skeptical.
- Whenever you are reading something, do not be skeptical.



Problems choosing a side in debate

Problems evaluating quality of information

# Reviewing



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# Reviewing

- Take the view of the skeptic.
  - This argument is mistaken because . . .
- Take the view of a contributor.
  - I agree with this argument because . . .
- Take the view of an analyst.
  - I agree with this argument, but it would be more convincing if . . .



# Reviewing

- Does the introduction make the topic of the paper clear?
- Does the introduction have a clear thesis?
- Does the introduction summarize the paper's arguments?
- Do all the paragraphs start with a good topic sentence?
- Are all the arguments of equal strength?
- Is the evidence detailed (i.e., the method summarized)?
- Does the paper address counter-arguments?
- Does it rely on a good number of scholarly sources?
- Does the conclusion summarize the paper?
- Is it organized in an effective way?
- Are there grammar issues such as awkward sentences, the passive voice and unclear sentences?

*Example: "This paper is not very controversial."*

# Finishing Touches



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# Finishing Touches

- Give your essay a title!
  - Re-work your research question into a title.
  - Try to make the title descriptive.
    - “Final Paper” is not a very good title.
    - “Stressful Times” is a vague title.
    - “Stressful Times: The Impact of COVID-19 on Undergraduate Student Learning” is a good title.
- Decide if your arguments need subtitles.
  - Make your subtitles descriptive.
    - “First Argument” is not a necessary subtitle.
    - “COVID-19 and Online Learning” is a good subtitle.
  - Subtitles should not substitute for good topic sentences.
  - You do not need to include subtitles.

Short Title 1

APA Short Title:

Full Title

Author's Name

Course name

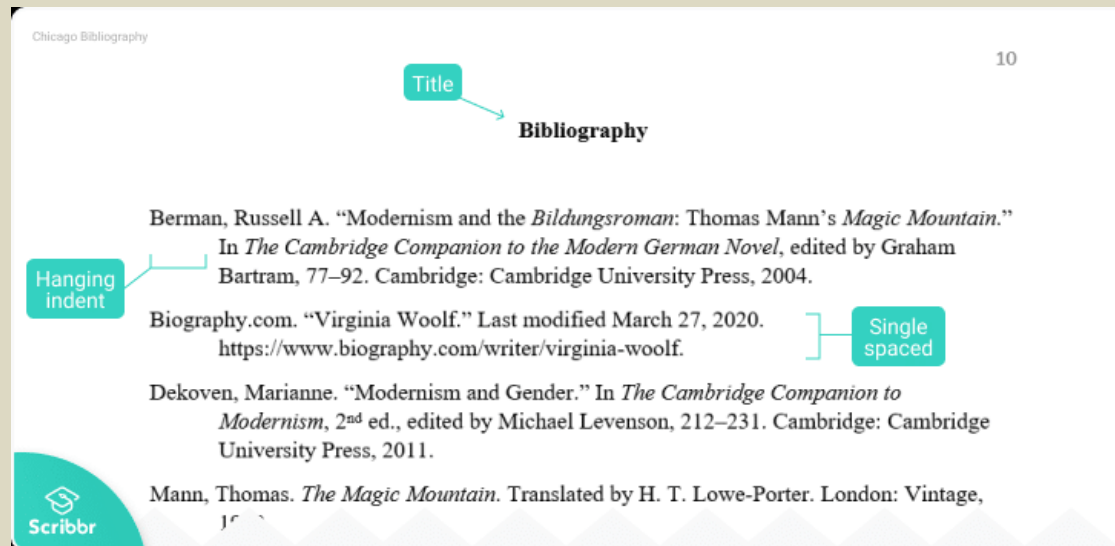
Professor's Name

Month Date, Year (Due Date)



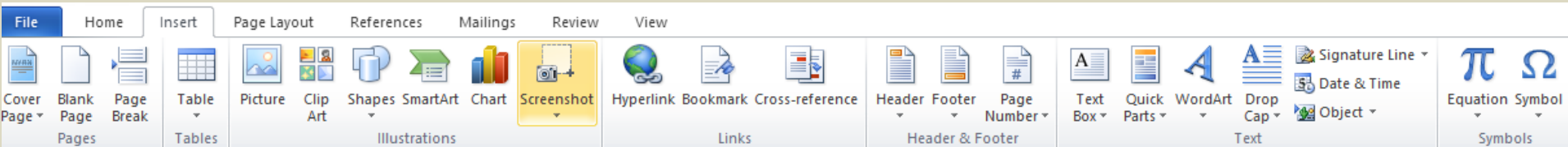
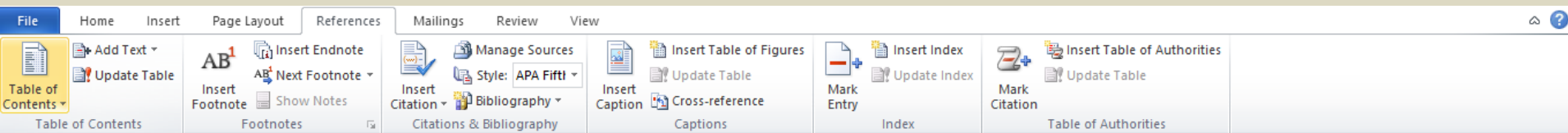
# Finishing Touches

- Double check that all the sources in your bibliography are cited in your paper.
- Double check that all of the sources you cite in your paper are in your bibliography.



# Finishing Touches

- Insert page numbers in your essay using the “Insert Footnote” tool.
- Make sure you inserted footnotes using the proper “Insert Footnote” tool.



# Finishing Touches

- Flip through all the slides to make sure you have not missed any key information.
  - Check the topic sentences.
  - Try to include “third level thinking.”



# Finishing Touches

- Give yourself enough time to do your best.
  - Make a “to do” list
  - Plan your time each day
  - Use your agenda
  - Reward yourself
  - Break down your tasks

[illegible]

# Finishing Touches

## **Tips for Staying On Track**

1. Set short-term, medium-term and long-term goals
2. Break down your tasks into smaller steps
3. Keep a “to do” list with goals and priority tasks
4. Keep an agenda
5. Block and schedule your time
6. Do your work earlier in the day
7. Aim to have your work done well ahead of the actual due date
8. Remove distractions from your work environment
9. Take breaks for fun, relaxation, proper nutrition and physical activity
10. Keep your eyes on the prize

*What else?*

# Issues Last Time Around

1. Summary of arguments not present in introduction
2. Thesis unclear (“In this paper . . .”)
3. Method or specific evidence not present
4. Some facts have method, but others do not
5. “When” or “where” part of the method missing
6. Sample size missing
7. Reason for rejection of counter-argument unclear (example next slide)
8. Quotes not introduced
9. Long quotes not offset
10. Paragraphs too long
11. Paragraphs too short
12. Sources not in bibliography



# Example

Some people say that Chinese interest in Arctic is due to economics; however, this view ignores the role of the environment. A 2021 study from The Brookings Institute based on a review of Chinese government documents shows that Chinese Arctic interest is almost exclusively framed in terms of economics and not the environment. However, a 2016 study from political scientist Andrew Chater based on a review of Arctic Council documents shows that environmental protection figures heavily into Chinese Arctic rhetoric in those meetings. Therefore, the motivator for Chinese government action in the Arctic is primarily environmental protection.

# In Closing

- The key is to make your essay look like an essay.
  - Double spaced
  - Regular margins
  - Professional font (Times)
  - Reasonable font size (12)
  - Page numbers





# Conclusion

## MLA Heading

Double space,  
left aligned, 1" down

Jennifer L. Betts  
Professor Bennett  
Humanities 5050  
10 February 2021

## MLA Header

Last name, page number,  
right aligned, 1/2" down

Betts 1

### Analogy of Art

You can't speak about art without thinking of some of the different greats of the time like da Vinci, Van Gogh and Renoir. These artists were at the top of their game. Explore art through the ages along with the different major artistic movements.

