



The Knight Writer

A WRITER'S HANDBOOK
2015-2016

Las Lomas High School
1460 S. Main Street
Walnut Creek, California

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Note to the Reader:

Parenthetical citations throughout this handbook refer to the works cited on page 52.

Types of Writing

1. **Arguments:** Make *claims* about a position, or belief, and support those claims with *evidence* (text/quotations/statistics, etc.). Literary analysis essays are arguments. Other forms of argument include speeches and persuasive writing.
2. **Informative/Explanatory Texts:** Convey information, or describe/ explain a topic, concept, or process using sufficient facts and *evidence* (text/quotations/statistics, etc.), including the use of appropriate transitions to create a cohesive paper. Research papers and some speeches are two types of informative / explanatory writing.
3. **Narratives:** Convey a personal experience or tell a story using conventions of fiction and nonfiction. These conventions include dialogue, pacing, plot structure, sensory details, narrative, description, and reflection. Autobiographical incident or personal essay are two types of narrative.

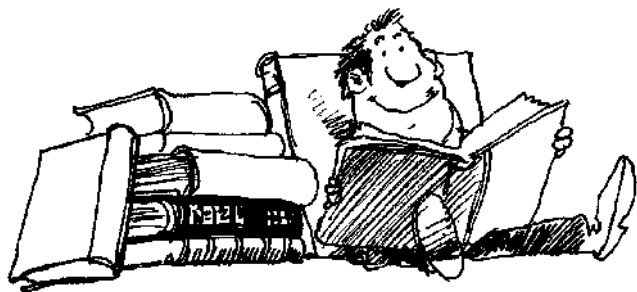
Genres of Writing

Fiction

Novels
Plays
Poems
Films

Nonfiction

Newspaper articles
Magazine articles
Essays
Biographies
Autobiographies
Memoirs
Speeches
Documentaries



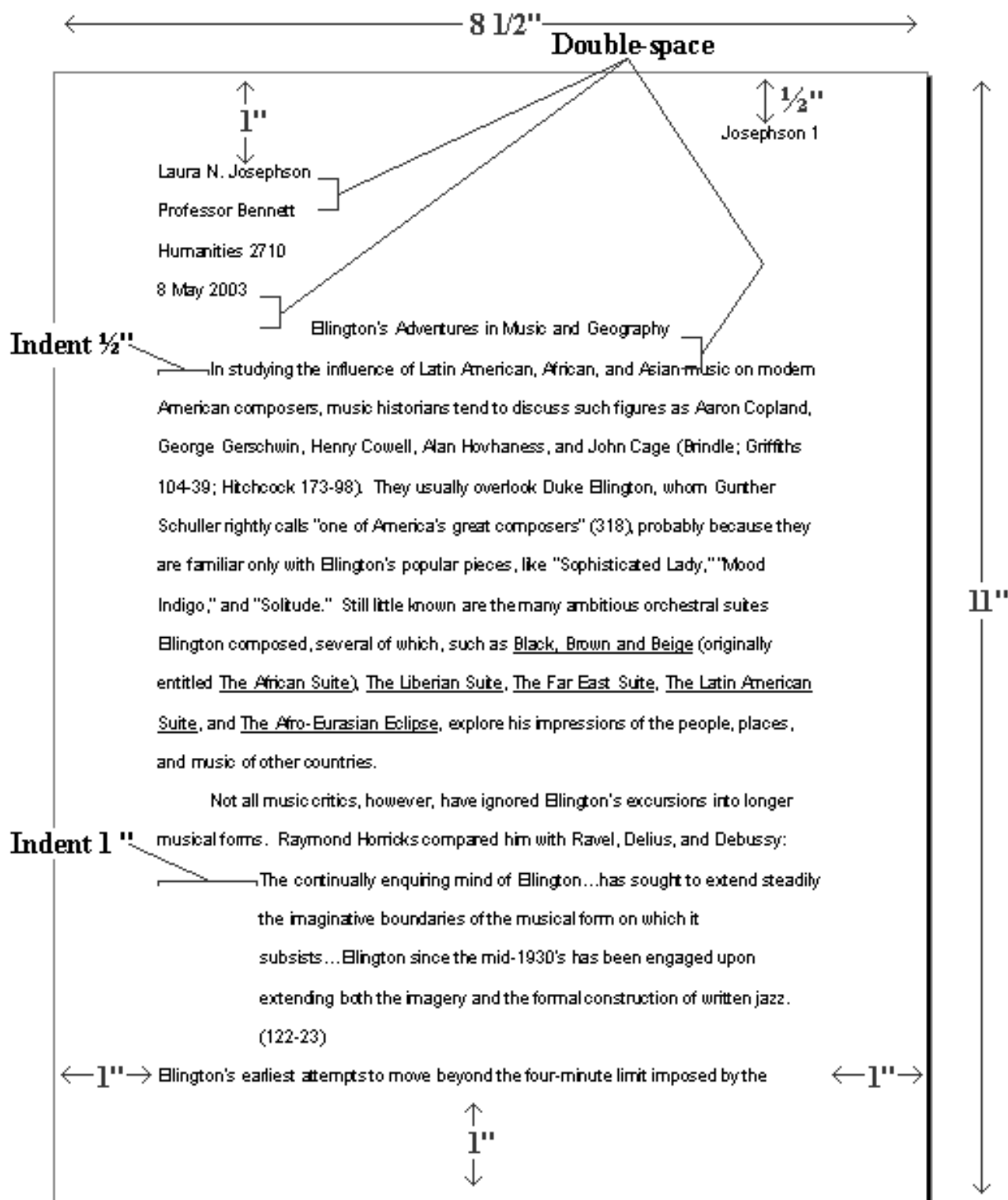
MLA Assignment Formatting

The *Modern Language Association* (MLA) rules provide the most commonly required format for academic papers. Other formatting styles (e.g. *APA* and *Chicago* style,) are required by certain colleges or subjects such as science, math, and psychology. MLA is for subjects in the humanities (English, history, economics, world languages, visual and performing arts). MLA style has been widely adopted by most American and international colleges and universities.

Format ALL written assignments per MLA guidelines as follows unless specified otherwise by your teacher.

1. Type your work unless you are in class or your teacher specifies handwriting.
2. Use a 1" margin on all four sides of each page. (Typed as well as hand written.)
3. Double-space your typed paper.
4. Include the heading in the upper LEFT hand corner of the first page ONLY.
(Heading is also double-spaced).
5. The heading must be WITHIN the 1" margins.
6. Include your last name and page number in upper right hand corner of all pages, including page one. This header must be ½ " from the top edge of the page.
7. Center a snappy title at the top of the page just below the heading.
8. Use a 12 point font such as Times or Ariel or another easy to read font.
9. Do NOT add extra spaces between paragraphs; indent ½ inch (use the TAB key) to indicate a new paragraph.
10. When writing a research paper, include parenthetical (in-text) citations for all research, and include a Works Cited at the end of you paper. **See page 51 of the APPENDIX for a sample works cited.**

Example Formatting: MLA Paper



Steps in the Writing Process

Good writers know that there are **STEPS** to the writing process. You must engage in all four steps below when developing major writing assignments. Your teacher may not assign these four steps explicitly, but excellence in any writing assignment requires you to use them all.

1. Prewriting

ORGANIZING --

- a. Thinking, Brainstorming, Talking, Listing, Diagramming
- b. Outlining (for papers such as major essays and research papers)

2. Drafting & Revision

Focus on CONTENT --

This process is repeated several times, until your ideas are succinct. Drafts of essays will and must show significant rewriting and reorganization.

3. Editing

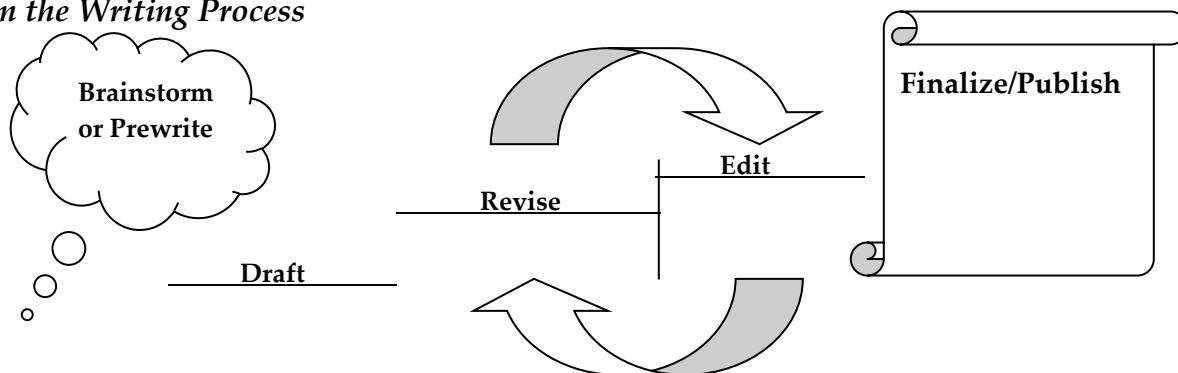
Focus on TECHNICAL things -- such as SPELLING and PUNCTUATION; also improve syntax and voice to improve **STYLE**. This step is performed once the content is in place.

- a. Self editing – read your paper quietly and aloud
- b. Peer editing – with a checklist or specific teacher instructions. NOTE: papers submitted for peer editing should be complete papers that are nearly perfect.
Do not expect your peer editor to correct a paper that is not your best effort.

4. Publication/Sharing

Publication includes any medium which **delivers** your writing to an **AUDIENCE**. This includes publishing in the traditional sense, but also sharing with peers and classmates via, oral delivery or group presentations, and with family & teachers.

Steps in the Writing Process



How to Prewrite

First, gather your ideas and organize them before you begin writing.

a) Think before you write.

- **Underline or circle** the important words in the essay question. Be careful to note when more than one question is asked and which particular points must be addressed.
- **Consider what, exactly, the question is asking.** Are you asked to *analyze*, *interpret*, or *describe* in your response? Although these words might be used interchangeably in conversation, as part of an essay response they have very specific meanings (see page 15 for specific writing terminology). Be certain that your response is framed appropriately.
- **Brainstorm ideas** – some ways to do this are making lists and diagramming.

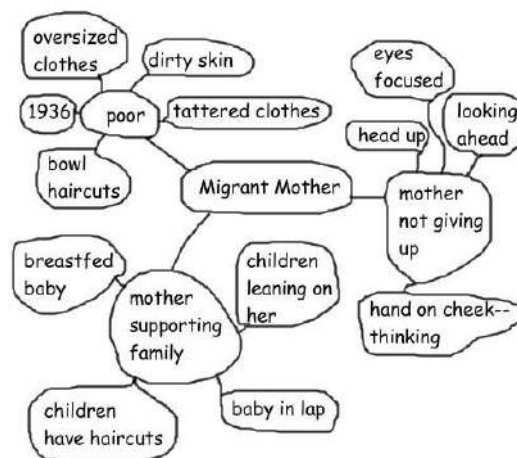
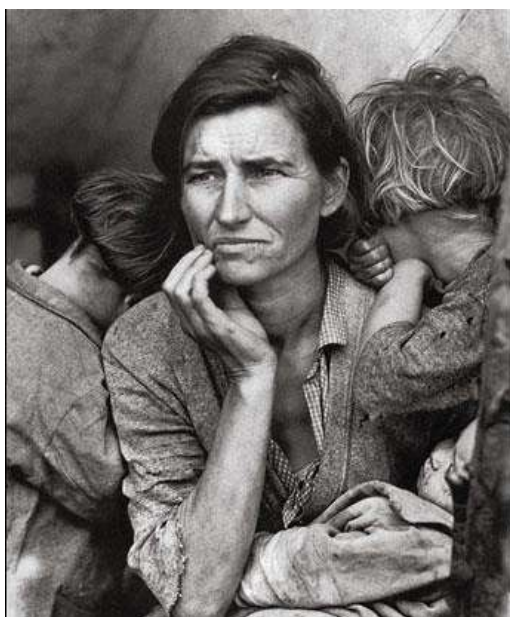
(b) Organize your ideas

- Design a logical order for your ideas and the evidence you will use.
- An effective way to organize your ideas is to use an OUTLINE. (See pages 9-10 for a sample outline).
- Be certain to address each item or task in a writing prompt in your response.
- Give equal weight to each required aspect of your response unless the prompt specifically requests otherwise.

Example for Using Prewriting Techniques

Brainstorm for Art –Dorthea Lange’s *Migrant Mother*

Prompt: After examining the details of the photo, explain how the photo reinforces the hardships experienced by many during the Great Depression.



Writing Terminology:

<i>Prompt</i>	The prompt is the topic or question to which writers must respond in any kind of writing.
<u>Introductory Paragraph</u>	The first paragraph in an essay, which includes the T-A-G and claim (thesis) statements.
<i>Hook</i>	The first sentence in an essay which catches the reader's attention.
<i>T-A-G Statement</i>	"Title, Author, Genre" statement. You must identify each of these in the introductory paragraph of any essay about any fiction or nonfiction (articles) about which you are writing. Example: "In William Shakespeare's play <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> ." (See further example on page 11.)
<i>Key Words</i>	Key words in a topic or question indicate what claim you are to prove in your writing. Always use key words in your claim (thesis) statement and topic sentences; these key words relate directly to the assigned topic.
<i>Claim (thesis/assertion)</i>	The sentence in which the writer clearly states the claim or argument of the paper. This sentence will likely be the last sentence of the introductory paragraph in an English paper, and the first sentence in a history paper.
<u>Body Paragraph(s)</u>	A middle paragraph in an essay that develops a point you want to make that supports your claim (thesis).
<i>Topic Sentence</i>	The first sentence in a body paragraph. It must have a subject and opinion for the paragraph. It does the same thing for a body paragraph that the claim (thesis) does for the entire essay.
<i>Lead-Ins</i>	A sentence that <i>leads-in</i> to quoted, textual evidence. This sentence should include all the following information about the quoted material: who speaks the quote, to whom it is spoken, and when or in what context. It is helpful to remember these as the "4 W's."
<i>Textual Evidence</i>	Specific details that form the backbone or core of your body paragraphs. This will take the form of directly quoted text from a publication, direct quotes from an interview, or vivid, sensory detail from personal experiences.
<i>Commentary/Analysis:</i>	Your explanation of how the Details/Quotes you provided illuminate your claim (thesis).
<i>Concluding Sentence</i>	The last sentence in a body paragraph. It is all commentary, does not repeat key words, does not end with a quote, and gives a finished feeling to the paragraph.
<u>Concluding Paragraph:</u>	The last paragraph in your essay. It summarizes, reflects upon, or comments on the subject or provides a question to ponder further. Conclusions are usually all commentary and do not include concrete detail or evidence. A solid conclusion should give your paper a finished feeling. (Adapted from Schaeffer, "Writing the Multi-Paragraph Essay").

Essay Outline – Guidelines

(Courtesy of Ms. Gielegthem)

Step 1: Claim (thesis)

Your claim (thesis) statement may be separate sentences or one big sentence. Remember, your claim (thesis) is the argument that you will be proving in your essay. Under it, list the major areas of support that you think will be the most effective in proving your position. Include a T-A-G statement (Title, Author, Genre - or other statement that identifies what you are writing about). In shorter papers, you may find that combining your claim and your T-A-G statement is most effective.

Step 2: Topic Sentences & Body Paragraphs

Write the topic sentence for your first supporting/body paragraph. Your first body paragraph will be your second paragraph (your first body paragraph). Use key words from your claim in your topic sentences. Then, list evidence (quotations, supporting details, reasons, or examples) that support this topic sentence.

Topic Sentence:

Textual Evidence: (Quotes, statistics, details, paraphrases etc. . .)

- 1.
- 2.
3. **Quotation:** (don't forget the lead in: who says it, to whom, and when)
4. Analysis of quotation (at least two sentences).

Step 3: Topic Sentences & Body Paragraphs

Write the topic sentence for your second supporting paragraph. This will become your third paragraph (your second body paragraph). List the details, reasons, or examples that support this topic sentence.

Topic Sentence:

Textual Evidence: (Quotes, statistics, details, paraphrases etc. . .)

- 1.
- 2.
3. **Quotation:** (don't forget the lead in: who says it, to whom, and when)
4. Analysis of quotation (at least two sentences).

Step 4: Write the topic sentence for third supporting paragraph. This will become your fourth paragraph (your third body paragraph). List the details, reasons, or examples that support this topic sentence.

Topic Sentence:

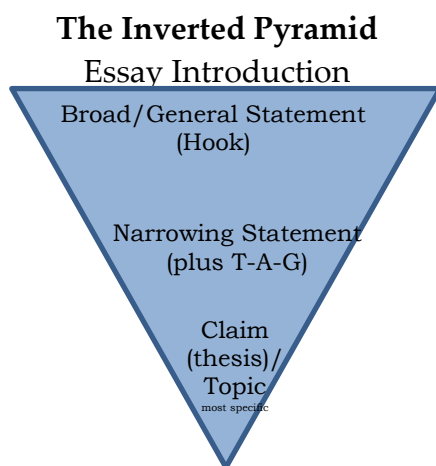
Textual Evidence: (Quotes, statistics, details, paraphrases etc. . .)

- 1.
- 2.
3. **Quotation:** (don't forget the lead in: who says it, to whom, and when)
4. Analysis of quotation (at least two sentences).

Step 5: Write some ideas for your conclusion. This answers the “so what?” in the essay. It begins by restating the claim (thesis) – **not *recopying*** the claim (thesis).

Step 6: If you are writing a take home essay for English, NOW go back and write a catchy opener, or **HOOK**, that begins your essay. A hook is a general statement about your topic that grabs the reader's attention. (For history and in-class English essays, skip this step altogether unless specified to include it.)

Step 7: In your first paragraph, do not forget to restate your topic, include TAG, and give a **brief** summary (no more than a single sentence) of the setting and plot. Smart technique: Combine the TAG with the brief summary.



Sample Outline - Completed

Title: *Common Sense* and Its Effect on American Political Thought

Step 1: Claim (thesis): Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* articulated the anti-British sentiments of the Colonies in a way so unprecedented that it permanently changed the face of political thought in America.

Step 2: Topic Sentences and Body Paragraphs

- I. What did *Common Sense* say that was so different?
- II. It denounced both the monarchy and the English Constitution, which had previously been viewed as a brilliant political document. Americans realized the inherent fallacies of hereditary government (specifically monarchy) as well as the English Constitution, which protected the monarchy.
- III. It called for Americans to disconnect themselves from the flawed British system and create a new one for themselves ("Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession" 6).
- IV. *Common Sense* questioned the long-standing belief that residents of the colonies were inseparably connected to England. It gave them a new identity – Americans rather than Britons.
- V. It also outlined the benefits of a republican government, which eventually would influence the ideas of the Founders as they created a new government for their new country.

Topic Sentence and Body Paragraph 2

- I. What was *Common Sense*'s immediate effect on the Colonies?
- II. It was read by an unprecedented number of colonists and united a great majority of them behind independence.
- III. Textual Evidence (Quote) – (Schoenberg 2) The debate in the American Colonies shifted from that of reconciliation with England to that of independence.
- IV. It inspired American intellectuals with its call for independence, leading to the composition of the Declaration of Independence a mere six months later.

Topic Sentence and Body Paragraph 3

- I. What were *Common Sense*'s long-term effects?
- II. It changed the connotation of the word "revolution" to something that looked to the future. "Revolution" became a word of innovation rather than renovation.
- III. It permanently cemented the idea of a republican, non-hereditary government into the American conscience. *Common Sense*'s design for a republican government, and its basic principles were articulated in the Constitution.

Step 5: Conclusion

- A. *Common Sense*'s eloquent, articulate, and unprecedented arguments led to a permanent change in American political thought.

Drafting & Editing:

(Courtesy of Ms. Tate)

When **DRAFTING** and **REVISING** your papers, your initial focus should be on **CONTENT**, not mechanics. This means you will be adding, deleting, moving, and augmenting your text. Drafts of essays will and must show significant rewriting and change.

- **Get to the point.** Avoid wordy, rambling sentences by using brief transition words: for example, accordingly, similarly, finally.
- **Write simply and carefully.** There is no substitute for clear, concise sentences. Discipline yourself. Clear, concise sentences help ensure understanding and make excellent writing eloquent.
- **Never mistake quantity for quality.** Excellent writing is clear, accurate and concise.
- **Avoid personal opinions.** Your answers should be factual, and cite supporting evidence unless reflection or opinion is requested. Avoid “I believe,” and “I think” phrases.
- **Conclude at all costs!** This is the most essential part of the essay, as it is your last chance to sway the reader.

When **EDITING** your papers, your focus should be on **TECHNICAL** things -- such as **SPELLING** and **PUNCTUATION**; also improve syntax and voice to improve **STYLE**.

This step is performed once the content is in place.

- **ALWAYS put a title on your essay.** It is best to use a phrase from the essay. To be a “titlesmith,” work your title into your paper, perhaps it into the conclusion. This is a miraculously effective strategy!



Essay Drafting & Editing Checklists

While DRAFTING your essay, be sure to refer to this checklist to ensure your paper is complete.

- ☐ Snappy title that is a phrase in the paper
- ☐ Intro contains "T-A-G"
- ☐ Intro contains unique claim (thesis) statement
- ☐ All body paragraphs begin with strong topic sentences containing key words
- ☐ All body paragraphs include a contextual lead-in for quoted evidence
- ☐ All body paragraphs contain textual evidence
- ☐ All text is insightfully analyzed /explained; two sentences per each quote
- ☐ Where required, quoted text is perfectly cited
- ☐ Organization is clear and demonstrates pre-writing
- ☐ Ideas are never repetitive.
- ☐ Evidence of advanced analysis and critical writing skills
- ☐ Conclusion restates claim (thesis) and introduces a new, related idea

Before printing the final copy of your paper, refer to the following EDITING checklist. Make your paper perfect!

- ☐ Snappy titles are simply centered at the top of your paper, below the heading.
No underline, bold, quotes or italics
- ☐ Author(s) are referred to by first name and last name initially; after that, refer to all persons in your writing by last name only
- ☐ Language is powerful, vivid & concise and utilizes varied syntax
- ☐ Consistent use of present, **active** voice
- ☐ Skillful transitions between paragraphs; ideas are skilfully woven together
- ☐ Paper is MLA formatted
- ☐ Paper does not include use of the word "you" unless in a direct quotation
- ☐ Paper does not include use of the word "I" unless in a direct quotation or needed for use in writing a reflection about oneself
- ☐ Paper is free of "deadwood/lard" words such as: very, so, really, can, starts/starts to, begins/begins to, may, might and words that end in *-ould*
- ☐ Paper is free of the use of "I will prove," "I believe" statements
- ☐ Paper is written in present tense with the exception of historical events, which happened in the past and therefore should be placed in the past
- ☐ No clichés are present. Skilled writers find fresh ways to convey their ideas
- ☐ Paper is technically perfect, free of punctuation and grammatical errors. Writers: read your paper out loud to yourself to help catch avoidable mistakes!

Section 2: Writing Arguments

Argument Definition:

Arguments support claims about a position, belief, or conclusion using valid reasoning and relevant evidence. The writer or speaker presents a claim and then defends that claim with credible information from research or first person interviews (primary sources). Good arguments clarify relationships between the claim and its evidence as well as address opposing or counter claims.

The goal of argument is to change the reader or audience's thinking, and move them to action or convince them to accept the claim put forth by the writer. For example, a claim for an argument might read, "His achievements clearly demonstrate that Alexander the Great was truly great," whereas an informative paper on this topic would explain "How Alexander the Great Hellenized the Middle East" (Stuart).

Types of argumentative writing include **persuasive essays and speeches, compare and contrast essays, expository essays.**

Common Core Definition for Argument Essays:

- Introduce arguable claims and distinguish from opposing claims
- Develop claims fairly
- Select, organize and analyse appropriate supporting text

Essentials of writing arguments: (Required parts!)

1. Claim/Thesis
2. Evidence
3. Analysis of evidence

The following pages contain information that will guide you in writing claims, using evidence, and developing analysis.

Essay Prompt Terminology

These words are found in essay and claim (thesis/assertion) paragraph prompts. They will determine the structure and content of your essay.

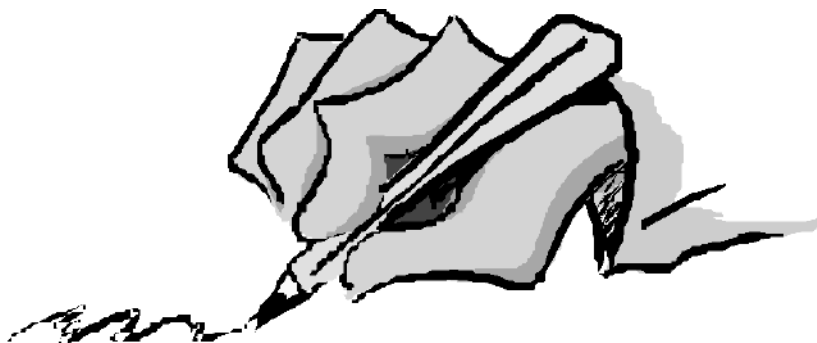
Analyze	Break down the topic, issue or problem into parts or principles in order to understand the whole. It means to answer the “why” and “how” behind an event/thing. You can include the judgments and evaluations of authorities, and, to a lesser degree, your factually supported personal opinion.
Cite	Provide quote, illustration and/or fact as evidence to support a subjective statement.
Compare	Look for qualities or characteristics that resemble one another.
Contrast	Stress the differences between qualities or characteristics, events or problems.
Define	Give clear meanings to terms. Generally a DEFINE question is answered by first giving a clear meaning to the term and then using examples that fit the meaning of the term.
Describe	Give a word picture of something; tell a story in detail. The word DESCRIBE directs you to organize the answer to the question either spatially (ex: describe the digestive system of a grasshopper) or chronologically (ex: description of Romeo’s first meeting with Juliet).
Diagram	Give a drawing, chart, plan or graphic answer. Label the diagram and if necessary, add a brief explanation or description.
Discuss	Give the long and complete response to the specific question. DISCUSS means to talk or write about an issue <i>from all aspects</i> . Because DISCUSS questions often call for answers that cover a broad range of material, give careful thought to your organization.
Evaluate	Make a judgment of value. It means to assess; to show the worth or lack of worth of a particular “thing.”
Explain	Clarify, interpret, and spell out, analyze and account for material you present. EXPLAIN questions call for a variety of possible answers - cause and effect, description of a process, analysis of meaning, etc.
Identify	Locate, make known or bring out a particular “thing.”

(Adapted from Kinsella)

Essay Terminology (*continued*)

- Illustrate** Show by means of a picture, chart, diagram or some visual representation. ILLUSTRATE can also mean to give a concrete verbal example to explain or clarify a problem.
- Interpret** Translate, clarify, elucidate, expound or explain the significance of. It is often used with famous quotations or important passages.
- Justify** Prove or give reasons for a decision or conclusions. The writer must stress the advantages of a position over the disadvantages. The writer also must *disregard* his/her opinion if it contrary to the claim (thesis) of the question.
- Outline** Organize a description under *main points* and *lesser points*, omitting minor details and stressing the arrangement or classification of things.
- Paraphrase** Restate a given passage in your own words.
- Persuade** Use evidence and reasoning to convince the reader to agree with your point of view.
- Prove** Establish that something is true or untrue by citing factual evidence and explaining how that evidence contributes to the truth or fallacy.
- Relate** Show the connection or logical association between two or more “things” through similarities, such as their origins, functions, or traits. RELATE can also mean TELL, *as* in “Relate your experience. . . .”
- Summarize** Give the main points or facts in condensed form, omitting details and illustrations.

(Adapted from Kinsella).



Evidence: The KEY to Excellent Writing

Good argumentative or informative writing begins with EVIDENCE. This means you need to gather your evidence before you **even begin to write**. Look at the chart below regarding what kinds of evidence you will need for each type of writing:

<u>Type of Writing</u>	<u>Type of Evidence</u>
Arguments	Direct quotes from literature or research sources
Informative/Explanatory	Direct quotes from research/information sources or detailed examples
Narratives	Detailed examples using vivid descriptive language and anecdote

To begin writing any of the papers listed in the chart above, you need to start by gathering EVIDENCE. Again, Ms. Gielegem suggests looking at “what is revealed about your topic, [then] write down everything you can find pertaining to your claim, even if it is something of a stretch.” You can always eliminate weak pieces of evidence later.

Gathering Evidence: (Courtesy of Ms. Gielegem)

1. **Collect:** As you collect your evidence, don’t forget to write down the page number or Act/scene/line, like this: (39) for page number, and (1.2.4-5) for Act/scene/line(s).
2. **Organize Categories:** Once you have tracked down all of the evidence related to your topic, organize it into categories. The different categories of evidence will become the areas of support for your body paragraphs. If you have any evidence that does not fit neatly into a category, place it in a “miscellaneous” category.
3. **Solidify your Claim:** Look at all your evidence and determine where it is leading you. (What is your claim about now that you have examined the evidence?) Write your claim about the topic in a clear sentence. You now have a *working claim* (also called a “*working thesis*”). It is a *working claim* because you will likely revise it before you finish the final draft of your paper.
4. **Review your Evidence:** You should have two to four categories that can be used in the body paragraphs to support your thesis/claim. At this point, discard any evidence that does not support your thesis/claim.
5. **Organize your Paper:** For some topics, you will want to have your body paragraphs in chronological order. For others, side by side (at the same time) analysis will be more appropriate. Determine which category provides the *best* support for your thesis.

Good vs. Poor Analysis (Courtesy of Ms. Rigrisch)

What is Analysis? Once you have gathered your evidence and determined your claim, you will need to ANALYZE the evidence to explain for your reader how it supports the claim you are making. Good analysis includes all of the following:

- **Contextual information:** before you quote your evidence, you need to clarify for your reader the CONTEXT of the material, that is WHO said it (or documented it), WHERE it was said/written, WHY it was said and WHAT it means. (This is easy to remember as the “4W’s.”)
- **Analysis:** once you’ve given the contextual information, you need to quote the material and then explain or ANALYSE how the material supports your claim. Analysis is more than just repeating the quote. You must use reference and explain how the words in the quote directly connect the claim you are making.

The chart below demonstrates the difference between poor analysis of evidence and successful analysis.

CLAIM: Vegetarianism is healthier than eating meat.

Evidence	Analysis
EVIDENCE: The National Center for Health Statistics reveals the two leading causes of death in America as heart disease and colon cancer.	<p>POOR ANALYSIS: This shows that vegetarianism is healthier than eating meat.</p> <p>STRONG ANALYSIS: According to the National Center for Health Statistics, a person is more likely to develop cancer or heart disease if he or she has high cholesterol. Cholesterol is found most abundantly in food that comes from animals, and especially meat. When one cuts meat out of his or her diet, one’s cholesterol level will decline, as will one’s risk of contracting these potentially lethal diseases. Vegetarianism, then, is a healthier way of eating.</p>
EVIDENCE: Meat can contain up to 30% fat. Vegetables rarely contain any fat.	<p>POOR ANALYSIS: Fat is bad so vegetarianism is healthier than eating meat.</p> <p>STRONG ANALYSIS: Research has repeatedly shown that eating a diet low in fat is desirable and beneficial. Limiting animal fats, as found in meat and dairy products, and eating more fresh vegetables and fruits, which naturally contain little fat, is recommended by most health agencies.</p>

Example Claim Paragraph – Using Excellent Evidence (Courtesy of Ms. Tate)

This paragraph is from an essay on the differences between Romeo’s and Juliet’s personalities, from Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet*:

Unlike the Lightning	
Claim (thesis sentence)	Unlike Romeo, who demonstrates on several occasions his capricious nature, Juliet is more level headed.
Lead-in/context for quote	Throughout the play she shows her capacity for common sense. In Act II scene ii, Romeo sneaks up to her balcony after the party. Delighted by his pursuit, Juliet exchanges vows of love with him, after which the lovers agree to meet and marry in secret the next day. Describing her love, Juliet tells Romeo that while she feels great passion for him, she has “. . . no joy\ in this contract tonight. It is too rash\ too sudden, too like the lightening, which doth\
Quote (integrated in embedded form)	cease to be ere one can say it lightens” (II.ii.56-61). By comparing their love to lightning, Juliet displays her common sense. She realizes that marrying someone after knowing them only one day is not a good idea.
Analysis explains how quote PROVES assertion	Furthermore, her comparison of their love to lightning, which ends practically before it lightens the sky, foreshadows the ephemeral nature of hasty love as well as the conclusion of the play. Later in the same scene, Juliet displays her maturity again when she expresses doubt about her new relationship: “My grave is like to be my wedding bed” (II.ii.202). Thinking about her new love, Juliet not only counsels herself but also foreshadows the end of the play. By speaking such rational and honest
Transition & lead-in to next quote	Words, Juliet demonstrates her maturity and common sense, as she does in Act IV, when she refuses to marry Paris.
Quote (integrated using a colon)	
Analysis explains how quote PROVES assertion	
Conclusion and transition	

Claim Paragraph Template

(Courtesy of Ms. Rigsich)

PROMPT:

CLAIM:

List two pieces of EVIDENCE that support the claim and, for each, explain how the evidence proves the claim (i.e. ANALYZE it).

Evidence (remember to include page numbers!)	Analysis (Be sure to include the 4 “Ws” - Context)

Final Step: Using the materials you’ve detailed on this worksheet, type it into your claim paragraph.

One-Paragraph Claim or Literary Response Rubric

(Courtesy of Ms. Gunnison)

Name: _____ Period: _____

	Outstanding (5)	Exceeds Expectations (4.5)	Meets Expectations (4)	Approaching Expectations (3.5)	Needs Remediation (3)
Introduction, T-A-G and Claim (thesis)	Summary is accurate, brief and specific. Writer includes a TAG statement to orient the reader. Claim (thesis) explains position clearly and accurately.	Summary is accurate and specific. Writer includes a TAG statement to orient the reader. Claim (thesis) explains an arguable position.	Summary is fairly accurate and includes some important plot points. TAG statement helps orient readers to the subject. Claim (thesis) expresses a position but does not offer a reason.	Summary is not always accurate or appropriate. It may stray from the relevant parts of the story and may be too wandering or too brief. Reader may be confused by vague claim (thesis).	Summary is an inaccurate representation of the story or is missing. No TAG statement. No claim (thesis).
Lead in, Textual Evidence & Analysis	Complete lead-in gives ample context; thorough development of analytical claims with ample textual evidence & analysis.	All contextual elements of lead-ins included; Substantial development of analytical claims with some textual evidence and analysis.	Obvious attempt at lead-in may leave some necessary context out. General support from textual evidence; some undeveloped analysis.	Inadequate or missing lead-in; inadequate textual evidence and/or analysis; is more summary of the story.	No analysis.
Writing Mechanics and Organization	Ideas expressed clearly and in an organized way; the reader remains engaged. Absence of avoidable errors.	Clear progression of ideas from one paragraph to the next; minor problems with flow of ideas. Few isolated errors that do not distract.	Some structural problems with divide between summary and analysis. Some repeated problems/patterns are distracting to reader	Writing problems inhibit a reader's ability to comprehend the message	Many recurring errors make the paper very difficult to read and comprehend
Other					
Total					

Score: _____/15

Additional comments:

Essay Rubric for Literary Analysis Paper

(Courtesy of Ms. Gielegthem)

Score	Format	Introduction	Body Paragraphs	General
A Excellent Paper	Follows format guidelines: Modern Language Association (“MLA”) Style: (12 pt., Times or Ariel Font, Double Space, 1” margins, Title, Heading, etc.) correctly done and meets/ exceeds minimum word length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Title: terrific and snappy o Hook: creative, compelling and relevant o TAG (Title, Author, Genre): present and smoothly integrated o Background: relevant and smoothly integrated o Claim (thesis): thought-provoking, clear, effective; employs key words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Transitions: smoothly and effectively employed; uses key words o Concrete Details/Textual Evidence: excellent o Lead Ins: beautifully done, providing context; punctuation correct o Textual Evidence: introduced skilfully and correctly o Commentary: insightful and smoothly and effectively integrated; two sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organization: clear and logical o Diction (word choice): powerful, concise o Mechanical Errors (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar): very few, if any o Citation: correct o Repetition: none o Use of “I, me, you, your, our, we, etc.”: none o Appropriate tense: maintained throughout o Contractions: few, if any o Conclusion: beautifully done
B Good Paper	Follows format guidelines: MLA Style, some minor problems exist and meets/exceeds minimum word length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Title: good, but lacks sparkle o Hook: creative and relevant o TAG: Present and integrated o Background: relevant and smoothly integrated o Claim (thesis): clear and effective; employs key words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Transitions: effectively employed; uses key words o Concrete Details/Textual Evidence: Good o Lead Ins: effective; punctuation correct o Textual Evidence: introduced correctly o Commentary: appropriate and integrated; at least two sentences of CM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organization: clear, but not as skilfully as an “A” paper o Diction (word choice): good, sometimes concise o Mechanical Errors: some minor errors present o Citation: correct o Repetition: minimal o Use of “I, me, you, your, our, we, etc.”: none. o Appropriate tense: maintained, mostly o Contractions: several o Conclusion: well done
C Average Paper	Follows format guidelines: Missing some aspects and meets minimum word length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Title: okay, but obvious o Hook: attempted o TAG: All parts present but not integrated effectively o Background: relevant, but poorly integrated, or not entirely relevant o Claim (thesis): clear, but basic; employs key words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Transitions: Present; uses some key words o Concrete Details/Textual Evidence: Acceptable o Lead Ins: attempted, but may be weak; punctuation correct o Textual Evidence: introduced, but not well; punctuation correct o Commentary: obvious, superficial, simplistic, generic or irrelevant, some integration; at least two sentences of CM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organization: exists, but not as skilfully done as a “B” paper o Diction (word choice): average, simple; not always concise o Mechanical Errors: present o Citation: some problems exist o Repetition: is a problem o Use of “I, me, you, your, our, we, etc.” avoids use except for one time in the conclusion. o Appropriate tense: not maintained o Contractions: are a problem o Conclusion: nice effort, but uninspiring; lacks a “so what?”
D Demonstrates Problems	Does not follow guidelines: MLA format not used throughout. Does not meet minimum word length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Title: little or no effort made o Hook: little or no attempt made o TAG: missing one or more items o Background: missing or irrelevant o Claim (thesis): not clearly stated; key words missing or hard to discern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Transitions: weak or non-existent; key words not used o Concrete Details/Textual Evidence: weak or irrelevant; mainly plot summary, missing one or more. o Lead Ins: weak or non-existent; punctuation incorrect o Textual Evidence: not introduced ; but announced; punctuation wrong o Commentary: weak, irrelevant or non-existent; lacks at least two sentences of CM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organization: unclear or illogical o Diction (word choice): simple, unclear and/or inappropriate word choice o Mechanical Errors: many errors o Citation: incorrect o Repetition: is a major problem o Use of “I, me, you, your, our, we, etc.”: present and problematic o Appropriate tense: not maintained o Contractions: are a major problem o Conclusion: weak attempt; lacks a “so what?”

Section 3: Writing Informational / Explanatory Writing

Informational/Explanatory Writing Definition:

This purpose of this type of writing is to convey information accurately. The writer aims to increase the reader's knowledge, to help the reader understand a process or procedure, or to increase the reader's comprehension of a concept. Truthfulness is assumed (as opposed to argumentative writing, in which truth must be proved.) Informational writing answers the questions of "why?" and "how?" In addition to drawing information from what they already know, writers must select and present relevant examples from primary and secondary sources.

For example, while a claim for an argument might read, "His achievements clearly demonstrate that Alexander the Great was truly great," an informative paper on this topic would explain "How Alexander the Great Hellenized the Middle East" (Stuart).

Types of informational and expository writing include: **research reports, cause and effect & compare and contrast papers, definition essays, letters, instructions and manuals, and interviews.**

Informational and explanatory papers might address any of the following topics:

- What is an X-ray used for?
- What are the different genres of poetry?
- How big is the United States?
- How do insects find food?
- What is Democracy?
- What is the endocrine system and how does it work?
- What makes an engine work?
- Who was Pythagoras and what were his contributions to mathematics and philosophy?

Common Core Definition for Informational/Explanatory Writing:

- **Convey ideas & processes clearly**
- **Select, organize and analyse appropriate content**
- **Use facts and concrete details**

Outline for a Geology/Science Paper

(Courtesy of Mr. Morse and Ms. Morse)

The Format: There are SIX basic parts to answering a scientific question:

1. The **ANSWER** statement. In Common Core lingo, this is “the claim,” and is usually derived from the question. The **answer** is used to focus the reader’s attention on your claim/topic.
2. The **REASON**. The reason should begin with the word “because,” and should be concise and not include any explanations (explanations come later.)
3. The **EXAMPLE**. This must create a picture in the reader’s mind. However, this is not an example about your scientific subject, but one that will create a simple “picture” for the reader. It is something the reader should be familiar with. **IMPORTANT:** You must use similar or the same language in this section that you used in your answer and reason sections.
4. The **TRANSITION**. This essential element must connect the example with the teaching part of the essay. You must include BOTH the topic of your example (#3) and the topic of your teach (#5) in this section. A transition is rarely more than one sentence long.
5. The **TEACH**. Teach your reader the whys and hows of your REASON, again using key words from the answer and reason. This should be the MAJORITY of your paper. Again, be sure to use similar language and phrasing here as you did in your answer and reason sections.
6. The **PONDER**. Include one final thought that makes the reader **ponder** your answer further. This section is not used to answer the question, but only to make the reader think.

Sample Science Paper – Using the Format (above)

In the sample paper below, notice that *each sentence dictates what the following sentence will say*. When you write a sentence, you create an idea, a picture. Therefore, you must support each idea or picture with more description. In the paper below some words are bolded and underlined. These bolded words show up two (or more) times after each is introduced. This is because each new word you mention should refer back to one you already mentioned or signal that a new one is coming. If you are writing well, you will write with this kind of useful repetition. Many teachers refer to this technique as using **key words**.

Note: Remember that EVERY PART of “The Format” must agree. Once way to keep focused on your agreement is to find the **key words** in your answer and use them. Example: “California is more **mountainous** than New York because California is between two **moving plates**.” While you are using the key words, refer back at the question/prompt to see if you are, indeed, answering the question (not off topic) and that your answer is “agreeing.” Remember to include WHYS, HOWS and WHATs as part of your reason’s main words in order to fully convince your reader. Finally, include THE PONDER. Leaving your reader with something to ponder is sometimes difficult, but it essential. Often, the pondering statement may ask what the reader’s life would be like if the topic (or reason) did not exist.

Prompt/Question: Why is California so mountainous, but New York relatively flat?

1. Answer (claim) California is more mountainous than New York
2. Because **because** California is in between two moving plates.
3. Example **For example,** if two moving cars crash into each other in a head on collision, the hoods of each car will be crumpled up, but the trunks of each car will still be relatively smooth because the hoods were where the impact took place.
4. Transition Like two cars colliding (from the example, #3), if two pieces of the earth's crust move and crash into each other, there will be crumpling and folding near the crash, while thousands of miles away the ground won't even register the collision.
5. Teach California is situated between the North American and the Pacific Plate. Swirling magma under the earth pushes the plates in various directions, and eventually the build up of energy results in a collision. Energy at the collision site is transferred in to the plates and cannot be dissipated in any other way except to fold the rock up into mountains. Because the folding absorbs the energy of the crash, the further from the crash site the more energy is absorbed. Energy dissipates over every mile, so thousands of miles away the energy is already dissipated, therefore no mountains form.
6. Ponder Earthquakes tend to scare people on the East Coast, but if we did not have the collisions that result in earthquakes, California would be a flat, boring place to live.

Be sure to avoid these "Rookie Moves" in your paper:

- Not reading carefully to see what, EXACTLY, the question asks.
- Not using hints that are incorporated into the question you are answering.
- Not using the format.
- Having gaps (unrelated material) between parts of the format.
- Straying from your reason (not "agreeing" or not using exact words from your reason).
- Not having a concise or clear reason
- Assuming the reader knows exactly what you are writing about.
- Not using science (knowledge) to convince the reader.
- Not checking back in the paper to see if you are answering the question.

Finally, remember that good writing is rarely a stream of consciousness. Successful writing takes a great deal of thought, planning, practice and understanding.

Sample Rubric for Science

The sample paper on the preceding page might be scored using the following rubric:

4 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses “The Format” (answer, reason, example, transition, claim, ponder). • Has proper agreement with all parts of paper. • Thoroughly leads reader from beginning to end of paper. • Skillfully uses scientifically relevant information to support reason.
3 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses “The Format” (answer, reason, example, transition, claim, ponder). • Mostly has proper agreement with all parts of paper. • Leads reader from beginning to end of paper. • Uses scientifically relevant information to support reason.
2 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to use “The Format” (answer, reason, example, transition, claim, ponder). • Has/attempts proper agreement with all parts of paper • Does not confuse reader by scattered and poorly arranged ideas • Uses /attempts scientifically relevant information to support reason.
1 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes some/most of the “The Format” • Has some agreement with all parts of paper. • Exhibits minimal organization. • Inconsistent use of scientific information.

Essay Sample: Informational/Explanatory – Paper for history or English

No Escape for Malnourished Children

Hunger and malnutrition are tremendous problems in our world. According to the magazine *Population Reports*, about 18 million people, mostly children, die each year from starvation, malnutrition, and related causes. This magazine also states that nearly 200 million children under age five – 40 percent of all children this age – lack sufficient nutrition to develop fully (79-80). Tragically, children suffering from malnutrition have little chance of living long, productive lives.

Malnutrition can lead to death, but long before that happens, poorly nourished children suffer from a number of physical problems. Extreme weight loss, stunted growth, and frequent infections are just a few of the physical problems resulting from poor nutrition. Because the immune system often begins to shut down in malnourished children, they are very susceptible to life threatening diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, and diarrhea. According to Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, Director General of the World Health Organization, “Much of the sickness and death attributed to major communicable diseases is, in fact, caused by malnutrition” (80).

One form of malnutrition is called marasmus and occurs when children are weaned too soon and receive few nutrients. Children with marasmus are extremely underweight, lack body fat or defined muscles, and appear almost puppet like – with large heads, small bodies, and thin arms and legs. Eventually, their skin sags, and their

faces wrinkle. To compound the problem, their body organs decrease in size, their intestines begin to fail, and their pulse rate slows down. Simply put, marasmus causes a child's body to waste away.

Another form of malnutrition is called kwashiorkor and occurs when children are weaned later than normal and do not receive necessary protein and nutrients. Children with this disease have badly swollen bellies that actually make them look somewhat healthy. However, their stomachs appear large because their abdominal muscles are loose and weak. Their skin is often pale or red, and their hair becomes thin. Eventually, children who suffer from this form of malnutrition simply stop growing.

In terms of mental development, children lacking proper food become sleepy, dull and withdrawn. As a result, their ability to learn decreases. Because these children have no energy, it is difficult for them to learn how to walk and talk. According to *The Public Health News and Notes*, iron and iodine deficiencies in children often impair their intellectual development. Even a small deficiency in iodine can reduce a child's development by as much as 10 percent. Studies have shown that poor nutrition in early childhood can continue to hinder development well into adulthood (15).

Malnutrition is a serious problem for people of all ages, but it takes its greatest toll on innocent children. And the problem is not likely to go away soon. New methods of farming, food distribution, and health care will be needed before a significant number of children can be helped. Those changes are just now beginning to take place.

Essay Source: (Sebranek 112-113).

Section 4: Writing Narratives

Narrative Definition:

Narratives convey personal experiences, either real (nonfiction – autobiography, biography or memoir) or imaginary (fiction). The purpose of narrative is to entertain, instruct and/or inform.

Types of narrative include **journals, learning logs, personal narrative (college/reflective essays), autobiographical incidents, monologues, and proposals.**

Evidence: What evidence do writers of narrative use? Since they are usually not using a published text for reference and are instead writing from experience or telling a story, the EVIDENCE in narrative writing usually appears in the form of DESCRIPTION.

Writing Vivid Description -- “Showing” Writing (Courtesy of Ms. Tate)

Painting a Scene:

Writers must detail events for their readers. This is most easily accomplished if the writer “forces [his or herself] to *visualize* what you want to say. . . Then ask yourself what kind of photograph you would take, or what kind of picture you could paint, to illustrate your point. Give yourself time to see this picture clearly in your own mind. Then put the picture into words, using detail as photographer or a painter would use it” (Payne 75). Writing in this way allows your reader to visualize and “see what you mean” because “you are **showing** him, not telling him” (Payne 75). This is the difference between interesting and boring writing.

Whenever you need to describe something in your writing, first *visualize* it as a photograph, then recall what other senses prevailed there. Paint a picture of that photograph using specific, *concrete* words (not car or truck, but flatbed or dump truck; not fabric or cotton, but *denim* or *calico*; not green or dark green, but *emerald*). Write descriptions in which you mindfully include specific visual details, as well as smells, sounds, tastes, sensations and emotional feelings associated with your scene.

Compare the two versions of the same attempt at description below. Notice how the “boring” paragraph below gives few specifics, but many abstract and vague generalizations. According to Payne, “Notice that the word “poverty” does not appear in the second example, yet unquestionably, the *effect* of poverty is greater” (76).

Boring

“The Harlem child is born in to a world that few white children ever encounter. They live in a world of terrible poverty. They do not have advantages that other children accept as a matter of course” (Payne 76).

Interesting

Born into a world few white children ever encounter, the Harlem child lives in a crowded coldwater flat, a place of peeling wallpaper, crumbling plaster, and the scuttling, scratching sound of rats (Payne 76).

Action and Poetic Device:

In addition to using five-sense, showing not telling details, good description should include **movement** and **action**. Think about the last action movie you saw: how did it begin? Chances are it began with an action scene: people parachuting out of planes onto a government building at night, a naked guy lying dead inside a pentagram in a world famous museum, an exploding limousine in the Middle East right behind the one in which the billionaire genius is riding.

Boring:

It was very cold. It was so cold that nobody wanted to stay outside. Everybody found this weather uncomfortable.”
(Payne 76)

Interesting:

A dagger pierced my throat as I stepped outside and took a breath; it was so cold the atmosphere itself felt solid and frozen. The sidewalks were ridged and lumpy with caked ice. Dirty crystals of old gray snow crunched under my feet with a dry, splintering sound. The trees, bare black skeletons without leaves, stretched out their icicle strewn branches in gestures of dismay. In the playground, a deserted sled lay on its back like a dead beetle, its runners frosted thick with ice. It was burning cold, a paradox not lost on children, who stayed inside knowing it was too cold to play (Payne 76).

Finally, notice the use of present participial (-ing verbs) in the improved paragraph above, as well as some poetic device: **personification**, **simile** and **metaphor**.

Snappy Titles: The only thing these writers omitted were titles. Notice how the title on the left is a dead giveaway – the reader knows all about the topic before they even begin reading, whereas the title on the right is intriguing and draws the reader in instead of revealing the topic.

Winter

It was very cold. It was so cold that nobody wanted to stay outside. Everybody found this weather uncomfortable” (Payne 76).

Nature’s Paradox

A dagger pierced my throat as I stepped outside and took a breath; it was so cold the atmosphere itself felt solid and frozen. The sidewalks were ridged and lumpy with caked ice. Dirty crystals of old gray snow crunched under my feet with a dry, splintering sound. The trees, bare black skeletons without leaves, stretched out their icicle strewn branches in gestures of dismay. In the playground, a deserted sled lay on its back like a dead beetle, its runners frosted thick with ice. It was burning cold, a paradox not lost on children, who stayed inside knowing it was too cold to play (Payne 76).

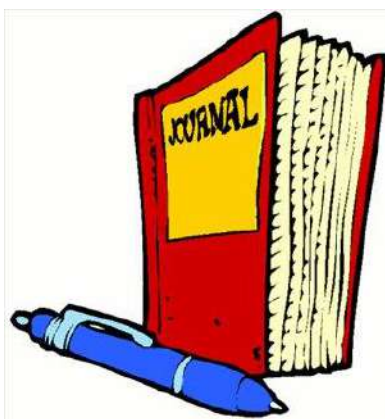
Journal Writing:

Journals are “free form” writing; that is, they don’t require a specific format or organization. A journaler can experiment with different forms or styles of writing in a journal, such as poetry, monologue, or letters, as well as enjoy the freedom of not having to write within a specific framework or format.

Tips for journal writing:

1. **Write nonstop.** Write for at least 10-15 minutes without stopping. If you get stuck, write, “I’m drawing a blank . . .” and keep writing from wherever that takes you. Something magical happens when a writer keeps his or her pen moving.
2. **Focus on ideas:** Satisfying journals help the writer make new discoveries. Focus on finding something new each time you write.
3. **Always date your entries:** this is valuable in many ways once you return to them.
4. **Push an idea as far as you can.** You’ll discover new thoughts and feelings when you write about an idea from many angles.
5. **Experiment.** Write like your favorite author or in the dialogue/vernacular of someone you know. Write in a “Jazzy” style or a “hip hop” style. Write to make yourself laugh or to give yourself advice.

(Sebranek 145).



Personal Narrative:

In personal narrative, writers recreate an incident that happened over a short period of time. This might be an emotional experience, a silly or serious event, or a frightening encounter. Effective personal narratives include specific details that make the incident come alive for readers. Writers don't have to remember EVERY detail; fill in the gaps with details that seem right. (The pros do this all the time!)

Tips for writing a personal narrative:

1. **Choose a subject.** Think of a specific incident from your life that will be appealing.
2. **Gather details.** Jot down (brainstorm!) ideas and details that come to mind when you think of this experience. Collecting information from others involved in the event is also a good idea.
3. **Include sensory details** (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, feelings).
4. **Focus your story.** Decide on a particular feeling or mood that you want to convey in your story. Do you want your story to surprise the readers or make them laugh?
5. **Hook your reader.** Try to start in the MIDDLE of the story or action or introduce the people in your story by showing them in conversation instead of starting your story at the beginning. Build action by adding specific details, feelings, etc.
6. **Revise.** Reread your story (silently and aloud) and determine if there is anything missing. Will the reader be able to follow your story, including changes in time, place, and speaker? Make adjustments as necessary.

(Sebranek 147).

The following example of a descriptive narrative is from John Updike's "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu":

"The afternoon grew so glowering that in the sixth inning the arc lights were turned on – always a wan sight in the daytime, like the burning headlights of a funeral procession. Aided by the gloom, Fisher was slicing through the Sox rookies, and Williams did not come to bat in the seventh. He was second up in the eighth. This was almost certainly his last time to come to the plate in Fenway Park, and instead of merely cheering, as we had at his three previous appearances, we stood, all of us, and applauded."

Personal Essay:

In personal essays, writers share details of a specific event or time in their life, emphasizing what they learned from the experience. As a result, personal essays are part narrative and part reflection. They may entertain and/or inform as well as get readers thinking.

Tips for writing a personal essay:

1. **Choose a subject.** Review journal entries or list ideas that come to mind about important parts of your life. Any significant moment has personal essay potential.
2. **Gather details.** Write freely about your subject for ten minutes or more, letting ideas take you where they will.
3. **Focus.** Study your journals/brainstorming to get a feel for your subject. Look for parts that you want to explore further and find a main idea or feeling that could serve as the focus for your essay.
4. **Organize.** Your opening should hook readers, the middle should discuss the experience, and the closing should reflect upon its significance.

(Sebranek 152).

For some excellent personal essays, visit: thisibelive.org.

Assignment: Autobiographical Essay

(Courtesy of Mr. Dewes)

Write about a person, event, or specific memory that has affected you in a positive way. This paper should be typed, MLA formatted, and 500 + words.

Tips:

- A better paper will focus on one specific event (a matter of hours or maybe one day) that changed you, or a specific event that showed you something about yourself that then affected you in a positive way.
- Think of important people in your life. Think of a great memory and then analyze why it sticks out in your mind. Or, think of a physical or emotional challenge that you worked to complete.
- You shouldn't have to interview or gather additional information for this paper. You should "reminisce" directly from your memory or an impression that you have. A better paper will include personal feeling and memory.
- Proofread before you submit your paper. Grammar and spelling count.

"Writing is not apart from living. Writing is a kind of double-living."

-- Catherine Bowen

Section 5: Research

Plagiarism: The Work of a Thief.

When you include words in your paper that you copied from any other source (magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, websites) without properly citing that source, **YOU ARE STEALING.**

There is nothing wrong with borrowing someone else's words IF YOU GIVE HIM or HER CREDIT BY CITING PROPERLY both after using the words in the paper and on the Works Cited page.

The Las Lomas faculty may check student work with the help of anti-plagiarism software. This software allows them to enter student written work—essays, reports and projects—into a computer database that will determine what words, phrases, and sentences are from existing sources (magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, and websites). Teachers then make sure you have cited these sources in your paper.

Paraphrasing:

A paraphrase is . . .

- Your own rendition of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, but presented in a new form. **YOUR WORDS.**
- One legitimate way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source.
- A more detailed restatement than a summary, which focuses concisely on a single, main idea.

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because . . .

- It is better than quoting information from an undistinguished passage.
- It helps you control the temptation to quote too much
- The mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you grasp the full meaning of the original.

Finding and Evaluating Credible Research Sources

When researching for any paper, good writers should find a variety of sources. This includes books and other published material, such as magazines and newspaper articles, electronic sources found on the Web, and primary sources, which are first person accounts of events or with experts on a specific topic.

In researching, you will need to visit a library or a library's databases as well as the internet. (Simply "Googling" your topic and finding the first two or three matches is not sufficient.) Writer's must find appropriate research and then EVALUATE it for credibility and usefulness.

Library Databases:

The Las Lomas Library contains excellent books and periodicals for research, but also subscribes to numerous subscription databases, which all students can access free of charge, from school or home. These databases are invaluable because their content has already been evaluated and organized. That means that any research you use from a library database is a credible and excellent source.

Las Lomas Research Databases

(Courtesy of Ms. Walfoort)

These subscription databases are available to the Las Lomas community. See library staff for home log-in information.

Proquest: Abstracts and full-text magazines and newspapers.

Historical Newspapers : Issues of *The New York Times* dating back to 1851.

Countrywatch.com : Up-to-date information on all the countries in the world

ABC-CLIO: Covers World Geography, Modern World History, American History, and Current Issues

eBooks : Gale Virtual Reference Library covering Arts, Biography, Education, Environment, History, Literature, Medicine, Religion, Science, and Social Studies

Opposing Viewpoints: Conflicting views on controversial topics

Scribner Writers Series: Over 1,600 original and detailed bio-critical essays on the lives and works of important authors from around the world

Salem Press: Covers a wide array of articles along with the reference work *Psychology & Mental Health*.

World Book Online: The online encyclopedia contains *World Book Student*, *Kids*, *Advanced*, *Mobile* and *Enciclopedia Estudiantil Hallazgos*.

Finding and Evaluating Credible Research Sources - Continued

Websites:

According to the University of California at Santa Cruz's University Library Website, "Unlike the library's collection of online databases, information retrieved using search engines (such as, GOOGLE) has not been evaluated and/or organized by librarians, or humans for that matter. Anyone can publish on the Web without passing the content through an editor. Pages might be written by an expert on the topic, a journalist, a disgruntled consumer or even a child. There are no standards to ensure accuracy. Web resources are not permanent. Some well-maintained sites are updated with very current information, but other sites may become quickly dated or disappear altogether without much if any notice.

If you are using a Web page as a possible research citation, you should especially consider the following criteria:

Authority: It is often difficult to determine who the author or sponsor of a Web page is, much less their credentials or qualifications.

- Is the author identified? If so, are his/her credentials/qualifications listed?
- Does the Webpage have a sponsor? If so, is the sponsor reputable?
- Does the Webpage provide information about the author or the sponsor? Is there contact information for the author? (e.g., e-mail address, mailing address, phone number)?
- Does the URL contain an .edu, .gov domain, for example, <http://library.ucsc.edu>.

Purpose: It is important to determine the goals of the Webpage. You can check to see if these are clearly stated in a mission statement or an "About Us" page. This can help you determine if the page is intended to inform, explain, or persuade.

- What is the purpose or motive for the site? (e.g., educational, commercial, entertainment, promotional) ?
- Is the information biased or is the author presenting more than one side of the argument?
- Is the page designed to sway opinion? Is the purpose of the page clearly identified?
- Is there a sponsor or advertising on the page? If so, does this influence the information? Is the site trying to sell you something? How easy is it to differentiate advertisement from content?

Currency: The effectiveness of a Web page can sometime be lessened if it becomes out-of-date. If the Web page relies on information such as hyperlinks, directory, or timely information, etc. it should be updated and revised as the information changes.

- Are dates provided for when the information was written or when the page was last modified or updated?
- Are the links (if any) up-to-date?

Coverage: Web resources are often presented in a different context than print resources, making it difficult to determine the extent of coverage.

- What topics are covered?
- How in-depth does the information go?
- Does the page offer information not found elsewhere?

(University Library).



Citing Your Sources: the Works Cited Page

What is a Works Cited?

A works cited is a listing of publications you quote or reference in a paper. The first word of each entry in your works cited will match the parenthetical citation you include in your paper for each piece of text you include.

Creating a Works Cited:

- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper. It should have the same MLA formatting (margins, spacing, headers) as the rest of your paper.
- Title the page --Works Cited-- page (do not italicize the words or put them in quotation marks) and center them at the top of the page.
- Entries in a works cited must be listed alphabetically, by author's last name (or article title if no author name provided or available). Indent the second and subsequent lines of each entry on TAB (use TAB, not the spacebar) so that you create a hanging indent.
- Include parenthetical (in-text) citations following all material, excepting that which is not common knowledge, that you quote or paraphrase in your paper. Refer to Noodle Tools for correct formatting of citations:
<http://www.noodletools.com/helpdesk/kb/index.php?action=article&id>
- If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50. Note that MLA style uses a hyphen in a span of pages.
- For every entry, you must determine the Medium of Publication. Most entries will likely be listed as Print or Web sources, but other possibilities may include Film, CD-ROM, or DVD.
- DO NOT include a URL for Web entries unless the website would be difficult to locate without the URL, or if your instructor insists on inclusion. If so, include URLs in angle brackets (<http://classics.mit.edu/>) after the entry and end with a period. For long URLs, break lines only at slashes.
- If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in italics. You do not need to provide subscription information in addition to the database name.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc, but do not capitalize articles (the, an), prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: *Gone with the Wind*, *The Art of War*, *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.

("The Works Cited Page").

For expanded help with Works Cited, see links to the Owl at Purdue website, EasyBib.com or Noodle Tools.com in the appendix.

Citing Your Sources: Sample Works Cited Page

NOTE: DO NOT list your entries by category (books, periodicals, etc.) but instead in ALPHABETICAL order by author or title.

Books

Author's last name, first name. *Title*. City of the publisher: Publisher, year published. Print.

Example:

Snow, Theodore P. *The Dynamic Universe*. St. Paul: West Publishing, 1988. Print.

Periodicals (Magazines and newspapers)

Writer's last name, first name. "Title of article." Name of magazine volume + day month year of issue: page numbers. Print.

Example:

Buchman, Dana. "A Special Education." *Good Housekeeping*. Mar. 2006: 143-48. Print.

Cowen, Ron. "Galaxy Hunters." *National Geographic*. Vol. 203, No. 2: 2-29. Print.

Websites with specific author

Author's last name, first name. "Title." *Title of the database, magazine, or website*. (Issue #/or year or date of publication): number of pages, if given. On-line. Name of organization sponsoring or associated with website. Web. Date website visited.

Example:

McGeary, Johanna. "Dissecting the Case." *Time Online Edition*. 2 Feb. 2010. Web. 5 Nov. 2013.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. S. H. Butcher. *The Internet Classics Archive*. Web Atomic and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 13 Sept. 2007. Web. 4 Nov. 2008.

Websites with unknown authors

Alphabetize by title and include with authored Works Cited entries.

Example:

"Collections and Research." Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology. Updated 2002. Web. 5 Mar. 2003.

See page 53 of the appendix for a sample works cited

Appendix

Getting Organized

Student Planners & School Loop

1. Write down assignments in class each day and after checking School Loop.
2. Be sure to check the CALENDAR on School Loop, not just the list of assignments on your home page.
3. Do not rely solely on School Loop for due dates and assignments.
4. Have a designated place in which to write down all assignments every day. This could be your school planner or an assignment sheet in your binder.
5. If you have no homework, write "NO HW."
6. Write down all your commitments: sports practice, band concerts, and weekend activities.
7. When you write down due dates for tests and projects, include the day it is due as well as the days you must work on it.
8. Check off assignments as you complete them.

Organizing Your Binder

Use subject dividers and have individual sections for each of the following:

- Notes
- Returned work
- Handouts
- Homework/classwork in process
- Grammar & Vocabulary



1. Include a section for handouts, notes and returned work for each subject.
2. Use at least two binders: one for morning classes and one for afternoon classes. TIP: you may want to have separate English and World History binders because you will get many hand outs in these classes. NOTE: some teachers may require a binder dedicated solely to that subject.
3. Clean out your binder once a quarter. Keep all your returned work and past notes at home – store them in a box. Remember: semester exams include the work of both quarters.
4. Keep extra paper in your binder, but do not allow loose papers to gather.

Managing your time

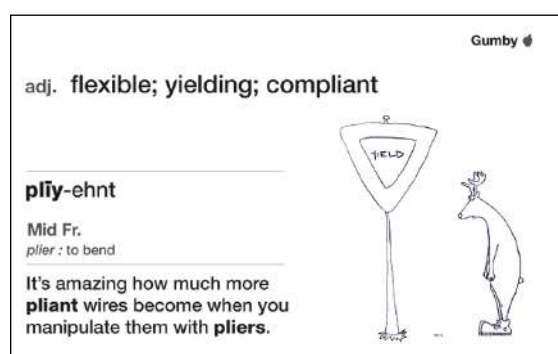
1. Do the hardest work first.
2. Make use of small blocks of time: as you wait for your ride, study your Spanish vocabulary.
3. Review your notes daily.
4. Focus on two kinds of material: material you have just learned and material that involves simple memorization.
5. You are going to have homework during the weekend, so plan your activities accordingly.

Creating Effective Study Habits

1. **Flash Cards** -- Make flash cards for learning terminology.
2. **Note taking** -- Become an active, organized note-taker.
3. **Active Reading Skills** -- Become an active reader.
4. **Test Taking Skills**

Flash Cards:

- Make your own flash cards.
- Carry them with you at all times; always have blank cards with you. Use premade flash cards (as in Vocabulary Workbook) when provided.



<p>Molarity M</p> <p><i>front</i></p>	<p>M = $\frac{\text{\# moles of solute}}{\text{L of solution}}$</p> <p><i>back</i></p>
<p>Boiling Point Elevation ΔT_b</p> <p><i>front</i></p>	<p>$\Delta T_b = K_b m$</p> <p><i>back</i></p>
<p>Osmotic Pressure π</p> <p><i>front</i></p>	<p>$\pi = M P T$</p> <p><i>back</i></p>

Note-taking:

Guidelines for Note taking:

- Use lined notebook paper measuring 8-1/2" x 11" with three holes in the margin.
- Always use a heading. **Write the date, class, topic of notes** and page number (if applicable) at the top of your paper.
- Before writing on your note paper, divide the sheets the following way: **Key words, Notes, & Summary**
- Use abbreviations and symbols (arrows, circles, underlining) **Be consistent! Always use the same symbol or abbreviation to mean the same thing.**
- Highlight important information, ideas/words that are unclear, or relationships between ideas/information.
- Skip lines between ideas or topics.
- Summarize your notes to check your understanding of the content.

Cornell Two-Column Notes

Keywords:

Notes:

Types of Matter

Solids

I. Solids

A. Have a definite shape

B. Have a definite volume

Liquids

II. Liquids

A. Do not have a definite shape

B. Have a definite volume

Gases

III. Gases

A. Do not have a definite shape

B. Do not have a definite volume

Summary:

(Insert summary of lecture after class.)

Active Reading

Reading is an **active** process which requires concentration and energy. Understanding and using the following strategies will increase your comprehension and retention of information.

- Reading Tips: Read actively, with a pen/highlighter and post-its.
- REREAD the material. Read more than once. Multiple Times.
- Identify bolded, underlined or otherwise emphasized information – the publishers have highlighted this for your benefit.
- Use the index and glossary when you need clarification.
- Identify and make note of key terms, examples and graphics. Look at section or end of chapter questions.
- Always look up any words you do not know.
- Anticipate questions and test formats.

How to Read a Textbook

Step 1: Survey/Preview

- **Skim** a chapter or assignment for a few minutes before reading it in depth.
- Read **title, headings, subheadings, and italicized words**. These headers will form a topical outline.
- **Read the summary** at the end of the chapter. Note which ideas the author restates or what general conclusions he or she comes to. If there is no summary, read the last sentence or two before each new heading.
- Recall what you already know about the subject to activate your **prior knowledge**.

Step 2: In-Depth Reading:

- Read textbooks and nonfiction **quickly and actively**; read fiction **slowly and passively the first time** -- enjoy it as a work of literature.
- **Make predictions and look for the answers to your questions**
- **Highlight** *key words, unfamiliar vocabulary, interesting facts or actions*.
- **Highlight** any areas about which you have questions or with which you disagree.
- **Highlight no more than 10-15% of each page.**
- Do not take notes while reading; *highlight (or post-it) only*.
- If you are reading a text which you cannot highlight, stick post-its underneath passages you wish to revisit. Make notes on the post-it in step 3.
- Apply the 50/10 rule for studying; read for 50 minutes and then take a 10 minute break. You will be able to sustain longer study times with better concentration and retention.

Step 3: Annotate -Take notes from the reading

- After having read and then highlighted a section, you are ready to take *annotate*, or take notes.
- Review the sections you highlighted previously –
 - ✓ Define key words and unfamiliar vocabulary

- ✓ Comment on areas you highlighted – answer questions, make connections to other sections/ideas in the reading.
- ✓ Create headings and subheadings or list names of important themes or characters in the corners of the pages

Step 4: Summarize

- **Rephrase main events and concepts into your own words.** If you simply **read** a textbook chapter, you will probably remember less than one-third of what you read by the following week.
- **Activate your memory:** In order to transfer a greater portion of the material you read from your short-term to long-term memory, you must do something **active** with the information to "attach" it to your memory. If you summarize the information after you read each chapter/section, you will ensure that more of it stays in your long-term memory.

Step 5: Review – (For Tests)

- Review notes and the headings and subheadings in the text.
- Recall supporting details under each main point.
- Predict test questions based on these main points, especially questions which would fall into the critical and creative levels of reading comprehension. Try true/false and completion-type questions from details. Essay questions are easy to make from the main headings. Answer your test questions.
- Create flash cards or study sheets from your annotations and notes.
- Write quizzes for yourself. Put them away for a day or two, then take the quiz. (Obviously, you need to make an answer key so you can check your answers!)

The more senses you use in storing your information, the better your retrieval and retention!

(Francis P. Robinson, *Effective Study*, 1941).



Test-Taking Study Strategies

Ask yourself these questions: Is the test a multiple choice, matching, true false, or fill in-the-blank? Or will it be an essay exam? It is okay to check with your teacher, too!

Before the test

1. Review past tests to see what kinds of tests have been given.
2. If you study in a group, be sure to study with the best students you can.
3. Study areas you are weak in first.
4. Do not try to cram everything in the night before – your brain can only take in so much at once.
5. Allow yourself at least two or three review/study sessions. While reviewing, make notes of facts that might show up on the test.
6. Do all of these things:
 - The night before the test, act as if you are preparing for an athletic competition.
 - Get plenty of rest and sleep the night before a test.
 - Relax. Don't try to study in the morning or in the minutes before the test.
 - Get up in plenty of time the morning of the test so that you are not rushed.
 - Eat a good, nutritious breakfast.

At test time

1. Have all your materials ready. You should not have to ask for anything, nor should the class have to wait for you.
2. Read the test carefully. Many students fail tests because they skip over directions or questions too quickly, and miss important information.
3. Decide which part of the test needs the most time.
4. Look for the items that are worth the most points.
5. Stop and think before you begin to write.
6. Keep track of time as you take the test. You should be halfway through the test halfway through the testing period.
7. Budget your time. Allow yourself time at the beginning to read and understand directions and time at the end to check your answers, especially for careless errors such as writing an answer in the wrong place.

During the test

1. Work at a steady pace.
2. Answer the questions you know right away and skip those you are not sure of.
3. Go back to skipped questions, working first on the questions that are worth the most points.
4. Keep your answer test and/or answer sheet neat. If your paper is too messy to read, you will cheat yourself out of points you deserve.
5. Relax and do your best. Don't worry if you can't answer every question – focus on what you DO know instead of what you DON'T know.

(Swanson).

How to Write an In-Class Essay

Follow the "25-50-25" Plan

Take 25% of your time to examine/analyze the question and PREWRITE

Spend 50% of your time to write.

Spend 25% of your time to edit and proofread.

Examine/Analyze the Question – 25% of allotted time

1. If all essay prompts are equal in point value, give equal time and attention to each of them. Be sure to keep track of your time.
2. If some essay prompts are worth more points than others, spend more time answering the higher point questions. More is expected from you in the higher point questions.
3. READ the directions. Make sure you are writing the correct number of essays. For example, if the prompt indicates "Choose 3 out of 5 of the following on which to write short essays," this indicates that you are to write three essays.
4. Some key words tell you how to approach the subject: analyze, comment, compare, define, describe, discuss, explain, prove, and respond. Each of these words asks for something slightly different, including: stating your opinion, presenting information, focusing on one idea, or dealing with and detailing several different ideas.
5. Make sure you read all the way through the prompt. Many essay prompts have several parts that you are expected to respond to. You don't want to skip them as they are worth points too.
6. Use pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming and then outline. Allowing a little planning time can make a big difference in the quality of your essay.

Writing (50% of allotted time)

1. Introduce your topic by rephrasing the question as the first sentence in your answer.
2. Completely explain each point you are making continuing on to the next one. If you skip around, your answer will seem confusing and incomplete.
3. Support your general statements with evidence.
4. Move on to new points by using transitional or introductory words such as: *another, besides, in addition, next, however, and although.*

Edit and Proofread (25% of allotted time)

1. Re-read your answers when you have completed the test.
2. Did you answer the prompt directly?
3. Did you stick to the point?
4. Did you cover all the "angles"?
5. Did you check for spelling and grammar errors?

(Swanson).

Tips for Specific Types of Tests

True/False

1. You have a 50% chance of choosing a correct answer, but this kind of test question is often tricky. Example: The novel *Hamlet* was written by Shakespeare. (*Hamlet* is a play. The word "novel" is a false detail, thus making the whole sentence false.)
2. Some true/false questions make general statements that may often be true or seem true, but are not always true. Example: Teenagers are always loud. (We know this is not always true.)
3. Read carefully. Sometimes you may know the answer but the question may be strangely worded. Careful reading will help you avoid overlooking answers you actually know.

Matching Tests

1. Even if you don't know every item, you may be able to figure them out.
2. Skip items for later – fill in the answers you know easily, and skip those that are difficult. Once you have filled in most answers, it will be easier to fill in the harder questions with the remaining answers.
3. Answer items you know first - mark off each item as you use it so that you won't mistakenly use it again.
4. Make intelligent guesses for items you aren't sure of. Use *clue words* or your logic to help you. Example: If you are asked to match "French General who fought in the American Revolution," look for a foreign-sounding name.

Fill in the Blank Questions

1. Sometimes you are given a list of words to use in filling in the blanks, making the test similar to a matching test. If this is the case, you can use the same strategies as suggested in "Matching."
2. Be sure the word fits grammatically into the sentence.
3. Sometimes the length of the blank will give you a clue to the length of the answer.
4. If you are unsure of the answer, fill in the blank with the most likely answer. You may get partial credit.

Multiple Choice Questions

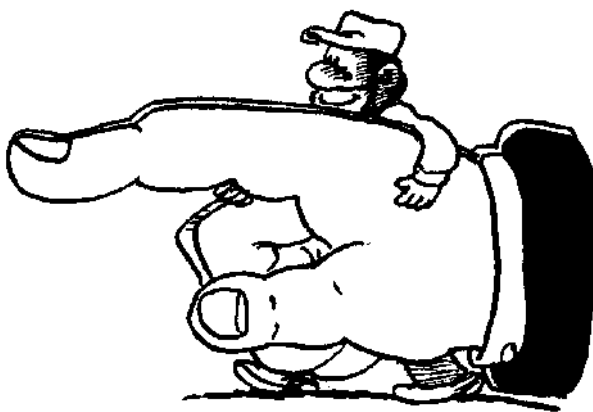
1. Read **ALL** the answers first when answering multiple-choice questions!
2. Answer all the questions you know first. Return to the harder questions later.
3. Read carefully and look for "tricky" words. Example: "All of the following are correct except..." ("except" indicates that the correct answer is the one that is NOT correct.)
4. Sometimes answer choices may be "all of the above" or "none of the above." Use common sense. Example: If you know at least one incorrect choice, then "all of the above" can't be right. Or, if you know that at least one of the other choices is right, "none of the above" can't be correct.
5. Always check your work! Make sure that you marked each answer in the correct space.

(Swanson).

No Excuse Words Usage List

Freshmen students are responsible for mastering the usage and spelling of all the words on this list. In the following years, students will be held accountable for mistakes on these words. There is “No Excuse” for misusing or misspelling the words on the list below.

1. accept :: except
2. affect :: effect
3. a lot
4. all ready :: already
5. all right
6. believe :: belief
7. course :: coarse
8. chose :: choose
9. it's :: its
10. lead :: led
11. lose :: loose
12. past :: passed
13. than :: then
14. their :: there :: they're
15. to :: too :: two
16. weather :: whether
17. your :: you're
18. who's :: whose
19. adverse :: averse
20. between :: among
21. fewer :: less
22. imply :: infer
23. lie :: lay
24. number :: amount
25. rise :: raise



Quick Punctuation Help

Punctuating Titles:

When to use *Italics* or “Quotation Marks”

Punctuating titles is easy if you remember these two rules:

1. **Short works and small parts of larger works (articles in magazines, chapter titles) go in “quotes.”**
2. **Longer works go in *italics*. When writing by hand, you should underline long titles.**

“Short works” and Small sections of larger works	<u>Longer works</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Most) poems- “The Raven” • Short Stories - “Young Goodman Brown” • Essay - “The Fiction of Langston Hughes” • Songs - “Money Talks” • A skit or monologue - “Madman’s Lament” • Commercial - “Obey Your Thirst” • Individual episode in a TV series - “Sawyer’s Past” (<i>Lost</i>). • A chapter in a Book - “Welsh Mountains” • Encyclopedia Article - “Etruscan” • Article in a magazine - “Training Your Toddler” • Article in a newspaper or magazine - “Man Kills Seven on Subway” • Article on the Web - “Secrets of the Great Barrier Reef” • One or two page handout- “Old English Verbs: A One Page Guide” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epic Poems - <i>The Odyssey</i> • Books - <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> • Collection or Anthology of Essays – <i>Modern Writers and Their Readers</i> • CD, Cassette, or Album – <i>The Razor’s Edge</i>, by AC/DC • Television Series (not episodes) – <i>Modern Family</i> • Play – <i>The Importance of Being Ernest</i> • Film – <i>Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones</i> • Textbooks – <i>Welsh Geography</i> • Magazine – <i>Parenting</i> • Newspaper – <i>The New York Times</i> • Encyclopedia – <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> • Artwork-<i>The Mona Lisa</i> • Symphony, Opera or Major Musical Work – Mozart’s <i>Symphony 40 in g Minor</i>; <i>Les Miserables</i> • Pamphlet – <i>The Coming Kingdom of God and the Millennium</i> • Video Games – <i>Super Mario Brothers</i>

Final Notes:

- Traditional religious works that are foundational to a religious group or culture are capitalized, but not italicized or underlined. For instance, note the Torah, the Bible, the Koran, the Book of Mormon and the Vedas. These do not take italics or quotes.
- Visual artworks, including paintings, sculptures, drawings and mixed media, are *italicized* and never put in quotation marks. Thus, Van Gogh’s *Starry Night* and Dorothea Lange’s *Migrant Mother*.
- The one exception to this policy is the title of your own unpublished student essay. Do not give your essay title any type of punctuation unless it is a direct quote from something already published.

Other Punctuation & Writing Help

- **Periods and commas** always go **inside** quotation marks, even when they are not part of the quoted material or title.
- **Question marks, exclamation points and dashes** go inside or outside of quotation marks, depending on whether they apply to what's inside
- **Use quotation marks** to enclose someone's exact words.
- **Initially, refer to writers and other famous persons** by first and last name; after that refer to them by last name **ONLY**.
- **Write out World Wars in Roman Numerals (never Arabic numerals):** World War I, World War II; never use numerals.
- **Spell out numbers ten and under** and for all numbers that begin a sentence. Use numerals for numbers 11 and higher.
- **Write in present tense** all papers requiring literary analysis: Atticus **tells** Scout and Jem to "Walk a mile in someone else's shoes" because he wants them to . . .
- **When quoting lines of poetry:**

Indicate poetic line breaks/ends by using slashes:

"The world is too much with us; late and soon/getting and spending we lay waste our powers"

Note: When quoting iambic pentameter, be sure you remember to capitalize the first word of each line:

"What light through yonder window breaks?/It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!/ Arise fair sun, and kill the envious moon. . ."

Helpful Research Websites:

EasyBib: <http://www.easybib.com/mla-format/book-citation>

Noodle Tools:

<http://www.noodletools.com/helpdesk/kb/index.php?action=article&id=53>

Owl at Purdue: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

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