

Free Writing Handouts

By David Bruce

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Introduction

Here are a number of handouts about writing that teachers and students are welcome to use for free.

The handouts cover a number of topics that are important in the writing process, including proofreading. Writing is important in the modern world, and I hope to help teachers to teach well and students to write well.

Teachers may want to use some of these handouts while grading. At Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, I require students to hand in their papers in a 2-pocket folder. In the right pocket is the final draft. In the left pocket are the early drafts (and outline, when I require one). As I grade, I find myself marking the same kinds of errors over and over. Therefore, I have created a number of handouts about these common writing errors. When I come across one of these common writing errors in a student paper, I put one or more relevant handouts in the students' 2-pocket folder. That way, the student can read at his or her leisure how to recognize and correct the error and how to improve his or her writing.

Of course, not all of these handouts will be useful in your particular course, but some of them are likely to be helpful to you.

Also, check out this Web site:

<http://stores.lulu.com/bruceb>

Lots of free stuff is here, including composition projects such as writing an autobiographical essay and discussion guides for many works of literature, including Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Prince and the Pauper*. Some of the handouts below involve students responding to questions of the type that appear in my discussion guides.

These handouts are free. Copy them at will and share them with whomever you wish. Of course, you may retype and modify these handouts to suit your own classes, students, and style of teaching.

What Kind of Writing Process Ought I to Use?

When writing academic papers, it's a good idea to use a different kind of writing process than you use in writing such things as diary entries or short, unimportant e-mails. Specifically, it's a good idea to write more than one draft, improving the draft with each revision.

Before You Begin Writing

- Keep up with the reading. In literature courses, the papers are on the reading, so it's important to do the reading. In composition courses, discussion is often about sample essays. If you haven't done the assigned reading, you will be bored.
- Attend class, and take notes. Doing these things will make drafting much easier and will help you to get a good grade.
- Look at the list of suggested topics carefully and choose one that interests you. If you are interested in the topic, you will be more likely to work hard on the paper and to make it as good as you can.
- Write an outline, if writing an outline will help you.
- Write extra reaction memos—more than are required. This is a good way to learn the material.
- If you know that you are interested in a particular topic—the rhetorical skill of Odysseus, the religious satire of Voltaire—try to write your reaction memos on that topic. Of course, your paper will be much different from a collection of memos, but this will help you to learn the material.
- Begin writing early. You need time to write more than one draft and to proofread carefully.
- Remember what you learned from other composition courses, if you have taken one. You aren't supposed to take a composition course, then say, "Great, now I can forget everything I learned from this course." Instead, you should apply what you learned from the composition course whenever you need to write a paper in any course or in real life.

Writing (aka Drafting)

- Write the draft. If you have an outline, follow the outline—but be aware that you can change the outline if you want. Be aware that the first draft does not have to be perfect. Of course, many writers—such as newspaper reporters and other people who write daily—are able to write a very good first draft because their writing muscles are well developed. Other writers who don't write much or who are unfamiliar with the topic they are writing about are more likely to write a poor draft that will need major revision.

Evaluating: Checking

- Checking is evaluating that you do by yourself. You should look at the paper and see what is done correctly and what needs to be improved. Use any checklists that the teacher provides.

Revising

- You should revise the draft to improve it as much as you are able, then get the draft reviewed.

Evaluating: Reviewing

- Reviewing is evaluating that is done by other people. After you have a very good draft, you should let other people review it so you can get their advice about how to improve it. Many course have peer reviews in which you will review other people's drafts and they will review your draft. Always give the reviewers a good, complete, carefully proofread draft. Do not give them a bad, incomplete, badly proofread draft. Use any peer review sheets that the teacher provides. If possible, you may also want to sign up for a conference with the teacher so he or she can review your draft.

Revising

- Revise the paper once again, making it as good as you are able. It is up to you whether you take the reviewers' advice. Some reviewers will give you good advice, while other reviewers will give you bad advice. However, listen to all of the comments that the reviewer makes. You may disagree with most of the comments, but one comment may be very helpful. If you stop paying attention to the reviewer, he or she may not make the one really good comment.

Proofreading

- After revising the paper for the final time (you may revise the paper many, many times), proofread it carefully at least one more time. Be sure to follow the paper format that the teacher requires.

Handing in the Paper

- Hand the paper in, using a 2-pocket folder. In the right pocket, place your final draft of your paper. In the left pocket, place your early drafts. On the upper right corner of your folder, write your name and the hour the class meets. For example: Jane Student, 8-9 a.m.

Notes

- You may have previously taken a composition course. In that course, you learned many useful writing techniques. Your job now is to use those techniques to write well in other courses. Definitely write more than one draft before handing in the best draft you are capable of writing. Be aware that this course is not a composition course, and you will not be allowed to revise papers for a higher grade after I have graded them.

Checking and Proofreading

I recommend checking and proofreading after each draft. Write the draft, then check it for accuracy, and correct obvious factual and mechanical errors (that is, errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling). Then set it aside for a while, and later evaluate it to see how you can improve it.

What is the MLA Format for a Literature Paper?

General Information

- Your paper must be typed.
- Do not use a title page.
- Double-space the paper, including short and long quotations. Be aware that your paper must be more than a collection of quotations. If your paper has lots of quotations at the expense of your own writing, you will receive a lower grade.)
- Indent long quotations a little more than you indent the beginnings of paragraphs.
- Double-space paragraphs.
- Indent paragraph beginnings.
- Put page numbers and your last name at the top right corner of each page, including the first. Use the header function of your word processing program to do that.

For example:

Dall 3

First Page Information

- We will use the MLA style in this course.
- On the first page only of your paper, write in the upper left corner these things:
 - Your name.
 - The name of the teacher.
 - The class.
 - The date.

For example:

Susan Dall
Professor Bruce
HUM 107
7 May 2004

Title

- Under this information, center the title of your paper. Do not underline the title of your own paper. Do not put your own titles in quotation marks (unless the title is a quotation).

A Works Cited List

- You will need a Works Cited list. A good English handbook will help you create a good Works Cited list. Some courses may not require research. In those courses, you will list only the work of literature that you are analyzing.

For example:

Works Cited

Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Books, 1998.

Works Cited

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Books, 1997.

Works Cited

Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

Note: The date is the date of the edition, which is not necessarily the same as the date of the copyright.

- Your Works Cited list should appear on a page of its own unless your teacher gives you permission to put at the bottom of the last page. If you do have a separate Works Cited list, your name and the page number must appear in the upper right corner.

How Do I Write and Punctuate Good Titles?

Your Papers Must Have Interesting Titles

Poor Title—Paper #1

Poor Title—*Agamemnon*

Note: *Agamemnon* is a good title for a play, but a bad title for a paper on that play.

Poor Title—Hector and Paris

Many good paper titles consist of a title and a subtitle, with a colon separating the two. For example:

Agamemnon: A Poor Leader

Achilles: Furious Noncombatant

Hector and Paris: Polar Opposites

Hector and Paris: Dissimilar Brothers

Aeneas: A Pious Leader

How Do I Write an Outline?

A good outline will indicate the organization and the content of a paper. A good outline will have a beginning (introduction), middle (body of the paper), and end (conclusion). A good outline will have a thesis statement (the main point of the paper) and topic sentences (the main points of the paragraphs or major sections of the paper). The reader of your outline and paper will be your teacher, who is very familiar with the work of literature you will write about; therefore, you will not have to write plot summaries, although you will of course back up your thesis statement and topic sentences with many examples (with interpretation) from the work of literature. For example, let's say that you will write a paper about the silly acts that love makes the characters in William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* do. Here is a sample outline you could use.

I. Introduction

A. Thesis statement: William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* shows that love makes people act in silly ways.

II. Topic sentence: Love can make people see a distinction where there is no real distinction.

A. Lysander and Demetrius are interchangeable male lovers.

B Hermia and Helena, despite superficial differences, are interchangeable young female lovers.

III. Topic sentence: Love can make people desire someone who is totally unsuitable for them.

A Theseus falls in love with the Queen of the Amazons.

B Titania falls in love with the ass-headed Bottom.

IV. Topic sentence: Love can make people blind to the loved one's faults.

A Titania ignores Bottom's crudities.

V. Topic sentence: Love can make people jealous.

A Oberon and Titania are jealous.

B Helena is jealous of Hermia's beauty, although Hermia and Helena are thought to be equally beautiful by people in Athens.

C Hermia is jealous of Helena's height, and she thinks that Helena has used her height to lure Lysander.

VI. Topic sentence: Love can make people quarrelsome.

A Lysander and Demetrius want to fight with swords.

B Hermia wants to fight Helena, a childhood friend.

VII. Topic sentence: Love can make people fickle.

A Demetrius loves Helena, then Hermia, then Helena again.

B Lysander loves Hermia, then Helena, then Hermia again.

VIII. Topic sentence: Love can make people have low self-esteem if they are rejected.

A Helena has low self-esteem because Demetrius has rejected her.

IX. Topic sentence: Love can make people chase after someone who hates them.

A Helena chases after Demetrius even after he tells her that he does not and cannot love her.

X. Conclusion

A. Quotation by Bottom: "And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays ..." (3.1.144-146).

Suppose that you write a paper on this topic: Analyze some of the marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* to determine what are the characteristics of bad marriages. You could organize the paper in this way:

- I. Introduction
 - A. Thesis Statement
- II. Bad Marriage #1
- III. Bad Marriage #2
- IV. Bad Marriage #3
- V. Characteristics of Bad Marriages
- VI. Conclusion

Suppose that you write a paper on this topic: Analyze some of the marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* to determine what are the characteristics of good marriages and what are the characteristics of bad marriages. Here are a few ways that you could organize the paper:

Organization #1

- I. Introduction
 - A. Thesis Statement
- II. Bad Marriage #1
- III. Bad Marriage #2
- IV. Bad Marriage #3
- V. Characteristics of Bad Marriages
- VI. Good Marriage #1
- VII. Other Good Marriages
- VIII. Characteristics of Good Marriages
- IX. Conclusion

Organization #2

- I. Introduction
 - A. Thesis Statement/Forecasting Statement

- II. Bad Marriage #1
- III. Bad Marriage #2
- IV. Bad Marriage #3
- V. Good Marriage #1
- VI. Other Good Marriages
- VII. Characteristics of Bad Marriages and of Good Marriages
- VIII. Conclusion

Notes on Outlines

- Put an introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion in your outline.
- Go into detail in your outline.
- Feel free to change your outline as needed when you are writing your paper.
- Avoid lots of plot summary. Instead, focus on interpretation. (You may assume that your teacher knows the plot of the work of literature.)

How Can I Use Chronological Organization in a Paper?

For example, a paper on Tom Sawyer's performances in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* could be organized according to five performances. Each performance could be discussed in chronological order with the first performance being discussed first and the last performance being discussed last. Of course, this paper would have a thesis—perhaps this paper could argue that Tom's performances show him changing from immature to mature.

Introduction with Thesis Statement

Performance No. 1: Winning the Bible at Sunday School

Performance No. 2: Showing Up at His Own Funeral

Performance No. 3: Fooling Aunt Polly

Performance No. 4: Testifying at Muff Potter's Trial

Performance No. 5: Comforting Becky in the Cave

Conclusion

Of course, you may write about other performances, such as when Tom takes Becky's punishment for her when she rips a page in the schoolmaster's anatomy book or when Tom proves that Huck is rich.

Chronological organization also works well in a paper giving a character analysis of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

I. Introduction with Thesis Statement

A. After making the first decision to commit evil by murdering King Duncan, Macbeth finds it easier and easier to commit evil.

II. At the beginning of *Macbeth*, Macbeth is a good person.

A. Macbeth has defeated Macdonwald.

B. Macbeth has defeated the King of Norway.

III. As a result of the encounter with the witches, Macbeth is tempted to do evil.

IV. Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth to murder King Duncan.

V. Macbeth becomes evil by murdering King Duncan.

VI. Macbeth becomes more evil by having Banquo murdered and trying to have Fleance murdered.

VII. Macbeth cares only for himself as shown in his next encounter with the witches.

A. Macbeth demands that his questions be answered no matter how it affects the universe.

B. "Something wicked this way comes"—this is now true of Macbeth.

VIII. Macbeth's most evil action—having Lady Macduff and her children murdered.

IX. Macbeth's death.

A. Life has no meaning for Macbeth.

B. Macbeth never repents.

X. Conclusion.

How Can I Organize a Character Analysis Paper?

- Don't write boring, obvious sentences such as "The Connecticut Yankee has many strengths and many weaknesses." Of course, the main character in Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* does. Instead, write a better, more interesting thesis statement by doing something like this:

Among the Connecticut Yankee's strengths are ..., ..., and ..., and among his weaknesses are ..., ..., ..., and

- In writing an analysis of one character (for example, Bottom in William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), you may use several characteristics to describe that character. For example, your thesis and forecasting statement may say, "Bottom is a fool, but he is a likeable fool with many friends and an enthusiasm for experiencing life."

Introduction

Thesis Statement

Characteristic #1: Bottom is a fool.

Characteristic #2: Bottom is likeable.

Characteristic #3: Bottom has many friends.

Characteristic #4: Bottom's enthusiasm for experiencing life is shown by his encounter with Titania.

Characteristic #5: Bottom's enthusiasm for experiencing life is shown by his rehearsing and acting in the play about Pyramus and Thisby.

Conclusion

- In writing an analysis of one character, you may use several characteristics to describe that character. For example, if you are writing about William Shakespeare's *I Henry IV*, you may write, "Falstaff is an entertaining character with great wit and many friends, but he is an evil character who should be kept far away from Prince Hal."

Introduction

Thesis Statement

Characteristic #1 Falstaff is entertaining.

Support: Falstaff plays characters; he pretends to be religious and he plays the part of King Henry IV in the impromptu tavern play.

Support: Falstaff tells entertaining lies following the robbery.

Characteristic #2: Falstaff has great wit.

Support: Falstaff is a master of puns.

Support: Falstaff is able to recover when his lies are exposed.

Characteristic #3: Falstaff has many friends.

Support: Bardolph and Mistress Quickly are his friends. So, in a way, is Prince Hal.

Characteristic #4: Falstaff is evil.

Support: Falstaff is a liar.

Support: Falstaff is a robber.

Support: Falstaff is a coward.

Characteristic #5: Falstaff should be kept far away from Prince Hal.

Support: Falstaff is a false staff for Prince Hal.

Support: Falstaff wants Prince Hal to become a robber.

Support: Falstaff misuses the King's press and gets his soldiers killed.

Support: Falstaff takes credit for killing Hotspur.

Conclusion

How Can I Organize a Comparison and Contrast Paper?

- When you compare and contrast two characters, write approximately equal amounts about each character. Don't write four pages about one character, then write one page about the other character.
- Don't write boring, obvious sentences such as "Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn have many similarities and many differences." Of course, they do. Instead, write a better, more interesting thesis statement by doing something like this:

Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry are similar in that they ..., ..., and ..., but they are different in that they ..., ..., ..., and

- When you compare and contrast two characters, you may use an alternating pattern of organization in which you write about characteristics or about similarities and differences. For example, in writing about the similarities and differences of two characters, you may use a version of this organization (of course, the number of similarities and differences you write about may vary):

Introduction (one paragraph long)

Thesis Statement

Forecasting Statement

Similarities

Similarity #1

Character #1

Character #2

Similarity #2

Character #1

Character #2

Similarity #3

Character #1

Character #2

Differences

Difference #1

Character #1

Character #2

Difference #2

Character #1

Character #2

Difference #3

Character #1

Character #2

Conclusion

- In comparison and contrast papers, an alternating pattern of organization works well. For example, let's say that you are going to compare and contrast Hector and Paris in Homer's *Iliad*.

In your essay, you would discuss each according to certain criteria (their reasons for fighting, their abilities as warriors, their abilities as leaders, their relationships with their wives, etc.). Your outline would look something like this:

Introduction (one paragraph long)
 Thesis Statement
 Forecasting Statement
 Characteristic #1
 Hector
 Paris
 Characteristic #2
 Hector
 Paris
 Characteristic #3
 Hector
 Paris
 Characteristic #4
 Hector
 Paris
 Conclusion

Of course, you may write about more characteristics if you wish.

Note: A paper comparing Hector and Paris could also evaluate the two warriors. Which is the better warrior and leader? Which is the better family man?

- Another way of writing comparison and contrast papers is to use a divided pattern in which you write about one character, then you write about another character. For example:

Introduction
 Thesis Statement
 Forecasting Statement
 Hector
 Characteristic #1
 Characteristic #2
 Characteristic #3
 Characteristic #4
 Paris
 Characteristic #1
 Characteristic #2
 Characteristic #3
 Characteristic #4
 Conclusion

In general, the alternating pattern works better when writing about two things (for example, two characters), but the divided pattern can work well when writing about three or more things (for example, three or more marriages).

How Do I Take Notes?

Advantages of Taking Notes

- If you listen to the teacher and take notes in class, you will most likely remember more than if you simply listen to the teacher.
- You can refer to your notes later when you are planning to write a paper. If you simply rely on your memory, you may forget a few important points that would make your paper much better.
- Being active in class, whether through taking notes or engaging in discussion or both, is a way to keep interested in the class.
- If you will teach these books later, perhaps in a high school literature course, your notes will come in handy.

Study Questions

For my literature courses (and courses about writing about literature), I will have study questions for the work of literature. I recommend that you do the reading before class and answer the study questions during class when we go over the answers. Often, a couple of sentences will provide a brief, but accurate answer to the question.

For example, the notes on the Study Questions for Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* could look something like this:

CHAPTER 4: SHOWING OFF IN SUNDAY-SCHOOL

- What does Tom think of Sunday-school? Why does he want to win a Bible?

We find out on p. 29 that Sunday-school is “a place that Tom hated with his whole heart.” However, Tom dearly wants to win a Bible because that will make him the center of attention. Tom loves performing in front of people, and he loves being the center of attention. Winning a Bible will put him squarely in the center of everybody's attention.

CHAPTER 4: SHOWING OFF IN SUNDAY-SCHOOL

- How do the characters “show off” in Sunday-school?

Pretty much everybody shows off in Sunday-school, with the exception of Mary and Sid and possibly Aunt Polly. For example, the Sunday-school superintendent shows off with a closed hymn-book in his hand. He never refers to it, but he finds it necessary to keep in his hands as a prop. He also shows off in his speech, which sounds different on Sundays than on the other days of the week. Very little of genuine worship appears to happen at this Sunday-school.

If you work hard during class and take notes, you won't have to work so hard outside of class.

Before Class

Enjoy the reading. Don't get in the very bad habit of reading only to find answers to the study questions. We will answer the study questions in class.

During Class

Take notes, whether lecture notes or notes on answering study questions. If you have any questions, ask them.

In class, try not to look bored. (This is a job skill that will be handy during meetings later in your career.)

After Class

Review your notes, and make any additional notes that need to be made. If you think that you will write a paper on a certain topic or on one or the other of two topics, highlight in some way the notes pertaining to that topic or those topics. Of course, you will then do the reading for the next class.

Writing Handouts

Often, students will get a handout or two about writing along with a graded short reaction memo. Keep these handouts in your three-ring binder. Review them once a week or so, and use them when revising and proofreading your papers.

Before Writing Papers

Before you write a paper, go through your notes and see which notes you will be able to use when writing your paper.

Review Your Class Notes

Once a week or so, review your class notes.

Conclusion

If you take good notes in a literature class, you will have an advantage when you write papers. You won't be in the position of trying to write a paper on a book that you know very little about. In such a case, your paper will lack content, and you may find yourself writing sentences such as "The *Iliad* is a great poem. Homer is a great poet. The *Iliad* is a great poem by a great poet."

On the other hand, if you take notes, when it comes time to write a paper, you will have a wealth of content to choose from. Instead of trying to come up with yet another idea that you can write a paragraph about, you will have so many ideas that you won't be able to put them all into one paper. As Bart Simpson says, "It's like a whole new way of cheating."

How Do I Proofread My Papers?

1. Proofread immediately after the creative phase—and later.

Let time pass before you proofread a second time. It is a good idea to proofread immediately after writing something, but it is also a good idea to let some time pass before you proofread it a second time. The problem with proofreading immediately is that you know what you meant to write, so it is easy to read a draft and think that you have said what you meant to say.

After you write something, proofread it. For example, after you write an e-mail or a short memo or letter, read it and correct obvious errors. Then, after time passes, proofread it again. In the case of a short e-mail, you may simply wait a minute, then proofread it again. In the case of a longer document, you may wait a day, then proofread it again.

Sometimes, when you are in the creative phase and turning out page after page, you may want to let the proofreading go until later. However, you should always proofread your work before having it reviewed.

2. If your paper is short and you won't bother anyone, read it out loud.

Read your draft out loud. If you have written a short draft, and if you will bother no one by reading it out loud, do so. This can help you catch missing or repeated (the the) words, and if a sentence sounds funny, you need to look at it to see if it needs to be revised.

3. Read your draft more than once, checking something different each time.

What are some of the things you should focus on during successive readings of your draft?

- **Format:** The first time you proofread your paper, you can check the format and make sure that you are using the correct, conventional letter, memo, academic paper, or book format.
- **Content:** The second time you proofread your paper, you can check the content and make sure that you have included all essential information and made the persuasive points you wish to make.
- **Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar:** The third time you check your paper, you can proofread to make sure that you are not making mechanical errors.

4. Check everything you are unsure about.

For example, you ought to double-check names that look odd to be sure that they are spelled correctly.

5. Proofread even short papers.

Even short memos and e-mails ought to be proofread before you send them.

6. Use computer aids—but be aware that they can't do everything.

What is wrong with simply using a spelling checker and not doing any other proofreading? The problem is that a spelling checker simply matches the words in the paper with the words in its dictionary. It has no way of knowing that you mistyped “take” as “rake,” so it will regard “rake” as correct. For example:

I have a spelling checker,
It came with my PC
It plane lee marks four my revue,
Miss steaks aye can knot sea.

— By Jerry Zar, Dean of the Graduate School, Northwestern Illinois University

7. Attack your weaknesses.

Are you making the same mistakes over and over? If so, sit down and study and learn not to make those mistakes. Study any handouts I have given or will give you about common errors in grammar and punctuation. Try not to make the mistakes you have made previously. It's up to you to learn this; your teacher can't learn it for you (and your teacher gets tired of marking the same mistakes over and over on student papers).

8. Learn by revising.

If you have time, you should make your paper better than merely competent. By making revisions, you are learning to write better. For example, by adding topic sentences to a draft, you are learning to use topic sentences. At Ohio University, it can be a good idea to go to the computer and make corrections after a paper has been graded, marked, and handed back to you. By making the corrections now, you are learning to avoid making those errors in the future.

Good Advice

- Always run the spelling checker before you quit your word processing program.
- Proofread your draft both on the computer and on paper.
- Proofread both immediately after writing and after some time has passed.
- If you can, get one or more reviews by someone who knows grammar and punctuation well.

How Do I Revise My Papers?

1. Make your communication at least competent — but if you can, make it a work of art.

At a bare minimum, your communication must be competent. However, you can learn to write better by making your communication better than merely competent.

2. Make the most significant revisions first.

Errors in key statements must be corrected; in addition, spelling and other proofreading errors must be corrected.

3. Revise in light of what you have learned from reviews by other people and from your own checking.

The purpose of getting reviews of your work is to enable you to revise your work well. If you don't correct the problems you have discovered through reviews, you have wasted your time getting reviews. Similarly, when you check over your own work and find an error, you need to correct that error.

4. Proofread carefully and correct all mechanical errors such as errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

I once started to read a book chapter on choreographer George **Balanchine**, but I saw that the writer had misspelled the name as “George **Ballanchine**” several times. I didn't bother reading the chapter because I figured that the writer had to be an idiot.

5. Be sure that your communication looks neat and professional.

Your communication must look neat and professional, not sloppy and amateurish.

6. Revise to learn.

If you have time, you should make your communication better than merely competent. By making revisions, you are learning to write better. For example, by adding topic sentences to a draft, you are learning to use topic sentences.

More Advice

- Proofread more than once.
- Always proofread before you give a copy to a reviewer.
- Always proofread before delivering finished copies to the reader.

What Do I Have to Do for Peer Reviews and for Conferences?

What is a Peer Review?

In a peer review, you exchange drafts of your paper with other members of the course. They evaluate your writing, you evaluate their writing, then each of you talk about the other's writing, telling what the other person has done right and how the other person can improve his or her paper.

Bring a Good Draft—Not a Zero Draft—to the Review

A zero draft is a seriously incomplete draft. For example, a student may arrive at a peer review with only the first paragraph of a paper. Zero drafts receive zero credit. Bring full drafts to the peer reviews. In some (perhaps all) cases, I may cancel the conference of a student who brings a zero draft to a peer review. I don't want my time wasted, and I don't want the time of the peer reviewers wasted.

What Do You Need to Bring to the Peer Review (and to Conferences)?

- Two typed copies of the carefully proofread second (or third) draft of your paper.
- An alert mind.

Advice for Reviews

- Bring two or more copies of your draft to class and to conferences. The reviewer can read (and perhaps mark) one copy; you can mark another copy as the reviewer makes comments.
- Bring a full draft to peer review sessions and to conferences. If your draft is incomplete, the reviewer can't make helpful criticisms.
- Bring a draft that you have proofread to peer review sessions and to conferences. If your draft is sloppy, the reviewer will be distracted from other important considerations.
- Read the other person's writing word for word. You won't help the other person by simply scanning their paper.
- Actively read the other person's writing. Try to find as many mistakes as you can.
- Take reviewing seriously. If all you do is glance at a draft and say it looks good, you aren't helping the reader, and you aren't learning the job skill of reviewing. Talk to the person whose work you are reviewing and give that person good advice about revising their draft.
- Get more than one review (several if you have time).

How I Write Good Introductions?

Introductions

These are good things to do in an introduction:

1. Write a thesis statement.
2. Write a forecasting statement.

Note: Do not define words whose meanings are commonly known in your introduction. For example, do not write, “Love is defined as” However, it is OK to define unusual concepts such as *xenia* or *kleos*, words for concepts that are important in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Advice

You may want to write a question or a series of questions in or as your introduction. For example, if you are going to write about marriages in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, you may write a question such as “What make a marriage good or bad?”

You need to avoid baldly stated statements, such as “In this paper, I will do this ...” or “Now that I have done this, I will now do that” This doesn’t mean that you have to entirely avoid using the word “I” in your paper.

A Good Example

This introduction appeared in a paper that argued that Tom Sawyer grew in maturity in Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, a process that we will see in Tom’s “performances”:

In Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Tom Sawyer is a typical, mischievous boy eager for adventure, attention, and mischief. Immaturity stems from being a young boy who has yet to realize the world does not solely revolve around his desires. Tom thrives on being the center of attention and participates in many performances. His most notable performances include turning in tickets for the Bible, showing up at his own funeral, fooling Aunt Polly with his dream, testifying at the trial of Muff Potter, and acting bravely in front of Becky in the cave. As Tom’s adventures and performances proceed, critical moments show Tom moving away from his childhood concerns and making more grown-up, mature, and responsible decisions.

How Do I Write Good Thesis Statements?

- A thesis statement tells the reader what a paper is about.
- A good thesis statement is about something that is debatable.

Bad example of a thesis statement: Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has many interesting characters.

Of course, it does. So what?

Good example of a thesis statement: In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain uses the characters that Huck and Jim meet along the banks of the Mississippi River to make serious criticisms of American society.

- Often, you can make a thesis statement out of an assigned topic by taking the teacher's prompt, turning it into a question, and then answering that question. For example, if your assignment is "Analyze the marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* to determine what are the characteristics of good marriages and what are the characteristics of bad marriages," turn the request into a question like "What can we learn about the characteristics of good and bad marriages from *Pride and Prejudice*?" After you've chosen the question your essay will answer, compose one or two complete sentences answering that question.

Example #1

Topic: "Analyze the marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* to determine what are the characteristics of good marriages and what are the characteristics of bad marriages."

Question: What can we learn about the characteristics of good and bad marriages from *Pride and Prejudice*?

Answer: Although most marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* are bad because ..., the marriage of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy is likely to be good because

The answer to the question is the thesis statement for the essay. Of course, it is up to the student to decide which words should replace the ellipses (...).

Example #2

Topic: "As a Realist writer, Mark Twain exposes lies. Explain how Twain exposes the lies of Romantic literature (e.g., robbers are heroes), how he exposes the lies of slavery (e.g., black people don't have deep feelings, black people don't care about their children as much as white people), and how in the final third of the novel he exposes the lies that followed the freeing of the slaves (e.g., now that the slaves are legally free, they are free in fact)."

Question: As a Realist writer, how does Mark Twain expose lies?

Answer: As a Realist writer, Mark Twain exposes lies by showing us the reality of such things of robbers, black relationships, and the reality of black existence after emancipation.

The answer to the question is the thesis statement for the essay.

Thesis Statements: Good or Bad?

Are the following thesis statements good or bad?

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is a great novel by a great author.

Answer: This is a bad thesis statement because it is too general.

Throughout Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, the title character grows in maturity.

Answer: this is a good thesis statement because it states something that the paper will argue and give evidence for.

Are the following thesis statements good or bad?

Tom Sawyer's performances show him growing more mature throughout the course of the novel.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is the best novel I have ever read.

In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain satirizes the hypocrisy of the people who attend church but does not satirize true religion.

Although *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is in many ways a light-hearted novel, throughout it are hints of the darker side of light.

The darker side of life that is so prevalent in the modern reader's world can also be found in the society that comprises the world of Tom Sawyer.

The Prince and the Pauper has many interesting characters.

The prince's experiences among the common people help educate him to become a just king.

Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* suggests that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave "civilized" society and go back to nature.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is a great American novel.

As a Realist writer, Mark Twain exposes lies in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by showing us the reality of such things as robbers, black relationships, and the reality of black existence after emancipation.

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Jim unsuccessfully tries to free Huckleberry Finn from prejudice.

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain uses the characters that Huck and Jim meet along the banks of the Mississippi River to make serious criticisms of American society.

While Tom Sawyer is in many ways a conformist, Huckleberry Finn is a true original.

Throughout *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Mark Twain criticizes not only the unjust laws of the Middle Ages but also the unjust laws of 19th-century America.

In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Mark Twain uses satire.

In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Mark Twain uses satire to criticize both the 6th and the 19th centuries.

As a Realist writer, Mark Twain exposes the harsh reality of life for the lower classes in Camelot.

How Do I Write a Good Forecasting Statement?

Definition

A forecasting statement tells the reader how a paper is organized. Forecasting statements often appear in the introductions of papers.

A forecasting statement may also be a thesis statement.

Example #1

Hector and Paris differ in their marriages, motivation for fighting, reputation as warriors, leadership ability, and personal integrity or lack of it.

This forecasting statement tells the reader that the writer will first write about how Hector and Paris differ in their marriages, then about how they differ in their motivation for fighting, then about how they differ in their reputation as warriors, then about how they differ in their leadership ability, and finally about how they differ in their personal integrity or lack of it.

Example #2

“Bottom is a fool, but he is a likeable fool with many friends and an enthusiasm for experiencing life.”

This forecasting statement tells the reader that the writer will first write about how Bottom is a fool, then about how Bottom has many friends, and finally about how Bottom has an enthusiasm for experiencing life.

Example #3

Achilles and Hector differ in their family lives, reasons for fighting in the Trojan War, prowess as warriors, and relationships with the gods.

This forecasting statement tells the reader that the writer will first write about how Achilles and Hector differ in their family lives, then about how Achilles and Hector differ in their reasons for fighting in the Trojan War, then about how Achilles and Hector differ in their prowess as warriors, and finally about how Achilles and Hector differ in their relationships with the gods.

Example #4

Tom Sawyer’s most notable performances include turning in tickets for the Bible, showing up at his own funeral, fooling Aunt Polly with his dream, testifying at the trial of Muff Potter, and acting bravely in front of Becky in the cave.

This forecasting statement tells the reader that the writer will first write about how Tom turned in tickets for the Bible, then about how Tom showed up at his own funeral, then about how Tom fooled Aunt Polly with his dream, then about how Tom testified at the trial of Muff Potter, and then finally about how Tom acted bravely in front of Becky in the cave.

Forecasting Statements in On-the-Job Writing

Tell about your communication's organization.

You can forecast the organization of the employee manual or other communication you are writing.

Ex: This employee manual will inform you about company policies, the procedures you need to know to do your job well, on-the-job etiquette, and relevant state and federal laws.

The above forecasting statement tells the readers that they will read about company policies first, the procedures they need to know to do their job well second, on-the-job etiquette third, and relevant state and federal laws last.

How Do I Write Good Conclusions?

Good conclusions are difficult to write. You must write a sentence that says FINIS to your paper so that the reader is not tempted to turn the page and look for the rest of the essay.

In your conclusion, don't write such sentences as:

I first covered the behavior of both Hector and Paris by discussing their differing attitudes toward battle. I then ...

Instead, write more interesting and informative sentences:

In conclusion, Hector and Paris have minor similarities, but major differences. Hector is fighting to protect his city, his parents, and especially his wife and child. However, Paris is fighting to be able to continue an adulterous relationship with Helen. Hector charges into battle and is not afraid to challenge any Achaean to single combat. In contrast, although Paris can fight well, he often chooses not to and it takes Hector to shame him into challenging Menelaus. In addition, Hector loves his wife and child, while Helen despises Paris and Paris is indifferent to anything Helen says to him as long as she sleeps with him. Despite their minor similarities, Hector and Paris are almost polar opposites.

Examples of good concluding sentences:

1) A paper that analyzed the character of Sir John Falstaff and found it lacking ended with a paragraph that ended with this sentence: "Sir John Falstaff deserves to be hung as quickly as possible."

2) A paper that analyzed the influence of Sir John Falstaff on Prince Hal and found it lacking ended with a paragraph that ended with this sentence: "The best thing that can happen to England is for Sir John Falstaff to be kept as far away from Prince Hal as possible."

You may write a conclusion that refers back to the introduction. For example, a student wrote a paper on the theme of marriage in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The introduction began:

Pride and Prejudice can be seen as the nineteenth-century precursor to our book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Marriage*.

The conclusion ended:

And to think that the reader learns all of his practical information in an entertaining story at the low price of \$4.95 as compared to the \$16.95 for *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Marriage* (amazon.com). Jane Austen's message is loud and clear, and as corny as it sounds I have learned her message and will carry it with me: a marriage immature will end unhappily for sure.

Of course, in addition to referring back to the introduction, this writer ends her paper with a memorable closing line.

A Good Example

This conclusion appeared in a paper that argued that Tom Sawyer grew in maturity in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, a process that we saw in Tom's "performances":

Tom's character grows from merely being a showoff, carefree boy to developing into a young adult. By the end of the novel, Tom is still not fully mature, yet he has matured a lot since the beginning of the story. Tom still believes all he reads in the romance adventure novels and thinks all robbers are respectable like the beloved Robin Hood, yet he has made great strides in how he begins to treat Aunt Polly with respect, defends Muff Potter, and protects Becky. He is no longer a disobedient character undermining the adult order, but a defender of respectability and responsibility. In the end, growing up for Tom means embracing social custom and sacrificing the freedoms of childhood. His responsibilities are directed more towards helping others rather than benefiting only himself. Tom Sawyer has successfully made the transition to greater maturity as shown through his changing performances over the course of the novel.

How Do I Write Good Transitions?

Transitions get the reader from one part of your paper to another part of your paper. They let the reader know that you have finished one part of your paper and now you are beginning another part of your paper.

Examples of Transitions

1) Although Hector has a very good marriage with Andromache, Paris has a very bad marriage with Helen.

Note: This transition would appear at the beginning of a paragraph that follows a section about the marriage of Hector and Andromache. This transition tells the reader: You have just read about the very good marriage of Hector and Andromache; now you are going to read about the very bad marriage of Paris and Helen.

2) Not only do the Collinses have a bad marriage, but so do the Bennets.

Note: This transition would appear at the beginning of a paragraph that follows a section about the marriage of the Collinses. This transition tells the reader: You have just read about the bad marriage of the Collinses; now you are going to read about the bad marriage of the Bennets.

3) Although most of the marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* are bad, some of the marriages are good.

Note: This transition tells the reader that the section of the paper discussing bad marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* is over, and the section of the paper discussing good marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* is beginning.

4) While Prince Hal learns what is noble and right from his father, he learns what is ignoble and wrong from Sir John Falstaff.

This transition is used to connect two sections about the education of Prince Hal in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*. The first section describes what Prince Hal learns from his father, King Henry IV, and the second section describes what Prince Hal learns from the disreputable Sir John Falstaff.

Advice

Don't baldly announce the transition.

Bad: I have written about the bad marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*. I will now write about the good marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Better: Although *Pride and Prejudice* has many bad marriages, it also has a few good marriages.

What Kind Of General Advice Can You Give Me Concerning Papers in Literature Courses?

In literature courses, the readers of your papers will be the teacher. You may assume that the teacher is familiar with the plot of whatever you read, so you need to focus on analysis of the books you read, not on plot summary.

To get good grades on papers written for literature courses, you need to do these things:

- 1) Show that you have a good understanding of the books you are reading in the course. You can do that by focusing on analysis rather than plot summary.
- 2) Show that you can write well. You can do that by writing carefully organized papers, by writing more than one draft (improving the draft with each revision), and by carefully proofreading.
- 3) Show that you can write in an interesting way. Avoid boring the teacher.
- 4) Show that you can do ALL of the things listed above. Content is important, organization and proofreading are important, and being interesting is important. They cannot be separated. To get a good grade, you have to do ALL of the things listed above.

Of course, I will be grading your papers and marking them. Often, I will give you handouts about common writing errors you make. To become a better writer, do these things:

- 1) Identify the errors you make over and over, then learn to avoid making them and learn how to correct them when you do make them. For example, if you constantly misuse the apostrophe, learn how to use it correctly.
- 2) Study the handouts about common writing errors. If you make a common writing error in a paper, I am likely to give you a handout about it.
- 3) Learn to avoid making common writing errors because you will probably be writing for the rest of your life.
- 4) Keep up with the reading. To write good papers, you must be familiar with the literature.

Use a 2-pocket folder to hand in your paper. In the right pocket, place the final draft of your paper. In the left pocket, place your early drafts. On the upper right corner of your folder, write your name and the hour the class meets. For example: Joe Student, 8-9 a.m.

How Do I Complete the Introductory Memo Assignment?

Your introductory memo assignment is to write a short memo introducing yourself to me. The memo format uses headings for To, From, Date, and Re. It does NOT include such lines as “Dear Reader” or “Sincerely.” (Those lines are used in the LETTER format.) See the example below.

“Re” means subject.

In your introductory memo, tell me your non-grade goals for this course and tell me how to contact you during the quarter. Type your memo. For example:

To: David Bruce
From: Joe College
Date: Today’s Date
Re: Introduction of Myself

I am a junior in the College of Education, and my career goal is to teach science to junior high students. Although I am not an English major, I am a reader. I love Homer, and I look forward to reading all the books in this course.

Some interesting facts about myself are that I am an Eagle Scout and I have hiked about half of the Appalachian Trail, which stretches from Georgia to Maine.

On the first day of class, I met Bob Smith, who was a United States Marine. He had to take a wilderness survival course that taught him that bugs are a very good source of protein if you are trapped without food behind enemy lines. As part of the course, Bob and some other soldiers parachuted into the wilderness, where they made good use of their problem-solving skills. As they parachuted into the wilderness, they looked around and noticed a road in the distance. Once they dropped to the earth, they used their compasses to find the road, and then they walked into a town and ate pizza.

The best way to contact me during the quarter is through e-mail. My address is JC123456, and I check my e-mail at least twice daily. Should you need to mail me any important handouts, use this address:

Joe College
12 Court St., Apt. 123
Athens OH 45701

In conclusion, I want to say that I am looking forward to this course.

How Do I Complete the Reaction Memo Assignments?

During the quarter, you will have to write a series of short memos in which you write about the readings you have been assigned. Each memo should be at least 250 words, not counting quotations from the work of literature. Include a word count for each memo. The first paragraph of the memo should be the question you are answering. For an example, see below.

To: Teacher's Name
From: Jane Student
Re: *Odyssey*, Book 12 Reaction Memo
Date: Put Today's Date Here
Words: 323

***Odyssey*, Book 12: Is Odysseus a bad leader?**

This is an important question in the *Odyssey*. After all, Odysseus leads 12 ships and many men to Troy, but the ships are all destroyed and all of his men die and he returns home to Ithaca alone. Who is responsible for the deaths of Odysseus' men? Is Odysseus responsible for their deaths or do the men bear some responsibility for their own deaths? Many readers prefer Odysseus, the great individualist, to Aeneas, the man who founds a country, but then they realize that all of Odysseus' men died, while Aeneas succeeded in bringing many Trojans to Italy. When readers think of that, they begin to have a greater respect for Aeneas.

From the beginning of the *Odyssey*, this has been an issue. The bard says that the men perished because of the "recklessness of their own ways" (1.8). However, we notice that Odysseus is asleep at odd times. In Book 10, Aeolus gives Odysseus a bag in which the contrary winds have been tied up. This allows him to sail to Ithaca safely. However, they reach the island and see smoke rising from the fires, Odysseus goes to sleep and his men open the bag, let the contrary winds escape, and the ship is blown back to King Aeolus' island. Similarly, in Book 12, on the island of the Sun-god, Odysseus is asleep when his men sacrifice the Sun-god's cattle.

It does seem that Odysseus does not bear the blame for his men's death. In many cases, they do perish through their own stupidity. In other cases, of course, they die during war or during adventures, but in those times, Odysseus was with them, and he could have died, too.

One other thing to think about is that Odysseus is telling his own story. Could he be lying? After all, some of the adventures he relates are pretty incredible. (Probably not. The gods vouch for some of what he says.)

Works Cited

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

In What Tense Should I Write Short Summaries?

Advice from William Strunk, Jr.'s 1918 Edition of *The Elements of Style*

In summaries, keep to one tense.

In summarizing the action of a drama, the writer should always use the present tense. In summarizing a poem, story, or novel, he should preferably use the present, though he may use the past if he prefers. If the summary is in the present tense, antecedent action should be expressed by the perfect; if in the past, by the past perfect.

An unforeseen chance prevents Friar John from delivering Friar Lawrence's letter to Romeo. Juliet, meanwhile, owing to her father's arbitrary change of the day set for her wedding, has been compelled to drink the potion on Tuesday night, with the result that Balthasar informs Romeo of her supposed death before Friar Lawrence learns of the nondelivery of the letter.

But whichever tense be used in the summary, a past tense in indirect discourse or in indirect question remains unchanged.

The Legate inquires who struck the blow.

Apart from the exceptions noted, whichever tense the writer chooses, he should use throughout. Shifting from one tense to the other gives the appearance of uncertainty and irresolution.

In presenting the statements or the thought of someone else, as in summarizing an essay or reporting a speech, the writer should avoid intercalating such expressions as "he said," "he stated," "the speaker added," "the speaker then went on to say," "the author also thinks," or the like. He should indicate clearly at the outset, once for all, that what follows is summary, and then waste no words in repeating the notification.

In notebooks, in newspapers, in handbooks of literature, summaries of one kind or another may be indispensable, and for children in primary schools it is a useful exercise to retell a story in their own words. But in the criticism or interpretation of literature the writer should be careful to avoid dropping into summary. He may find it necessary to devote one or two sentences to indicating the subject, or the opening situation, of the work he is discussing; he may cite numerous details to illustrate its qualities. But he should aim to write an orderly discussion supported by evidence, not a summary with occasional comment. Similarly, if the scope of his discussion includes a number of works, he will as a rule do better not to take them up singly in chronological order, but to aim from the beginning at establishing general conclusions.

Note by David Bruce: Your papers must be more than summaries of what you have read. Summaries should be short. You may assume that your professors are familiar with the plots of the works of literature studied in the professors' course.

How Can I Learn to Write Better?

- Begin writing early, so that you have lots of time for editing and proofreading.
- Outline your papers, when outlining will help—for example, when a paper is long.
- Bring two copies of a full, typed draft to peer reviews and to conferences.
- Don't race through peer reviews just so you can leave early.
- If you have time, get a second peer review.
- Sign up for a conference so I can review your paper. (That doesn't mean you will get a B or an A, but you should get a few suggestions about how to improve your paper.)
- Proofread your paper more than once, on more than one day.
- Ask your roommate to help you proofread your papers. In turn, you can help proofread your roommate's papers.
- Keep up with the reading, and come to class.
- Revise a paper that has already been graded. No, I won't raise your grade, but you will learn to write better by revising a paper that has already been graded. You can revise to learn.
- Look at the comments on your paper and learn from them.
- Do you keep making the same mistake over and over? Learn how to correct that mistake, and your future papers should be better.
- Look at any handouts I give you that explain writing mistakes you make, and learn how to avoid making those mistakes.
- Even if you are one of the very few students who got an A or A-, work to improve your writing. Even a grade-A paper can be improved.
- Don't plagiarize.

Checklist for Literature Papers

Audience and Purpose

- The audience of your paper is your teacher, not members of the general public. The purpose of your paper is to show your teacher that you have a good understanding of the work of literature and that you can write well and interestingly, with correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Titles

- Do you have an interesting and informative title? Don't write something such as *Pride and Prejudice* or *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for your paper — those titles have already been used and don't identify the specific topic of your paper. However, you may use a title that includes a colon. Two examples:

Pride and Prejudice: An Abundance of Bad Marriages

Mr. Darcy: Intelligent and Sometimes Kind But Overly Proud

Introductions

- Do you have a good introduction? (Do not define words whose meaning is already commonly known.)

Thesis Statements

- Do you have a thesis statement in your introduction? (Thesis statements tell the reader what the paper is about.)

Forecasting Statements

- Do you have a forecasting statement in your introduction? (Forecasting statements tell the reader how the paper is organized.)

Content

- Do you engage in analysis, not in plot summary? (You may assume that David Bruce already knows the plot of the play.)
- In character analysis, you may identify several traits of the character. The traits can be listed in topic sentences. The rest of the paragraph can be supporting evidence showing that the character does indeed have those traits.

Topic Statements

- Do you put topic statements at or near the beginning of paragraphs? (A topic statement lets the reader know what the paragraph or section is about. Topic statements help the reader most when they are at the beginning, not the end, of paragraphs.)

Transitions

- When you use transitions, do you put them at the beginning of paragraphs rather than at the end of paragraphs?

Conclusions

- Do you have a good conclusion? (David Bruce should not be tempted to turn the final page and look for a conclusion.)

Quotations

- Do you properly cite all quotations?
- Do you quote accurately?
- If you quote from a source other than the play, do you include a bibliography at the end of your paper?

Mechanics

- Do you spell all names correctly?
- By now, you have probably received a few handouts attached to the memos you have turned in. Study the handouts, and make sure you avoid those mistakes in your paper.

A Final Thought

- Have you written a paper that you can be proud of and would enjoy reading?

Literature Paper Review Sheet

When you hand your paper in, use a 2-pocket folder. In the right pocket, place your final draft of your paper. In the left pocket, place your early drafts. On the upper right corner of your folder, write your name and the hour the class meets. For example: Joe (or Jane) Student, 10-11 a.m. Write “final draft” on the final draft.

1. Review the paper format.

- Put page numbers and your last name at the top right corner of each page, including the first.

For example:

Dall 3

- On the first page of your paper, write in the upper left corner these things:
 - Your name
 - The name of the teacher
 - The class
 - The date

For example:

Susan Dall

Professor Bruce

ENG 109

7 May 2008

The paper must have an interesting title (don't use “Paper #1” or Paper #3” as a title).

Check that the paper is long enough. (Don't fill your paper with long quotations just to take up space.) If you are supposed to write between 4 and 6 pages, write at least 4 full pages, not counting quotations. To be safe, write 5 pages.

Check that the paper is double-spaced. The writer should NOT triple-space between paragraphs.

The margins should be one inch all around, including the top margin of the first page.

Comments:

2. Review the paper's content and style.

Check to see that the introduction makes an interesting beginning to the paper.

Check to see that a thesis statement appears near the beginning of the paper. The thesis statement should not be boring, as in "In this paper I will discuss" Instead, simply state the main point of your paper: "Members of the audience may be able to question Romeo and Juliet's maturity, but no one can question their passionate love for each other." The thesis statement may be the writer's introduction.

Check to see that the writer supports the thesis statement with evidence. For example: What evidence is there that Romeo and Juliet are immature yet feel a passionate love for each other?

Check to see that the paper has a good conclusion. The reader should not turn the page after reading the conclusion and expect to see more to the paper.

Check to make sure that the reader does more than summarize the plot.

Comments:

3. Help the writer with proofreading.

Check the paper for the following: 1. Spelling, 2. Grammar, and 3. Punctuation.

Remember that play or book titles such as *Romeo and Juliet* or *Pride and Prejudice* should be put in italics.

Many students in this course have received various handouts on punctuation and grammar. The writer and the reviewer should have learned from those handouts and should seek to correct the errors described in the handouts.

Comments:

4. Check the paper for style.

- The writer should avoid having too many paragraphs or sentences in a row that begin with the word “I.” The writer should avoid having too many short, simple sentences in a row. The writer should vary the sentence length and structure.
- Look up each quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out. Make sure that the writer tells the page number (or chapter) of the passage he or she is quoting.
- Make sure that the paper is more than a collection of quotations from the book. Most of the paper should be devoted to reporting the writer’s own thought, not quoting from the book. No quotations should be huge.
- To quote from a book other than the one being read in this course, use the MLA format.

Comments:

5. List one more things that the writer has done well, in your opinion.**6. List one more things that the writer needs to change, in your opinion.****7. Read the paper again, putting yourself in the place of the reader, and see if there are any additional comments or suggestions you wish to make.**

8. You and the writer will take turns making oral comments on each other's paper.

Remember that you are doing your best to help the other person improve his or her paper. Tell the writer what he or she is doing right — and wrong.

Can you help the writer with content? Is there an example the writer can add to his or her paper?

9. If there is time, find another person with whom to exchange papers and then go through the process again. (Some of you may want to arrange to meet in a library later tonight and review another draft of your papers.)

How Do I Use a Computer To Help Proofread My Papers?

Do You Sometimes Put Two Spaces Between Words?

If you are using a computer, be aware that most word processing programs have a FIND command which is often located in the EDIT menu. You can have the computer find all the places where you have two spaces in a row in your communication, then you can delete the unnecessary space.

Note: After a period, you may use either one space or two.

Do You Make Mistakes Often When Using Such Word Pairs as *Then* and *Than*?

If you know that you often make mistakes with certain words (for example, *then* and *than*), here is one way to help yourself correct that kind of mistake. After you have typed your paper, use your word-processing program to find the words you have trouble with. For example, if you have problems using *then* and *than*, use the FIND command (the FIND command is often found in an EDIT menu) to find all occurrences of *then* and check that they are correct, then to find all occurrences of *than* and check that they are correct.

Of course, you can also use this technique to find problems with other word pairs:

who/whom versus *that* — use *who* and *whom* to refer to people

you/your — sometimes a student will type *you* instead of *your*, as in “Thank you for you time.”

there/they’re/their, *your/you’re*, *its/it’s*, etc.

Are You Wordy?

If you often write “due to the fact that,” search for that phrase, then replace it with “because.”

If you often write “despite the fact that,” search for that phrase, then replace it with “although.”

Finding Definitions

A quick way to find definitions on the WWW is to search for "define aegis" or whatever word you need to know the definition for.

How and When Do I Use *Who* and *Whom*?

Use *who* and *whom* to refer to people. (Do not use “that” to refer to people.)

Wrong: This is the man that will be the next President of the United States.

Wrong: This is the man that I was speaking of.

Right: This is the man who will be the next President of the United States.

Right: This is the man of whom I was speaking.

Use *who* as a subject.

Right: This is the man who will be the next President of the United States.

Note: In the above sentence, *who* is the subject of the verb *will be*.

Use *whom* as an object.

Right: This is the man of whom I was speaking.

Note: In the above sentence, *whom* is the object of *of*.

Note: When referring to fairies, use *who* and *whom*.

Right: Oberon and Titania are very powerful fairies who cause natural disturbances when they quarrel.

Right: Puck is a fairy who is mischievous but not evil.

Be aware that some sentences with *who* or *whom* are wordy; for example, the above sentence can be rewritten in this way:

Right: Puck, a fairy, is mischievous but not evil.

Note: When referring to gods, use *who* and *whom*.

Right: Zeus, who rules the sky, is the ancient Greek god of lightning.

Right: Poseidon, who rules the sea, is the ancient Greek god of earthquakes.

Use “Who” (Subject) and “Whom” (Object) to Refer to People

Use “who” and “whom” to refer to people.

From William Sleator’s *Oddballs*: Also, I had snowed the Harvard Dean of Admissions, **who** had come to interview people at our school in the fall—I told him I had gone to the Yale interview in order to get out of gym, which he found highly amusing. (I also told the Yale guy I went to the Harvard interview to get out of gym, but I don’t know if that worked as well since I didn’t apply to Yale.)

- Much of Jack Benny’s humor came from his writers, but at least once he got off a funny ad-lib. During a radio show with Fred Allen—**who** was funny with or without writers—Mr. Allen kept peppering Mr. Benny with comic ad-lib insults. Finally, Mr. Benny protested, “You wouldn’t say those things if my writers were here!”

- Goodman Ace was a comedian of the 1950s **who** had his own highly successful radio show and worked as a writer on Milton Berle’s TV show. He knew many of the famous comedians of his day. While walking with Groucho Marx in New York, the two passed a wedding. Groucho, **who** had been divorced twice, tapped the bride on her shoulder and said softly, “I tried it twice—it’s no good.”

- Of course, identical triplets are very similar, but they are not so similar that family pets can’t tell them apart. For example, Edgar, the dog owned by the family of a set of identical triplets—**who** are named Darren, David, and Donny—can tell them apart. Their mother can tell Edgar to fetch David, and Edgar knows immediately **whom** to fetch.

- Early in her career, when soprano Rita Hunter had a young child, a situation arose suddenly where she needed to be at an important rehearsal and her husband needed to be in a hospital. Having no babysitter because they were so new to the neighborhood, but needing one desperately, she gathered her baby’s things, knocked on the door of a neighbor, explained the situation hurriedly, shoved the baby into the neighbor’s arms, and ran off. Luck was with her. She hadn’t left her daughter in the hands of a dangerous person, but in the hands of a most excellent babysitter, **whom** she thanked by name—Auntie Symes—in her autobiography, *Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie*.

How Do I Use *To, Two, Too?*

“To” is used in infinitives: to walk, to talk.

“Two” is a number: one, two, three.

“Too” means “excessively” or “very”: too hot, too hard, too soft. It can also mean “also”—I’m going, too.

- Greg “the Bull” Luzinski was a big man and a major hitter in the major leagues. Umpire Eric Gregg once called a strike on him, and when the next pitch went across the plate at roughly the same spot, he called, “That’s **two**.” The Bull raised the bat above his head and asked, “**Two** what?” Mr. Gregg looked at the baseball bat and the Bull’s massive build and replied, “**Too** high.”

- Charlie Grimm, manager of the Chicago Cubs, once got angry with umpire Charlie Moran—so did several of his players. As his players stormed out **to** argue the call with umpire Moran, Mr. Grimm told them, “The first person **to** lay a finger on this blind old man will be fined 50 bucks.”

- When opera singer Joan Hammond returned to Australia for a visit, **two** of her nieces asked for her autograph—in fact, they each gave her a piece of paper and asked that she sign each piece of paper ten times. When she had finished, they said, “Goody! Now we can swap these for twenty tadpoles!”

- Some young children are surprised that older adults have parents, **too**. Librarian Jeanette C. Smith once made friends with a 10-year-old girl who often came into the Minnesota public library where she worked. One day, Ms. Smith’s mother visited her, leaving as the 10-year-old girl arrived. The 10-year-old girl asked who the visitor had been, and when Ms. Smith explained that the visitor had been her mother, the 10-year-old girl exclaimed, “YOU HAVE A MOTHER!”

How Do I Use *There*, *They're*, and *Their*?

there = a place

they're = they are

their = possessive of “they”

- Many very young children don't realize that what happens on stage is not real. At Christmas, Ernestine Schumann-Heink played the role of the Witch in the opera “Hansel and Gretel” while her children were very small, and when her character was put in the oven, her young son Ferdinand cried out, “**They're** putting my mother in the oven and burning her up!” Fortunately, Ms. Schumann-Heink came out of the other side of the oven quickly, and little Ferdinand saw that she was all right.

- Young children tend to believe whatever you tell them. Quaker humorist Tom Mullen once showed his children the place where he had been born. The house had long been torn down, and at the location where the house had stood was an intersection with a flashing yellow light, so Mr. Mullen told his children that the flashing yellow light had been placed **there** in his honor. Afterward, whenever his children saw an intersection with a flashing yellow light, they asked, “Who was born **there**?”

- French-cooking expert Julia Child and her husband seldom got **their** Christmas cards done in time to mail, so instead of Christmas cards they would send Valentine's Day cards to **their** friends. One card shows the happy couple taking a bubble bath together.

- Many colleges recruited Wilt Chamberlain to play basketball for them, including some schools that asked if he wished to be the first African-American player on **their** team. Mr. Chamberlain always responded, “I'd rather be the second.”

How Do I Use *Then* and *Than*?

“Than” is used in comparisons: better than, more than.

“Then” is a time word: If this happens, then that will happen.

- Comedian Jerry Lewis once boasted about a one iron he owned that he said was the best ever made. Pro golfer Sam Snead heard the boast, and he invited Mr. Lewis to try his one iron. Mr. Lewis tried it, hit the ball further **than** with his own one iron, **then** attempted to buy the one iron from Mr. Snead. On hearing the first offer—\$100—Mr. Snead said, “No, no.” On hearing the second offer—\$200—Mr. Snead said, “No, losing that club would ruin my whole bag.” On hearing the third offer—\$500—Mr. Snead said, “Run with it before I change my mind,” and so Mr. Lewis handed over the money and took off running across the golf course.

- Comedian Bob Smith’s parents accepted his homosexuality. His father, a retired state trooper, once attended an Annual Policemen’s Ball where some men sitting with him and his wife (Sue) began to talk about “fags.” His father said, “You know, my son’s gay. And it takes a lot more guts for him to deal with being gay **than** it does for jerks like you to sit there talking with your mouths full and your heads empty. And I don’t have to listen to it. C’mon, Sue. Let’s sit somewhere else.”

- Gracie Allen could make a stand when a stand was necessary. A dry cleaner ruined a dress that she had taken to him, but he refused to pay for the dress. That evening, in the middle of the vaudeville act she performed with her husband, George Burns, she told the audience about the dry-cleaning incident and recommended that they not patronize that particular establishment, **then** she went on with the act. The next day, the dry cleaner paid her the money for the dress he had ruined.

- The very dignified Greer Garson guested on Jimmy Durante’s program. She didn’t know anything about comedy and asked Mr. Durante what would happen if the show wasn’t funny. Mr. Durante replied, “**Then**, Miss Garson, we’re all gonna be in the toilet together.”

How Do I Use *Your* And *You're*?

your = possessive form of *you*

Ex: Your coat is in that closet.

Ex: Your car is at the carwash.

you're = contraction of *you are*

Ex: You're standing in the rain.

Ex: You're an incredibly sensitive woman.

- Comedian Lewis Black's mother was a substitute teacher in city classrooms, some of them very tough. Usually, a substitute teacher would have a rough time of it, but not Mrs. Black because she had a very sharp tongue and a mastery of sarcasm. One tough kid asked her why he had to learn the subject she was teaching, and she replied, "Because when you are pumping my gas at the Sears Station, where you have been for 10 years because you didn't get **your** diploma, I don't want to waste any breath saying 'I told you so.'"

- Some lessons need to be learned at exactly the right time. For example, Ralph Nader's mother used to teach her children about health when they were ill. She told Ralph, "When you were sick, I gave you **your** lessons on health. There was no more receptive time than when you were in the middle of chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough, and measles." Of course, the lessons she taught were about such things as eating the right foods and getting enough exercise and sleep.

- Having a Hall-of-Fame baseball player for a father does not mean that you will make the major leagues. Hank Aaron's son played in the minor leagues, and Hank realized that his son would never get out of the minor leagues and that it would be better for him to pursue a different avenue in life. Therefore, as a baseball executive and as a father, he told his son, "You've got two choices. Either I can keep you here in A ball or you can go back to college, get your degree, come back out, and have a family." His son thought about the choice, and he was about to make the wrong decision, so Hank told him, "While **you're** thinking, here are your release papers." Of course, his son was angry at first, but much later and after graduating from college and becoming a schoolteacher, he told Hank, "Thanks for making that decision, because I couldn't have made it."

- Quaker humorist Tom Mullen once complained to his doctor about the fact that he needed to go to the restroom several times a night and that he often suffered from gastritis. His doctor asked how old he was, and after hearing the answer said, "**You're** right on schedule."

How Do I Use *It's* And *Its*?

its = the possessive form of *it*

Ex: The dog played with its rawhide bone.

Ex: The fox left its burrow.

it's = the contraction of *it is*

Ex: It's raining.

Ex: It's the day before my paper is due.

its' = ?

Its' is not a word. An apostrophe should never follow *its*.

- When Clyde, Maya Angelou's son, grew up, he decided that he wanted to be called "Guy." Ms. Angelou told him about a river in Scotland that was named the Clyde River, but her son replied, "**It's** an O.K. name for a river, but my name is Guy." Ms. Angelou started calling him "Guy."

- Figure skater Christopher Bowman once performed in a costume consisting of a black velvet suit whose major features consisted of a white collar and plunging neckline. Reporters tried to find words sufficient to describe the features of the outfit, and *National* reporter Julie Vader said, "**It's** a shawl collar." When someone asked how she knew that, she explained, "I have a dress exactly like it."

- Every Navajo blanket has an opening in **its** border. Sometimes, the border will be dark, with one piece of white-colored yarn reaching to the edge of the blanket. This is done so that the weaver will keep her mind open and be able to learn more. When one's mind is closed, one is unable to learn.

- As a boy, André Eglevsky suffered from a cough that caused his family to travel to a healthier locale for him. However, young André learned that a cough does have **its** advantages. While traveling in a crowded train compartment, young André had a bad fit of coughing. As he coughed and coughed, the other passengers left the train compartment, finally leaving André alone with his mother, his nurse, and his sister.

How Do I Use *Amount* And *Number*?

Use *number* for things you can count.

Ex: I spilled a large number of bags of flour on the floor.

Use *amount* for quantities you can't count.

Ex: I spilled a large amount of flour on the floor.

- Growing up during the Great Depression in Morgantown, West Virginia, comedian Don Knotts was lucky to have the mother he did. She could take very little meat and turn it into a great **amount** of meatloaf. In fact, when young Don went to the grocery store to buy a quarter-pound of hamburger, the grocer would joke, “Are you people having company again?”

- Ralph Nader’s mother used to give her children chickpeas as a snack, and she used to scrape the sugary frosting off of birthday cakes before giving them a piece. In addition, because she didn’t know what hot dogs were made of, she never fed her kids hot dogs. At her household, kids were expected to eat what was on their plates, whether they liked it or not. If a kid ever objected and asked why he or she had to eat something, her standard answer was this: “Because it’s good for you.” She also had a **number** of stories to go with certain foods. If one of her children didn’t want to eat a food with lots of vitamin C, for example, she would tell the child a story about sailors who got sick with scurvy until they learned that lemons would prevent the disease. And if telling a story about why a certain food was healthy to eat didn’t convince a child to eat something, she would look the child in the eyes, and ask, “What does your tongue have against your heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys?”

- Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin often said that he had learned from a beggar how to collect money for charity. A beggar had appeared at his door, and the good Rabbi had given him a generous handout, but the beggar asked for more. Someone present said that he was surprised that the beggar had asked for more money because the beggar had often accepted much smaller sums of money without arguing. The beggar replied that when he was given a small **amount** of money, it wasn’t worth arguing about because what he would get if he won the argument? Another small **amount** of money. But a sizable amount of money was worth arguing about because if he won that argument he would get another sizable **amount** of money. Rabbi Meir Shapiro said, “Whenever I ask a donation from a wealthy man and he gives me a sizable sum, I tell that story.”

- The lectures of Professor Harold Dwight Lasswell were notoriously difficult to understand. Once, Professor Lasswell walked into his classroom at the beginning of a term and was surprised at the large **number** of students waiting for him to start class. He muttered, “We shall reduce the **number** forthwith.”

How Do I Use *Principal* And *Principle*?

Principal: the head of a high school or an elementary school (noun); chief or foremost in importance (adjective)

Ex: The principal is a pal.

Principle: a basic truth, a rule, a standard, a moral standard

Ex: The principles of economics are difficult to understand.

- A bully named Zachary picked on classmate Elliot Rafael at school, calling him a “n*gger” several times. Elliot’s mother, Tina, went to the school **principal**, who took no action. Finally, it was Elliot’s kindergarten teacher who took appropriate action. She told her class that she and Elliot were going to be together. She also said, “All those in the class who want to use ugly names and call Elliot a ‘n*gger’ will have to call me one, too.” Tina was grateful, and the bullying and the name-calling stopped immediately. (And the next day Elliot gave Zachary a big hug and told him, “What you need is some love, Zachary.” He also told Zachary’s mother to spend time with her son, adding, “He just needs to be loved, so he won’t be so mean.”)

- When Muhammad Ali was still known as Cassius Clay, he almost did not graduate from high school because of his poor grades. However, Atwood Wilson, the **principal** of his high school, wanted him to graduate, in part because of Mr. Clay’s growing fame as a boxer. Mr. Wilson stated, “One day our greatest claim to fame is going to be that we knew Cassius Clay or taught him. Do you think that I’m going to be the **principal** of a school that Cassius Clay didn’t finish?”

- As a radical who broke new ground in art, Mary Cassatt rejected some things that many artists accept. After she was informed that she had won a \$300 Walter Lippincott Prize for work shown in the 1904 exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, she turned down the prize, writing, “Of course it is very gratifying to know that a picture of mine was selected for a special honor. I, however, who belong to the founders of the Independent Exhibition, must stick to my **principles**, our **principles**, which were, no jury, no medals, no awards.”

- Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese Consul-General in Bordeaux, rescued thousands of Jews from the Holocaust by directly disobeying his country’s orders and giving visas to Jews so that they could escape to freedom. A devout Roman Catholic, Mr. Mendes knew that he was risking his career, his reputation, and his own money by rescuing Jews. However, he said, “I cannot allow these people to die. Our constitution says that the religion or the politics of a foreigner shall not be used to deny refuge in Portugal. I have decided to follow this **principle**. Even if I am discharged, I can only act as a Christian, as my conscience tells me. If I am disobeying orders, I would rather be with God against men than with men against God.” The Jews used the Portuguese visas to escape to neutral Spain.

How to Avoid Making Some Mistakes (Mainly Involving Word Pairs) Teachers Never Want to See Again

Proofreading

If you know that you make one of the mistakes listed below, here is one way to help yourself correct that kind of mistake. After you have typed your paper, use your word-processing program to find the words you have trouble with. For example, if you have problems using *then* and *than*, use the *Find* command (the *Find* command is often found in an *Edit* menu) to find all occurrences of *then* and check that they are correct, then to find all occurrences of *than* and check that they are correct.

Know the differences among *its*, *it's*, and *its'*.

its = the possessive form of *it*

Ex: The dog played with its rawhide bone.

Ex: The fox left its burrow.

it's = the contraction of *it is*

Ex: It's raining.

Ex: It's the day before my paper is due.

its' = ?

Its' is not a word. An apostrophe should never follow *its*.

Know the difference between *your* and *you're*.

your = possessive form of *you*

Ex: Your coat is in that closet.

Ex: Your car is at the carwash.

you're = contraction of *you are*

Ex: You're standing in the rain.

Ex: You're an incredibly sensitive woman.

Know the differences among *there*, *they're*, and *their*.

there = a place

Ex: From here to there is not so far as from here to eternity.

Ex: I parked my car over there.

We also use *there* in this way:

Ex: There are three solutions to this problem.

Ex: There are a couple of things we must face.

However, often *there are* is wordy and can be deleted:

Ex: This problem has three solutions.

Ex: We must face a couple of things.

they're = a contraction of *they are*

Ex: They're travelling on the Orient Express.

Ex: They're over there.

their = the possessive of *they*

Ex: Their cars are in the parking garage.

Ex: Their problem-solving expertise is immense.

Know the differences among *to* and *too* and *two*.

To is used in infinitives such as *to walk* or *to talk*.

Ex: To walk is not my style when I can run.

Ex: To run for political office or not to run for political office.

Too means *also*, *very*, *rather*, or *excessively*.

Ex: This night is too hot for comfort.

Ex: There go the cars, too.

Two is a number.

Ex: Two children sit in the swing.

Ex: He has two dogs, two cats, and two children.

Know the difference between *then* and *than*.

then = a time word

Ex: If it rains, then it pours.

Ex: I went here, then I went there.

Ex: This happened, then that happened.

than = a comparison word

Ex: This is sweeter than that.

Ex: Anything is better than nothing.

Ex: He is bigger than a locomotive.

How Do I Use Apostrophes Correctly?

Do I need apostrophes to make words plural?

Answer: No, you do not.

Ex: The Smiths are holding a formal dinner this Saturday evening.

Ex: We visited the Joneses, the Gordons, and the Bossarts.

Ex: Take a look at the dogs, the cats, and the hamsters.

How do I make singular words possessive?

Answer: Add an apostrophe and an -s.

Ex: Look at Bill's hat.

Ex: One dog's frisbee is dirty.

Ex: We saw one cave's interior.

Ex: He went on a fool's errand.

Ex: We saw each other's boats. ("Each" indicates the singular.)

Optional: If the word does end in -s, then you may add only an apostrophe if you choose. However, the apostrophe and the -s are preferred unless they make the word sound funny.

Ex: Look at Sis's hat.

Also OK: Look at Sis' hat.

How do I make plural words possessive?

Answer, part 1: If the word does not end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s.

Ex: The children's play was funny.

Ex: The women's tea party went on for two hours.

Ex: Gentlemen's night at the bar was boring because no women were present.

Ex: The geese's wings are wide.

Ex: The men's cars are in the parking lot.

Answer, part 2: If the word does end in -s, add an apostrophe only.

Ex: The two dogs' meals are in the refrigerator.

Ex: The two stores' inventory is larger than expected.

Ex: Take a look at the three girls' test scores.

Other Examples

Ex: Huck's best friend is probably Tom Sawyer.

Ex: The two boys' latest adventure began in a graveyard at midnight.

Ex: Muff Potter's "murder" of Dr. Robinson was a lie.

Ex: Mr. Darcy's pride and Elizabeth's prejudice make up the heart of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Ex: The book's title is in italics.

Ex: The women's club meets at noon.

Ex: The Yankee's adventures in medieval England are interesting.

Ex: Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are two of my favorite books.

Ex: Marion Jones's adventures in the 2000 Olympics were exciting.

Also OK: Marion Jones' adventures in the 2000 Olympics were exciting.

Ex: Injun Joe's murder of Dr. Robinson was a dastardly deed.

Ex: Dr. Robinson's grave robbing violates important ethical principles.

Ex: Jane's beauty is striking, while Elizabeth's intelligence is stunning.

Ex: Lady Lucas's daughter is plain.

Also OK: Lady Lucas's daughter is plain.

Ex: The two boys were looking at the two girls' hats.

Ex: The two girls stared at the two boys' feet.

How Do I Use Hyphens?

When you combine two or more words to form an adjective that appears before the noun it modifies, use hyphens to connect the adjective-forming words together.

If you need more information about the smoking-cessation course, please call Personnel.

On February 30, both company buildings will be no-smoking facilities.

On February 30, both company buildings will be smoke-free facilities.

I am applying for an entry-level position in your chemical department.

I have used my problem-solving skills to increase profits and decrease costs at SSI Industries.

Last Monday was a two-pots-of-coffee-and-three-packs-of-cigarettes day.

Your internships give students hands-on experience.

When the adjective follows the noun it modifies, no hyphen is needed.

At SSI Industries, all buildings were smoke free.

At SSI Industries, no jobs were entry level.

Use suspended hyphens with modifiers to reduce repetition.

The lab uses oil- and water-based compounds.

I enjoy reading 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century writers.

Some words have a hyphen no matter where they appear in a sentence. Check a dictionary to find which words always have a hyphen. For example, “part-time” and “full-time” always have a hyphen.

At SSI Industries, I had a full-time job.

At SSI Industries, my job was full-time.

At SSI Industries, I had a part-time job.

At SSI Industries, my job was part-time.

Use Adjective-Forming Hyphens When Combining Two or More Words to Form an Adjective That Appears Before the Word It Modifies

When you combine two or more words to form an adjective that appears before the noun it modifies, use hyphens to connect the adjective-forming words together.

From William Sleator's *Oddballs*: The lawyer said that all **middle-class** teenagers were the same: they cared only about money, and clothes, and being just like everybody else.

- In 1973, **African-American** tennis star Arthur Ashe played in a tournament in South Africa, which then practiced a form of segregation known as apartheid. Before he would play in the tournament, Mr. Ashe demanded that the audiences watching it be integrated.

- As an **11-year-old** gymnast, Shannon Miller finished second (behind Wendy Bruce) in the **all-around** competition in the Alamo Classic. Afterward, the **pre-teen** Shannon signed autographs for her adoring fans. In fact, when her father, Ron, went up to talk to her, other parents grew angry at him because they thought he was cutting in line.

- Greg Maddux played for the Chicago Cubs and the Atlanta Braves. As a **12-year-old** Little Leaguer, he was so gifted a pitcher that his coach would not allow him to pitch in a championship game, saying that allowing him to pitch would not be fair to the other team! (Greg played, but did not pitch, and his team won the championship.)

- Shannon Martin was six years old when she won an **age-12-and-under** roping contest, for which she was written up in the *Roping Sports News*. Because she hadn't learned to read yet, she kept saying to her father, "Come on, Dad. Read it again."

- When Canadian gymnast Elfi Schlegel was seven years old, she won her first competition. As a reward, she was given a trophy, while the **second-** and **third-place** competitors were given medals hanging from ribbons. Ms. Schlegel was so young that she was disappointed that she didn't win a medal necklace like her friends had.

Note: In the anecdote above, the word "second" has a suspended hyphen.

How Do I Use Commas with Introductory Clauses?

After an introductory element (word, phrase, or clause), use a comma.

If I teach Great Books this fall, then I will teach Homer.

For example, roses grow on bushes.

Although the two murderers are desperate men, they have free will and do not have to murder Banquo and Fleance.

As a result, Macbeth grows more and more paranoid.

Despite the quarrel between Titania and Oberon, true love exists.

Although Tom Sawyer has a loving family (except for Sid) and Huckleberry Finn does not, the two boys get along.

Now that Macbeth has become King of Scotland, he thinks that he ought to be happy.

After we left the dance, we went to a restaurant.

If apples grow on trees, why don't cucumbers?

However, we ought to continue to do the right thing.

However much evil surrounds us, we ought to continue to do the right thing.

After Bethany quit her job (for just cause), she went to graduate school.

Although Hector's wife loves him, Paris's wife does not even respect him.

If you feel anything, you ought to feel happiness.

Although I am usually happy, I am sometimes sad.

Sometimes, donating money is not enough.

Note: Sometimes, a comma after a short introductory element is optional. It may be a good idea to use the comma as a way to vary sentence length and structure in a passage. Both of these sentences are correct.

Last night, we went dancing.

Last night we went dancing.

How Do I Use a Comma to Join Sentences With Connecting Words?

Use a comma and a connecting word to join two independent clauses.

Note: The grammarian jargon for “connecting words” is “coordinating conjunctions.”

Note: An “independent clause” is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

Note: English has seven coordinating conjunctions: *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, and *yet*.

Ex: *Hamlet* is playing at the Palace, and *Macbeth* is playing at the Globe.

Ex: Delta flies to South American, but Tri-Continental flies to Australia.

Note that both independent clauses have subjects.

Don’t use a comma between compound elements that are not independent clauses.

Incorrect: I swam three miles, and biked for seven miles.

Note: “... biked for seven miles” is not an independent clause because it doesn’t have a subject.

Correct: I swam three miles, and I biked for seven miles.

Note: The above sentence is punctuated correctly because the comma and conjunction are used with two independent clauses.

Also correct: I swam three miles and biked for seven miles.

Note: The above sentence is punctuated correctly because no comma appears in the series of two verbs.

Other Examples

Incorrect: My handbook will give great insight into the workings of the fraternity as a whole, and the different components that make up the fraternity.

Correct: My handbook will give great insight into the workings of the fraternity as a whole, and it will give great insight into the different components that make up the fraternity.

Also correct: My handbook will give great insight into the workings of the fraternity as a whole and into the different components that make up the fraternity.

Incorrect: I will be interviewing members of my fraternity who hold leadership positions now, and who have held leadership positions in the past.

Correct: I will be interviewing members of my fraternity who hold leadership positions now, and I will be interviewing members of my fraternity who have held leadership positions in the past.

Also correct: I will be interviewing members of my fraternity who hold leadership positions now and members who have held leadership positions in the past.

Incorrect: I have been working at the Pita Pit for a year and a half now, and have gained the experience and the knowledge of the business to write an employee manual.

Correct: I have been working at the Pita Pit for a year and a half now, and I have gained the experience and the knowledge of the business to write an employee manual.

Also correct: I have been working at the Pita Pit for a year and a half now and have gained the experience and the knowledge of the business to write an employee manual.

How Do I Punctuate Parenthetical Elements?

Set off parenthetical elements with commas.

She, however, is not afraid of them.

She, on the other hand, is not afraid of them.

We see, though, that she is small.

We know, for example, that tomatoes are rich in vitamin C.

Evolution, so far as we know, is absolutely correct.

A parenthetical element may appear at the beginning of a sentence. In that case, set it off with a comma. (In doing so, you will be following the rule of using a comma after an introductory element.)

However, she is not afraid of them.

On the other hand, she is not afraid of them.

For example, we know that tomatoes are rich in vitamin C.

So far as we know, evolution is absolutely correct.

A parenthetical element may appear at the beginning of the second of two closely related independent clauses joined by a semicolon; in that case, set it off with a comma.

The Democrats believe this; however, the Republicans believe that.

The Democrats believe this; on the other hand, the Republicans believe that.

Many foods are good for you; for example, tomatoes are rich in vitamin C.

Sometimes, a word that can be used as a parenthetical element is NOT used as a parenthetical element.

However big and strong the guys are, she is not afraid of them.

Though she is small, she is fierce.

How Do I Make a Dash?

There is a difference between a dash and a hyphen. A hyphen is shorter.

Dash —

Hyphen -

To make a dash on a Macintosh, simultaneously press these keys: shift — option — hyphen.

If you can't figure out how to make a dash on your computer, use the Help menu. If that doesn't work, use two hyphens to represent a dash.

Dash --

How Do I Make Curly Quotation Marks Curve in the Right Direction?

When quoting Mark Twain or Shakespeare or poetry, you may need to write words such as these:

'tis 't

Of course, these words mean “it is” or “it.”

A question arises about how to make the first curly quote curve the correct way. After all, usually the quotation marks will come out like this:

‘tis ‘t

Here is how to make curly quotes curve in the right direction:

1. Type any letter.

i

2. Type the word that begins with a quotation mark.

i'tis i't

3. Delete the unneeded letter.

'tis 't

That way, the curly quote will curve in the correct direction.

What are Some Common Types of Sentences?

Simply knowing a few terms and a few types of sentences can be useful. If you know what some types of correctly punctuated sentence look like, you can recognize those types of sentences in your writing and know that they are correctly punctuated.

An independent clause is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a sentence.

Ex: I saw Marcus Garvey hit three home runs in one game.

An independent clause may be joined to an introductory clause. (**Note:** after an introductory clause, you should use a comma.)

Ex: On a hot June afternoon, I saw Marcus Garvey hit three home runs in one game.

Two closely related independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon.

Ex: The Yankees are in first place; the Mets are in last place.

Two independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon, a connecting word or phrase such as *however*, *moreover*, or *as a result*, and a comma.

Ex: The Yankees are in first place; however, the Mets are in last place.

Two independent clauses may be joined with a comma and a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, or *yet*.

Ex: The Yankees are in first place, but the Mets are in last place.

Of course, these are just a few of the many patterns in which correctly punctuated complete sentences can be formed.

Don't Make the Errors Below

Common Error #1: Comma Splice — Two Independent Clauses Joined by a Comma Only

The Yankees are in first place, the Mets are in last place.

Common Error #2: Fused (aka Run-On) Sentence — Two Independent Clauses Not Joined by Any Punctuation

The Yankees are in first place the Mets are in last place.

How Can I Recognize and Correct Dangling Modifiers?

Definition

Dangling modifiers are dependent structures that are related to the wrong word in a sentence.

Example No. 1

The following sentence says that the Courthouse was walking down Court Street:

Walking down Court Street, the Courthouse glittered in the sun.

The clause “Walking down Court Street” modifies what follows it: “the Courthouse.” Clearly, this is wrong—the Courthouse was not walking down Court street.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who was walking down the street.

Walking down Court Street, I saw the Courthouse glittering in the sun.

Example No. 2

The following sentence says that the radio washed the dishes:

After washing the dishes, the radio was turned on.

The clause “After washing the dishes” modifies what follows it: “the radio.” Clearly, this is wrong—the radio did not wash the dishes.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who washed the dishes.

After Robert washed the dishes, he turned on the radio.

Example No. 3

The following sentence says that a dead opossum was driving on a dirt road.

I saw a dead opossum driving on a dirt road.

The clause “driving on a country road” modifies what is close to it: “a dead opossum.” Clearly, this is wrong—a dead opossum did not drive on a dirt road.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who was driving on a dirt road.

While driving on a dirt road, I saw a dead opossum.

Example No. 4

The following sentence says that the police were allegedly smuggling cocaine.

Allegedly smuggling massive quantities of drugs, the FBI arrested the suspect.

The clause “Allegedly smuggling massive quantities of drugs” modifies what follows it: “the police.” Clearly, this is wrong—the FBI did not smuggle massive quantities of drugs.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who was smuggling massive quantities of drugs.

Allegedly smuggling massive quantities of drugs, the suspect was arrested by the FBI.

The FBI arrested the suspect, who was allegedly smuggling massive quantities of drugs.

More Examples

Dangling Modifier (this sentence doesn’t identify what is lacking accurate, up-to-date information):

By not having accurate, up-to-date information for the cadets, problems continually arise.

Correct Sentence:

Because the manual does not have accurate, up-to-date information for the cadets, problems continually arise.

Note: One way to avoid dangling modifiers is to follow this rule: Keep related words together.

How Do I Recognize and Correct Comma Splices?

A comma splice consists of two independent clauses that are connected with a comma only.

Ex: Odysseus goes to Ithaca, Aeneas goes to Italy.

Ex: Hector is a good husband, Paris is a bad husband.

Note: An “independent clause” is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

You may correct a sentence with a comma splice in several ways:

1. Make two sentences out of it.

Odysseus goes to Ithaca. Aeneas goes to Italy.

Hector is a good husband. Paris is a bad husband.

2. Keep the comma, but join the sentences together with a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, or *yet*.

Odysseus goes to Ithaca, but Aeneas goes to Italy.

Hector is a good husband, and Paris is a bad husband.

3. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon.

Odysseus goes to Ithaca; Aeneas goes to Italy.

Hector is a good husband; Paris is a bad husband.

4. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon, a transition word such as *however* or *moreover*, and a comma.

Odysseus goes to Ithaca; however, Aeneas goes to Italy.

Hector is a good husband; however, Paris is a bad husband.

5. Make one of the independent clauses a subordinate clause.

Although Odysseus goes to Ithaca, Aeneas goes to Italy.

Although Hector is a good husband, Paris is a bad husband.

6. If relevant, use a dash.

Odysseus goes to Ithaca—Aeneas goes to Italy.

Hector is a good husband—Paris is a bad husband.

How Do I Recognize and Correct Comma Splices?

A comma splice consists of two independent clauses that are connected with a comma only.

Ex: Sally went to the movies, Bill went to the dance.

Ex: Bottom is a fool, Puck is a trickster.

Note: An “independent clause” is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

You may correct a sentence with a comma splice in several ways:

1. Make two sentences out of it.

Sally went to the movies. Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool. Puck is a trickster.

2. Keep the comma, but join the sentences together with a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, or *yet*.

Sally went to the movies, but Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool, and Puck is a trickster.

3. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon.

Sally went to the movies; Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool; Puck is a trickster.

4. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon, a transition word such as *however* or *moreover*, and a comma.

Sally went to the movies; however, Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool; however, Puck is a trickster.

5. Make one of the independent clauses a subordinate clause.

Although Sally went to the movies, Bill went to the dance.

Although Bottom is a fool, Puck is a trickster.

6. If relevant, use a dash.

Sally went to the movies—Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool—Puck is a trickster.

How Do I Recognize and Correct Run-on Sentences?

Definition

A run-on sentence consists of two independent clauses that are connected without any punctuation.

Ex: Hector is a good husband Paris is a bad husband.

Note: An “independent clause” is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

How to Correct a Run-on Sentence

You may correct a run-on sentence in several ways:

1. Make two sentences out of it.

Hector is a good husband. Paris is a bad husband.

2. Join the sentences together with a comma and a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, or *yet*.

Hector is a good husband, and Paris is a bad husband.

3. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon.

Hector is a good husband; Paris is a bad husband.

4. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon, a transition word such as *however* or *moreover*, and a comma.

Hector is a good husband; however, Paris is a bad husband.

5. Make one of the independent clauses a subordinate clause.

Although Hector is a good husband, Paris is a bad husband.

6. If appropriate, use a dash.

Hector is a good husband—Paris is a bad husband.

The way that you correct a run-on sentence will depend on the context of the sentence.

How Do I Avoid Wordiness?

Wordy: Due to the fact that you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Not Wordy: Because you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Wordy: In spite of the fact that she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Not Wordy: Although she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Wordy: Despite the fact that she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Not Wordy: Although she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Wordy: For the reason that you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Not Wordy: Because you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Wordy: The reason that the problem exists is because

Not Wordy: The problem exists because

Wordy: At this point in time, I want to get married.

Not Wordy: At this time, I want to get married.

Also Not Wordy: Right now, I want to get married.

Wordy: For a long period of time, I have wanted to get married.

Not Wordy: For a long time, I have wanted to get married.

Wordy: You should go get the pitcher of water.

Not Wordy: You should get the pitcher of water.

Wordy: Because of the fact that I went to college, I am deep in debt.

Not Wordy: Because I went to college, I am deep in debt.

Wordy: It has come to my attention that

Not Wordy: I have learned

Wordy: In the lease, it states

Not Wordy: The lease states

Wordy: In spite of the fact that he is rich, he is cheap.

Not Wordy: Although he is rich, he is cheap.

You should be aware that the phrases *there are* and *there is* and *it is* are often wordy and can be deleted.

Wordy: There are three reasons why you should accept my recommendations.

Not Wordy: You should accept my recommendations for three reasons.

Wordy: There are three recommendations that I wish to make.

Not Wordy: I wish to make three recommendations.

Wordy: When I started working in the chemistry lab, there were several techniques that I did not know.

Not Wordy: When I started working in the chemistry lab, I did not know several techniques.

Wordy: My guidebook will be especially helpful when new employees have questions and there is no one around to answer them.

Not Wordy: My guidebook will be especially helpful when new employees have questions and no one is around to answer them.

Avoid Beginning Too Many Sentences in a Row with the Word “I”

1. Vary sentence length and structure and beginnings.

Once in a while, use an introductory clause, or do something else to make a sentence different from the sentences near it.

2. Don’t begin too many sentences (or paragraphs) in a row with the word “I.”

Bad:

I have enclosed a copy of my resume and a list of references. I hope for the opportunity to come in and meet with you personally to further discuss my qualifications for this job. I can be reached during all times of the day at (740) 593-1234.

Better:

If you would like more information about my qualifications, please see the enclosed resume and list of references. I hope for the opportunity to come in and meet with you personally to further discuss my qualifications for this job. Please contact me any time of the day at (740) 593-1234.

Simply knowing a few terms and a few types of sentences can be useful. If you know what some types of correctly punctuated sentence look like, you can recognize those types of sentences in your writing and know that they are correctly punctuated.

An independent clause is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a sentence.

Ex: I saw Sarah Hughes win the gold medal at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

An independent clause may be joined to an introductory clause. (**Note:** after an introductory clause, you should use a comma.)

Ex: At the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, I saw Sarah Hughes win the gold medal.

Two closely related independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon.

Ex: Sarah Hughes won the gold medal in 2002; Tara Lipinsky won the gold medal in 1998.

Two independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon, a connecting word or phrase such as *therefore*, *however*, *moreover*, or *as a result*, and a comma.

Ex: Sarah Hughes won the gold medal in 2002; earlier, Tara Lipinsky won the gold medal.

Two independent clauses may be joined with a comma and a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, or *yet*.

Ex: Sarah Hughes won the gold medal in 2002, but Tara Lipinsky won the gold medal in 1998.

Common Knowledge

What is Common Knowledge?

Common knowledge is knowledge that is widely known. It consists of facts that many, many people know. These facts appear over and over in reference guides such as dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Does Common Knowledge Need to Be Cited in Your Papers?

It depends.

Common knowledge consists of facts. If the facts are put in your own words, commonly known facts do not need to be cited. Here are some examples of commonly known facts:

John F. Kennedy died in 1963.
John F. Kennedy was Catholic.

Important: Common knowledge does not consist of words arranged in a particular pattern. In other words, you can't copy part of an encyclopedia article (or other source) and paste it into your paper without properly citing the source, including using quotation marks (for short quotes) or block format (for long quotes). If you were to copy part of an encyclopedia article (or other source) and paste it into your paper without using quotation marks and without citing the source, you would be committing plagiarism. Someone worked hard to write the encyclopedia article (or other source) and that person (or the person's organization) must get credit for that work.

However, if you take some commonly known facts from the encyclopedia article (or other source) and some commonly known facts from other sources and write them in your own words, then you do not need to cite the sources.

An Example

The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, 2001-07, contains this information at the beginning of its article on John F. Kennedy:

1917–63, 35th President of the United States (1961–63), b. Brookline, Mass.; son of Joseph P. Kennedy.

Early Life

While an undergraduate at Harvard (1936–40) he served briefly in London as secretary to his father, who was ambassador there. His Harvard honors thesis on the British failure to judge the threat of Nazi Germany was published as *Why England Slept* (1940). Enlisting in the navy in Sept., 1941, he became commander of a PT boat in the Pacific in World War II. In action off the Solomon Islands (Aug., 1943), his boat, PT 109, was sunk, and Kennedy was credited with saving the life of at least one of his crew.

The facts recounted here are common knowledge; however, you cannot copy these words and paste them in your paper without properly citing the source, including using quotation marks (for short quotes) or block format (for long quotes). If you do that, you are guilty of plagiarism.

In addition, you cannot copy these words and paste them in your paper, and then change one or a few words and not properly cite the source, including using quotation marks (for short quotes) or block format (for long quotes). If you do that, you are guilty of plagiarism.

How Can I Avoid Plagiarism?

Obviously, if you quote word for word, you must use quotation marks (for short quotes) or block format (for long quotes) and you must properly cite the source.

Chances are, what you should do is to consult other sources about John F. Kennedy and find other commonly known facts about him. Then, when you write about his early life, write without consulting your sources. Check to make sure that you are not inadvertently quoting one or more of your sources and make sure that what you write is commonly known facts. If you have used your own words and have used only commonly known facts, you will be OK.

Here are some commonly known facts about John F. Kennedy:

John F. Kennedy was born in 1917, and he died in 1963.

John F. Kennedy was the 35th President of the United States.

John F. Kennedy was born in Brookline, Massachusetts.

John F. Kennedy was the son of Joseph P. Kennedy.

John F. Kennedy was of Irish Catholic descent.

John F. Kennedy attended Harvard University and graduated in 1940.

After graduating from Harvard, John F. Kennedy joined the United States Navy.

In 1943, while John F. Kennedy was in the Navy, a Japanese destroyer sank the PT boat he commanded. He led the survivors to safety and became a war hero.

John F. Kennedy became a Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts.

From 1953 until 1960, John F. Kennedy was a Democratic Senator from Massachusetts.

All of the facts above are commonly known and appear in many, many reference sources. However, you can't simply copy and paste them in one of your papers without giving this handout and me credit. If you were to copy and paste them in one of your papers without giving this handout and me credit, you would be guilty of plagiarism.

Assignment

Take the commonly known facts above and use them to write a paragraph about John F. Kennedy. Remember to vary your sentence length (don't use lots of very short sentences), sentence structure (once in a while, use an introductory clause, or join two independent clauses together), and sentence beginnings (don't begin lots of sentences with "John F. Kennedy"). If you use your own words, you do not need to cite anything because all of the facts listed above are commonly known. In your paragraph, use most of the facts above.

Handouts for Specific Authors

How Do I Use Apostrophes Correctly? (Homer's *Iliad*)

Do I need apostrophes to make words plural?

Answer: No, you do not.

Ex: Most of the Achaeans support the war against the Trojans.

Ex: Among the allies of Troy are the Lycians.

Ex: The Trojans became ancestors of the Romans.

Note: If the word you wish to make plural ends in -s, you will normally add -es to make it plural:

the Joneses = more than one Jones

How do I make singular words possessive?

Answer: Add an apostrophe and an -s.

Ex: Hector's character is very sympathetic.

Ex: Agamemnon's leadership is often poor.

Ex: Nestor's advice is usually very good.

Ex: Paris's love for Helen is physical

Ex: Achilles's anger may or may not be excessive

Ex: Odysseus's reputation as a good orator was well deserved.

Optional: If the word does end in -s, then you may add only an apostrophe if you choose.

Also correct: Paris' love for Helen is physical.

Also correct: Achilles' anger may or may not be excessive.

Also correct: Odysseus' reputation as a good orator was well deserved.

How do I make plural words possessive?

Answer, part 1: If the word does not end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s.

Ex: The children's coats are missing.

Answer, part 2: If the word does end in -s, add an apostrophe only.

Ex: The Achaeans' reputation as fighters is very good.

Ex: The Trojans' reputation as fighters is very good.

Homer Checklist

Check to make sure that you are not making these common errors.

- Make sure that book titles are underlined or italicized.

Iliad

Odyssey

Aeneid

- Make sure that foreign words are underlined or italicized.

xenia

kleos

aristeia

- Make sure that you use numbers to refer to books and lines that you cite in your paper.

(5.14-15) = Book 5, lines 14-15

- Make sure that you use MLA style when quoting Homer. See my handout on “How Should I Quote Poetry in Homer’s Epic Poems?”

- Make sure that you use a dash—not a hyphen—when a dash is needed.

Dashes are longer than hyphens.
— is longer than -

- Make sure that you use a hyphen when a hyphen is needed (as when you put two words together to form an adjective that appears before the noun it modifies).

Epic poems are thought-provoking literature.

- Make sure that you use a comma after an introductory element.

Although Odysseus is a greater individualist, Aeneas is a greater leader.

- Make sure that you put commas and periods inside quotation marks—this is the American style.

“Hi,” said Sally. George replied, “Hello.”

- Make sure you proofread well. Make sure you spell words correctly (double-check difficult-to-spell names) and use apostrophes, commas, etc. correctly.

- Make sure you do a spelling check one final time before printing your paper. Often, a writer will misspell a word during revision.

- Refer to books using this style: Book 1, Books 23-24 (Note that “Book(s)” is capitalized.)

How Do I Quote Poetry in Homer's Epic Poems?

Important Notes:

- 1) For information about the MLA style of using quotations, see Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*. See especially the section titled "Integrating Literary Quotations."
- 2) An easy way to see how to quote such authors as Homer is simply to look at the introductions of the books and see how the author of the introduction quotes Homer.
- 3) Your major papers will be double-spaced.

How to Indicate Which Lines are Being Quoted

When citing either long or short passages from Homer's epic poems, give the book and the line numbers. For example, (5.24-27) says that lines 24-27 from Book 5 are being quoted. Please note that a dot separates the book from the line numbers. Also note that no space follows the dot.

Warning: Be aware that one style is used for quoting short passages and a different style is used for quoting long passages. Do not mix the two styles up.

How to Quote Short Passages of Poetry (Three Lines or Fewer)

- When quoting three or fewer lines of poetry, run them in with your text. (This is MLA style.)
- Use a slash mark to separate the lines of poetry.
- Use a blank space before and after the slash mark.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Use numbers to indicate book and lines.
- Use quotation marks.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example:

Chryses asks Agamemnon to accept a ransom for his daughter at the beginning of the *Iliad*: "Just set my daughter free, my dear one ... here, / accept these gifts, this ransom. Honor the god / who strikes from worlds away — the son of Zeus, Apollo!" (1.22-24).

Homer calls on the Muse to help him in the *Iliad* when he says, "Begin, Muse, when the two first broke and clashed, / Agamemnon lord of men and brilliant Achilles" (1.7-8).

A period will follow the end parentheses of the citation. At the end of the quotation (before the end quotation marks), no period or comma appears. However, if a question mark or an exclamation point appears in the original passage, make it part of the quotation.

How to Quote Long Passages of Poetry (Four Lines or More)

- When quoting four lines or more of poetry, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraphs.
- Do not center the lines of poetry.
- Do not use quotation marks unless they appear in the original lines of poetry or you are quoting dialogue.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Use numbers to indicate book and lines.
- Use a colon to introduce a long quotation.
- Do not use slashes unless they appear in the original text.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example, the below quotation is correct. It is quoted as poetry—the lines break exactly where they break in the poem.

Her father, Chryses, asks to ransom his daughter, saying:

“Agamemnon, Menelaus — all Argives geared for war!
 May the gods who hold the halls of Olympus give you
 Priam’s city to plunder, then safe passage home.
 Just set my daughter free, my dear one ... here,
 accept these gifts, this ransom. Honor the god
 who strikes from worlds away — the son of Zeus, Apollo!” (1.19-24)

- Be sure capitalization remains the same as in the original source.
- Note that no quotation marks are needed unless they appear in the original source or you are quoting dialogue. The indentation shows that the passage is a quotation.
- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out. Make sure that the poetry is quoted as poetry, not as prose. (Each line of the poem should be indented, as above.)

Important Note For All Quotations

- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words and no punctuation marks left out and no misspellings.

How Should I Quote Poetry in Virgil's *Aeneid*?

Note: For information about the MLA style of using quotations, see Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*. See especially the section titled "Integrating Literary Quotations."

How to Indicate Which Lines are Being Quoted

When citing either long or short passages from Virgil's *Aeneid*, give the book and the line numbers. For example, (5.24-27) says that lines 24-27 from Book 5 are being quoted. Please note that a dot separates the book from the line numbers. Also note that no space follows the dot.

Warning: Be aware that one style is used for quoting short passages and a different style is used for quoting long passages. Do not mix the two styles up.

How to Quote Short Passages of Poetry (Three Lines or Fewer)

- When quoting three or fewer lines of poetry, run them in with your text. (This is MLA style.)
- Use a slash mark to separate the lines of poetry.
- Use a blank space before and after the slash mark.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Use numbers to indicate book and lines.
- Use quotation marks.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

Two examples:

The first line of the *Aeneid* tells the audience its theme: "I sing of warfare and a man at war" (1.1).

Virgil asks about the anger of Juno, "Can anger / Black as this prey on the minds of heaven?" (1.18-19).

- A period will follow the end parentheses of the citation. At the end of the quotation (before the end quotation marks), no period or comma appears. However, if a question mark or an exclamation point appears in the original passage, make it part of the quotation.

How to Quote Long Passages of Poetry (Four Lines or More)

- When quoting four lines or more of poetry, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraphs.
- Do not center the lines of poetry.
- Do not use quotation marks unless they appear in the original lines of poetry or you are quoting dialogue.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Use numbers to indicate book and lines.
- Use a colon to introduce a long quotation.
- Do not use slashes unless they appear in the original text.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.
- Indent long quotations a little more than you indent paragraph beginnings.

For example, the below quotation is correct. It is quoted as poetry—the lines break exactly where they break in the poem.

Virgil asks the Muses for help in telling the causes of Juno's anger:

Tell me the causes now, O Muse, how galled
 In her divine pride, and how sore at heart
 From her old wound, the queen of gods compelled him —
 A man apart, devoted to his mission —
 To undergo so many perilous days
 And enter on so many trials. Can anger
 Black as this prey on the minds of heaven? (1.13-19)

- Be sure capitalization remains the same as in the original source.
- Note that no quotation marks are needed unless they appear in the original source or you are quoting dialogue. The indentation shows that the passage is a quotation.
- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out. Make sure that the poetry is quoted as poetry, not as prose. (Each line of the poem should be indented, as above.)

How Do I Use Apostrophes Correctly? (Virgil's *Aeneid*)

Do I need apostrophes to make words plural?

Answer: No, you do not.

Ex: Most of the Rutulians support the war against the Trojans.

Ex: Among the allies of Aeneas are the Etruscans.

Ex: The Trojans became ancestors of the Romans.

Note: If the word you wish to make plural ends in -s, you will normally add -es to make it plural:

the Joneses = more than one Jones

How do I make singular words possessive?

Answer: Add an apostrophe and an -s.

Ex: Dido's love for Aeneas is excessive.

Ex: Camilla's ability as a warrior is great.

Ex: Evander's advice is usually very good.

Ex: Aeneas's *pietas* is remarkable

Ex: Ascanius's age varies in the *Aeneid*

Ex: Mezentius's reputation as a tyrant is evil.

Optional: If the word does end in -s, then you may add only an apostrophe if you choose.

Also correct: Aeneas' *pietas* is remarkable.

Also correct: Ascanius' age varies in the *Aeneid*.

Also correct: Mezentius' reputation as a tyrant is evil.

How do I make plural words possessive?

Answer, part 1: If the word does not end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s.

Ex: The children's coats are missing.

Answer, part 2: If the word does end in -s, add an apostrophe only.

Ex: The Trojans' reputation as fighters is very good.

Ex: The Etruscans' reputation as fighters is very good.

How Do I Use Quotations When Writing About Dante's *Divine Comedy*?

Important Notes

- 1) For information about the MLA style of using quotations, see Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*. See especially the section titled "Integrating Literary Quotations."
- 2) Your major papers will be double-spaced.
- 3) Use a Works Cited list.

The work being cited list for all of the quotations in this section is this:

Dante. *The Divine Comedy. Volume 1: Inferno*. Trans. Mark Musa. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

Warning: Be aware that one style is used for quoting short passages and a different style is used for quoting long passages. Do not mix the two styles up.

How to Quote Short Passages of Poetry (Three Lines or Fewer)

- When quoting three or fewer lines of poetry, run them in with your text. (This is MLA style.)
- Use a slash mark to separate the lines of poetry.
- Use a blank space before and after the slash mark.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Make sure the reader knows which book and canto are being cited.
- Put the page number in parentheses.
- Use quotation marks.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example:

Canto 1 of Dante's *Inferno* begins in this way: "Midway along the journey of our life / I woke up to find myself in a dark wood, / for I had wandered off from the straight path" (67).

In Canto 3 of Dante's *Inferno*, we see the sign over the gate of Hell, the last three lines of which read: "BEFORE ME NOTHING BUT ETERNAL THINGS / WERE MADE, AND I SHALL LAST ETERNALLY. / ABANDON EVERY HOPE, ALL YOU WHO ENTER" (89).

- A period will follow the end parentheses of the citation. At the end of the quotation (before the end quotation marks), no period or comma appears. However, if a question mark or an exclamation point appears in the original passage, make it part of the quotation.

How to Quote Long Passages of Poetry (Four Lines or More)

- When quoting four lines or more of poetry, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraph beginnings.
- Do not center the lines of poetry.
- Do not use quotation marks unless they appear in the original lines of poetry or you are quoting dialogue.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Use a colon to introduce a long quotation.
- Do not use slashes unless they appear in the original text.
- Make sure the reader knows which book and canto are being cited.
- Put the page number in parentheses. No period will follow the final parenthesis.
- Do not use quotation marks unless you are quoting dialogue and the quotation marks appear in your source.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example, the below quotation is correct. It is quoted as poetry—the lines break exactly where they break in the poem.

Canto 1 of Dante's *Inferno* begins in this way:

Midway along the journey of our life
 I woke up to find myself in a dark wood,
 for I had wandered off from the straight path.
 How hard it is to tell what it was like,
 this wood of wilderness, savage and stubborn
 (the thought of it brings back all my old fears),
 a bitter place! (67)

In Canto 3 of Dante's *Inferno*, we see the sign over the gate of Hell, which reads:

I AM THE WAY INTO THE DOLEFUL CITY,
 I AM THE WAY INTO ETERNAL GRIEF,
 I AM THE WAY TO A FORSAKEN RACE.
 JUSTICE IT WAS THAT MOVED MY GREAT CREATOR;
 DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE CREATED ME,

AND HIGHEST WISDOM JOINED WITH PRIMAL LOVE.
BEFORE ME NOTHING BUT ETERNAL THINGS
WERE MADE, AND I SHALL LAST ETERNALLY.
ABANDON EVERY HOPE, ALL YOU WHO ENTER. (89)

- Be sure capitalization remains the same as in the original source. The sign over the gate of Hell appears in all capital letters in the text, so it appears in all capital letters here.
- Note that no quotation marks are needed unless they appear in the original source or you are quoting dialogue. The indentation shows that the passage is a quotation.
- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out. Make sure that the poetry is quoted as poetry, not as prose. (Each line of the poem should be indented, as above.)

How to Quote Short Passages of Prose (Four Lines or Fewer)

You may find yourself quoting Mark Musa or a literary critic. If you do, follow these rules for short passages of prose (four lines or fewer):

- When quoting four or fewer lines of prose, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraphs. (This is MLA style.)
- Do not use a slash mark to separate the lines of prose.
- Quote prose correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Make sure the reader knows which book and canto are being cited.
- Put the page number in parentheses. No period will follow the final parenthesis.
- Do not use quotation marks unless you are quoting dialogue and the quotation marks appear in your source.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example:

In his notes on Canto 5 of Dante's *Inferno*, Mark Musa points out about Francesca and Paolo, "Their temporary pleasure together in lust has become their own particular torment in Hell" (119).

How to Quote Long Passages of Prose (Five Lines or More)

You may find yourself quoting Mark Musa or a literary critic. If you do, follow these rules for long passages of prose (five lines or more):

- When quoting five or more lines of prose, run them in with your text. (This is MLA style.)
- Use a slash mark to separate the lines of poetry.
- Use a blank space before and after the slash mark.

- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Make sure the reader knows which book and canto are being cited.
- Put the page number in parentheses.
- Use quotation marks.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example:

In his notes on Canto 5 of Dante's *Inferno*, Mark Musa points out about Francesca and Paolo:

Many critics, taken in like the Pilgrim by Francesca's smooth speech, have asserted that she and Paolo in their love have "conquered Hell" because they are still together. But their togetherness is certainly part of their punishment. The ever-silent, weeping Paolo is surely not happy with their state, and Francesca coolly alludes to Paolo with the impersonal "that one" (*costui*) or "this one" (*questi*). She never mentions his name. . . . Their temporary pleasure together in lust has become their own particular torment in Hell. (118-119)

- Be sure capitalization remains the same as in the original source. The sign over the gate of Hell appears in all capital letters in the text, so it appears in all capital letters here.
- Note that no quotation marks are needed unless they appear in the original source or you are quoting dialogue. The indentation shows that the passage is a quotation.
- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out. Make sure that the poetry is quoted as poetry, not as prose. (Each line of the poem should be indented, as above.)

Important Note For All Quotations

- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words and no punctuation marks left out and no misspellings.
- If you leave out part of a quotation, use an ellipsis (...). For example, I used an ellipsis in the example of a long prose quotation above.
- If you add an editorial comment to a quotation, use brackets.

How Do I Use Apostrophes Correctly? (Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*)

Do I need apostrophes to make words plural?

Answer: No, you do not.

Ex: The Capulets held an old, accustomed feast the night that Romeo and Juliet met.

Ex: The Capulets and the Montagues are feuding.

How do I make singular words possessive?

Answer: Add an apostrophe and an -s.

Ex: Romeo's love for Juliet was passionate.

Ex: Juliet's love for Romeo was passionate.

Ex: Lady Capulet's desire is for Juliet to be married.

Ex: Lady Montague's desire is for her husband to be safe.

Ex: Paris's love for Juliet was true.

Optional: If the word does end in -s, then you may add only an apostrophe if you choose.

Ex: Paris' love for Juliet was true.

How do I make plural words possessive?

Answer, part 1: If the word does not end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s.

Ex: The children's coats are missing.

Answer, part 2: If the word does end in -s, add an apostrophe only.

Ex: Romeo and Juliet met at the Capulets' feast. (The feast was held by Capulet *and* Lady Capulet, so we need the plural.)

Ex: The Montagues' marriage is apparently good.

How Do I Quote Poetry in Shakespeare?

How to Quote Long Passages of Poetry (Four Lines or More)

- When quoting more than four lines of poetry, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraphs. (This is MLA style.)
- Do not center the lines of poetry.
- Do not use quotation marks unless they appear in the original lines of poetry.
- Be aware that some dialogue in plays by Shakespeare is poetry and must be quoted as poetry.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Tell the reader the page number of the quoted passage. (However, when quoting Shakespeare, use numbers to indicate act, scene, and lines.)

For example, the below quotation is correct. It is quoted as poetry — the lines break exactly where they break in the poem.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Titania says:

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest. (2.2.1-8)

Another correct quotation:

Macbeth says:

No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings! (3.1.64-70)

- Be sure capitalization remains the same as in the original source. If the original source capitalizes the beginning of each line, your quotation should do the same.
- Note that no quotation marks are needed unless they appear in the original source. The indentation shows that the passage is a quotation.

- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out. Make sure that the poetry is quoted as poetry, not as prose. (Each line of the poem should be indented, as above.) Tell the reader the page number of the quoted passage.

How to Quote Short Passages of Poetry (Three Lines or Fewer)

- When quoting four or fewer lines of poetry, run them in with your text.
- Use a slash mark to separate the lines of poetry.
- Use a blank space before and after the slash mark.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Tell the reader the page number of the quoted passage. (However, when quoting Shakespeare, use numbers to indicate act, scene, and lines.)
- Use quotation marks.

For example:

When Romeo first sees Juliet in the Capulets' garden, he says, "But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? / It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!" (2.2.2-3).

A Note on How to Tell Poetry from Prose in Shakespeare

Shakespeare uses both poetry and prose in his plays. A quick way to differentiate between the two is to look at capitalization. If each line of a passage begins with a capital letter, it is poetry; if it does not, it is prose.

How Can I Identify Very Long Lines of Poetry as Being One Line?

Occasionally, a line of poetry is too long to be set as a single line in a copy of one of William Shakespeare's plays, so the last word or two is printed below the first, long line. However, you may still quote it as a single line.

For example, the Signet Classic edition of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has this:

Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.
 Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!
 Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet
 air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear. (1.1.181-185)

The word "air" is printed on a line of its own because the width of the page it is printed on is not long enough for the whole line. How do we know this? We can count the lines. Immediately preceding this quotation, Hermia says, "God speed fair Helena! Whither away?" That line is marked 180. If we count out the lines of Helena's speech, we find out that "Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet air" is line 183. If "Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet" was line 183, and if "air" was line 184, we would have too many lines. After all, "More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear" would have to be line 185, but the book clearly identifies "When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear" as line 185.

In your papers, you may quote it as a single line.

When Hermia calls Helena fair, Helena replies:

Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.
 Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!
 Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear. (1.1.181-185)

How Do I Quote Prose in Shakespeare?

Do quote prose with line breaks the way you quote poetry in Shakespeare's plays. To make it easy for scholars to refer to passages in Shakespeare's plays, passages of prose have also been given lines. Therefore, use the line breaks that appear in the play and cite the passages of prose just like you do with poetry.

How to Quote Short Passages of Prose (Four Lines or Fewer)

- When quoting four or fewer lines of prose, run them in with your text. (This is MLA style.) Note: The four lines or fewer refer to lines in your paper, not to lines in the books you are quoting.
- Do not use a slash mark to separate the lines of prose.
- Quote prose correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Put the page number in parentheses. A period will follow the final parenthesis.
- Unless the author is identified in the introduction to the quotation, put the author's name in parentheses before the page number. If you are citing more than one work by the author, use an identifying word or words from the title instead of the author's name.
- Do not use quotation marks unless you are quoting dialogue and the quotation marks appear in your source.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

Sample Short Quotation

Here is an example of a short quoted passage of prose from the Signet Classic edition of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*:

When Mercutio has been fatally wounded by Tybalt, he makes a final joke: "Ask / for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave / man" (3.1.98-100).

How to Quote Long Passages of Prose (Five Lines or More)

- When quoting five or more lines of prose, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraphs. (This is MLA style.) Note: The five lines or more refer to lines in your paper, not to lines in the books you are quoting.
- Quote prose correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Put the page number in parentheses. No period will follow the final parenthesis.
- Unless the author is identified in the introduction to the quotation, put the author's name in parentheses before the page number. If you are citing more than one work by the author, use an identifying word or words from the title instead of the author's name).
- Use quotation marks.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

Sample Long Quotation

Here is an example of a longer passage of quoted prose from the Signet Classic edition of *Romeo and Juliet*:

When Mercutio has been fatally wounded by Tybalt, he makes a final joke even as he calls down a plague on both the House of Capulet and the House of Montague:

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide
as a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask
for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave
man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world. A
plague a both your houses! Zounds, a dog, a rat, a
mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! A braggart,
a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arith-
metic! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt
under your arm. (3.1.97-105)

How Do I Use Apostrophes Correctly? (Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*)

Do I need apostrophes to make words plural?

Answer: No, you do not.

Ex: Most of the Bennets attended the ball at Netherfield Park.

Ex: The Gardiners are sensible people.

Ex: The Lucases and the Collinses are united by marriage.

How do I make singular words possessive?

Answer: Add an apostrophe and an -s.

Ex: Miss Bingley's love for Jane was nonexistent.

Ex: Lady Catherine's nose was in everyone's business.

Ex: Miss de Bourgh's health was poor.

Ex: Jane's love for Mr. Bingley was true.

Ex: Mr. Collins's love for Elizabeth was imaginary.

Optional: If the word does end in -s, then you may add only an apostrophe if you choose.

Also correct: Mr. Collins' love for Elizabeth was imaginary.

How do I make plural words possessive?

Answer, part 1: If the word does not end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s.

Ex: The children's coats are missing.

Answer, part 2: If the word does end in -s, add an apostrophe only.

Ex: The Bennets' marriage could be happier. (The marriage is of Mr. *and* Mrs. Bennet, so we need the plural.)

Ex: The Collinses' marriage is apparently satisfactory to both husband and wife.

How Do I Use Apostrophes Correctly? (Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*)

Do I need apostrophes to make words plural?

Answer: No, you do not.

Ex: Most of the Sawyers are good people.

Ex: The Finns are regarded by most people as low and ornery.

Ex: The Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons hate each other.

How do I make singular words possessive?

Answer: Add an apostrophe and an -s.

Ex: Huck's common sense is remarkable.

Ex: Tom's love of adventure novels sometimes leads him to do nonsensical things.

Ex: The king's ability to be mendacious [untruthful] is extraordinary.

Ex: Mary Jane's love for her uncles is true.

Ex: Peter Wilks's daughters are trusting.

Optional: If the word does end in -s, then you may add only an apostrophe if you choose.

Also correct: Peter Wilks' daughters are trusting.

How do I make plural words possessive?

Answer, part 1: If the word does not end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s.

Ex: The geese's honks are annoying.

Answer, part 2: If the word does end in -s, add an apostrophe only.

Ex: The Grangerfords' hatred of the Shepherdsons leads to disaster. (More than one Grangerford is filled with hatred, so we need the plural.)

Ex: The Shepherdsons' hatred of the Grangerfords leads to disaster. (More than one Shepherdson is filled with hatred, so we need the plural.)

How Do I Use Quotations When Writing About Mark Twain?

Important Notes

- 1) For information about the MLA style of using quotations, see Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*. See especially the section titled "Integrating Literary Quotations."
- 2) Your major papers will be double-spaced.
- 3) Use a Works Cited list.

The work being cited list for all of the quotations in this section is this:

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2003.

Warning: Be aware that one style is used for quoting short passages and a different style is used for quoting long passages. Do not mix the two styles up.

How to Quote Short Passages of Prose (Four Lines or Fewer)

- When quoting four or fewer lines of prose, run them in with your text. (This is MLA style.)
Note: The four lines or fewer refer to lines in your paper, not to lines in the books you are quoting.
- Do not use a slash mark to separate the lines of prose.
- Quote prose correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Put the page number in parentheses. A period will follow the final parenthesis.
- Unless the author is identified in the introduction to the quotation, put the author's name in parentheses before the page number. If you are citing more than one work by the author, use an identifying word or words from the title instead of the author's name.
- Do not use quotation marks unless you are quoting dialogue and the quotation marks appear in your source.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example:

Mark Twain has Huckleberry Finn introduce himself in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by saying, "You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter" (1).

Huckleberry Finn introduces himself in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by saying, "You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter" (Twain 1).

How to Quote Long Passages of Prose (Five Lines or More)

- When quoting five or more lines of prose, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraphs. (This is MLA style.) Note: The five lines or more refer to lines in your paper, not to lines in the books you are quoting.
- Quote prose correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Put the page number in parentheses. No period will follow the final parenthesis.
- Unless the author is identified in the introduction to the quotation, put the author's name in parentheses before the page number. If you are citing more than one work by the author, use an identifying word or words from the title instead of the author's name).
- Use quotation marks.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example:

Huckleberry Finn introduces himself in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by saying,

You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. (Twain 1)

Mark Twain has Huckleberry Finn introduce himself in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by saying,

You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. (1)

- Be sure capitalization remains the same as in the original source.
- Note that no quotation marks are needed unless they appear in the original source or you are quoting dialogue. The indentation shows that the passage is a quotation.
- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out.

How to Quote Short Passages of Poetry (Three Lines or Fewer)

- When quoting three or fewer lines of poetry, run them in with your text. (This is MLA style.)
- Use a slash mark to separate the lines of poetry.
- Use a blank space before and after the slash mark.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Put the page number in parentheses.
- Unless the author is identified in the introduction to the quotation, put the author's name in parentheses before the page number. If you are citing more than one work by the author, use an identifying word or words from the title instead of the author's name).
- Use quotation marks.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example:

According to Huckleberry Finn, Emmeline Grangerford wrote very good poetry. This is a short sample: "His soul did from this cold world fly / By falling down a well" (Twain 102).

- A period will follow the end parentheses of the citation. At the end of the quotation (before the end quotation marks), no period or comma appears. However, if a question mark or an exclamation point appears in the original passage, make it part of the quotation.

How to Quote Long Passages of Poetry (Four Lines or More)

- When quoting four lines or more of poetry, indent the lines a little more than you indent the paragraph beginnings.
- Do not center the lines of poetry.
- Do not use quotation marks unless they appear in the original lines of poetry or you are quoting dialogue.
- Quote poetry correctly, both in content and in style. (Quote every word accurately, and use the punctuation that appears in the original quotation.)
- Use a colon to introduce a long quotation if the introduction to the quotation is an independent clause.
- Do not use slashes unless they appear in the original text.
- Put the page number in parentheses. No period will follow the final parenthesis.
- Unless the author is identified in the introduction to the quotation, put the author's name in parentheses before the page number. If you are citing more than one work by the author, use an identifying word or words from the title instead of the author's name).
- Do not use quotation marks unless you are quoting dialogue and the quotation marks appear in your source.
- Put a Works Cited List at the end of your paper. In it, list the edition you are citing and any other works you are citing.

For example, the below quotation is correct. It is quoted as poetry—the lines break exactly where they break in the poem.

According to *Huckleberry Finn*, Emmeline Grangerford wrote very good poetry. This is a sample:

Oh no. Then list with tearful eye,
 Whilst I his fate do tell.
 His soul did from this cold world fly
 By falling down a well. (Twain 102)

- Be sure capitalization remains the same as in the original source.
- Note that no quotation marks are needed unless they appear in the original source or you are quoting dialogue. The indentation shows that the passage is a quotation.
- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words left out. Make sure that the poetry is quoted as poetry, not as prose. (Each line of the poem should be indented, as above.)

Important Note For All Quotations

- Look up the quotation to see that it is quoted correctly, with no words and no punctuation marks left out and no misspellings.
- If you leave out part of a quotation, use an ellipsis (...). For example, I used an ellipsis in the example of a long prose quotation above.
- If you add an editorial comment to a quotation, use brackets.

In-Class Exercises

How Do I Write the Introductory Memo Assignment?

In-Class Exercise

In order to write the introductory memo, you need to know someone else in the course, preferably somebody whom you do not already know. Break up into small groups—no more than four people per group—and take turns talking. Introduce yourself, say something interesting about yourself—perhaps a funny anecdote—and memorize the name and some information about another person so that you can write about that person in your introductory memo.

Sample Introductory Memo

Your introductory memo assignment is to write a short memo introducing yourself to me. The memo format uses headings for To, From, Date, and Re. It does NOT include such lines as “Dear Reader” or “Sincerely.” (Those lines are used in the LETTER format.) See the example below.

“Re” means subject.

In your introductory memo, tell me your non-grade goals for this course and tell me how to contact you during the quarter. In addition, tell me something interesting about someone you met the first day of class. Type your memo. For example:

To: David Bruce
 From: Joe College (ENG 153, 1-2 MTRF)
 Date: Today’s Date
 Re: Introduction of Myself

I am a freshman in the College of Education, and my career goal is to teach science to junior high students. Although I am not an English major, I am a reader.

The best way to contact me during the quarter is through e-mail. My address is jc123456@ohio.edu, and I check my e-mail at least twice daily.

Some interesting facts about myself are that I am an Eagle Scout and I have hiked about half of the Appalachian Trail, which stretches from Georgia to Maine.

On the first day of class, I met Bob Smith, who was a United States Marine. He had to take a wilderness survival course that taught him that bugs are a very good source of protein if you are trapped without food behind enemy lines. As part of the course, Bob and some other soldiers parachuted into the wilderness, where they made good use of their problem-solving skills. As they parachuted into the wilderness, they looked around and noticed a road in the distance. Once they dropped to the earth, they used their compasses to find the road, and then they walked into a town and ate pizza.

In conclusion, I want to say that I am looking forward to this course.

20 Questions

One of the really good things about writing is that you can make yourself more original, wittier, and more interesting than you are in real life. Why? Because you have a chance to think about what you write and to revise what you write. If someone asks you a question in person, it can be hard to think up an original, witty, interesting answer, but if you are emailed a list of questions to answer at your leisure, you can come up with something good.

In-Class Exercise: Break up into small groups and do your best to come up with original, witty, interesting answers to the following questions.

Optional Writing Exercise: Write a memo to me. In the memo, answer the following questions. Try to be original, witty, and interesting.

1. The latest book or movie that made you cry?
2. The fictional character most like you?
3. The greatest album, ever?
4. *Star Trek* or *Star Wars*?
5. Your ideal brain food?
6. You're proud of this accomplishment, but why?
7. You want to be remembered for...?
8. Of those who've come before, the most inspirational are?
9. The creative masterpiece you wish bore your signature?
10. Your hidden talents...?

11. The best piece of advice you actually followed?
12. The best thing you ever bought, stole, or borrowed?
13. You feel best in Armani or Levis or...?
14. Your dinner guest at the Ritz would be?
15. Time travel: where, when and why?
16. Stress management: hit man, spa vacation or Prozac?
17. Essential to life: coffee, vodka, cigarettes, chocolate, or...?
18. Environ of choice: city or country, and where on the map?
19. What do you want to say to the leader of your country?
20. Last but certainly not least, what are you working on, now?

Source of Questions: <Popmatters.com>

What are Clichés, and How Can I Cure Them?

What are Clichés?

According to Maxwell Nurberg, clichés “are generally fixed idiomatic phrases, some of which may have originally been valid, fresh, and colorful but through constant use have become about as personal as a rubber stamp or a mimeographed love letter.” Clichés were original at one time, but now they are predictable.

Cliché examples: Right off the bat, As quiet as a mouse, Avoid him (her, or it) like the plague

Write five clichés:

How Can I Cure Clichés?

1) Simplify the cliché.

For example: “A bolt from the blue” equals a shock.

“Right off the bat” means quickly.

“As quiet as a mouse” means quiet.

Take three of the clichés you have written above and simplify the phrase.

2) Give the cliché a “twist” that changes the meaning of the phrase.

For example:

“Live and let live” can be changed to “Live and let die.”

“Better late than never” can be changed to “Better late than later.”

Can you twist any of your clichés and give it an alteration that changes the meaning of the phrase?

3) Make up an entirely new image or phrase—one you have never heard before, but one expresses the same idea.

For example: Mark Twain could have written, “Miles Hendon was shocked.” Instead, Mark Twain wrote this: Miles Hendon “felt much as a man might who had danced blithely out to enjoy a rainbow, and got struck by lightning.”—From Mark Twain’s *The Prince and the Pauper*

Can you make up an entirely new image or phrase, one you have never heard before, but one that expresses the same idea as one of the clichés you wrote down earlier expressed?

Write Your Own Similes and Metaphors

Definitions of Similes and Metaphors

Source of Definitions: <http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/literacy/PC_met.htm>.

A simile is where two things are directly compared because they share a common feature. The word AS or LIKE is used to compare the two words. E.g. As cold AS a dog's nose

A metaphor also compares two things, but it does so more directly WITHOUT using AS or LIKE. E.g. The shop was a little gold mine.

Examples of Metaphors and Similes

- What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.—Crowfoot, Blackfoot warrior and orator, 1890
- The human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out a tune for a dancing bear, when we hope with our music to move the stars.—Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*
- A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.—Arab Proverb
- A clear conscience is a soft pillow.—German Proverb
- Anger is as a stone cast into a wasp's nest.—Malabar Proverb
- Fortune is a woman; if you neglect her today, do not expect to regain her tomorrow.—French Proverb
- Gray hairs are death's blossoms.—English Proverb

Note: Do not feel that you have to use similes and metaphors in your paper. If they will improve your paper, use them. If they won't improve your paper, don't use them.

Write Your Own Similes and Metaphors

Example:

(About a baseball player) He was as hitless as _____

(About a baseball player) As hitless as the Ramones.

As bald as _____

As crazy as _____

As cool as _____

One Secret of Writing Well is Writing Vividly

One secret of writing well is writing vividly. For example, you could write, “We had always heard that nuns are mean,” and then stop. Or you can write like this:

We had all heard horror stories about the nuns who taught at the Catholic school, how they used yardsticks like broadswords and dipped the edges in salt so they would hurt more and didn’t care if you bled as long as you didn’t drip on the floor. Whenever I had seen nuns, they always seemed quiet and almost nice, but there were Catholic boys so mean they scared bad dogs, and these boys would cross the street and hide in back of a garbage can in terror when they saw Sister Eunicia walking by.—Gary Paulsen, *How Angel Peterson Got His Name and Other Outrageous Tales About Extreme Sports*, p. 57.

Take one of the following sentences and write vividly about that topic.

- My friend was a daredevil.
- My friend was the best-looking boy in high school.
- My friend was the worst driver in the state.

How Can I Recognize and Correct Dangling Modifiers?

Spotting Dangling Modifiers

“To spot a dangling modifier, look for a sentence that begins with a modifier but doesn’t name the person, idea, or thing modified. Readers will think the modifier refers to the subject of the sentence that follows. If it doesn’t, the modifier dangles.”—*The Longman Pocket Writer’s Companion*

Example No. 1

The following sentence says that the Courthouse was walking down Court Street:

Dangling Modifier: Walking down Court Street, the Courthouse glittered in the sun.

The clause “Walking down Court Street” modifies what follows it: “the Courthouse.” Clearly, this is wrong—the Courthouse was not walking down Court Street.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who was walking down the street.

Correct: Walking down Court Street, I saw the Courthouse glittering in the sun.

Example No. 2

The following sentence says that the police tested positive for many and various illegal drugs:

Dangling Modifier: Having tested positive for many and various illegal drugs, the police arrested the suspect.

The clause “Having tested positive for many and various illegal drugs” modifies what follows it: “the police.” Clearly, this is wrong—the police did not test positive for many and various illegal drugs.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to correctly identify who tested positive for many and various illegal drugs.

Correct: Having tested positive for many and various illegal drugs, the suspect was arrested by the police.

Also Correct: After the suspect tested positive for many and various illegal drugs, the police arrested him.

Example No. 3

The following sentence says that my grandfather was still in diapers when he went back to college:

Dangling Modifier: Still in diapers, my grandfather went back to college.

The clause “Still in diapers” modifies what follows it: “my father.” Clearly, this is wrong— my grandfather was not in diapers when he went back to college.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to correctly identify who was still in diapers.

Correct: While I was still in diapers, my grandfather went back to college.

Dangling Modifier Exercise #1

Correct these dangling modifiers:

1. Driving much too fast, the car swerved out of control.
2. By writing my autobiographical essay, readers will be entertained.
3. Working the night shift, the little son and daughter were rarely seen.

Dangling Modifier Exercise #2

Write one or more funny dangling modifiers:

How Do I Use Ethics In Academic Life?

Ethics will be a concern in your professional life. At times, you may have to decide if a certain action you are thinking of doing or a certain communication you are thinking of writing is moral. Therefore, it is a good idea to know some ethical rules and how to apply them to real life.

Mama Bruce's Ethical Rules

The rules of ethics are T-shirt simple, and chances are, your mother is an expert in ethics. I know that my mother was. Here are Mama Bruce's T-shirt simple ethical rules:

- If you are allowed to do it, everyone (in a similar position to yours) should be allowed to do it.
- Treat other people the way that you want to be treated.
- Do actions that have good consequences.

Mama Bruce's Ethical Questions

Along with the ethical rules go ethical questions. These are questions that a person can ask when determining whether an action that person is thinking of doing is moral:

- What would happen if everyone were to do what you are thinking of doing?
- Would you want done to you what you are thinking of doing to other people?
- What are the consequences of the action you are thinking about doing?

Applying the Rules to Real Life: Is Plagiarism Moral?

- What would happen if everyone were to do what you are thinking of doing?
- Would you want done to you what you are thinking of doing to other people?
- What are the consequences of the action you are thinking about doing?
- When is it ethical to use someone else's words and ideas?
- Suppose someone plagiarizes an excellent communication created by an experienced professional working in the field and that communication receives an A. What happens to the student-written papers that would have normally received an A?

Answers to Exercise: Is Plagiarism Moral?

- What would happen if everyone were to do what you are thinking of doing?

If everyone plagiarizes papers, the professor will think of another way to have students write papers that are not plagiarized. For example, a professor friend of mine recently stopped giving take-home exams (the answers to which were sometimes plagiarized) and started giving in-class essay exams. There is a contradiction here. The student makes the rule “I will plagiarize my paper,” but if every student follows the rule, soon it will become impossible to plagiarize. Alternatively, if everyone in a course that requires papers (such as a composition course) plagiarizes, then everyone will receive lower grades, perhaps even F’s.

- Would you want done to you what you are thinking of doing to other people?

Suppose the student writes a truly excellent paper, then later finds that the professor has plagiarized large sections of the paper and published it in a journal. Of course, now the student is unable to publish the paper which the student wrote because the student will be accused of plagiarizing the professor’s paper. Is this fair?

- What are the consequences of the action you are thinking about doing?

One consequence, of course, is that the student will learn much less than the student would have learned if the student had actually done the work. It also means that parents and taxpayers are getting a poor return on the money that they are paying for the student’s education. In addition, a teacher who has been overwhelmed with cases of plagiarism may think of leaving the education field in order to pursue a lucrative and exciting career as an international jewel thief.

- When is it ethical to use someone else’s words and ideas?

Of course, the correct answer is when the student gives credit to the other person.

- Suppose someone plagiarizes an excellent communication created by an experienced professional working in the field and that communication receives an A. What happens to the student-written papers that would have normally received an A?

The standard for an A in the course is likely to go up. If the plagiarized paper gets an A, then the student-written papers that would have normally received an A may receive grades of A- or lower.

Avoid Plagiarism by Using Your Own Words and Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

Source: Dave Simpson, 'I went to her gig and she was wearing a little G-string.' *The Guardian*. 8 August 2008 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/aug/08/popandrock>>.

Following are three quotations by the parents of children who became professional musicians. Choose an anecdote and rewrite it using your own words and giving credit where credit is due. When everyone has finished rewriting an anecdote, break into small groups of three or fewer. Each person will take turns reading the anecdote out loud. The group will then discuss the rewritten anecdote: Is it funny? Has the student writer given credit where credit is due? What kind of credit would be needed if the anecdote appeared in a newspaper article? What kind of credit would need to be given if the anecdote appeared in an essay written for a teacher at Ohio University?

Roy Newman, retired electrical power engineer: father of Colin Newman, singer with Wire

Roy Newman says, "Colin always had a vivid imagination. When he was about five he used to lag behind us with his hand held up making a clicking noise. He told us he was taking his pet horse for a walk. He was always very driven. We once took him and his younger sister Janice to Woolworths so Colin could buy the latest Beatles record. Fifteen minutes later Janice was crying - no sign of Colin. We found him two hours later: he'd run home, climbed in through the bathroom window and was in his room, blaring out the record."

Meat Loaf, rock singer: father of Pearl Aday, rock singer

Meat Loaf says, "Even though she's a woman in a very tough, male-dominated industry, the only time I was concerned was when she went on the road with Mötley Crüe. I went to a gig and she was wearing a little G-string. It was hard to watch. I went up to [bassist] Nikki Sixx and said 'I wanna talk to you NOW!' and scared the hell out of him. But it was a joke."

Ed Marnie, retired Scottish Enterprise development worker: father of Helen Marnie, Ladytron singer

Ed Marnie says, "It is weird being a pop star's parent. At one gig my pal and I were standing with our black Ladytron T-shirts on thinking we were cool and this kid looked at us and said, 'You must be parents.' I was once in a bar and this bloke said he was a big Ladytron fan and had a screensaver of Helen on his computer. I looked at him and said, 'That's my daughter!'"

Answers to Exercise

This is how David Bruce would rewrite all three anecdotes. For a newspaper article, there is no need for the footnote or for a bibliography. For a paper written for an Ohio University professor, I would ask the professor if he or she required the use of the MLA format. If not, I would write it exactly as follows. If I had to use the MLA format, I would use a Works Cited List instead of a bibliography and after each quotation I would put “(Simpson)” in parentheses.

- So what is it like being the parent of a rock star? Dave Simpson of the British newspaper *The Guardian* asked some parents of rock stars just that question. Roy Newman, a retired electrical power engineer, is the father of Colin Newman, a singer with the group Wire. Roy remembers that Colin was a very imaginative child—at age five, he used to walk behind his parents and hold his hand up while making clicking noises with his tongue because he was taking his imaginary horse for a walk. As you would expect, he liked music. His parents took him and Janice, his younger sister, to a store so that Colin could buy the most recent Beatles album. Quickly, Colin turned up missing. Two hours later, they had found him. He had been so eager to listen to the album that he had run home, climbed in through a window, and started playing the album. Meat Loaf’s daughter is named Pearl Aday, the first name coming from the title of an album by Janis Joplin. Meat Loaf, who is himself a rock star, says, “Even though she’s a woman in a very tough, male-dominated industry, the only time I was concerned was when she went on the road with Mötley Crüe.” He attended the concert, and his daughter was wearing a tiny G-string. He says, “I went up to [bassist] Nikki Sixx and said ‘I wanna talk to you NOW!’ and scared the hell out of him. But it was a joke.” Ed Marnie is a retired Scottish Enterprise development worker and the father of Ladytron singer Helen Marnie. He admits, “It is weird being a pop star’s parent. At one gig my pal and I were standing with our black Ladytron T-shirts on thinking we were cool and this kid looked at us and said, ‘You must be parents.’” In addition, Mr. Marnie remembers, “I was once in a bar and this bloke said he was a big Ladytron fan and had a screensaver of Helen on his computer. I looked at him and said, ‘That’s my daughter!’”¹

Bibliography

Source: Dave Simpson, ‘I went to her gig and she was wearing a little G-string.’ *The Guardian*. 8 August 2008 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/aug/08/popandrock>>.

¹ Source: Dave Simpson, ‘I went to her gig and she was wearing a little G-string.’ *The Guardian*. 8 August 2008 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/aug/08/popandrock>>.

Ways of Arguing

One or more of the following points may be relevant to the argument paper that you will write.

Argue on the Basis of Consequences

If something will have bad consequences, we probably ought not to do it. If something will have good consequences, we probably ought to do it. This seems obvious. If hitting yourself on the head with a hammer gives you headaches, I recommend that you stop hitting yourself on the head with a hammer. Ask yourself: What are the consequences of what you are arguing?

Argue on the Basis of the Golden Rule

Here are two formulations of the Golden Rule, one stated positively, and the other stated negatively:

- Treat other people the way you want to be treated.
- Do not treat other people the way that you do not want to be treated.

Ask yourself: Is what you are arguing consistent with the Golden Rule?

Argue on the Basis of Reversibility

One way to find out if something is morally right is to ask if you want something done to you. You may be thinking that you would like other people to be forced to do something, but would you want to be forced to do that thing?

Argue on the Basis that Human Beings are Valuable

To be moral, we ought to treat human beings as valuable, and we ought not to treat other human beings badly. In fancy language, we ought to treat other human beings and ourselves as ends (valuable in itself) rather than as means (something to be used, then tossed aside). Make sure that what you are arguing treats other people with respect.

Argue on the Basis of Happiness

Happiness is good. We have to do some things, such as make a living and pay our bills. We ought to do some things, such as exercise and eat healthily. We want to do some things, maybe even things that other people find silly. As long as the things we want to do don't conflict with the things we have to do and the things we ought to do, go ahead and do them. Ask yourself: Will what you are arguing bring happiness to people, including yourself?

Argue on the Basis of What Would Happen if Everybody Did It

If everybody pirates music, what would happen? Chances are, less new music will be written. If musicians can't make a living from their music, they will have to get money from other sources, including jobs that may not allow them enough time to write and perform good music.

Ethics

Consequences

Consequences are important in determining whether an action is right or wrong. If an act has good consequences, chances are that the act is good.

Happiness

Happiness is important in determining whether an action is right or wrong. If an act makes people happy, chances are that the act is good.

Reversibility

Let's suppose that you need money desperately and that the only way you can acquire that money is to borrow it and make a lying promise that you will pay the money back although you know that you will never be able to do so. The principle would be this: "When you need money, it's ok to make a lying promise that you will pay the money back although you know that you will never be able to do so." Is this principle moral?

"Reversibility" means that what you want to do to another person, that person can also do to you. (In other words, you "reverse" the situation.) You may be willing to make a lying promise to obtain other people's money, but are you willing to allow other people to make lying promises to you in order to obtain your money? Of course not.

Here's another example of reversibility from *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. In the episode "Punch Thy Neighbor," Rob Petrie's neighbor Jerry Helper teases Rob mercilessly about a "bad" show that Rob wrote for *The Alan Brady Show*. Rob tells Jerry that the teasing isn't funny, but Jerry keeps on teasing. Finally, Rob opens his door and yells outside, "Jerry Helper is a rotten dentist." Then Jerry realizes that the teasing isn't funny. Jerry is willing to tease other people, but he doesn't want to be teased himself. Thus the maxim that the teasing is based on isn't reversible.

Treating Other People as Ends, Not Means

The moral philosopher Immanuel Kant formulated a moral rule that he called the categorical imperative. This is one of the ways that he expressed it: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means."

If you treat another person as a means, then you are using that person. For example, a guy unfortunately might be very nice to a woman, sleep with her, then never call her. In this example, the guy is treating the woman as a sex object, not as an end.

If you treat other people as ends, then you are treating them as valuable in themselves. For example, you can treat everybody you meet with common courtesy (which, as you probably know, is no longer common). If you see a parent teaching her young child how to cross the street, you can decide to refrain from jaywalking this one time and thus be a role model for the child. You can also refrain from demonstrating power by ordering around waitresses in a restaurant.

As I hope that you can see, our example of making a lying promise to borrow money fails this formulation of the categorical imperative. If you make a lying promise to borrow money, you are using the person you are borrowing from. You are not treating the person as an end; you are treating the person as a means.

