Essential Bites: A Brief Guide to Academic Writing

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1  AH, THAT HITS THE SPOT: AN INTRODUCTION TO ESSENTIAL BITES

Over the span of my teaching career, I have seen and used many writing guides with my students. This one distills volumes of lengthy handbooks into truly essential nuggets of wisdom. This compilation is by no means meant to replace your required textbook, but rather meant to highlight sections and supplement them. It is served as a snack, and should not suffice as a complete meal. Please see the last section for a list of additional resources and references.

I hope I have organized this information in an easy-to-digest manner. Enjoy!

2  IT’S A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE WRITING PROCESS

Most students, upon receiving a writing assignment, search the directives for two items: the length requirement and the due date. I would argue that while those elements are important and can dictate much of your planning process, they are not the most important pieces of given information. First, before writing ANYTHING (from a text message, to an academic paper), you must discern your purpose and audience.

2.1  PURPOSE

Your purpose is quite simply the motivation/reasoning behind your writing. Even a text message has a purpose (to pass information from you to another person/people in a swift manner).

When discerning your purpose, consider:

- Why are you writing?
  - Explain
  - Inform
  - Persuade
  - Entertain
  - Record information
  - Express feelings
- What is the reader supposed to do with this information?
- What do you (the author) want to happen as a result of your writing?

Your purpose will dictate the following:

- Genre
- Mode/method
- Design
- Length
- Format

2.2  AUDIENCE

On par with the purpose behind your writing, it is equally as important to identify to whom you are writing. Often, in academic contexts, your audience is your grader, but that is not a hard and fast rule. When conducting an “audience analysis,” consider:
• To whom are you writing?
• What is your audience’s:
  o Education Level
  o Age
  o Personal Bias
  o Gender
  o Culture
  o Geographical Location
  o Profession
  o Family role
  o Level of interest in the topic
  o Overall demographic

Discerning your audience will dictate:
  o Tone
  o Level of detail/support
  o Presentation of information

Together, your purpose and audience will dictate:
• How you will write:
  o Genre
  o Conventions
  o Format
  o Organization

2.3 What’s the Point?: The Benefits of Learning to Write in an Academic Context
Playing into the concept of “purpose,” learning to write academically, along with academic reading, is aimed at not only ensuring advanced literacy, but further competency. One would assume that college-level students are, indeed, literate, but composition instruction seeks to push the bounds of literacy to achieve competency. When you write, seek to prove that you are both literate and competent in the skill your writing is meant to showcase.

2.4 Steps in the Process
Your process is YOURS. Each person has one and they all look different. Here are some of the steps you can take to arrive at your destination:
1. Prewriting:
   o Brainstorming
     • Freewriting – “Word Vomit” on the page. Just let the words flow.
     • Looping – freewriting for a set period of time, forcing yourself to stop and start. Compare the short passages and to draw out content.
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- Clustering/Mapping – place a term in a bubble in the center of the page and create a web around it to draw conclusions and relationships between and among concepts.
- Drawing/Doodling
- Listing – creating a running tally of all of the ideas that pertain to a topic
  - Outlining – a more organized list that will dictate the flow and organization of your paper
- Cubing: 5 Ws (who, what, where, when, why) and 1 H (how) questions represent the 6 sides of a cube
- Keeping a Journal – free-form expression
- Asking Questions
- Consulting Sources
- Collaborating – two (or more) heads are often better than one!

2. Planning
   - Narrowing a topic
   - Drafting a working thesis
     - Thesis = states the main idea of a piece of writing
       - Includes your attitude towards the topic and a road map of your main points
       - Written in 3rd person (as is the rest of the paper, unless otherwise specified)
   - Gathering information
     - Consult any outside sources required by the assignment
   - Outlining
     - Storyboard
     - Formal outline
       - Organizing verbal and visual information in terms of:
         - Importance
         - Spatial organization
         - Chronological (time) organization
         - Logical organization
         - Associational organization
         - Combined organizational patterns

3. Drafting
   - Speak into a recorder (Google Docs has this feature, as do most cell phones)
   - Type it out
   - Hand write
   - Take ample time to revise and edit

4. Revising and Editing
   - Revising pertains to larger issues in the document: (global concerns)
     - Structure
     - Organization
     - Support
     - Transitions
   - Editing pertains to more minute details: (local concerns)
     - Grammar
     - Mechanics
     - Commonly Confused Words
     - Tone
     - Format
3 ROCK THE SCHOOL HOUSE: GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION RULES

3.1 PARTS OF SPEECH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Speech:</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Conjunction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition:</td>
<td>Person, place, thing, object, or idea</td>
<td>Takes the place of a noun</td>
<td>The action in the sentence</td>
<td>Connects words in a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types/Classifications:</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Subordinating</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Proper</td>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>Linking</td>
<td>Coordinating</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>Helping</td>
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<td>Plural</td>
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<td>Reciprocal</td>
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<td>Part of Speech:</td>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Interjection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition:</td>
<td>Modifies/describes a verb</td>
<td>Connects a noun or pronoun to another word in the sentence</td>
<td>Modifies/Describes a noun</td>
<td>Can stand independently, used to express emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types/Classifications:</td>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Greeting/Farewell</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Comparative</td>
<td>Approval/Praise</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Superlative</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intensifiers</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Determinant (articles and quantifiers)</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES, SUBJECTS, AND VERBS

- **Phrase**: group of related words lacking a subject and verb
- **Preposition**: relates a noun or pronoun to the rest of a sentence
- **Prepositional Phrase**: phrase beginning with a preposition
  - Shows spatial and time relationships between ideas
  - **Every preposition answers a question**
    - The noun that answers is the end of a prepositional phrase!
  - Cross out prepositional phrases to determine the subject and verb
- **Infinitive**: “to” + verb → NOT conjugated
  - **Looks like a prepositional phrase, but isn’t 😞
- **Main parts of a sentence = subject + predicate (verb phrase)**
  - **Subject**: says what the sentence is about, who/what is performing the action of the verb
  - **Verb**: the action of the sentence
**Predicate/Verb Phrase:** the entire action of the subject, verb + helping objects

**Types of Verbs:**
- **Main:** communicate the primary action or state of being in a sentence
- **Helping:** communicate when and under what conditions the action of the main verb took place
- **Linking:** connect the subject to words that identify or modify it
- **Complete Verb:** includes helping verbs and main verbs

### 3.3 Direct and Indirect Objects

- **Objects:** words that receive the action or direction of another word such as a verb or preposition
  - **Direct object:** receives the action of the verb
  - **Indirect object:** receives the direct object
    - Example: The King loves his daughter.
      - Subject = King
      - Verb = loves
      - Direct Object = daughter
    - Example: I poured a Coke for my sister.
      - Subject = I
      - Verb = poured
      - Direct Object = Coke
      - Indirect object = sister

### 3.4 Clauses and Sentences

- **Clause:** a group of related words having a subject and a verb that work together to communicate an idea
- **Phrase:** a group of related words lacking a subject and a verb

**Types of Clauses:**
- **Independent Clause (IC):** a clause that makes sense all by itself
  - A complete sentence
- **Dependent Clause (DC):** a group of words that has a subject and a verb but does NOT make sense all by itself
  - A fragment (when not attached to an independent clause)
  - Depends/relies on independent clauses to make sense
    - **Common dependent words:**
      - After
      - Although
      - Because
      - Before
      - Even though
      - How
      - If
      - Since
      - Though
      - Unless
      - Until
      - When
      - Whether
      - Which
      - While
      - Who
      - Whom
    - **Relative Clause:** dependent clause starting with a relative pronoun
      - **Relative Pronoun:** a dependent word that links information identifying or clarifying ideas in another part of the sentence
      - Examples: who, which, where, that, what, whoever, whom, whomever, whose
• **Types of Sentences:**
  o **Simple:** single, independent clause
  ▪ IC
  o **Compound:** 2 or more independent clauses joined together using a semi-colon or a comma and a coordinating conjunction
  ▪ IC + IC
  ▪ Every part of the sentence is equally important
  o **Complex:** a sentence that combines a least one independent clause with at least one dependent clause
  ▪ IC + DC
  ▪ **If the dependent clause comes first, you need a comma**
  o **Compound-Complex:** a sentence with at least 2 independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses
  ▪ IC + IC + DC
  o **Run-on:** attempt to combine 2 independent clauses without proper conjunction or punctuation
  ▪ A sentence that tries to do too much
  o **Fused:** when a writer tries to join 2 independent clauses without any connecting words or punctuation
  o **Comma Splice:** joining 2 independent clauses with a comma
  ▪ **Comma is not a strong enough punctuation mark to connect 2 independent clauses without the help of a conjunction**

3.5 **CORRECTING RUN-ON SENTENCES, COMMA SPLICES, FUSED SENTENCES, AND FRAGMENTS**

• **Make the run-on into 2 separate sentences**
• **Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction**
  o Make into a compound sentence
• **Use a semi-colon**
  o **Semi-colon:** joins 2 independent clauses
  ▪ Gives sentences variety
  ▪ Signifies separation of clauses and related ideas – emphasizes connection
• **Use a semi-colon and transition word (conjunctive adverb)**
  o **Common transitional words/phrases (conjunctive adverbs):**
    ▪ Also
    ▪ Furthermore
    ▪ In addition
    ▪ Moreover
    ▪ However
    ▪ Nevertheless
    ▪ On the other hand
    ▪ In fact
    ▪ Indeed
    ▪ Instead
    ▪ Meanwhile
    ▪ Otherwise
    ▪ As a result
    ▪ Thus
    ▪ Consequently
    ▪ Therefore
• **Create a dependent clause**
  o Use a dependent word to make one of the clauses in a run-on subordinate to the other
    ▪ Subordination = making one idea weaker, or less important, than the other one
• **Comma Splices/Fused Sentences:**
  o **Comma Splice:** incorrectly connect independent clauses; two independent clauses are connected with only a comma
    o My family bakes together nearly every night, we then get to enjoy everything we make together.
    o Correction: My family bakes together nearly every night, and we then get to enjoy everything we make together.
  o **Fused Sentence:** two independent clauses that are joined together with no punctuation or connecting word
    o They weren’t dangerous criminals they were detectives in disguise.
    o Correction: They weren’t dangerous criminals; they were detectives in disguise.

• **Sentence Fragment:** a sentence lacking either a subject or a verb; will not express a complete thought
  o **No Subject:** Went to the store to buy brownie mix.
    o Added Subject: My dad went to the store to buy brownie mix.
  o **No Verb:** Brownie mix at the store expensive.
    o Added Verb: Brownie mix at the store was expensive.
  o **Incomplete:** When he went to the checkout counter to pay for the brownie mix.
    o Complete: When he went to the checkout counter to pay for the brownie mix, he got distracted by a display of cake mixes.
  o **Incomplete:** The variety of yummy cake mixes.
    o Complete: The variety of yummy cake mixes convinced him that he’d rather bake a cake than brownies tonight.

3.6 **Stylistic Elements**

**Confusing Shifts:** occur when the tense, voice, point of view, or pronoun changes in mid-sentence or mid-paragraph

- Provide transitions to alleviate confusion
- Choose one and stay with it – make sure everything matches!
- Maintain 3rd person point of view in academic writing, unless otherwise specified

**Parallelism (Parallel Structure):** using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance

- **Words and Phrases**
  o Gerunds (-ing verbs)
    ▪ Mary likes hiking, swimming, and bicycling.
  o Infinitives (“to” verb)
    ▪ Mary likes to hike, to swim, and to ride a bicycle.
    ▪ Mary likes to hike, swim, and ride a bicycle.

- **Voice**
  o Changing the voice of the verb (from active to passive and vice versa)
    ▪ The coach told the players that they should get a lot of sleep, that they should not eat too much, and that they should do some warm-up exercises before the game.
    ▪ The coach told the players that they should get a lot of sleep, not eat too much, and do some warm-up exercises before the game.
• **Modifiers:** a word or phrase that adds detail or description to a sentence
  o Incorrect: Having looked through the whole music store, the CD I wanted just wasn’t there.
  o Possible revision: Having looked through the whole music store, I realized that the CD I wanted just wasn’t there.
  o Incorrect: The jacket was just too small in the store.
  o Possible revision: The jacket in the store was just too small.

4 **SEW WHAT?: COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS**

Please, please do not only “spell check” your document, but also check to ensure that you have not misused any of these commonly confused words. After all, you may have spelled all the words correctly, but that does not mean that you have employed them well.

**ACCEPT**-to receive, ex: He accepts defeat well.
**EXCEPT**-to take or leave out, ex: Please take all the books off the shelf except for the red one.

**AFFECT**-to influence, ex: Lack of sleep affects the quality of your work.
**EFFECT**-n., result, ex: The subtle effect of the lighting made the room look ominous.
  v., to accomplish, ex: Can the university effect such a change without disrupting classes?

**A LOT** (two words)-many.
**ALOT** (one word)-Not the correct form.
**ALLOT**-to allocate, disburse

**ALLUSION**-an indirect reference, ex: The professor made an allusion to Virginia Woolf’s work.
**ILLUSION**-a false perception of reality, ex: They saw a mirage: that is a type of illusion one sees in the desert.

**ALL READY**-prepared, ex: Dinner was all ready when the guests arrived.
**ALREADY**-by this time, ex: The turkey was already burned when the guests arrived.

**ALTOGETHER**-entirely, ex: Altogether, I thought that the student’s presentation was well planned.
**ALL TOGETHER**-gathered, with everything in one place, ex: We were all together at the family reunion last spring.

**APART**-to be separated, ex: The chain-link fence kept the angry dogs apart. OR My old car fell apart before we reached California.
**A PART**-to be joined with, ex: The new course was a part of the new field of study at the university. OR A part of this plan involves getting started at dawn.

**ASCENT**-climb, ex: The plane’s ascent made my ears pop.
**ASSENT**-agreement, ex: The criminal assented to confess.
BREATH—noun, air inhaled or exhaled, ex: You could see his breath in the cold air.
BREATHE—verb, to inhale or exhale, ex: If you don’t breathe, then you are dead.

CAPITAL—seat of government, also financial resources, ex: The capital of Virginia is Richmond, and ex: The firm had enough capital to build the new plant.
CAPITOL—the actual building in which the legislative body meets, ex: The governor announced his resignation in a speech given at the capitol today.

CITE—to quote or document, ex: I cited ten quotes from the same author in my paper.
SIGHT—vision, ex: The sight of the American flag arouses different emotions in different parts of the world.
SITE—position or place, or shortened version of “Website”, ex: The new office building was built on the site of a cemetery.

COMPLEMENT—noun, something that completes; verb, to complete, ex: A nice dry white wine complements a seafood entree.
COMPLIMENT—noun, praise; verb, to praise, ex: The professor complimented Betty on her proper use of a comma.

CONSCIENCE—sense of right and wrong, ex: The student’s conscience kept him from cheating on the exam.
CONSCIOUS—awake, ex: I was conscious when the burglar entered the house.

COUNCIL—a group that consults or advises, ex: The men and women on the council voted in favor of an outdoor concert in their town.
COUNSEL—to advise, ex: The parole officer counseled the convict before he was released.

ELICIT—to draw or bring out, ex: The teacher elicited the correct response from the student.
ILICIT—illegal, ex: The Columbian drug lord was arrested for his illicit activities.
EMINENT—famous, respected, ex: The eminent podiatrist won the Physician of the Year award.
IMMANENT—inherent or intrinsic, ex: The meaning of the poem was immanent, and not easily recognized.
IMMINENT—ready to take place, ex: A fight between my sister and me is imminent from the moment I enter my house.

HEAR—the auditory sense, ex: Did you hear what I said?
HERE—place indication, ex: Please put the book here on the table.

ITS—of or belonging to it, ex: The baby will scream as soon as its mother walks out of the room.
IT’S—contraction for it is, ex: It’s a beautiful day in the neighborhood.

KNOW—to have knowledge, ex: I know I’m going to do great things one day.
NO—the opposite of yes, ex: No, you can’t have cookies before dinner.

LEAD—noun, a type of metal, ex: Is that pipe made of lead? Also, a verb meaning to show one the way.
LED—verb, past tense of the verb “to lead,” ex: She led the campers on an over-night hike.
LIE—verb, to misplace or not win, ex: Mom glared at Mikey. "If you lose that new lunchbox, don’t even think of coming home!"

LOOSE—adjective, to not be tight; verb (rarely used)—to release, ex: The burglar’s pants were so loose that he was sure to lose the race with the cop chasing him. Or ex: While awaiting trial, he was never set loose from jail because no one would post his bail.

NOVEL—noun, a book that is a work of fiction. Do not use "novel" for nonfiction; use "book" or "work," ex: Mark Twain wrote his novel Adventures of Huckleberry Finn when he was already well known, but before he published many other works of fiction and nonfiction.

PASSED—verb, past tense of "to pass," to have moved, ex: The tornado passed through the city quickly, but it caused great damage.

PAST—belonging to a former time or place, ex: Who was the past president of Microsoft Computers? Or ex: Go past the fire station and turn right.

PIECE—a section, ex: I was so angry that I needed to give that mean lady a piece of my mind!

PEACE—without conflict, ex: Now that the kids were safe and sleeping, she had peace of mind.

PRECEDE—to come before, ex: Pre-writing precedes the rough draft of good papers.

PROCEED—to go forward, ex: He proceeded to pass back the failing grades on the exam.

PRINCIPAL—adjective, most important; noun, a person who has authority, ex: The principal ingredient in chocolate chip cookies is chocolate chips. Or ex: The principal of the school does the announcements each morning.

PRINCIPLE—a general or fundamental truth, ex: The study was based on the principle of gravity.

PROSPECTIVE—a likely future option, ex: The open house gave prospective students a view of the school.

PERSPECTIVE—a vantage point, ex: From my perspective, we have a good shot at winning the game.

QUOTE—verb, to cite, ex: I would like to quote Dickens in my next paper.

QUOTATION—noun, the act of citing, ex: The book of famous quotations inspired us all.

RELENTANT—to hesitate or feel unwilling, ex: We became reluctant to drive further and eventually turned back when the road became icy.

RETICENT—to be reluctant to speak; to be reserved in manner. Note that The American Heritage Dictionary lists "reluctant" as a synonym for "reticent," as the third definition. For nuance and variety, we
recommend "reticent" for reluctance when speaking or showing emotion (after all, even extroverts can become reluctant), ex: They called him reticent, because he rarely spoke. But he listened carefully and only spoke when he had something important to say.

**STATIONARY**-standing still, ex: The accident was my fault because I ran into a stationary object.

**STATIONERY**-writing paper, ex: My mother bought me stationery that was on recycled paper.

**SUPPOSED TO**-correct form for "to be obligated to" or "presumed to" NOT "suppose to."

**SUPPOSE**-to guess or make a conjecture, ex: Do you suppose we will get to the airport on time? When is our plane supposed to arrive? We are supposed to check our bags before we board, but I suppose we could do that at the curb and save time.

**THAN**-use with comparisons, ex: I would rather go out to eat than eat at the dining hall.

**THEN**-at that time, or next, ex: I studied for my exam for seven hours, and then I went to bed.

**THEIR**-possessive form of “they,” ex: Their house is at the end of the block.

**THERE**-indicates location (hint: think of "here and there"), ex: There goes my chance of winning the lottery!

**THEY'RE**-contraction for "they are,” ex: They're in Europe for the summer--again!

**THROUGH**-by means of; finished; into or out of, ex: He plowed right through the other team's defensive line.

**THREW**-past tense of throw, ex: She threw away his love letters.

**THOROUGH**-careful or complete, ex: John thoroughly cleaned his room; there was not even a speck of dust when he finished.

**THOUGH**-however; nevertheless, ex: He's really a sweetheart though he looks tough on the outside.

**THRU**-abbreviated slang for through; not appropriate in standard writing, ex: We're thru for the day!

**'TIL**-abbreviation of “until”

**TILL**-to work land or soil for planting

**TO**-toward, ex: I went to the University of Richmond.

**TOO**-also, or excessively, ex: He drank too many screwdrivers and was unable to drive home.

**TWO**-a number, ex: Only two students did not turn in the assignment.

**WHETHER**-a comparison, ex: I’m not sure whether I should wear a sweater or a coat.

**WEATHER**-the state of the environment, ex: Does the weather report call for rain today?

**WHO**-pronoun, referring to a person or persons, ex: Jane wondered how Jack, who is so smart, could be having difficulties in Calculus.

**WHICH**-pronoun, replacing a singular or plural thing(s); not used to refer to persons, ex: Which section of history did you get into?

**THAT**-used to refer to things or a group or class of people, ex: I lost the book that I bought last week.
WHO—used as a subject or as a subject complement (see above), ex: John is the man who can get the job done.
WHOM—used as an object, ex: Whom did Sarah choose as her replacement?
WHOSE—possessive form of who, ex: Whose jacket is this?
WHO’S—contraction of “who is,” ex: Who’s going to the party on Saturday?
YOUR—possessive form of you, ex: I thought that was your book, not his.
YOU’RE—contraction of “you are,” ex: What do you think you’re doing?

5  DRESS TO IMPRESS: FORMAL WRITING GUIDELINES IN AN ACADEMIC SETTING

Writing in an academic setting is quite different than any other setting you may be used to, and it carries its own set of rules and preferences with it. Because you are likely attempting to earn a grade or make a solid impression on your audience, use these tips and tricks to really impress your reader:

- Maintain a formal tone.
  - Remove contractions
  - Do not use slang or abbreviated language
  - Shy away from colloquial (conversational) phrases and clichés
  - Use third person unless otherwise directed
- Be as descriptive as you can – do not begin sentences with vague pronouns or force your reader to search for what you are talking about.
- Use rhetorical questions sparingly, if at all.
- Ensure that you have a good, solid, well-written thesis statement (see section 7).
- Eliminate all instances of passive voice whenever possible.
- Adhere to the guidelines given – use your assignment sheet like a checklist. Your instructor likely created a rubric at the same time that (s)he wrote the assignment sheet.
- Make sure you write enough – develop your paragraphs well and pay close attention to the word count/length requirement. Words onto the top of a page does not constitute a full page of writing.
- Format your writing correctly – pay special attention to headings, page numbers, margins, and all the details. These are the easiest points to lose and are even easier points to keep!
- Do not overuse borrowed material, but do cite whatever you reference – your instructor wants to see YOUR writing and not a string of quotes from outside sources. Be sure that you are giving proper credit (using whatever citation method is requested) to avoid plagiarism.
6  THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM: UNDERSTANDING ACADEMIC WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

As mentioned in section 2, always start with figuring out the purpose (why you are writing) and audience (to whom you are writing). After you have isolated those facets, then start looking for verbs (explained in section 3 – the action in a sentence).

Look for these “action words”: (reiterated in section 16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Explain what something is and what it is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Identify similarities and differences, emphasizing similarities, in two or more texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Identify similarities and differences, emphasizing differences, in two or more texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>Condense main points into an objective, chronological narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Break into separate parts and evaluate how the parts affect the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Based on the information given, offer your educated reasoning or conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Ascribe a value to a text based on analysis and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Give reasons for happenings or situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize</td>
<td>Coherently combine ideas from a number of texts to support your main argument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7  LEAD ME TO THE PROMISED LAND: CONSTRUCTING A THESIS STATEMENT

The most important sentence in your entire paper is your thesis (sometimes called a “focus”). From your thesis, your reader will know exactly what you are offering (attitude/argument) and how you are going to present your evidence (roadmap). Here is how you make one:

Thesis statement = attitude/argument + roadmap of main points

If you have a directive prompt:

- Dissect it
- Look for the verbs – what are you meant to do?
  - Summarize
  - Analyze
  - Interpret
  - Synthesize
  - Evaluate
  - Etc.
- Key in on the “question words”
  - Declarative questions: Who, Where, When, What
  - Analytical questions: What, Why, and How
    - What – list of entries [this, that...]
    - Why – cause/effect [because...]
    - How – process/procedure [by, through...]

If you DO NOT have a prompt:

- You can potentially choose your own topic
7.1 QUESTION TO THESIS METHOD: TURNING YOUR TOPIC INTO A THESIS STATEMENT

What if you are stuck and you cannot seem to write a good, solid thesis? It is ok; it happens to the best of us. Here is a quick and easy method to help you come up with a thesis just with using questions and answers:

Example of Question to Thesis Statement Method*:

**Topic:**
Single Sex Educational Environments

**Question:**
Is a single sex learning environment more beneficial than a co-ed learning environment?

**Main opinion about topic:**
Single sex learning environments are better for students because they offer fewer social distractions.

**Strongest reason supporting my opinion:**
Without the opposite sex present, students are much more likely to focus on their studies rather than impressing their co-ed classmates.

**Another reason supporting my opinion:**
Single sex schools offer unique learning opportunities for their students.

**Main argument against my opinion:**
Single sex learning environments can hinder a student’s social development.

**Possible thesis statement:**
Although some may argue that single sex learning environments may hinder a student’s social development, it is proven that single sex schools are better for students because they offer fewer social distractions, students are much more likely to focus on and excel in their studies, and more unique educational opportunities are available.*
*Note: the thesis statement is written entirely in 3rd person (no use of I, me, my, our, we, us, you, your, etc.) and is in parallel structure (meaning that the topics are mentioned in the same order as they are listed above).

7.2 QUESTION TO THESIS METHOD WORKSHEET

Ok, now you try. Using a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions:

1. What is the topic about which you would like to write?
2. Formulate a question regarding your topic:
3. What is your main opinion about this topic?
4. What is the strongest reason supporting your opinion?
5. What is another strong reason supporting your opinion?
6. What is the main argument against your opinion?
7. Possible thesis statement:

8 CLEANING UP: ORGANIZING AND OUTLINING YOUR WRITING

Many students identify that they are more successful when they can visually see how their arguments are progressing. Below you will find examples of a two conventional outlines (topic and full sentence), as well as a more whimsical take (triangles and squares).

8.1 TOPIC OUTLINE

1. Introduction – Single sex learning environments
   a. Introductory strategy
   b. Preview main points
   c. Thesis statement
2. Body paragraph 1 – counter argument
   a. Supporting point 1 – one gender means having to play both roles
   b. Supporting point 2 – one gender means making assumptions about how the other gender might think, feel, or act
3. Body paragraph 2 – Fewer social distractions
   a. Supporting point 1 – not competing for opposite sex’s attention
   b. Supporting point 2 – less relationship drama
4. Body paragraph 3 – more likely to focus and excel
   a. Supporting point 1 -- focus
   b. Supporting point 2 -- excel
5. Body paragraph 4 – unique educational opportunities
   a. Supporting point 1 – can take more overnight/extended stay trips
   b. Supporting point 2 – get to play both types of roles to fill in the gaps
6. Conclusion
   a. Restate thesis
   b. Sum up main points
   c. Clincher
8.2 Full Sentence Outline

1. Introduction
   a. “From the outside looking in, you can never understand it. From the inside looking out, you can never explain it” (unknown).
   b. Preview of main points leading into thesis statement
   c. Thesis statement: Although some may argue that single sex learning environments may hinder a student’s social development, it is proven that single sex schools are better for students because they offer fewer social distractions, students are much more likely to focus on and excel in their studies, and more unique educational opportunities are available.

2. Body paragraph 1: Counter argument
   a. Some argue that single sex learning environments hinder students’ social development because they are only seeing one sex’s point of view of many situations.
   b. When only one gender is represented, students may be uncomfortably forced to play the role of someone in the opposing gender.
   c. If a debate arises, students may fail to consider the other gender’s point of view because it is not represented.

3. Body paragraph 2: Less distractions
   a. Conversely, in single sex school environments, students are less distracted from their studies because they are not competing for the opposite sex’s attention during class.
   b. Additionally, students do not bring as much relationship drama to school with them if their significant other does not attend the same school.

4. Body paragraph 3: More likely to focus and excel
   a. Moreover, students who are less distracted by the opposite sex are able to more readily focus on the tasks at hand.
   b. Furthermore, not only are they able to hone in with sharper focus, but they are able to push themselves to excel in the absence of the opposite sex’s distractions.

5. Body paragraph 4: unique educational opportunities
   a. Students who focus and excel are often offered more unique educational opportunities such as extended field trips.
   b. In the absence of the opposite sex, students are further pushed to play opposing gender roles and consider opinions that are not their own by “walking a mile” in a person of another gender’s shoes.

6. Conclusion
   a. Restate thesis: There are truly some compelling arguments against single sex educational environments, but in practice they all fall short of the benefits: less distractions, more focused students who excel, and unique opportunities for expansive learning.
   b. Sum up main points in order of display to maintain parallel structure.
   c. Clincher: with the boundless positive attributes afforded by single sex schools, why would anyone want to deny a child such an incredible opportunity to thrive?
8.3 TRIANGLES AND SQUARES

Introduction

Opening Statement

Preview Main Points

Thesis Statement: includes your attitude about the topic and a roadmap of your main points.

Main Point

Topic Sentence

Supporting Details/Integrated Source Text

Concluding Sentence

Transition

Main Point

Topic Sentence

Supporting Details/Integrated Source Text

Concluding Sentence

Transition

Main Point

Topic Sentence

Supporting Details/Integrated Source Text

Concluding Sentence

Transition

Main Point

Topic Sentence

Supporting Details/Integrated Source Text

Concluding Sentence

Transition

Restate Thesis: Do NOT copy and paste, but be sure to keep all of the main points in the same order.

Sum Up Main Points

Clincher
9 BOOKENDS HOLD IT ALL TOGETHER: WRITING EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS

Introduction
Note the shape of the introduction is like a funnel. It's wide (general) at the top, and narrow (specific) at the bottom. This will help to focus your reader and give him/her an outline and guide to the rest of your paper.

Thesis Statement: should be the last sentence and should include your attitude about your topic and a preview of your main points. The order of your main points should match (in both the thesis and in your paper).

Conclusion
Note the shape of the conclusion is like an inverted funnel. It's narrow (specific) at the top, and wide (general) at the bottom. This will help your reader revisit your main points and will nicely sum up your argument, thus creating a more convincing paper.

Sum up main points (reword topic sentences) and maintain parallel structure.

Rword thesis statement. DO NOT copy and paste it from the introduction, but maintain parallel structure. You do not need to begin your conclusion with the phrase, “In conclusion” because the rewording of your thesis statement (and the last visible paragraph on the page) signals your reader to understand that this is your concluding paragraph.

General Statement (global): Use an introductory strategy - a quotation, question, alarming fact, background information, anecdote, question/problem, definition, paradox, or statistic. Be sure to cite appropriately!

Preview main points by rewording your topic sentences. Maintain parallel structure by keeping your points in the same order that you will talk about them in your paper.

Clincher (the last statement that your reader will read): Include a broader implication or a “call to action.” Make it memorable!
9.1 INTRODUCTORY STRATEGIES
At the outset of your introduction, you want to grab your reader’s attention. There are several strategies you can use to accomplish this effect:

- Quotation
- Background information
- Startling fact or statistic
- Rhetorical Question
- Definition
- Paradox
- Problem or perplexing situation
- Anecdote

Be sure to cite any outside sources you use if you choose a strategy that includes someone else’s words or ideas!

Additionally, ensure that you introduce any outside source(s) you are asked to use (their authors, titles, and types) somewhere in your introduction, and restate the piece(s) you are using in your thesis.

For example:

“James Joyce’s collection of short stories, *Dubliners*, weaves dynamic characters into the evolving backdrop of Irish society.”

9.2 WRITING YOUR “CLINCHER”
Much like an introductory strategy aims at catching the reader’s attention, the clincher endeavors to keep it. Be sure to end your paper with a thought-provoking idea, or perhaps a broader implication so that your reader remembers your writing after (s)he has put it down.
10 Toning the Body: The Anatomy of a Paragraph

Each body paragraph exists to give further support for a main point (derived from your thesis statement). In order to include all of the required elements, see the sample structure below:

- **Introduction**
  - Introductory Strategy
  - General to Specific
  - Thesis Statement: (argument + roadmap)

**Body Paragraph**

**Sample Structure of a Body Paragraph**

1) **Topic Sentence**: (transition + introduction to idea mentioned in thesis statement)

2) **Inclusion of details, examples, and/or source text***

   **Sandwich Method for Integrating Source Text:**
   - Lead into borrowed material; see "signal phrases"
   - Borrowed material: quoted, paraphrased, or summarized
     Include proper documentation
   - Explanation of/justification for source text
     Why did you pick this excerpt?
     What do you want the reader to do with/think about this information?

   *Repeat as needed to substantiate your claim

3) **Concluding Statement**: explicitly tie back to thesis

- **Restate Thesis Statement** (DO NOT copy and paste from introduction,
  but DO maintain parallel structure)

- **Summation of Main Points**: (reworded topic sentences)

- **Clincher**: (broader implication/"so what?" statement)
Another way to step up your writing skills is to ensure the smooth transition from one point to the next. Select from the following (non-exhaustive) list of transitional phrases to provide an easy ride for your readers as you progress from idea to idea:

- **For opening a paragraph initially or for general use:**
  - admittedly
  - assuredly
  - certainly
  - granted
  - no doubt
  - nobody denies
  - obviously
  - of course
  - to be sure
  - true
  - undoubtedly
  - unquestionably
  - generally speaking
  - in general
  - at this level
  - in this situation

- **For continuing a common line of reasoning:**
  - consequently
  - clearly
  - then
  - furthermore
  - additionally
  - and
  - in addition
  - moreover
  - because
  - besides
  - that
  - in the same way
  - following
  - this
  - further
  - also
  - pursuing this further
  - in the light of the...
  - it is easy to see that

- **To change the line of reasoning (contrast):**
  - however
  - on the other hand
  - but
  - yet
  - nevertheless
  - on the contrary

- **Transitional chains, to use in separating sections of a paragraph which is arranged chronologically:**
  - first... second... third...
  - generally... furthermore... finally
  - in the first place... also... lastly
  - in the first place... pursuing this further... finally
  - to be sure... additionally... lastly
  - in the first place... just in the same way... finally
  - basically... similarly... as well

- **Sequence or time**
  - after
  - afterwards
  - as soon as
  - at first
  - at last
  - before
  - before long
  - finally
  - first... second... third
  - in the first place
  - in the meantime
  - later
  - meanwhile
  - next
  - soon
  - then
• For the final points of a paragraph or essay:
  o finally
  o lastly

• To restate a point within a paragraph in another way or in a more exacting way:
  o in other words
  o point in fact
  o specifically

• To signal conclusion:
  o therefore
  o this
  o hence
  o in final analysis
  o in conclusion
  o in final consideration
  o indeed

### 12 Tightening Your Stitches: Integrating Source Text and Signal Phrases

Just as you should guide your reader from one topic to the next, so should you signal where you have included supporting text. You need to differentiate between your thoughts and ideas and those you have borrowed (and properly cited) from another. To do so, use a signal phrase:

**If the author is neutral:**
- Comments
- Describes
- Explains
- Illustrates
- Notes
- Observes
- Points out
- Records
- Relates
- Reports
- Says
- Sees
- Thinks
- Writes

**If the author agrees:**
- Admits
- Agrees
- Concedes
- Concurs
- Grants

**When the author infers or suggests:**
- Analyzes
- Asks
- Assesses
- Concludes
- Finds
- Predicts
- Proposes
- Reveals
- Shows
- Speculates
- Suggests
- Supposes

**If the author argues:**
• Claims
• Contends
• Defends
• Disagrees
• Holds
• Insists
• Maintains

If the author is uneasy or disparaging:
• Belittles
• Bemoans
• Complains
• Condemns
• Deplores
• Deprecates
• Derides
• Laments
• Warns

12.1 QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, AND SUMMARIZING
Additionally, you have more stylistic choices than just including a signal phrase to indicate that you are including someone else’s words or ideas into your text, you can also choose how you will use your source text: quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing.

12.1.1 Quotations:
Choosing to directly quote indicates that you are repeating the material exactly how it appears in the original text. If you choose this avenue, you most likely are doing so because you are hoping to achieve emphasis, you like how it was originally worded and cannot rephrase it better yourself, or the text includes facts or figures that you are unable to paraphrase. A direct quotation in MLA style looks like this:

Jeremy Adam Smith’s central theme in “Our Fear of Immigrants” reads: “Fear of foreigners might well be the most intractable of all human prejudices because it is so tightly linked to survival and natural selection” (752).

12.1.2 Quotation Alteration:
Block Quotes
Set off long quotations using block style. In MLA format, if you have selected five or more typed lines to quote, you need to indent the quote one-half inch (one tab) from the left margin of your paragraph. In APA format, use the same metric to indent a quotation of forty or more words. In either format, omit the quotation marks, and include your in-text/parenthetical citation after the end punctuation.

Omissions
If there are sections of a quotation that are irrelevant to your point, you may need to delete words from the quote. To do so, insert three ellipsis marks ( . . . ), ensuring that you leave spaces before, between, and after each mark to indicate the absence of words. Beware not to distort the meaning of the original text by altering it.
**Additions**

Should you need to add words to a quotation, you may do so by setting off the added text within brackets [ ]. This is usually done to give clarification to an otherwise unclear or contextually specific part of the text, like identifying the proper noun behind a pronoun.

**12.1.3 Paraphrasing**

In paraphrasing, you will restate the borrowed idea in your own words and sentence structures, but maintaining the original meaning and tone. Typically, your paraphrased version should have a similar length to the original text. Beware of using similar sentence structures and maintaining similar or the same vocabulary as the original – that could border on plagiarism.

**12.1.4 Summarizing**

When you summarize, you should concisely and succinctly state the main idea of a source in your own words. This is a useful tactic if you want to use a longer work to help support your claim. In summarizing, use only the main ideas and leave out the details, and also be sure that you are using your own words and giving proper credit to the source.

---

**13 Do It Yourself: Avoiding Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when you use (intentionally or unintentionally) the words or ideas of someone else without affording the proper credit to the original source. If it is not yours, you have to say whose it is!

**13.1 In-Text Citations**

In-text documentation tells a reader from where you have derived the section of borrowed text and the citation immediately follows the borrowed information.

**MLA:**

If the author’s name is used in the signal phrase, include the page number in the parenthesis behind the information: As Luciana Herman states, “There’s nothing quite like a good, solid handshake and a well-placed semi-colon” (13).

If the author’s name does not appear before the borrowed text, include it in the parenthetical citation along with the page number: As one grammarian touts, “There’s nothing quite like a good, solid handshake and a well-placed semi-colon” (Herman 13).

**APA:**

This documentation style places emphasis on the date of the source, so it asks for you to provide that information in your in-text citations.

If the author’s name is used in the signal phrase, follow the name with the year of publication (in parentheses) and include the page number after the borrowed material: As Herman (2018) suggests, “There’s nothing quite like a good, solid handshake and a well-placed semi-colon” (p. 13).

Similar to MLA format, if the author’s name does not appear in the text before the referenced material, include it, along with the date and page number, in the parenthetical citation: During the ice breaker at
the division meeting, one instructor offered her whimsical philosophy of “There’s nothing quite like a good, solid handshake and a well-placed semi-colon” (Herman, 2018, p. 13).

13.2 **BIBLIOGRAPHIC/WORKS CITED ENTRIES**

If you have ANY in-text citations, so should you also have a bibliography or works cited at the end of your document. This affords you the space to give a complete citation including all the pertinent information for your reader to find the original source. A complete listing of all of the citations should be easily accessible in your textbook or in one of the resources included at the end of this book.

### 14 **WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?: MLA, APA, AND CHICAGO DOCUMENTATION STYLES**

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**Document Layout**

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<td>Section Headings</td>
<td>✓ If used, double space between end of previous paragraph and section heading ✓ No punctuation after section heading ✓ No type face changes</td>
<td>✓ Up to 5 levels: 1. Centered, bolded, uppercase and lowercase headings 2. Left-aligned, bolded, uppercase, and lowercase headings 3. Indented, bolded, lowercase heading with period 4. Indented, bolded, italicized, lowercase heading with period 5. Indented, italicized, lowercase heading with period ✓ Be consistent!</td>
<td>✓ Left justified ✓ On a new line ✓ Each level differentiated by typeface and size ✓ Stay away from all capital letters</td>
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<td>✓ Parenthetical ✓ Author’s last name, year, and page number ✓ Date can follow author’s name in signal phrase ✓ Outside quotation marks ✓ Inside punctuation</td>
<td>✓ Footnotes or Endnotes ✓ Superscript numbers following quotation – outside quotation marks (punctuation inside quotes) ✓ Note lists: author, title, and publication facts ✓ If the same in succession, use: Ibid.</td>
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<td>Citation Emphasis</td>
<td>✓ Author and location of material (page or paragraph number)</td>
<td>✓ Author, date of research, and location of material</td>
<td>✓ Author, date, and location of material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Sources</td>
<td>✓ Use signal phrase ✓ List on works cited page ✓ Cite in-text with parenthetical citation ✓ (____ qtd. in ____ )</td>
<td>✓ Use signal phrase ✓ List on references page ✓ Cite in-text with parenthetical citation ✓ (____ as cited in____)</td>
<td>✓ Shy away from indirect sources ✓ If original source is unavailable, cite both the original ✓ 1 ____ quoted in ____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 15 WHEN AM I EVER GOING TO USE THIS?: CRAFTING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Moving along in the writing process, researching is a process, too. One of the tools instructors use to introduce their students to researching and help them through evaluating sources is the annotated bibliography. This list goes a step beyond compiling your sources; you will write an annotation (short paragraph) for each one in which you will include pertinent information.

## 15.1 STEPS FOR WRITING ANNOTATIONS
1. Introduce the source (author, title, type, etc.)
2. Give context for the source
3. State the author’s/source’s thesis
4. Indicate how the thesis is supported/proven
5. Give an example of the support (quote with citation)
6. Evaluate the source (if/how you will use it; if not, why not?)

## 15.2 EXAMPLES
**MLA:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>APA</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotations</strong></td>
<td>✓ Ellipsis ( . . . ) for omissions ✓ ( . . . ) = connection of material from the middle of one sentence to the beginning of another, or omitting full sentences ✓ [ ] for added material</td>
<td>✓ Ellipsis ( . . . ) for omitted material ✓ ( . . . ) = omissions between two sentences ✓ [ ] for added material</td>
<td>✓ Ellipsis ( . . . ) for omitting irrelevant material ✓ Do not use ellipses at the beginning or end of quote ✓ [ ] for added material or for parentheses within parentheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long/Block Quotes</strong></td>
<td>✓ Four lines or more ✓ Set off on new line ✓ Indented 1 inch ✓ Double-spaced ✓ No quotation marks ✓ Parenthetical citation at end – outside punctuation ✓ Introduced by a colon (:)</td>
<td>✓ 40 words or more ✓ Set off on a new line ✓ Indented ½ inch from the left margin ✓ Double-spaced ✓ No quotation marks ✓ Parenthetical citation at end – outside punctuation</td>
<td>✓ 100 words or more (at least 6-8 lines) ✓ Set off on new line ✓ Indent from left margin (TAB) ✓ No quotation marks ✓ Footnote/endnote at end of quotation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this book, David Crystal attempts to understand the meaning behind grammar and how it works in an effort to explain why it is important to study it. As one who studies language and linguistics, Crystal embeds his argument in the understanding that language exists to create meaning, but one must have structure to effectively use a language. He uses a series of student examples, as well as encounters with English Language Learners to illustrate his point. Crystal writes, “The present day trend in English is to bring the two dimensions together: the ‘two sides of a coin’ approach. Structures are there to be used, and uses need structures in order to be fulfilled” (135). This source will prove extremely helpful as I set up my argument regarding grammar as a necessity in the elementary curriculum.

**APA:**


This compilation of several of Noam Chomsky’s publications and interviews provides a seemingly comprehensive view of the linguistic giant’s philosophies on language. Chomsky discusses myriad topics over the course of the text, ranging from grammar, to meaning, structure, and understanding (cognition). He cites personal anecdotes, work from others in the field, and practical applications to bolster his claims. Chomsky offers, “Alongside of the language faculty and interacting with it in the most intimate way is the faculty of mind that constructs what we might call ‘common sense understanding,’ a system of beliefs, expectations, and knowledge concerning the nature and behavior of objects . . . and the organization of these categories” (35). I will use this source when situating my argument on top of the background already substantiated by leaders in the field, such as Chomsky.

**16 PRESSURE COOKER: BEST PRACTICES FOR TIMED WRITING EXERCISES AND EVALUATIONS**

**16.1 PRIOR TO EVALUATION**

- Read text(s) in advance – if applicable
  - Discern thesis
  - Locate what type of support is given
- Review prior readings – if applicable
  - Discern theses
  - Locate what type of support is given

- Review rhetorical and analytical strategies
  - Logos – appeal to logic
  - Ethos – appeal to credibility
16.2 Day of Evaluation

1. Dissect the prompt
   a. Circle the “question” words
      i. How – by/through (process/procedure)
      ii. Why – because (cause and effect)
      iii. What – this/that (list)
   b. Underline verbs – discern what you are being asked to do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Explain what something is and what it is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Identify similarities and differences, emphasizing similarities, in two or more texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Identify similarities and differences, emphasizing differences, in two or more texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>Condense main points into an objective, chronological narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Break into separate parts and evaluate how the parts affect the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Based on the information given, offer your educated reasoning or conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Ascribe a value to a text based on analysis and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Give reasons for happenings or situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize</td>
<td>Coherently combine ideas from a number of texts to support your main argument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. (Re)Read Source Text(s)
   a. Pick apart support based on what you are being asked to do
   b. Relate texts to each other (if there are more than one)
      i. Use a chart or word/concept map to draw any comparisons/contrasts

3. Compose thesis
   a. Appropriately ANSWER the question you are being asked
   b. 2 parts: argument and roadmap

4. Construct outline from thesis
   a. Place thesis in introduction
   b. Craft topic sentences with transitional phrases
   c. Restate thesis in conclusion

5. Begin writing
   a. Start from the beginning
   b. Get your thoughts out!
      i. Use the highlighting function to mark things for later (or star the margin if you are writing long-hand)

6. Review your writing
   a. SPELL CHECK
   b. Read your work “out loud” [mouth the words as you go through it]
c. Be sure you have ample support for all of your claims
d. Ensure that you have used transitional phrases to link one point to the next
e. Double check that you have integrated your source text properly
   i. Lead into your source text with a signal phrase (i.e., “the author argues/contends/writes/states...”)
   ii. Employ the source text: quote, paraphrase, or summary
   iii. Cite your source(s)!
   iv. Give justification for or analysis of the excerpt you chose. What is the reader supposed to do with this information?

7. Breathe – You are DONE!

16.3 HELPFUL TIPS

- If using a computer, have one Word document for your composition, and another for your notes (if permissible)
- Don’t think of the exam in terms of its duration
  o Break it up into chunks/steps – this will help to defray mental fatigue
- When taking notes on your text(s), consider using different colored highlighters to categorize different concepts
  o Easier to recall (“see” in your mind) during pressure situations

17 AN ACQUIRED TASTE: HELPFUL TIPS FOR ESL LEARNERS

English as Second Language students (ESL) or English Language Learners (ELL) encounter myriad complicated hurdles as they navigate not only mastering their own native languages, but also learning English, one of the most difficult languages on the planet. There is not one, single “right” way to write, and academic writing can pose extra challenges.

As always, begin with a solid understanding of the task at hand, and build in ample time to go through the entire writing process (especially revising and editing). Pay careful attention to the grammatical structure of your sentences, as errors in grammar can significantly hinder the overall message of your writing.

Some of the most common, grammatical issues noted in ELL writing are explained earlier in section 3 of this handbook and include:

- Syntax (word order)
  o Choosing where subjects and verbs go in a sentence
  o Adjective placement
  o Adverb placement

- Verb forms
  o Gerunds
  o Infinitives
Additionally, in many cultures, using references to well-known works without citation is not only appropriate, but also expected. In the United States, we mandate that any and all borrowed material includes a proper citation to illustrate where the author located the source text. For some ELL students, this practice is both foreign and confusing. Plagiarism is a serious offense here, so be sure that you understand the guidelines and requirements.

18 I’M STILL HUNGRY: RESOURCES FOR MORE WRITING HELP

For more comprehensive answers to your writing questions and detailed information, please consider visiting these resources:

- American Psychological Association: http://www.apa.org/
- Harvard College Writing Program Resources: https://writingprogram.fas.harvard.edu/pages/students
- Modern Language Association: https://www.mla.org/
- Purdue Online Writing Lab: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center Tips and Tools: https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/