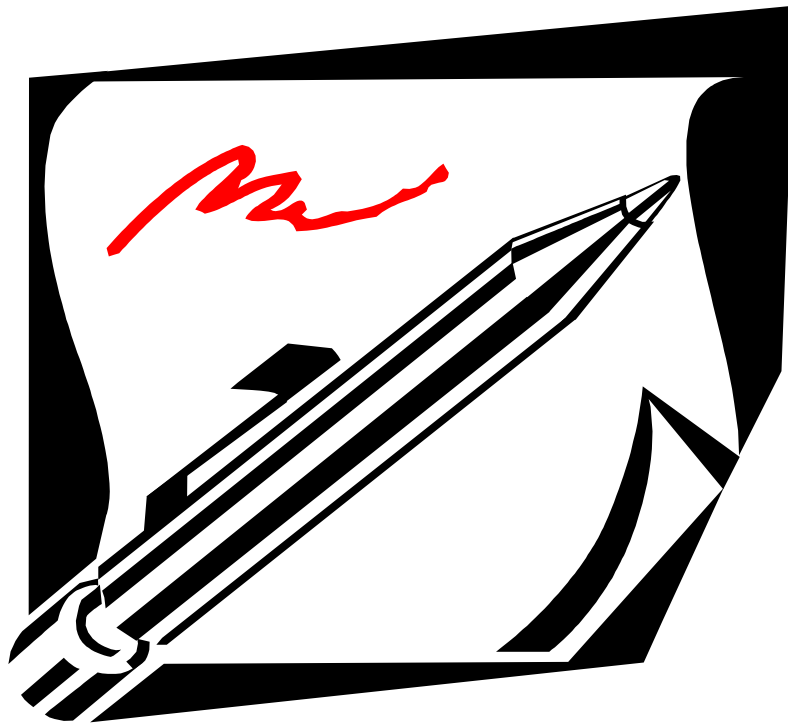


WRITING WITH STYLE



**Writing and Style Manual
Poway Unified School District**

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ELEMENTS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Whether you are writing e-mail to a friend or a formal essay for a class, all writing has several elements in common. The three most important elements to consider are:

- Audience:** Who are you writing to?
Purpose: Why are you writing?
Form: What will the finished piece of writing look like?

Whenever one of these elements changes, it has an impact on each of the others. For instance, if you are writing to a friend, you might choose a casual form, like e-mail or a note. However, if you are writing an essay for a class, you will have a very different purpose and form.

Before you start writing, determine the three elements for your particular writing task.

Audience:

Determining your audience helps you to know what style (formal or informal) your writing should take. It also will help you to understand the level of detail and information your finished piece of writing should contain. Consider:

- Who will be reading this piece of writing?
- Is a formal or informal style more appropriate for this audience?
- What information on this subject does this audience need?
- How much information does this audience already know?

Purpose:

Determining your purpose will help keep you focused as you write. The main purposes of writing are to inform, persuade, and entertain. Why are you writing? Consider:

- What do you want the audience to know when you are done?
- What do you want the audience to believe or agree with?
- What action do you want the audience to take?

Form:

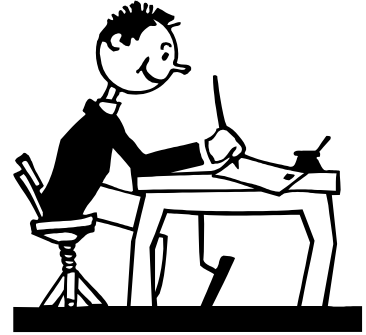
Sometimes your form will be determined by the assignment, such as a research paper or an essay in MLA format. However, sometimes you must decide what form will best accomplish your purpose for your particular audience. Consider:

- Is there a model or format that you are supposed to follow?
- Would formal or informal writing be more appropriate for your audience and purpose?
- How can you best organize your information to have the greatest impact on your audience?

THE WRITING PROCESS

There are five basic stages that we go through when we write. They are:

1. Pre-writing
2. Drafting
3. Revising
4. Editing
5. Publishing



However, it is very important to realize that these are stages, not independent steps. Depending on the writing task and the situation, you may follow these stages in order from start to finish, or you might find yourself going back and revisiting these stages several times before you are done. Also, you will not take every piece of writing you do through all of these stages. See *The Writing Center at Cleveland State University for an interactive diagram with help for each stage of this writing process.* <http://www.csuohio.edu/writingcenter/writproc.html>

Stage 1: Pre-writing

Before you sit down to write something, you need to figure out what you are going to write about. Most of us start with a topic, and then decide what we have to say about this topic. For an essay, you might generate a “working thesis” or a main idea that you would like to explore, and then start collecting information and ideas that relate to that idea.

Ways to generate ideas:

- freewrite or use a journal
- collect and review class or reading notes
- review assignments and discussion questions
- use graphic organizers, like Venn diagrams
- participate in class or small group discussions
- talk out ideas with a partner
- determine who, what, where, when, why, and how
- determine what you already know and what you still need to learn about your topic
- do some research to learn more information



Ways to plan your writing:

- create a cluster, diagram, or web
- make an outline
- identify pros and cons
- list supporting arguments
- sort and organize note cards by topic

Hint:

Using colored sticky notes, note cards, or highlighters can help keep you organized!

Use a different color for each topic and note important information as you read.

Stage 2: Drafting

Once you have planned out your ideas, the next step is to start drafting, or writing. As you write, keep referring back to your notes and the plan that you determined in stage 1, but don't be afraid to change the plan when needed. During the drafting stage, you should concentrate on organizing your information logically, and developing your topic with enough detail for your audience and purpose. (see *Organizing Writing for more on organizing and developing your ideas*).

As you work, keep the following things in mind:

Drafts are for the writer:

Our brain processes information as we write things down. You will find yourself making connections and discovering new ideas as you are writing your first drafts. When this happens, you should go back to the planning stage (stage 1) to work in these new ideas. You may even need to change your thesis or the angle you are taking on the topic.



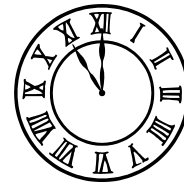
Drafts are not perfect:



Because you are really drafting for yourself, to understand your ideas and put them into words, you might be unhappy with your early results. Don't agonize over every word and sentence because you'll give yourself writer's block! You will never send off a draft to your audience without at least SOME sort of revision or at least editing. Just get some words down on paper even if they sound silly or awkward. You can always go back and fix it later – that's what revision is for.

Drafting takes time:

The more complicated your writing task is, the more time you should allow yourself for drafting. As you discover new ideas and connections, you need the time to incorporate them into your plan! Don't procrastinate, and don't feel that you have to finish your whole paper in one sitting.



Save your drafts

Writing early drafts on the computer makes revising and editing much easier. Save all your drafts because you might come back to ideas you previously discarded.

Stage 3: Revising

What is revision?

If drafting is for the writer, revision is for the reader. During revision you consider your writing from your audience's point of view. In fact, to *revise* means literally to “re-see” or “re-look” at your writing. When you revise, you are looking at the parts of your document and making sure that each part works together to make a coherent whole. You may need to change the order of your information, expand on certain sections, or cut details in others. Often, you will need to go back to the drafting stage and re-work parts of your paper. Revising is NOT editing! Save the spelling, grammar, and sentence fixes for later.

Take time off:

Revision works best when you have some time to let your writing sit. You will be better able to look at your writing with a reader's eye if you can put it aside for a day or two before working on it again.

Most writers find it helpful to have someone else read their writing at this stage. A reader who is unfamiliar with your document can help you identify which parts are working and which parts are still unclear.

Revising for Audience:

- Is the level of detail appropriate for your audience (not too general or too specific)?
- Are your ideas presented in a logical order that will be evident to the reader?
- Do you use clear transitions to help the reader follow your train of thought?
- Are your sentences clear and specific? Do you say what you mean, and mean what you say?
- Is your tone and style appropriate for your audience?

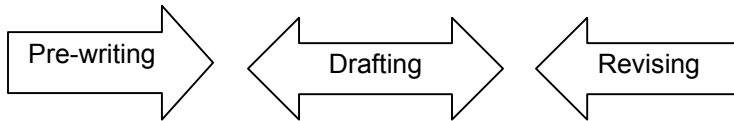
Revising for Purpose:

- Is your purpose clearly stated for the reader?
- Do you clearly maintain that purpose throughout the document?
- Does all of your supporting information clearly relate to your purpose?
- Do you organize your ideas to best fulfill your purpose?

Revising for Form:

- Do you follow the established form for the document you are writing?
- Do you separate ideas into paragraphs with clear topic sentences?
- Do you maintain a balance among your points, developing each to the same extent?

NOTE: Stages 1-3 are not independent steps but rather stages within a cyclical process. Good writers move back and forth between planning, drafting, and revising many times during the course of creating a single document.



Stage 4: Editing

While revision focuses mainly on making your content clear for your reader, editing focuses on making your document meet the conventions of standard written English. During the editing stage, check the following:

- grammar
- sentence structure
- word choice
- punctuation
- capitalization
- spelling
- citation and document format

See the sections on Solving Writing Problems, Mechanics, and MLA Format for specifics.



Computers aren't perfect.

While spell-check and grammar-check programs are helpful to identify errors, they are not foolproof. Spell-check programs will not catch mistakes where you have used the wrong word, for example. Grammar-check programs may help identify fragments and run-ons, but sometimes the corrections they advise are simply wrong.

Stage 5: Publishing



Writing is communication—if you have written something down, must have intended someone to read it, even if that person is only yourself. When you *publish* a document, you are releasing it to the *public* for others to read. Not all of your writing will be taken through the publishing stage, but even turning a paper in to your teacher constitutes “publishing.” Ways to publish your writing include:

- Turning in a paper to your teacher
- Entering an essay contest
- Sending a letter to the editor
- Writing for your school newspaper, yearbook, or literary magazine
- Posting a piece of writing on the Internet
- Writing a letter to a public official or company

Professional Publication:

If you wish to pursue professional publication, books such as *The Writer's Market* (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books) contain lists of publishers, magazines, and trade journals, and even greeting card companies that might be interested in buying your writing. These books are published annually; try to get the most recent copy from your bookstore or local library.

TYPES OF WRITING

General Writing Modes

Expository Writing

Expository writing presents factual information about a subject. Its main purpose is to inform. Because expository writing is concerned with presenting facts to the audience, it should be objective and unbiased. Expository writing is often used in the sciences, and it is the primary mode used by journalists. Within academic essays, we use expository writing when we present factual information, such as background or research findings.

We use expository writing to

- report facts
- summarize ideas
- define terms
- explain a process
- give instructions



Descriptive Writing

Descriptive writing paints a picture of a subject through the use of vivid imagery and specific detail. Descriptive writing tries to convey a particular impression of a person, place, or thing. Because descriptive writing uses strong “word pictures”, it is a great way to convey emotion and attitude. Vivid descriptions can be great tools for persuasion, and often add interest to introductions or conclusions.



We use descriptive writing in many different writing tasks, including

- Narratives or stories
- Reports
- Personal experiences
- Character sketches
- Advertising
- Poetry

Narrative Writing

Narrative writing is used to tell a story. Narration presents a series of events in order to inform or entertain the audience. Narrative writing can be both fiction and non-fiction. The primary goal of narration is to relate a series of events that occurred to particular characters.

However, narrative writing will often incorporate the **descriptive** mode (when describing setting and characters) as well as the **expository** mode (when stating background or other information directly to the reader). Within academic essays, narrative writing can be used to relate an anecdote, particularly in an introduction or as part of an example.

We use narrative writing for

- anecdotes and illustrative examples
- personal writing
- creative writing
- fiction



Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing is used to convince the audience to believe or agree with the writer's argument or interpretation. Most advanced academic writing is done in the persuasive mode. Persuasive writing relies primarily on logic and specific supporting examples, but it often incorporates **expository**, **descriptive**, and occasionally **narrative** modes as well.



Persuasive writing takes many forms, including

- literary analysis
- historical analysis
- debates
- research papers
- advertising

Specific Forms of Writing

Summary

A **summary** takes a lot of information and condenses it down to the most important points. Summaries are always written in the **expository** mode because they contain only factual information from the original source, without your own opinion or evaluation. Summaries should include only the main ideas from the original source and should be written in your own words. Your summary may include **brief** direct quotations of key ideas that you cannot paraphrase.



Typically your summary will follow the organization of the original.

When writing a summary, make a brief outline of the main ideas first. Use titles and section headings as a guide. As a rule, your summary should be no longer than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the length of the original.

Common uses for summaries are:

- Summarizing readings or lectures as a study guide
- Summarizing new material you have learned to check your understanding
- Summarizing documents or research to report findings to another person

One special type of summary is an **abstract**. An abstract is a short summary of a longer article or report. Abstracts are helpful for readers who need to determine whether a long article would contain useful information.

Hint:

When writing summaries and paraphrases, read through the material to make sure you understand it. Then, write your summary or paraphrase without looking at the original source. When you finish, check your version against the original.

Paraphrase

A **paraphrase** is like a summary in that you take information from another source and put it into your own words. However, one generally uses a paraphrase to reword more detailed and specific information (such as a single passage from a book) while a summary is used to condense a number of longer passages into briefer form. When writing a paraphrase, it is important to completely reword the original passage. You may NOT simply substitute synonyms for key words from the original source.

(See the sections on paraphrasing and plagiarism for more information)

Report

The purpose of a **report** is to convey new, interesting, or important information to your audience. A report is also written in the **expository** mode. Reports are generally factual, and include information that was gathered through observation or research. News writing is essentially report writing (hence the term “reporter”).

Common types of reports include:

- Lab reports
- Book reports
- Research reports
- Interview reports
- News reports



When writing a report, maintain objectivity by avoiding personal opinion or evaluation of the material you are presenting. After collecting your information, arrange and present your ideas in an order that best suits the purpose and subject of the report *(see the section Patterns of Organization for ideas)*.

Personal Writing

Personal writing involves writing about yourself, your experiences, and your opinions. Personal writing may be for you alone (such as a journal or diary), or it may be directed at a wider audience (such as a personal essay). However, all personal writing seeks a greater understanding of ourselves through writing about our lives and experiences. Personal writing is and may use a more casual tone. Personal writing often combines the **narrative, descriptive,** and **persuasive** modes.



Common types of personal writing include:

- Journals or diaries
- Narrative essays about personal experiences
- Reflective essays about your ideas or beliefs
- Autobiographies and memoirs
- Poetry
- Responses to literature
- Learning logs

Organizing your Writing

Your **subject** and your **purpose** should determine the way you organize your ideas. If you are narrating a story, for example, you will want to put the details in chronological order. If you are describing an object or a person, you will probably use a spatial pattern.

The main patterns of organizing information are:

1. Chronological (by time)
2. Spatial description (by location)
3. Classification (by category)
4. Illustration (by example)
5. Argumentation (assertion and support)
6. Cause/Effect
7. Problem/Solution
8. Compare/Contrast (whole vs. whole or point by point)

You can use these patterns of organization to organize your whole essay, particular paragraphs, or details within a paragraph.



The Basic Structure of an Academic Essay

THESIS STATEMENT

Your main “claim” for your paper – this is what you are trying to prove. Your thesis must take a position that can be genuinely argued from more than one side. It should not be factual. It should not be so broad that it cannot be adequately supported in the scope of your paper, or so narrow that it cannot support a full analysis.

MAIN IDEAS/SUPPORT THESES

Supporting reasons WHY your thesis is true. Each reason must be supportable by facts.

COMMENTARY

Your explanation of HOW the evidence proves your main idea, and in turn, your thesis. You must have commentary for each piece of evidence. Commentary is the heart of your paper.

EVIDENCE/CONCRETE DETAIL

Proof that supports your main idea. Each main idea must be supported by convincing evidence. Acceptable evidence includes quotations, examples, statistics, or other factual information.

Thesis statements:

The thesis statement is the most important part of your paper because it states your **purpose** to your **audience**. In your thesis statement, you explain what your paper will prove. The **form** of your thesis statement will vary depending on the form of your writing; however, for most academic writing, your thesis should identify your subject and make an assertion or claim regarding that subject. A strong thesis statement will serve as mini-outline for the structure of the essay. The thesis should be explicitly stated somewhere in the opening paragraphs of your paper, most often as the last sentence of the introduction. Often a thesis will be one sentence, but for complex subjects, you may find it less awkward to break the thesis into two sentences.

To check your thesis statement:

- Have you identified your subject?
- Is your subject narrow or broad enough for the scope of your paper?
- Have you made a truly debatable claim regarding that subject?
- Does the structure of the thesis statement give the reader an idea of the structure of your paper?

Keep revising your thesis

Many students feel they need a “perfect” thesis before they can start writing their paper. However, you probably won’t even fully understand your topic until after you’ve written at least one draft. Keep testing and revising your thesis as you write.

Sample thesis statements:

The United States government should not fund stem-cell research because such research is not ethical, cost-effective, or medically necessary.

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens shows the process by which a wasted life can be redeemed. Sidney Carton, through his love for Lucie Manette, is transformed from a hopeless, bitter man into a hero whose life and death have meaning.

America's use of the atomic bomb at the end of World War II was an unnecessary action that caused unprecedented civilian casualties for purely political ends.

Thesis Statement Help:

[U. North Carolina Writing Center](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/thesis.html)
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/thesis.html>

[Purdue U. Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/thesis.html)
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/thesis.html>

[U. Wisconsin Writer's Handbook:](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/thesis.html)
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/thesis.html>

Main ideas and support theses:

As you develop your thesis statement, you also identify a number of main ideas, or reasons why your thesis is true. Each of these reasons is called a **main idea**, or **support thesis**. Your major thesis states what you will prove in your whole paper, while your support thesis states what you will prove in each paragraph or section. Each paragraph (or set of paragraphs, for longer papers) is organized around one of your main ideas:

Sometimes your main ideas will be **stated in the major thesis**, as in this example. The reader will expect to see these main ideas treated in this order in the writer's paper:

The United States government should not fund stem-cell research because such research is not ethical, cost-effective, or medically necessary.

1 2 3

Sometimes the main ideas are **implied by the major thesis**, as in this example:

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens shows the process by which a wasted life can be redeemed. Sidney Carton, through his love for Lucie Manette, is transformed from a hopeless, bitter man into a hero whose life and death have meaning.

1. Sydney Carton is a hopeless, bitter man.
2. Sydney Carton is transformed by his love for Lucie Manette.
3. Sydney Carton's death redeems his wasted life.

Sometimes the main ideas are **not directly stated in the major thesis**, and must be provided for the reader as the essay progresses, as in this example:

America's use of the atomic bomb at the end of World War II was an unnecessary action that caused unprecedented civilian casualties for purely political ends.

1. Conventional invasion casualties
2. Firebombing casualties
3. Nuclear explosion and fallout casualties
4. US loss of moral high ground
5. US political and strategic rationale

Evidence and concrete detail:



Each of your main ideas must be supported by specific **evidence**, also called **concrete detail**. This evidence must be both factual and convincing to the reader. It should clearly connect your main idea to your thesis by proving your point. Acceptable evidence includes:

- quotations from literature
- expert opinion
- historical facts
- statistics
- specific examples
- other factual data.

Start collecting evidence as soon as you know what topic you are going to write about, even if you don't have a thesis statement or specific idea for your paper yet. Ways to collect evidence include:

- note cards
- sticky or Post-It notes
- notes from class discussion
- notes from lab experiments
- charts or graphic organizers
- dialectical journals
- learning logs
- highlighting reading material

Plagiarism:

It is considered plagiarism to:

- use another writer's exact words w/o quotation marks.
- use another writer's ideas or line of thinking w/o a citation
- use another writer's key terminology or even sentence structure in your paraphrase, even WITH a citation

When you integrate your evidence into your paper, often you will use **direct quotations**, especially when writing about literature. (*See the sections on Parenthetical Documentation and Incorporating Quotations into your Writing for more on how to do this.*) However, you may also **paraphrase**, or put the information into your own words. Remember to always cite the original source and page of the information, even if you do not use a direct quotation.

Direct quotation:

When Carlton and Darnay first meet at the tavern, Carlton tells him, "I care for no man on this earth, and no man cares for me" (Dickens 105).

Paraphrase:

According to Barton Bernstein, President Truman and his administration did not even pursue alternatives to dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima (Bernstein 288).

Grammar note:

Whenever you include a quotation from another source in your own writing, you must make sure that it fits grammatically into your text. Your quotation should be so smoothly integrated that it is impossible to tell where your voice leaves off and the quotation begins, were it not for the quotation marks!

Desdemona tells her father, "I saw Othello's visage in his mind," confirming that she loves Othello willingly and has not been seduced (1.3.248).

Commentary

Commentary refers to your **explanation and interpretation** of the evidence you present in your paper. Commentary tells the reader how the concrete detail connects to your main idea and proves your point. Commentary may include interpretation, analysis, argument, insight, and/or reflection. (*Helpful hint: In your body paragraph, you should have twice as much commentary as concrete detail.*)

Examples:

Carton makes this statement as if he were excusing his rude behavior to Darnay. Carton, however, is only pretending to be polite, perhaps to amuse himself. With this seemingly off-the-cuff remark, he reveals a deeper cynicism and his emotional isolation.

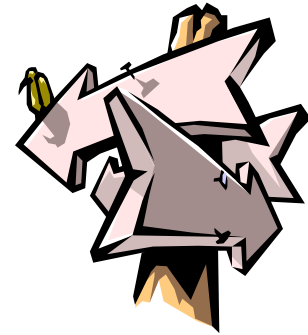
Rather than attempt other, more conventional, methods such as non-nuclear bombing raids and ground force invasion, the United States pushed forward a devastating attack on essentially civilian targets. The Truman administration simply wanted to prove the power of the Allied forces to cause extreme damage to innocent civilian populations. This action was intended to prove American strength and willingness to use its power not just to the Japanese, but the USSR as well.

When writing commentary, you must always keep your **audience** and **purpose** in mind. Consider the following questions as you look at your evidence:

- Why is this example particularly apt or fitting?
- What does this example reveal about your topic?
- What do you want your reader to gain or understand from your use of this example?
- How does this example prove or illustrate the main idea of your paragraph?
- How does the example prove your thesis?
- How does this example relate to other examples that you have already discussed, or plan to discuss later in your paper?

Transitions

Transitions are words that help the **audience** follow your train of thought. Transitions help the reader connect new information to what he or she has just read.



Transition words can be used to

Show location:	above, across, near, between, inside, below, throughout
Show time:	after, as soon as, finally, during, then, when, next
Compare:	also, likewise, as, similarly
Contrast:	although, however, but, even though, yet
Emphasize:	this reason, especially, in fact, in particular
Draw conclusions:	as a result, finally, therefore, in conclusion, thus
Add information:	additionally, for example, besides, moreover, also
Clarify:	that is, in other words, for instance

Lead-ins are special transitions that provide **context** for the reader when introducing evidence or concrete detail. A lead-in should include the essential information needed to make sense of the example that follows it. Information in a lead-in may include:

- speaker's name, title, or qualifications
- location, time, or setting of the quotation
- situation or occasion when the quotation was made

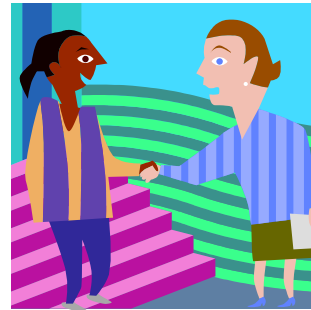
Notice in the following examples how the lead-ins provide context for each quotation, but also include some of the writer's own **interpretation** to help the audience understand the purpose of the quotations:

Later, however, when the confident Sidney Carton returns alone to his home, his alienation and unhappiness become apparent. "Climbing into a high chamber in a well of houses, he threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed, and its pillow was wet with wasted tears" (Dickens 211).

Desdemona truly loves Othello. She tells her father in front of the Duke, "I saw Othello's visage in his mind / And to his honors and his valiant parts / Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate" (1.3.248-250).

Introductions

An **introduction** is like a first impression; you want your audience to think your paper is interesting enough to be worth their time. Most people form first impressions very quickly, so it is important to catch your reader's interest from the start with an **attention-getter** or creative opening:



Save the first for last:

While it is important to have at least a working version of your major thesis as you start to write, you can usually save the introduction for later. That way it will truly introduce what you actually have written, instead of just what you had intended to write. In addition, you can tie your introduction more effectively to your conclusion by writing them both at the same time.

Attention-getting openings:

- A startling fact or bit of information
- A meaningful quotation
- A universal idea related to your thesis
- A rich, vivid description or image
- A fresh analogy or metaphor
- An interesting anecdote, story, or dramatic episode
- A thought-provoking question
- Beginning in the middle of the action

Openings to avoid:

- Dictionary definitions of words your reader should know.
- "Did you know?" or "Have you ever wondered?" rhetorical questions
- "This paper will be about ..." "In this paper I will prove"
- Beginning too far away from your actual topic ("There are many novels, all of which have characters. Some characters are heroes, and some are not.")
- A "book report" list of irrelevant facts (William Shakespeare lived in the Elizabethan era in England. He wrote many plays. One of these plays was *Hamlet*.)

Once you have your reader's attention, you should provide essential background about your topic and prepare the reader for your major thesis. The best introductions function as road maps for the rest of the essay, previewing major ideas and posing important questions that you will consider in your paper. Finally, end your introduction with your **major thesis**. Because the major thesis sometimes sounds tacked on, make special attempts to link it to the sentence that precedes it by building on a key word or idea.

Hint:

When previewing main topics in your introduction, make sure you list them in the order in which they appear in your paper.

Conclusions

Your **conclusion** wraps up your argument and leaves the reader with some final things to think about. Your conclusion should stem from what you have already written. Effective conclusions therefore often refer back to ideas presented in a paper's introduction.



In general, your conclusion should echo your major thesis without repeating the words verbatim. However, since your paper has already proven your thesis, your conclusion should move beyond it to reflect on the significance of the ideas you just presented. It should answer the question, “OK, I’ve read your paper, but so what?” In other words, why are these ideas important?

Effective conclusions

- Reflect on how your topic relates to larger issues (in the novel, in society, in history)
- Show how your topic affects the reader’s life
- Evaluate the concepts you have presented
- Issue a call for action on the part of your audience
- Ask questions generated by your findings
- Make predictions
- Recommend a solution
- Connect back to introduction, esp. if you used a metaphor, anecdote, or vivid image
- Give a personal statement about the topic

Conclusions to avoid:

- Beginning with “In conclusion ...”
- Restating your thesis and all your main points without adding anything new
- Bringing up a new topic
- Adding irrelevant details (esp. just to make a paper longer)



Informal Style	Formal Style
<p>May use numerals for numbers 1, 5, 20, 100, 150</p>	<p>Write out numbers of one or two words one, two hundred, one million</p> <p>Use numerals for numbers of three or more words 201, 47.5, 1,005</p> <p>Use numerals for dates July 19, 2001 20 May 2001</p> <p>Write out any number beginning a sentence Twenty-five thousand dollars was more than he could afford.</p>
<p>My use contractions can't, won't, shouldn't</p>	<p>Write out all contractions cannot, will not, should not</p>
<p>May use first, second, or third person pronouns:</p> <p>1st I, me, we, us 2nd you 3rd he, she, it, they, them</p>	<p>Keep writing entirely in third person, or use first person sparingly.</p> <p>Eliminate second person (you) entirely; substitute <i>he, she, they, a person, people, one</i>, or another noun.</p> <p>Resist the temptation to overuse the impersonal <i>one</i>:</p> <p>Impersonal: <i>One finds the hottest temperatures in equatorial zones.</i></p> <p>Revised: <i>The hottest temperatures can be found in equatorial zones.</i></p>
<p>May abbreviate to save time and space. U.S., Feb., TV, N.Y.</p>	<p>Spell out most abbreviations United States, February, television, New York</p> <p>Never use etc. or &</p> <p>May use abbreviations in standard use (never written out) Mr., Mrs., PhD, a.m., p.m.</p>
<p>May use slang or colloquial expressions</p> <p>a lot, kids, guy, jerk, mess around, swipe, awesome, blab, etc.</p>	<p>Eliminate slang and colloquial expressions.</p> <p>Substitute <i>many, much, a great deal</i>, or a specific amount for <i>a lot</i>.</p>

WRITING ON DEMAND

Unpack the Essay Prompt

When you are assigned a topic on which to write, the first task is to “unpack” the prompt, or to figure out exactly what the question is asking.



Pay careful attention to the terms used. Make sure you understand what the prompt is asking you to do. (*There is a list of key terms and their definitions in the next section.*) Circle or underline each task in the question. Consider this question from an AP English exam:

Choose a work of literature that depicts a conflict between a parent (or a parental figure) and a son or daughter. Write an essay in which you analyze the sources of the conflict and explain how the conflict contributes to the meaning of the work.

Often essay questions contain several parts—which part logically should come first, which second, etc.? Arrange the tasks in the order of your response. Remember to include information that is *assumed* but not stated by the question:

- 1) Choose a work of literature depicting a parent/child conflict
- 2) [Identify the conflict]
- 3) Analyze the sources of the conflict
- 4) Explain how the conflict contributes to the meaning of the work

[TIME SPENT IDENTIFYING AND ORDERING TASKS: 1-2 minutes]

Outline Main Ideas

Once you have determined the tasks that the prompt is asking you to do, turn this list of tasks into a quick topic outline. While you will probably feel pressed for time, a few moments spent planning will keep your essay from going off track and help you remember all the things you want to say. You might write this outline in the margin of your paper or on a scratch piece of paper so that you can refer back to it as you write.

Taming of the Shrew by Shakespeare [choose a work of literature]

1. Conflict between father and daughters [identify conflict]
2. Baptista won't let Bianca marry until Kate does [analyze sources of conflict]
3. Baptista views Bianca as "perfect child"
4. Kate is jealous of Bianca's attention
5. Kate gets attention by being a "shrew"
6. Conflict shows impact of stereotypical gender roles [explain conflict's contribution to meaning of work]

[TIME SPENT OUTLINING MAIN IDEAS: 3-5 minutes]

Write a Thesis Statement and Introduction

Once you have your topic outline, spend a moment to draft a strong thesis statement for your essay. What are you going to prove? (*See the section on Thesis Statements for more information*). You may not have time to write an elaborate creative opening for your introduction. Many writers find it easiest to start by echoing key ideas from the prompt in their first few sentences, and then to move directly into their thesis statement.

Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew* contains many examples of parent/child conflict. Baptista Minola's conflict with his daughters Kate and Bianca over the issue of marriage not only creates the plot but also highlights the stereotypical roles that women were expected to play.

Time Constraints and Drafting

Writing within a time limit is difficult, but most evaluators understand that an essay written in 45 minutes will not be the same quality as an essay written at home over the course of several days or weeks. However, they will want to see that you can put together a clear, organized, and intelligent response to the question.



A few tips to help you manage your time:

1. Before you start writing, take off your watch and put it on your desk. Determine what time you must stop writing, and periodically check the time remaining.
2. Be clear and specific. Do not try to impress the grader with grandiose vocabulary if you aren't 100% sure of the meaning – simpler is better.
3. Do not spend precious minutes playing with wording or trying to get a sentence to sound EXACTLY right. This wastes time and can give you writer's block.
4. Write legibly, but do not try to re-copy your essay at the end. Content is more important than neatness (as long as your writing is legible). If you make a mistake, NEATLY cross out the error and move on.
5. Use your outline to keep yourself on track. Periodically check to make sure that you are still answering the question.

When you finish writing:

1. Leave yourself about 3-5 minutes to re-read your essay and make some quick fixes.
2. Correct any spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.
3. Double-check your thesis statement against the body of your essay. Make sure you prove what you said you were going to. If you find that your essay doesn't really match your thesis statement, change the thesis – don't try to change the entire essay!
4. Check each paragraph and make sure it has a topic sentence that accurately reflects the content of the paragraph.

Key Terms Used in Essay Questions:

analyze	to break something up into its component pieces and explain how those pieces relate to the whole.	illustrate	to show the reader a general concept or principle through the use of specific examples or diagrams.
classify	to place persons or things together in categories based on common elements	interpret	to identify the significance, meaning, or importance of a set of information Interpret the data from the experiment.
compare	to use examples to show how things are similar – some differences may be identified, but the emphasis is on similarities	justify	to tell why a position or point of view is correct or good
contrast	to use examples to show how things are different	list	to provide many examples
define	to give a clear and precise meaning for a term – sometimes including identifying the class to which an item belongs and telling how it differs from other items in that class.	outline	to organize a set of facts or ideas by listing main points and sub-points, illustrating how the ideas relate to one another
describe	to tell what something looks like, give a general overview of something	reflect	think back over what is significant to you and why, often calls for personal connection
discuss	to talk about – a vague term, generally meaning to explain an issue from several points of view	refute	to disprove an assertion using logical reasons, evidence, and explanations
evaluate	to make a value judgment in comparison to a model or a set of criteria, to look at both sides and then judge.	review	re-examine or summarize the major points of a topic, usually in chronological order or order of importance
examine	to look closely and in-depth at an issue	state	to briefly present the facts or your position.
explain	to tell how something works, make something clear, show a process, analyze	summarize	to present the main points of an issue in brief
identify	to list, explain, or provide an example of; to describe the most important aspects that distinguish a subject from other things	support	to provide proof for an assertion in the form of reasons, evidences, and explanations
		trace	to follow a single idea over a period of time

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Topic selection

The **form** of your research depends on your **audience** and **purpose**. If your teacher asks you to give a one-minute speech on “weapons used during World War II” to provide the class with background knowledge, then your topic, audience, and purpose have been determined for you. If you decide to research chemistry departments at West Coast colleges for yourself, then your research process will probably be very different.

However, there are some **general guidelines for topic selection**:



1. Select an interesting topic: Find a way to write about something that interests *you*. If you’ve been given a topic, try to find an original angle. If you’re choosing your own topic, you might start by brainstorming questions that you’d like answered or topics you want to know more about. You also might want to reflect on current controversies, look over your lecture notes, or skim through your textbook to get more ideas.

2. Think about your topic: Before running to the computer and typing your topic into a search engine, think about what you already know and what you need to find out. Are you interested in the *who, what, when, where, why, or how* of the issue? Do you know where to look to find that information? (*See Types of Sources below.*)

3. Do preliminary research: Discover what sources and information are out there **BEFORE** deciding on a final topic. You may discover that there’s too much or too little information on the topic you have chosen. You may also discover that there aren’t enough reputable sources from which you can draw. (*See Evaluating Sources below.*)



4. Revise and/or limit your topic: Now that you know what information is out there, make sure your topic fits your **purpose**. You might have to expand or contract your topic depending on whether you’re writing a business proposal, a persuasive speech, or an eight-page essay. At this point, it’s appropriate to write a research question or thesis statement that will guide the rest of your research.

Types of sources

Once you have a working research question or thesis statement, it's time to continue your research. Here are the types of sources that you might use:

Primary and Secondary Sources

A **primary source** is an original source that gives information directly. That means that the information has not been summarized, interpreted, or explained by someone else. Primary source documents include personal interviews, surveys, experiments, and original-source documents like the Constitution, a novel, or an autobiography.

Examples of primary sources:

- Interview with a Holocaust survivor
- Survey of students about their knowledge of the events of the Holocaust
- WWII photographs or maps of concentration camps
- *Night* by Elie Weisel (autobiography)

A **secondary source** is *not* an original source. It is removed from the original because someone has extended the primary information by summarizing, analyzing, interpreting, or evaluating it. Secondary source documents include newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia, and journal articles, as well as documentaries, biographies, literary criticism, and websites.

Examples of secondary sources:

- Pamphlet from the Museum of Tolerance
- CBS Documentary on the Holocaust
- Books or articles by experts about the events of the Holocaust
- History textbook
- Website: <http://www.holocaustsurvivors.org>

Print Sources

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| • Books | • Journals | • Pamphlets |
| • Newspapers | • Encyclopedias | • <i>Taking Sides</i> |
| • Magazines | • Almanacs | • <i>CQ Researcher</i> |

Internet & electronic versions of print sources (databases)

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| • SIRS | • Personal website | • On-line periodical |
| • Gale Group | • Professional website | • Listserv posting |
| • Infotrac | • E-mail | • E-text |

Other sources

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Film, radio, or TV program | • Audio recording |
| • Speech or lecture | • Interview |
| | • Work of art |

Evaluating sources

Many sources, particularly on the Internet, aren't legitimate for research use. Some are out-of-date; others come from non-expert sources; still others are created for shock value.

Use the following checklist to evaluate the quality of the sources you're using:

- Is the information current?
- Is the information complete?
- Is the information accurate?
- Is the source an expert?
- Is the source biased?

What should you believe?

Can you tell which of the following cloning sites is legitimate and which is a spoof?

<http://www.d-b.net/dti/>

<http://www.humancloning.org/>

You can also evaluate websites by looking at the web address's domain name.

By doing this you can determine what type of organization is sponsoring the website and maybe even predict potential bias before looking at the site. The best research sites are usually posted by universities, government agencies, and other reputable organizations, as opposed to individuals' personal sites.

The following are the most commonly used domains:

- **.edu** -- educational site (usually a university or college)
- **.gov** -- U.S. governmental/ non-military site
- **.com** -- commercial business site, includes news organizations
- **.mil** -- U.S. military sites and agencies
- **.net** -- networks, internet service providers, organizations
- **.org** -- U.S. non-profit organizations and others

The *Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers* (ICANN) <http://www.icann.org/tlds/> has also designated the following domains for use:

- **.aero** -- restricted use by air transportation industry
- **.biz** -- general use by businesses
- **.coop** -- restricted use by cooperatives
- **.info** -- general use by both commercial and non-commercial sites
- **.museum** -- restricted use by museums
- **.name** -- general use by individuals
- **.pro** -- restricted use by certified professionals and professional entities

Hint: You can include a domain name in your web search. For example, searching for **cloning .gov** would bring up all the cloning sites sponsored by government agencies.

Note taking

Once you find good sources, you should begin taking notes. Some teachers require students to use one particular note-taking method to ensure that they have research tools for future assignments. However, whether you're jotting notes on napkins or on your laptop, some guidelines are the same:

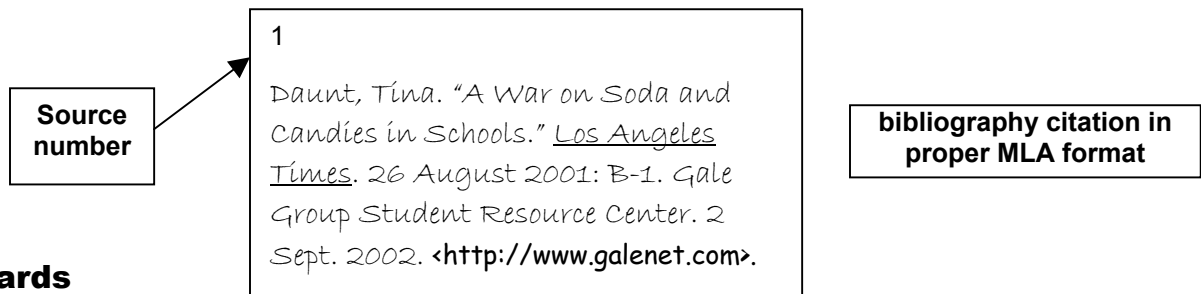
- Include a **key word or phrase** as a topic or "slug" so you'll remember what you were thinking when you wrote information down.
- Include the **source name or number** (see *Bibliography Cards*) as well as the **page number** where you found the information. This should make parenthetical documentation easy when you sit down to write. (You will need to cite your sources, even if you paraphrase someone else's ideas.)
- Use **quotation marks** whenever you copy information word-for-word.
- Only write down relevant information. (Your goal isn't to fill a notecard quota.)
- Use **ellipses** (...) whenever you leave words out of a quotation.
- Use **[square brackets]** whenever you add words to a quotation.

Documenting Sources

It's important to write down all of the relevant bibliographic information for each source before you return it or forget where you found it. You will need this information later when you cite your sources in your paper. If you are taking notes on a sheet of paper or on your computer, you should write this information at the top of each page or section. If you are using notecards, make a separate bibliography card for each source.

Bibliography cards

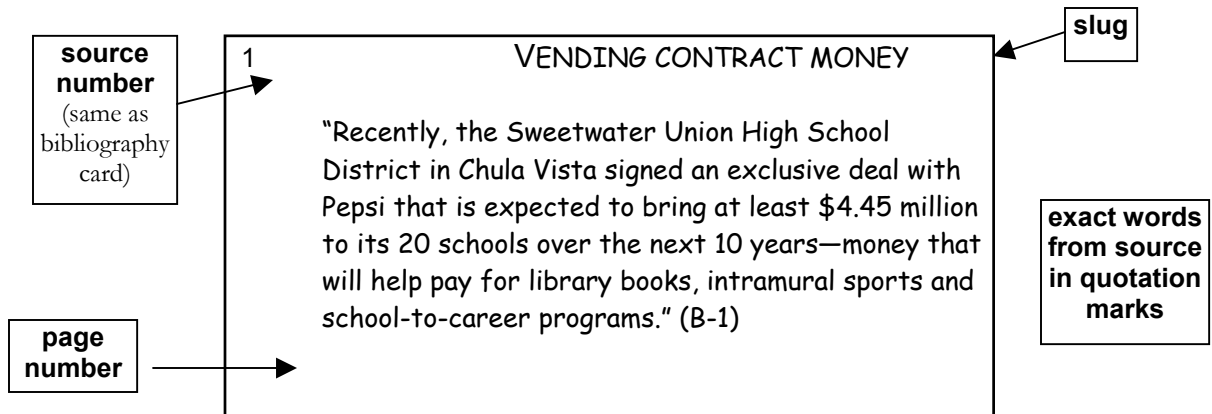
A bibliography card lists the publishing information of each source in MLA format on a separate notecard. This information will be used for your Bibliography or Works Cited page. You should number your source cards and use these same numbers in your research notes, an efficient way of matching notes and sources.



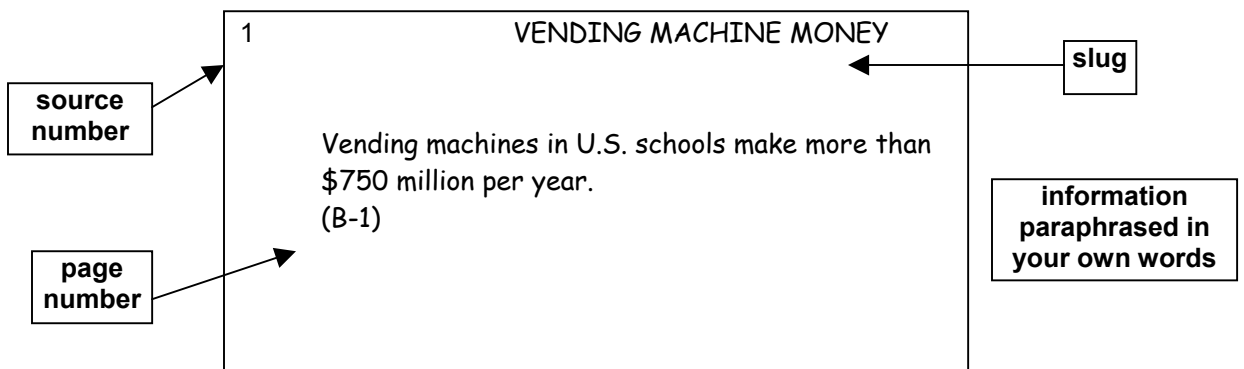
Notecards

Using 3x5 or 4x6 notecards allows researchers to write down information whenever and wherever they find it and then organize that information by rearranging the cards. Traditional notecards have a designated space for researchers to write down their source, page numbers, and a key word (or *slug*).

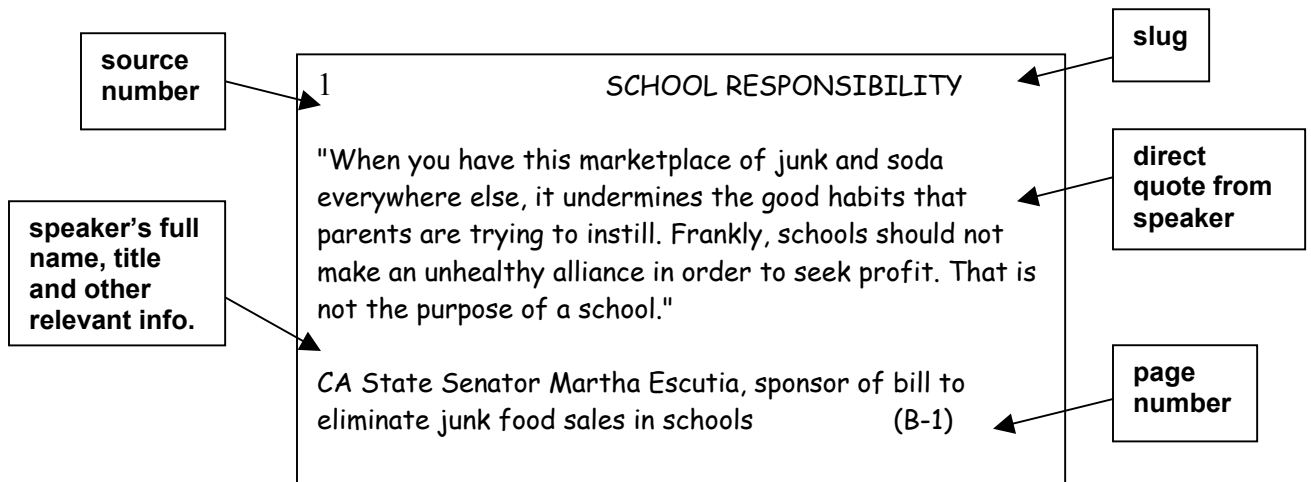
Notecard with direct quote



Notecard with paraphrase



Notecard with secondary quotation (attributed)



Cornell Notes

You might have learned how to take Cornell Notes during lectures, and the same method can be used for taking research notes. These notes are written on the right hand side of a regular-size piece of paper, and the “slug” and other notes are written on the left side. This note-taking method gives the researcher more space to write commentary and is an alternative to writing on note cards. The disadvantage of this method is that the information is not easy to rearrange, but this arranging can be done during the drafting process.

Sample Cornell Notes:

Daunt, Tina. "A War on Soda and Candies in Schools." Los Angeles Times. 26 August 2001: B-1. Gale Group Student Resource Center. 2 Sept. 2002.
<<http://www.galenet.com>>.

	NOTES TO SELF	NOTES FROM SOURCES:
slug or topic	<p>VENDING MACHINE \$\$\$</p> <p>Vending machines bring in a lot of money for the soda companies - students spend their money on soda not healthy food (reason to ban soda sales)</p>	<p>Vending machines in U.S. schools make more than \$750 million per year. (B-1)</p>
thoughts on the significance or importance of the quotation	<p>VENDING CONTRACT \$\$\$</p> <p>Schools make money from contracts with companies that pay for needed supplies and extra curricular activities (reason against banning soda sales)</p>	<p>"Recently, the Sweetwater Union High School District in Chula Vista signed an exclusive deal with Pepsi that is expected to bring at least \$4.45 million to its 20 schools over the next 10 years—money that will help pay for library books, intramural sports and school-to-career programs." (B-1)</p>
	<p>SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY</p> <p>Schools shouldn't be selling junk food to kids - they should set a good example. (reason to ban soda sales)</p>	<p>"When you have this marketplace of junk and soda everywhere else, it undermines the good habits that parents are trying to instill. Frankly, schools should not make an unhealthy alliance in order to seek profit. That is not the purpose of a school."</p> <p>CA State Senator Martha Escutia, sponsor of bill to eliminate junk food sales in schools (B-1)</p>

Paraphrasing

There are two ways of taking notes on someone else's work, either quote the source directly or paraphrase it. Paraphrasing is not a play-by-play retelling of everything that happened in a selection and is not just a process of substituting synonyms for the words of the original.

A paraphrase captures a source's main ideas in your own words yet is more detailed than a summary (*see Forms of Writing*)

The Purdue University On Line Writing Lab has a number of pages that explain how to paraphrase, cite sources, and complete research papers. See <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research>

Here are some guidelines for paraphrasing:

- Only include the essential information
- State important ideas clearly and concisely
- Use quotation marks around key words or phrases taken directly from the source
- Arrange the ideas in a logical order that's easy for the reader to understand
- Avoid plagiarism (*see below*)

Plagiarism

According to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, "Plagiarism is the act of using another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source. The word comes from the Latin word *plagiarius* ('kidnapper')" (21).

Plagiarism includes:

1. cutting and pasting from the internet (or any other source)
2. copying word-for-word without using quotation marks
3. lifting particularly apt phrases from the original and including them in your writing without quotation marks
4. replacing a few words with synonyms but keeping the basic sentence structure (syntax) the same
5. paraphrasing information but not indicating its source within the text of your paper using parenthetical citations; simply putting a bibliography citation at the end is not enough

Do I have to cite everything?

Facts, such as dates, that can be found in more than two sources are common knowledge and need not be cited.



Original Passage

The major concerns of Dickenson's poetry, early and late, her "flood subjects," may be defined as the seasons and nature, death and a problematic afterlife, the kinds and phases of love, and poetry as the divine art.

Gibson and Williams. *The Literary History of the United States*. Vol. 1. (906)

Plagiarized Passage

The chief subjects of Emily Dickenson's poetry include nature and the seasons, death and the afterlife, the types and stages of love, and poetry as the divine art.

Acceptable Use

Gibson and Williams suggest that the chief subjects of Emily Dickenson's poetry include nature, death, love, and "poetry as the divine art" (901).

Five Ways to Avoid Plagiarism:

1. Don't wait until the last minute to do your assignment.
2. When copying information from original sources, be careful to use quotation marks around direct quotes and include page numbers. This is especially important in the note-taking phase.
3. Read through the material you are researching and make sure you understand it. Then put it aside and write down the key ideas without looking at it.
4. Don't write your paper with the original sources in front of you. Use note cards with paraphrases of source material instead.
5. Understand what you are trying to say before you start to write.

Outlining

Outlining helps writers to organize their research and their ideas before and during drafting.

A **working outline** might start off as a simple list of ideas that are chunked together into groups. This outline should evolve throughout the research and writing process as the researcher discovers new information and narrows/expands the research topic (*see example below*). Some writers like to create this outline after doing preliminary research, so that they can use key words from their outline as the key words on their notecards.

A **formal outline** is often required after research has been done and before drafting begins. This outline usually uses Roman numerals, capital letters, numbers, and lower-case letters to show subordinate ideas (*see example below*). In addition, parallel structure is required (*see parallel structure*).

<p>Working Outline</p> <p><u>Things to remember when researching</u></p> <p>Don't plagiarize (give sources credit) Write sources on notecards Parenthetical documentation</p> <p>Thinking before researching Helps research to go faster An outline might help with this</p> <p>Only write down necessary things Slugs will help me remember why I thought it was necessary</p>	<p>Information is chunked without using Roman numerals</p> <p>Parallel structure is not necessary.</p>
<p>Formal Outline</p> <p><u>Things to remember when researching</u></p> <p>I. Think before researching A. <u>Brainstorm</u> what I want to know B. <u>Use</u> efficient search techniques C. <u>Develop</u> a working outline</p> <p>II. Write down only the necessary information A. <u>Refer</u> back to my working outline B. <u>Use</u> words from my outline as slugs in my notes C. <u>Paraphrase</u> when an exact quote isn't necessary</p> <p>III. Give sources credit A. Source <u>numbers in</u> my notes B. Page <u>numbers in</u> my notes C. Parenthetical <u>documentation in</u> my paragraphs</p>	<p>Roman numerals, letters, and numbers are used.</p> <p>No Roman numeral, letter, or number can stand alone. (You can't have an <i>A</i> without a <i>B</i>, etc.)</p> <pre> I. _____ II. _____ A. _____ B. _____ 1. _____ a. _____ b. _____ i. _____ ii. _____ 2. _____ </pre> <p>Parallel structure is used within each list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roman numerals must be parallel (<i>Think, Write, Give</i>) ○ Each list underneath a Roman numeral must be parallel within itself (<i>Refer, Use, Paraphrase</i>) ○ Lists do not need to be parallel with other lists. (<i>II A, B, and C</i> do not need to be parallel with <i>III A, B, and C</i>.)

MLA CITATION FORMAT

What is MLA Format?

MLA style has been adopted by the Poway Unified School District and is based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, published by the Modern Language Association (MLA). The term *MLA format* generally refers to the method of citing outside sources using the MLA style of parenthetical documentation. This term can also refer to MLA manuscript format, or the set-up of your document (heading, title, and page number placement, etc.).

While not the only way to document sources, MLA style is widely used in colleges and generally simpler than other documentation styles (such as APA or Chicago). Once you have learned MLA style, adapting to another style will be simple.

The term *MLA format* does not refer the content of your document, nor to the method of organization you choose to employ in presenting your information. Your use of evidence (concrete detail) and your explanations of that evidence (commentary) are not governed by MLA format.

MLA Manuscript Format:

See the sample essay at the end of this section for an example of manuscript format.

- In the MLA style, **no separate title page** is necessary.
- On the first page, type your **last name and the page number** in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top of the page. Continue this pagination for every page of your paper, through your bibliography or work cited section.
- Type your **heading** one inch down from the top of the first page, flush with the left margin: Student's name, teacher's name, class title and period, date.
- Double space and center your paper's **title**. (Do not underline your title or write it in quotation marks or italics.)
- **Double space** the entire paper with one-inch margins on all sides. Generally use a clear, easy-to-read, **12-point font** appropriate for business (such as Times New Roman).

Documenting Your Sources in MLA Format:

Preparing a research paper, involves building on the work of previous writers and researchers. When you draw on another's work – **whether facts, opinions, ideas, or quotations** – you must credit the author of your source. To give the author credit, simply place the necessary information (usually the author's last name and the page number) in parentheses after the

borrowed words or ideas brief citations will then refer to a list of sources at the end of your paper.

Parenthetical Documentation:

Parenthetical documentation is a way of giving the original source of your information with a brief reference, called a **citation**, placed in parentheses. In order to avoid disrupting the flow of your writing, place the citation where a pause would naturally occur, usually at the end of a sentence, before the period. At the end of your paper, you will provide a **works cited** list that gives the full bibliography information for each source cited in your paper. *See the sample essay at the end of this section for an examples of parenthetical citation.*

Most often you will use simply the **author's last name and the page number**:

Benjamin Franklin has been described as "a man who spent his life getting ahead without asking where he was going" (Hodgkins 58).

For a source with **two authors**, use both last names in your citation:

(Steele and Mayhem 567).

If you give the **author in the text** of your paper, give only the page number in parentheses:

In his Autobiography Benjamin Franklin lists thirteen virtues he practiced to attain "moral perfection" (135-37).

If **two works by the same author** appear in your list of works cited, add the title or a shortened version of it to distinguish your sources:

According to one story, the Continental Congress was afraid to let Franklin draft the Declaration of Independence because he might slip a joke into it (Mann, Early Americans 347).

If you cite **someone's words second-hand**, give the abbreviation *qtd. in* ("quoted in") before the indirect source in your reference. Use this form when the author of the quotation you are using is NOT the author of the text you are citing.

Herman Melville, author of Moby Dick, Made a catalog of Franklin's roles, beginning "printer, postmaster, almanac maker, essayist, chemist, orator. He was everything," Melville said, "but a poet" (qtd. in Hodgkins 58).

If you cite an **anonymous source alphabetized by title** on your works cited page, give the title or a shortened version of it:

Franklin has been identified as America's first millionaire ("Franklin" 678).

If your source has **no page numbers**, simply cite the author's last name or, if it has no author, cite the title (or short title):

(Carlos) or (Guidelines).

Bibliography versus Works Cited:

A **working bibliography** is the list of books, magazines, and other sources you prepare in the beginning of your library research. Usually you list these intended sources on individual index cards, noting all the information you will later need to make your source page. (*See the section Bibliography Cards for more information*). Also include the **call number** of each book and the library where you find each source.

A **bibliography** is a separate alphabetical list of all the sources you consider in preparing a research project. Some teachers may ask for a full bibliography rather than a works cited page, and a few teachers may ask for both a bibliography and a works cited page. (By high school most teachers will require just a works cited listing.) A bibliography appears on a separate page at the end of your paper. *See the section MLA Format for Bibliography entries for the format for each source.*

The list of **works cited** gives only the sources you have actually cited in your paper. Unlike a bibliography, it does not include the sources you may have consulted but did not actually refer to in your paper. Type your list of works cited on a separate page at the end of your paper. *See the section MLA Format for Bibliography entries for the format for each source.*

MLA Format for Bibliography or Works Cited Page:

See the sample essay at the end of this section for an example of a Works Cited page.

- **Number each page**, continuing the numbering from the last page of the text. Type your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top of the page.
- **Center the title** Bibliography or Works Cited one inch down from the top edge of our paper. Double-space after this title, before the first entry.
- Type each entry in **alphabetical order** by the author's last name. If the source has no author, alphabetize by the first word of the entry (the title). (Disregard *A, An, The*.)
- Use **reverse indentation** (also called a "hanging indent"): begin each entry flush with the left margin, but if the entry runs more than one line, indent the successive lines one-half inch (or five spaces).
- **Double-space** the entire page (each entry and between entries).

MLA FORMAT FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRIES

Book Entries

Author(s). *Book Title*. Trans., Ed. Name of Translator/Editor. City of Publication: Publisher, date.

Book by One Author

Handy, Charles. *The Age of Unreason*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1990.

Book by Two or Three Authors

Lawrence, Jerome, and Robert Lee. *Inherit the Wind*. Toronto: Bantam Publishing Co., 1955.

Book by More than Three Authors

Hastings, Marie et al. *Biogenetics*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985.

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"Title of the Episode or Segment." Narrator. Writer. Producer. *Title of the Program or Series*. Name of the network. Call letters and city of the local station. Broadcast date.

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SENTENCE PARTS AND TYPES

Parts of Speech

Parts of speech refer to the way that words are used in sentences. There are eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

Noun

A **noun** is the **name** of a person, place, thing, or idea. Nouns may be **common** or **proper**. Proper nouns are capitalized:

Common: brother newspaper beach democracy baseball
Proper: Grand Canyon Michael Johnson Sea World Paris

Nouns may also be grouped as **concrete**, **abstract**, or **collective**:

Concrete nouns name a tangible thing, something that can be touched or seen:

guitar White House soccer ice-cream friend

Abstract nouns name something that cannot be touched or seen, such as an idea, doctrine, thought, theory, concept, condition, or feeling:

joy Christianity illness love euphoria excellence prejudice

Collective nouns name a group or unit:

faculty audience school herd San Diego Chargers

Nouns may also be grouped by their **function** in a sentence: subject, object, complement, appositive, or modifier.

Pronoun

A **pronoun** is a word used **in place of a noun**. The noun or pronoun that the pronoun refers to or replaces is called its **antecedent**. (*See the section on Pronoun Agreement for more about antecedents*).

Personal pronouns change form to indicate case, gender, number, and person:

PERSONAL PRONOUNS	SINGULAR			PLURAL		
	1 st person	2 nd person	3 rd person	1 st person	2 nd person	3 rd person
Nominative case:	I	you	he/she it	we	you	they
Objective case:	me	you	him/her it	us	you	them
Possessive case:	my, mine	your, yours	his/her hers/its	our, ours	your, yours	their, theirs

Reflexive pronouns **refer back to** (or modify) a noun or pronoun. They are formed by adding the suffix *-self*.

Ryan loves himself more than anyone.

I didn't realize that she would bring the package herself.

We decided to show ourselves out.

Relative pronouns **relate** an adjective clause back to the noun or pronoun it modifies. (*See the section on Essential and Nonessential Clauses for more on using relative pronouns.*) Relative pronouns are:

who whose whom which what that

My new jeans, which are fabulous, cost \$75.00.

Musicians who practice regularly are most comfortable in front of an audience.

Interrogative pronouns are used to ask a **question**:

who whose whom which what

What do you want?

To whom am I speaking?

Whose notebook is this?

Which entrée did you order?

Demonstrative pronouns **point out**, or demonstrate, specific things:

this that these those

That is my suitcase.

Those don't look ripe.

Indefinite pronouns refer to **unknown** people or things:

anyone someone either everybody

nobody many several nothing

Who or whom?

Who is a subject case pronoun—it does the action:

Who is at the door?

Whom is an object case pronoun—it receives the action:

Whom will you take to the dance?

To test which to use, substitute *he* or *him* in the sentence. If *he* fits, use *who*; if *him* fits, use *whom*.

Person or thing?

Use *who*, *whom*, or *whose* to refer to people.

Use *that* or *which* to refer to things.

Adjective

An **adjective** is a word that **describes or modifies** a noun or pronoun:

Little people peek through big steering wheels.

The strongest man I ever saw wore silver shoes.

An adjective does not always come before the word it modifies:

The dentist, daring and diligent, worked on his new patient's cavities.

Remember that the articles *a*, *an*, and *the* are also adjectives.

Verb

A **verb** is a word that expresses an **action** or a **state of being**.

An **action verb** expresses mental or physical action:

speak	compose	drive	participate	catch
hope	believe	approve	understand	choose

A **helping verb** helps the main verb to express action or to make a statement. The main verb plus the helping verb together make a **verb phrase**. The helping verb is italicized below:

My dad *will work* late one or two nights a week when he *should be sleeping* in his bed.

Verbs of being include all the forms of the verb *be*:

Be am is are was were being been

Verbs of being also include verb phrases ending in *be*, *being*, or *been*, such as *could be*, *was being*, and, *could have been*.

A linking verb connects the subject of the sentence with a word that describes or explains it. The most common linking very is *be* and its forms (above). Other linking verbs include such verbs as *smell*, *look*, *taste*, *remain*, *appear*, *sound*, *seem*, *become*, and *grow*:

In his new carriage, the baby **felt** cool. He **was** a driver! He **looked** more mature.

Verb Tenses

Verb tenses indicate time: past, present, and future. The six tenses are formed from the principal parts of the verb:

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Present Participle</u>	<u>Past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
To march	marching	marched	marched

Regular verbs follow rules when forming the six tenses. Irregular verbs follow no fixed rules; you simply have to memorize them or consult a dictionary. Regular verbs are formed as follows:

Present tense expresses action that is occurring at the present time or action that happens continually, regularly:

I watch she talks The band marches every day.

Past tense expresses action that was completed at a particular time in the past.

I watched she talked The band marched yesterday.

Future tense expresses action that will occur in the future:

I shall watch she will talk The band will march tomorrow.

Present perfect tense expresses action that began in the past but continues in the present:

I have watched she has talked The band has marched all fall.

Past perfect tense expresses action that began in the past and was completed in the past:

I had watched she had talked The band had marched last week.

Future perfect tense expresses action that will be completed in the future before some other future action or event:

I have watched she will have talked The band will have marched 178 days by vacation.

Adverb

An **adverb** modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. An adverb tells *how, when, where, why, how often, to what extent, and how much*:

Yesterday a fire completely destroyed the home of a family on Hill Street.
Rarely does a fire last so long.
The family looked totally grungy after hauling out their valuables all day.

Preposition

A **preposition** is a word (or group of words) that shows the relationship between its object (a noun or a pronoun that follows the preposition) and another word in the sentence.

Prepositions may be simple (at, in, of, to, for, with), compound (without, inside, alongside), or phrasal (in spite of, on top of, aside from, because of).

A preposition never stands alone in a sentence; it is always used in a prepositional phrase with the object of a preposition (a noun or pronoun) and the modifiers of the object:

The pool shark leaned over the ball with a confident smirk on his face.
Standing near the table, he consciously ignored the hisses of the crowd.

Conjunction

A **conjunction** connects individual words or groups of words:

A puffer fish is short and fat. A tiny bird cannot fly, nor can it feed itself.

There are three kinds of conjunctions:

Coordinating conjunctions: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet

Correlative conjunctions: either... or neither... nor
not only... but also both... and
whether... or just... as

Subordinating conjunctions: after, although, as, as much as, as though,

because, before, if, in order that, provided that, since, than, though, unless, until, when, where, whereas, while

Interjection

An **interjection** is a word or group of words that expresses strong emotion or surprise. Punctuation (often a comma or exclamation point) is used to separate an interjection from the rest of the sentence:

Cool, the boat's leaking.

Oh, no! I can't swim.

CLAUSES AND PHRASES

Clauses

A clause is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb.

My uncle looks and walks exactly like Groucho Marx.
subject verbs

Some clauses can stand alone as sentences; others must be grouped with other clauses to create a complete sentence.

An **independent clause** can stand alone as a sentence:

Because he looks like Groucho Marx, he won five hundred dollars in a contest.
independent clause

A **dependent clause** has a subject and a predicate, but it would be an incomplete sentence by itself. A dependent clause contains a subordinating conjunction (e.g., because) and **must be** joined to an independent clause:

Because he looks like Groucho Marx, he won five hundred dollars in a contest.
Dependent clause

Phrases

A phrase is a group of related words that work together as a single part of speech. It is not a clause because it lacks a subject and/or predicate:

Under the old refrigerator,...

Running from the Energizer Bunny...

Essential and Nonessential Clauses and Phrases

Essential or “restrictive” clauses and phrases cannot be removed from a sentence without changing its meaning. They usually begin with *that* or *who*.

Horses that are overly nervous are usually not good for trail riding.
Carla Davis is the only senior who won scholarships to four colleges.

Nonessential or “nonrestrictive” clauses and phrases add information, but they are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence. They are set off by commas and usually begin with *which*, *whom*, or *whose*:

The new Stallone movie, which has a great soundtrack, starts this weekend.
Joe, whom I love like a brother, is moving away tomorrow.

CONSTRUCTING SENTENCES

Subject (*Write for College 807-808*)

Predicate

Sentence beginnings

Vary your sentence beginnings to add style to your writing. Try writing some sentences beginning with each of the following:

Adjective: word(s) that describe a noun:

Small and green, the turtle stood looking at the audience.
Exhausted, the rabbit fell across the finish line thirty minutes after the turtle.

Adverb: word(s) that describe a verb:

Boisterously, the crowd yelled for David Bowie to get the show started.
Indignantly and arrogantly, the tabby cat turned her back on the cat show.

Prepositional phrase: a phrase that contains a preposition (at, on, over, through, under, between, etc.) and the object of the preposition:

During the summer my brother skateboards everyday.
In another nine months, the dude will get his driver’s license.

Hint: Use a comma after a long introductory prepositional phrase (four or more words).

Participial phrase: Since a participle is a verb that can function as an adjective (e.g., *melting ice cream*), a participial phrase is one that consists of a participle and its modifiers and complements:

Present: Looking for his mother, the toddler scooted under the clothes rack.
Remembering that she had a child, Bertha searched the store for her son.

Hint: A dangling participle occurs when it’s unclear to the reader what the participle modifies. To avoid this, keep the participial phrase and the noun it modifies together.

Past: Exhausted from doing sit-ups, the flabby senior collapsed on the sofa.
 Purchased just a few days ago, his gold class ring flashed
in the sun.

Adverb clause: a dependent clause (subject and verb that can't stand alone) that describes how, what, where, when, or why. It always begins with a subordinating conjunction (*after, although, as before, when, where, while, etc.*):

Before she could give her speech, Clara fell off the stage.

While the paramedics came, they resuscitated her.

Appositive phrase: a noun and its modifiers that stand beside another noun to explain or identify it:

An innocent bystander, Martin gasped at the crime he witnessed.

A red Mustang, my sister's car was hit by a speeding vehicle of joy riders.

SENTENCE TYPES

Use a variety of sentence types to add style to your writing.

Simple sentences contain just one independent clause:

I hate spiders.

Compound sentences contain two or more independent clauses that are joined by a semicolon or a comma and a coordinating conjunction like *and*:

I hate spiders; tarantulas are the worst.

I hate spiders, but I do not mind snakes.

Complex sentences contain an independent clause (underlined) and one or more dependent clauses (italicized):

Although I do not mind snakes, I hate spiders.

Compound-complex sentences contain two or more independent clauses (underlined) and one or more dependent clauses (italicized):

Although I hate spiders, I do not mind snakes, and I like lizards.

SOLVING WRITING PROBLEMS

Run-ons and Fragments

Avoid fragments and run-ons, including comma splices.

A **fragment** is a group of words written as a sentence but missing a subject, a verb, or some other essential part. The missing element causes it to be an incomplete thought:

Fragment: Mark Twain said that at the age of fourteen. He was convinced that his parents were among the stupidest people on the face of the earth. (This is a fragment followed by a sentence. Correct it by combining the fragment with the sentence.)

Sentence: Mark Twain said that at the age of fourteen he was convinced that his parents were among the stupidest people on the face of the earth.

Fragment: When he reached twenty-one. (This clause does not convey a complete thought. What happened when he was twenty-one?)

Sentence: When he reached twenty-one, he was amazed at how much they had learned in only seven short years.

A **run-on sentence** is the result of two sentences run together without adequate punctuation or a connecting word:

Run on: Smoke started billowing from under a Rolls Royce in Beverly Hills then the driver doused the flames with a bottle of Evian water.

Correct: Smoke started billowing from under a Rolls Royce in Beverly Hills; then the driver doused the flames with a bottle of Evian water. (Semicolon has been added.)

A **comma splice** is a sophisticated kind of run-on sentence in which two sentences are connected (“spliced”) with only a comma. A comma is not strong enough to connect two independent clauses; a period, semicolon, or conjunction is needed:

Splice: The two teams faced off, neither one could make any yardage.

Correct: The two teams faced off, but neither one could make any yardage. (Conjunction has been added.)

Splice: My brother just got his senior yearbook, he was voted “most likely to have his picture in the yearbook again next year.”

Correct: My brother just got his senior yearbook. He was voted “most likely to have his picture in the yearbook again next year.” (Comma has been changed to a period.)

Splice: Our Boy Scout leader said that if we get lost in the woods at night, we should get our bearings from the sky, a glow will indicate the nearest shopping center.

Correct: Our Boy Scout leader said that if we get lost in the woods at night, we should get our bearings from the sky; a glow will indicate the nearest shopping center. (Comma has been changed to a semicolon.)

A semicolon is often the best way to correct a comma splice.

Some other indefinite pronouns (*all, any, half, most, none, and some*) may be either singular or plural depending on the meaning of the sentence:

Some of the show was hilarious.

Some of the actors were hilarious.

All of the homework seems simple.

All of the exercises seem simple.

Half of the popcorn was gone.

Half of the cokes were gone.

When the subject follows the verb, as in questions and in sentences beginning with *here* and *there*, be careful to find the subject and make sure that the verb agrees with it:

There are many hardworking students on the honor roll this semester.

plural verb

plural subject

Active and Passive Voice

For a stronger writing style, use active verbs, whenever you can, rather than passive verbs. With passive verbs the subject of the sentence is the receiver of the action; passive verbs make writing slow moving and impersonal.

Passive: The island was deluged by a hurricane.

Active: A hurricane deluged the island.

Passive: A dangerous rescue was made by volunteers after dark, but no sharks were encountered.

Active: Volunteers made a dangerous rescue after dark but encountered no sharks.

Hint: Any form of the helping verb **be** (*be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been*) is a clue that your sentence may be written in passive voice.

To change to active voice, begin with the person or thing doing the action.

PRONOUN PROBLEMS

Pronoun Agreement

Make sure that a pronoun agrees with its antecedent. The antecedent is the noun (or pronoun) that the pronoun refers to or replaces:

When Matilda dances, she makes the whole dance floor sway and bounce.

antecedent

pronoun

Use a singular pronoun to refer to such antecedents as *each, either, neither, one, anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, somebody, another, and nobody*:

Everybody must learn how to turn his car alarm off.

Either Sue or Jane needs to let me borrow her vocabulary book.

Hint: Often an error in pronoun agreement is made to avoid sexism. When pronouns such as *a person* or *everyone* are used to refer to both sexes or either sex, you should either offer optional pronouns or rewrite the sentence in the plural form:

Optional pronouns: Everybody must learn how to turn his or her car alarm off.

Plural form: People must learn how to turn their car alarms off.

Nominative and Objective Cases of Pronouns

Use the **nominative case** when the pronoun describes the subject of a clause. Usually the nominative pronoun describes who or what is doing the action. The following are nominative: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they, who, whoever.*

I wish that he had a new glove.
They need to get one for him before the next game.
Otherwise Steve and he are going to warm the bench.
Who can pick out one without a hole in it?

Use the **objective case** when the pronoun describes the direct or indirect object of the sentence, in other words, when it describes who or what is receiving the action. An objective pronoun should also be used within a prepositional phrase when the pronoun is the object of the preposition. The following are objective pronouns: *me, you, him, her, it, us, them, whom, whomever.*

Throw the ball to her; she's open. (*Her* is the indirect object of the verb *throw*.)
My dad is taking my brother and me to practice.
(*Brother* and *me* are direct objects of the verb *is taking*.)
Dwayne sat behind Norman and us.
(*Norman* and *us* are the objects of the preposition *behind*.)
We did not hear whom the coach had named.
(*Whom* is the direct object of the verb *had named*.)

Hint: To test whether to use *I* or *me* in a compound subject or object, try the sentence with only the pronoun to see which one fits.

Sally and (I/me) went to the movies after work.
(When I take away the phrase *Sally and*, I realize that *I* fits best.)
Robert is planning to meet Sally and (I/me) there.
(When I take away the phrase *Sally and*, I realize that *me* fits best.)

Clear Pronoun Reference

Avoid ambiguous references that occur when the pronoun could refer to more than one antecedent:

Joe is a big Bugs Bunny fan; he (?) taught me everything I know about comedy.
(Which one taught me about comedy, Bugs Bunny or Joe?)

Avoid confusing general references by always following such words as *this* or *that* with a noun:

Confusing: The Padres won their game last night even though Tony Gwynn struck out. That could be the turning point of the season.

Clear: That game could be the turning point of the season.

Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Avoid misplacing modifiers by placing them next to the word they modify. Misplaced modifiers have been placed incorrectly, making the meaning of the sentence unclear:

Misplaced: They sold an assortment of exercise equipment for active people with a lifetime guarantee.

Correct: For active people, they sold an assortment of exercise equipment with a lifetime guarantee.

Misplaced: The thief decided to run when he saw the police officer abandoning the stolen vehicle and dashing into the woods.

Correct: When he saw the police officer, the thief decided to run, abandoning the stolen vehicle and dashing into the woods.

Avoid dangling modifiers that appear to modify a word that isn't in the sentence:

Dangling: Carrying a heavy stack of trays, her foot caught in the doorway.

Correct: Carrying a heavy stack of trays, Jenny caught her foot in the doorway.

Dangling: Adjusting the binoculars, a dizzy-headed jay was finally spotted.

Correct: Adjusting the binoculars, Audrey finally spotted a dizzy-headed jay.

Parallel Structure

Maintain parallel structure by expressing parallel ideas with the same tense or structure of words or phrases in a sentence:

Wrong: We learned how to change a tire, shift sixteen gears, and once almost ran the truck off the road.

Correct: We learned how to change a tire, shift sixteen gears, and keep the truck from running off the road.

Wrong: I have mowed the lawn, washed the dog, rescued our hamster, and went to the store all in one day.

Correct: I mowed the lawn, washed the dog, rescued our hamster, and went to the store all in one day.

Wrong: Water skiing no longer interests me as much as to go scuba diving.

Correct: Water skiing no longer interests me as much as scuba diving.

USING THE RIGHT WORD

For more information and examples, see Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*:
<http://www.bartleby.com/141/strunk3.html>

a lot: *a lot* is always two words; however, *a lot* is a vague descriptive phrase that should be avoided in formal writing:

Informal: I have a lot of jelly beans in my lunch.
Formal: I have many jelly beans in my lunch.



accept/except: *accept* means “to receive or take”; *except* means “to leave out”:
I will happily accept your offer of a free lunch.
Except for Joe, everyone has really cool purple shoes.

affect/effect: *affect* is a verb that means “to influence”; *effect* is most commonly seen as a noun that means “result,” but it is also used as a verb that means “to bring about”:
The movie affected me so much that I cried.
The love potion had a strange effect on Rosie.
I ran for office to effect change in our school.

Affect = Action (v.)

all right: *all right* is always two words; there is no such word as *alright*.
I'll be all right once I catch my breath.

among/between: *among* refers to three or more persons or things; *between* refers to only two persons or things:
Among the three of us, we could not produce a single good idea.
However, between you and me, we have enough money for lunch.

amount/number: *amount* refers to a quantity that cannot be counted; *number* refers to a quantity that can be counted:
A great amount of water flooded my bathroom when I left the tap on.
A large number of water drops splattered on my windshield.

bad/badly: *bad* is always an adjective; *badly* is always an adverb:
The bad child was sent to his room.
There he practiced badly on his tuba.
I feel bad (ill). I feel badly (have an inferior tactile sense).

beside/besides: *beside* means “next to”; *besides* means “in addition to”:
Besides Newt, everyone on the team got new tennis shoes.
I stood beside Newt when he sunk the first shot.

can/may: *can* indicates ability; *may* indicates permission:

I can solve algebra problems.

You may go to the restroom.

fewer/less: *fewer* refers to quantities that can be counted; *less* refers to quantities that cannot be counted. (Same rule as amount/number):

I got fewer scoops of ice cream than she did.

I got less ice cream than she did.

You can count scoops of ice cream
but not ice cream in general.

further/farther: *further* refers to a greater extent, time or degree; *farther* refers to a greater distance:

We will discuss post modernism further tomorrow.

I plan to go several inches farther on my next long-jump attempt.

goes/went: Do not use *go* or *went* when you mean *say* or *said*:

Then she said (not goes), "No way!"

hanged/hung: A person is *hanged*; everything else is *hung*.

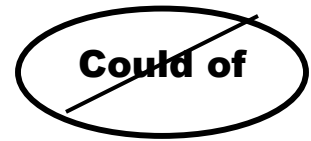
The outlaw was hanged at high noon in the sycamore gulch.

The velvet Elvis painting hung prominently in the bathroom.

have (not of): write *could have*, *should have*, *would have*, *might have*, etc.

Wrong: I could of won.

Right: I could have won; I just didn't feel like it.



i.e./e.g.: The Latin abbreviation *i.e.* means "that is." The abbreviation *e.g.* means "for example":

The country's leader (i.e., the president) declared war.

I love candy (e.g., chocolate truffles).

it's/its: Use *its* to describe something that *it* possesses; *it's* is the contraction of it is:

Without its mother, the monster felt lonely and scared.

It's not whether you win or lose; it's how you play the game.

lay/lie: The transitive verb *lay* means "to put or place" (the subject does the action to something); the intransitive verb *lie* means "to rest or recline" (the subject does the action).

Please lay your completed test on the table.

After that scare, I needed to lie down.

Hint: Memorizing the principal parts of these two verbs will help you use them correctly:

Infinitive	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
Lie (to recline)	(is) lying	lay	(have) lain
Lay (to put)	(is) laying	laid	(have) laid

past/passed: *Past* is a noun that means “history,” an adverb (e.g., He rode *past*), or a preposition (e.g., Go *past* the store and turn left); *passed* is the past tense of the verb *pass*:

In the past plagues wiped out vast populations.

Marcus rode past her house every day.

I passed Belinda in the hall.

real/really: *Real* is an adjective; *really* is an adverb that describes the degree of an adjective:

Her boyfriend bought her a real diamond.

Because I'm really tired, I'll go to bed now.

regardless: *Regardless* means “without regard”; there is no such word as *irregardless*:

Regardless of his natural talent, he did not make the team.

rise/raise: *Rise* means “to move upward” (the subject does the action); *raise* means “to lift or make something go up” (the subject does the action to something else):

I plan to rise early to go fishing.

The Boy Scouts will raise the flag at the ceremony.

said/says: *Said* is the past tense of the verb *to say*; *says* is the present tense:

Yesterday he said he wanted to quit.

My aunt always says, “Pretty is as pretty does.”

slow/slowly: *Slow* is an adjective; *slowly* is an adverb:

The slow tortoise never wins races.

After spraining his ankle, he slowly crossed the finish line.

that/which: Use *that* to introduce essential clauses not set off by commas; use *which* to introduce nonessential clauses.

The mirror that once hung in the front hall cracked. (no commas)

My car, which has a sunroof, gets good gas mileage. (commas)

that/who: Use *who*, *whom*, or *whose* to refer to people; use *that* or *which* to refer to things.

Incorrect: I enjoy spending time with people that have similar interests as me.

Correct: I enjoy spending time with people who have similar interests as me.

their/there/they're: To show possession, use *their*; *there* is a place; and *there is* a contraction for *they are*:

Their matching outfits make them look like twins.

I love the zoo; let's go there.

They're as slow as molasses in January.

to/too/two: *To* is a preposition that can mean “in the direction of” or it can form the infinitive of any verb. *Too* means “also” or is an adverb indicating degree. And *two* is a number:

- Let's go to the mall. (preposition)
- Jeff would like to go too. (infinitive/ “also”)
- It will be too crowded. (adverb showing degree)
- We will need to take two cars. (infinitive/ number)

try to (not try and): *Try to* means “attempt”; never use *try and*
Try to avoid waking a sleeping alligator.



well/good: *Good* is an adjective (modifies a noun); *well* is an adverb (modifies a verb) that means “capably” or an adjective that means “satisfactory” or “in good health”:

- The good boy got a sticker as a reward for doing his homework well.
- I feel well.

who/whom: *Who* does the action; *whom* receives the action:

- Who will feed the dragon?
- Whom will you take to the dance?

Hint: To test for *who/whom*, substitute *he/him* in the sentence. If *he* fits, use *who*; if *him* fits, use *whom*.

your/you're: To show possession, use *your*; *you're* means “you are”:

- Thanks for letting me share your apartment.
- You're going to love this next tune.

PUNCTUATION AND MECHANICS

For more information and practice exercises, see the Purdue University On-Line Writing Lab web site: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/#punctuation>

Comma

1. Use a comma to separate adjectives that equally modify the same noun:
A big, hairy monster ate my homework.
2. Use commas to separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series:
I need to pack my stamps, rocks, camera, weights, hair dryer, and hat.
I must remember to gas the car, check the map, and pack a sandwich.

3. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so*) when joining two independent clauses to form a compound sentence:

I've never tried fried liver, and I never will.

However, do not separate verbs that are part of a compound predicate:

I also hate broccoli and despise lima beans.

4. Use a comma at the beginning of a sentence to set off introductory words, a participial phrase, or an adverb clause:

Introductory word: Unfortunately, that is not my car.

Participial phrase: Running late, I rushed out of the house without my shoes.

Adverb clause: As soon as we left the house, the phone rang.

5. Generally, a comma is not used with short prepositional phrases at the beginning of a sentence (4 words or less):

Above my head floated a hot air balloon.

However, you must use a comma after a series of prepositional phrases or a single long one:

Before the office manager would hire me, I had to interview with the president of the firm.

6. Use commas to enclose **nonessential** phrases and clauses. **Nonessential** phrases or clauses are NOT needed to understand the basic meaning of a sentence. **Essential**, also called **restrictive**, phrases or clauses are needed to understand the basic meaning of the sentence.

Nonessential: The dragon, which had gleaming teeth, set the house ablaze.

Essential: The man who is wearing the red jacket just dropped this umbrella.

Nonessential: The article was about the Green Bay Packers, my favorite team.

Essential: Anna is wearing the shirt she received for her birthday.

7. Use commas to separate the exact words of a speaker from the rest of a sentence:

"Off with her head," the Queen of Hearts yodeled. "In fact," she bellowed on, "off with all their heads!"

8. Use a comma to separate items in an address or date:

1550 Hill Road, Poway, CA 92064.

Thursday, October 17, 2001.

Semicolon

1. Use a semicolon to join two or more independent clauses in place of a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so*):
Nobody will ever win the battle of the sexes; there's too much fraternizing with the enemy.
On a dare I ate twenty-seven candy bars; I don't think I'll do that again.
2. Use a semicolon before a conjunctive adverb (i.e., an adverb that joins two independent clauses). Note that a comma goes after the adverb because it is an introductory word. Common conjunctive adverbs include *also, besides, for example, however, in addition, instead, moreover, meanwhile, nevertheless, similarly, then, therefore, thus*.
My brother was arrested at the zoo just for feeding the pigeons; however, he was feeding them to the lions.
I didn't take my usual route to school; instead, I took a shortcut that took twice as long.
3. Use a semicolon to separate groups of words in a series that already contain commas:
Over vacation we visited Paris, France; Venice, Italy; Vienna, Austria; and Madrid, Spain.

Colon

1. Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter:
Dear Mr. President:
Dear Dr. Mehta:
2. Use a colon to introduce a list that follows an independent clause:
I cleaned out the garage and found the following items: a giant bowling ball, a dead canary, one scuba flipper, and my math textbook.



When word-processing, type only one space after a colon.

Note that the list must follow an **independent** clause:

Wrong: My favorite subjects are: math, physics, P.E., and ceramics.

Right: The following subjects are my favorites: math, physics, P.E., and ceramics.

3. Use a colon after a complete sentence that introduces an illustration, explanation, or quotation:
There are three ways to get something done: do it yourself, hire someone, or forbid your teenager to do it.

Home computers are being called upon to perform a new educational function: the consumption of homework formerly eaten by the dog.

Dash

1. Use a dash to show a sharp break or interruption in a sentence:
So I told Griswold I was going to—OUCH! That hurt!
2. Use a dash to divide an introductory series from the explanatory clause that follows it:
Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—these are the rights of all Americans.
3. Use dashes to set off appositives that contain commas:
The makings of dinner—pasta, tomato sauce, vegetables, and garlic bread—were waiting on the counter when I arrived home.



Type a dash as two hyphens with no spaces between, before, or after. Many word-processing programs will convert this to a full dash.

Hyphen

1. Use a hyphen to make a compound word or to join coequal nouns:
mother-in-law three-year-old scholar-athlete
2. Use a hyphen to join words in compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine and with fractions:

Where to Break?

Words of one syllable may NEVER be divided, and multisyllable words may ONLY be divided between syllables.

twenty-nine forty-seven
two-thirds five-eighths

3. Use a hyphen to divide a word at the end of a line, but only between syllables:
Wrong: The bird peered at Mr. McGillacudy with a pu-zzled expression.
Right: The bird peered at Mr. McGillacudy with a puz-zled expression.

4. Use a hyphen to join a capital letter to a noun or participle:
R-rated movie T-bone steak Y-shaped U-turn
5. Use a hyphen to join two or more words that serve as a single adjective before a noun:
best-known novel two-story building awe-inspiring speech
6. In general, do not use a hyphen after a standard prefixes (e.g., *anti-*, *co-*, *multi-*, *non-*, *over-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *re-*, *semi-*, *sub-*, *un-*, *under-*):
multinational postwar antiestablishment coworker
nonjudgmental reinvent prescheduled unrelated

For other prefixes, or when in doubt, consult the [dictionary](http://www.m-w.com) (<http://www.m-w.com>)

Quotations and Quotation Marks

1. Use quotation marks around text that is taken from another source, or to indicate a speaker's exact words. When quoting material from another source, you must always include the citation for that source (*See the section on MLA Citation Format for details on how to cite sources*).
2. To omit words from a quotation, use an **ellipsis** to represent the part of the text omitted. An ellipsis is typed as three periods with a single space before and after each one (. . .). When using an ellipsis at the end of a sentence, include a fourth period for the sentence's end mark (. . . .). *You should never use an ellipsis to distort or change the meaning of the original text you are quoting.*

"When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one . . . had seen in at least ten years" (Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily").
3. Use **brackets** [like this] to enclose words you add or substitute to a quotation for the sake of clarity. Brackets are often used to replace a pronoun with the name of a character, for instance:

"Strange energy was in [Mr. Rochester's] voice, strange fire in his look" (Bronte 133).
4. To punctuate a **quotation within a quotation**, use single quotation marks to surround the inner quotation:

Steven said, "My favorite movie line is from Marlon Brando in *The Godfather* when he says, 'I'll make you an offer you can't refuse.'"
5. **Periods and commas** are always placed *inside* quotation marks:

"I've heard that line," said Albert, "but I never saw the movie."

However, the period at the end of a **citation** goes outside the *final parentheses*, not inside the quotation marks:

Lady Macbeth foreshadows her future insanity when she tells her husband:
"These deeds must not be thought after these ways; so, it will make us mad"
(2.2.45-46).

6. An **exclamation point** or a **question mark** is placed *outside* the quotation marks when it punctuates the main sentence:

What do you suppose it means when a cannibal says, "Well, of course, you're welcome to stay for dinner"?

It is placed *inside* the quotation marks when it punctuates only the quotation. [Note that no additional end punctuation is needed.]:

I almost croaked when he asked, "That won't be a problem for you will it?"

7. **Semi-colons** or **colons** are placed *outside* quotation marks:
Derek's favorite Springsteen song is "Born to Run"; I prefer "Thunder Road."

Punctuating Dialogue

1. For dialogue, use quotation marks before and after the exact words of a speaker; place the comma *inside* the quotation marks when the speaker attribution follows the quotation:
"Your driver's license says you should be wearing glasses," said the traffic officer to the speeder.
2. When the speaker attribution is given first, follow it with a comma. The direct quotation following it begins with a capital letter:
The speeding driver explained, "But I have contacts."
3. When a quoted sentence is divided into two parts by an interrupting expression or speaker attribution, begin the second part of the quotation with a lower case letter:
"I don't care who you know," the policeman replied, "because you're getting a ticket anyway."
4. When a question mark or exclamation point is used as an end mark of a quotation, place the end mark *inside* the quotation marks. (Note that the sentence continues without capitalizing the first word after the end of the quotation):
"Who comes up with these lame jokes, anyway?" asked the bewildered student.
5. When you write dialogue with two or more persons conversing, begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes:
"That guy is great on the field," said a college football scout to the player's coach. "But how's his scholastic work?"
"Why, he makes straight A's," replied the high school coach as they watched the player make tackle after tackle.
"Wonderful!" said the scout.
"Yes," agreed the coach, "but his B's are a little crooked."

Incorporating Quotations Into Your Writing

1. Work a **short quotation** (up to four typed lines of your page) directly into the text of your paper and put quotation marks around it. [Note that the period at the end of the quotation goes outside the final parentheses of the citation]:

"To be, or not to be, that is the question" (3.1.57). This familiar statement expresses the young prince's moral dilemma in William Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*.

2. For quotations that are **longer** than four typed lines of your page, use a **block quotation** format. Indent the entire quotation one inch from the left margin. Do not change the right margin. Because you have indented the quoted material, you do NOT use quotation marks around it as well.

Based on rumors and gossip, the children of Maycomb speculate about Boo Radley's appearance:

Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were bloodstained—if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time.

(Lee 13)

To block or not to block?

Determine a prose quotation's length by the number of lines it takes up on *your paper's* typed page, NOT in the original source!

3. Use a **block quotation** format when **quoting dialogue** between two or more speakers:

During the trial scene, Bob Ewell immediately shows his disrespect for both the court and his family:

"Are you the father of Mayella Ewell?" was the next question. "Well, if I ain't I can't do nothing about it now, her ma's dead," was the answer. (Lee 172)

4. Also use **block quotation** format when quoting dialogue between speakers in a play:

Mama compares her children to a beloved plant:

Mama (*looking at her plant and sprinkling a little water on it*): They spirited all right, my children. Got to admit they got spirit—Bennie and Walter. Like this little old plant that ain't never had enough sunshine or nothing—and look at it. . .

Ruth (*trying to keep Mama from noticing*): You . . . sure . . . loves that little old thing, don't you? (Hansberry 335)



Formatting Block Quotations

To format a block quotation, first type the entire quotation into your document. Then use the mouse to select the block of text you wish to indent. Using the ruler at the top of the page, move the *Left Indent* setting one inch. Alternatively, your program may have an *Increase Indent* button on the toolbar. Press it once for each tab indent you wish to add.

Quoting Poetry

1. When quoting **two or three lines** of poetry, use a **forward slash** [/] with one space on each side to show where each line ends. Using the format for a short quotation (see previous section), work the lines directly into the text of your paper using quotation marks. [Note that the period at the end of the quotation goes outside the final parentheses of the citation]:

Juliet's innocence soon turns to passion when she tells Romeo in the balcony scene, "My bounty is as boundless as the sea, / My love as deep; the more I give to thee, / The more I have, for both are infinite" (1.2.141-43).

Capitalized Lines

If the original text uses capital letters at the beginning of each line, as in these examples, keep the same capitalization in your document.

2. When quoting **more than three lines** of poetry, use a **block quotation** format. [Remember, no quotation marks!]:

Mercutio shows his sarcasm about love when he mocks Romeo's lovesickness for Rosaline:

Romeo! humors! madman! passion! lover!
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied!
Cry but "Ay me!" pronounce but "love" and "dove." (2.1.9-12)

3. When the quotation you are using begins in the **middle of a line**, position the partial line as it appears in the text:

When the exiled Romeo draws his dagger, Friar Lawrence scolds,
Hold thy desperate hand.
Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art;
Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast. (3.3.118-121)

Apostrophe

Contractions

1. Use an apostrophe to signify letter(s) left out of a word to form a contraction:
don't = do n[o]t she'd = she [woul]d
it's = it [i]s
2. Use an apostrophe to signify one or more numbers left out of numerals or words that are spelled as they are actually spoken:
class of '02 "Good mornin'!"

it's or its?

It's = it is
Its = belonging to it

These two words are commonly confused.

Remember:
Its is a possessive form, like *his* or *hers*—no apostrophe is needed.

Possessives

1. Add an apostrophe and an *s* to form the possessive of **singular nouns**, even if the noun ends in *s*:

Bob Dylan's voice the kiss's meaning Dickens's novels

2. Add only an apostrophe to form the possessive of **plural nouns** ending in *s*. If the plural does not end in *s*, add 's to form the possessive:

the Joneses' father the Padres' last game children's library

3. For the possessive form of a **compound noun** or an **indefinite pronoun**, place an apostrophe and an *s* after the last word:

mother-in-law's apartment Secretary of State's telephone
everybody's someone else's anyone's

4. Possessive personal pronouns (*his, hers, its, ours, yours, theirs* and the relative pronoun *whose*) do not require an apostrophe.

5. Remember that the word immediately before the apostrophe is the owner:

parent's car = one parent owns boss' office = one boss owns
parents' car = two parents own bosses' office = many bosses own

When ownership is **shared**, the apostrophe is also shared; use the possessive form only on the last item in a series to indicate shared ownership:

Caitlin, Chris, and Joshua's house = the house is shared by all three

When ownership is **individual**, each noun in a series gets its own individual apostrophe and *s*:

Caitlin's, Chris's, and Joshua's jackets = each has his or her own jacket

Capitalization

Sentences

1. Capitalize the **first word** of a sentence.

Marco loves to slam dance.

2. Capitalize the first word of a **full-sentence direct quotation**:

When Joe made it to first base, his coach screamed, "Run to second!"

Lady Macbeth foreshadows her future insanity when she tells her husband:
"These deeds must not be thought after these ways; so, it will make us mad"
(2.2.45-46).

Proper Nouns

Capitalize all **proper nouns** (those which name a specific person, place, or thing), including:

- Names of people and official titles, either written before a name or used in place of the proper noun:

Keanu Reeves **President John Kennedy** **Alexander the Great**
"Mr. President, will you answer questions at the press conference?"
"Not if I can help it, **Senator.**"

- Geographical Names:

- towns, cities, states, capitals, countries, and continents:

Dallas **Australia** **Russia** **New York**

- sections of the country or a continent:

the South **the Midwest** **the Middle East**

- streets, roads, highways:

Interstate 5 **Route 66** **Park Avenue**

- land forms and bodies of water:

Lake Havasu **Iberian Peninsula** **Sahara Desert**

- Languages, races, nationalities, and religions:

French **Inuit** **European** **Islam**

Also capitalize nouns referring to the Supreme Being and holy books:

God **Allah** **the Lord** **the Bible** **the Torah**

- Days of the week, months, holidays, or holy days:

This year, Hanukkah begins on Friday, December 6, and Christmas is on a Monday.

- Historical time periods, events in history, and special events:

Renaissance **Vietnam War** **Kentucky Derby** **Senior Prom**

- Names of organizations, associations, and teams:

San Diego Padres **Daughters of the American Revolution**
Greenpeace **Republican Party**

- Capitalize the first, last, and all other words in titles except for articles, short prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions:

The Taming of the Shrew ***Gone with the Wind***
To Kill a Mockingbird ***Los Angeles Times***
Crime and Punishment ***"Twist and Shout"***

Punctuating Titles



Italicize or Underline?

Italics is a term for a slanted type style. Before word-processors, writers would underline the words in a typed or hand-written manuscript that they wanted printed in italics when the document was published.

Today, *italics* are preferred to underlining when word-processing documents. However, when hand-writing or using a typewriter, underlining still stands in for italicized type.

Whichever you decide to use, only use one or the other throughout your document, and NEVER use both!

Italicize or underline the titles of **long works** that are published or released by themselves, such as movies, books, record albums, CD's, magazines, newspapers, full-length plays, operas, pamphlets, book-length poems, long musical compositions, legal cases, and the names of ships and aircraft:

Romeo and Juliet (play)
Washington Post (newspaper)
Seventeen (magazine)
Saving Private Ryan (movie)
Quit Smoking Now (pamphlet)
Titanic (ship)
Law and Order (television program)
The Four Seasons (musical composition)

Use quotation marks around the titles of **short works** that are likely to be published or released as part of a larger work, such as chapters of books; short stories; poems; songs; articles in a magazine, newspaper, and encyclopedia; and episodes of a radio or television program:

"To Build a Fire" (short story)
"Partners in Crime" (episode of *The Cosby Show*)
"Alien Triplets!" (article in the *National Inquirer*)
"Rocky Raccoon" (song on the Beatles' *White Album*)

Other Uses for Italics

1. Use italics to indicate a number, letter, or word that is being discussed or used in a special way. You may also use quotation marks:
Is there an e or an a at the end of cemetery?
2. Use italics for foreign words or phrases that are not part of everyday speech.
The Cavalier poets lived by the motto "*Carpe diem!*", or "Seize the day!"

Dates and Time

1. Capitalize the days of the week and months. Each of the following formats is acceptable:
December 31, 1999 31 December 1999

- When writing a date within a sentence, place a comma after the day of the week, the date, and the year:
On Wednesday, January 1, 2000, I will be eighteen years old!
- When only the month and day or only the month and year are given, no punctuation is necessary:
We began rehearsals on December 10 but performed in January 1997.
- When writing out times, use the numeral and a colon between the hour and minutes. Write only the hour if there are no minutes. Indicate morning or evening with the abbreviations *a.m.* and *p.m.* Note that both abbreviations are lower case and that a period is placed after each letter:
Meet me at the subway station at 7 p.m. because the movie starts at 8:10.

Numbers

- Spell out numbers of one or two words; numbers of more than two words are usually written as numerals.

ten twenty-five fifty thousand $3\frac{1}{2}$ 101 2,020

- Use numerals to express numbers in the following forms: dates, pages, chapters, decimals, percents, addresses, time, identification numbers, and statistics.

June 8, 1996	44 BC	AD 79	3:30 p.m.
pages 29-37	chapter 7	Interstate 5	Spanish 7
27.6	2 percent	a vote of 23 to 4	
1388 County Road	35 m.p.h.	5 milliliters	

- When a number begins a sentence, always spell it out:

Two hundred thirty people claimed to have seen UFOs in Alaska in 1996.
Nineteen ninety-two was an incredible year for tracking paranormal behavior.

However, if this creates awkward sentence structure, change the sentence:

Eight hundred and ninety-five people say they have talked to aliens within the last five years.

Within the last five years, 895 people say they have talked to aliens.

- When numbers are used frequently in a document, such as in scientific and technical writing, you may express all measurements as numerals:

In 4 experiments of psychic phenomenon, 79 percent of the couples could predict the correct sum of money 2 out of 3 times.

- When a mixture of numbers—some one or two words, some longer—are used together, they should be kept in the same style:

How could a team of 5 couples discover what an association of 2,250 scientists and economists could not?

6. You may use a combination of words and numerals for very large numbers:
1.5 million 3 billion to 3.2 billion 25 million dollars