The Essential Rhetoric

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Preface

The idea for this textbook came from my experiences as a director of composition at a university and as a teacher of brief writing workshops for businesses and government agencies. As a composition director, I increasingly came to see the encyclopedic textbooks we adopted or examined as too prescriptive. None of them even approximated a good fit for our program. Some approached the teaching of writing from positions radically different from ours, whereas others had philosophies we agreed with but included material that was inappropriate for our students.

In addition, these comprensive textbooks (and the accompanying manuals, guides to teaching writing, course packs, and handouts) overwhelmed our overburdened and inexperienced TA's and adjunct instructors with more information than they could possibly assimilate. I often ran into TA's in the campus bookstore clutching copies of Strunk and White or Zinsser's *On Writing Well*, hoping they had found a concise skeleton key to the reams of information they had been given. My repeated encounters with TA's made me realize something that should have been obvious: Although TA's and adjuncts who teach in composition programs are well-trained literary critics and talented creative writers, many of them are not thoroughly trained in rhetoric, and their chances of being able to discern the conceptional framework under the welter of readings and exercises in most comprehensive writing guides are slim. Nor would Strunk and White and *On Writing Well* be much help to them as guides to rhetorical concepts, because both volumes are compendia of writing do's and don'ts rather than systematic guides to the writing process.

Furthermore, my colleagues and I had problems coming to agreement about the suitability of reading selections in the rhetorics we used over the years. However, supplementing a rhetoric by adopting a reader created other problems. Not only did it substantially increase the total cost of books for the course, but it also added more and different information, in the form of the reader's apparatus, to an already overloaded teaching and learning situation.

All of this led us into discussions about what it was we really needed, and we decided what we needed was less, not more. What we really were seeking to find was a concise book that focused on rhetorical concepts we could use in conjunction with a pedagogically appropriate reader as a delivery system for our own ideas.

At the same time that I was directing our university's writing program, I also was running one- and two-day workshops for people in business and government who had never expected to write as part of their work but were increasingly being asked to do so. The workshop participants were demanding and highly motivated, and designing concentrated sessions on writing that would be valuable to an exacting audience of adults forced me to pare the writing process down to its practical essentials and focus on problem solving throughout the process. You will find what I learned from planning those workshops reflected in *The Essential Rhetoric's* brevity. You also will find it in the emphasis on revision and in the problem-solving strategies that give shape to that emphasis.

I have designed this volume to be used on its own as a personal guide to writing or in conjunction with a reader as a classroom textbook. *The Essential Rhetoric* is flexible enough to be used with a variety of course syllabi. For example, the textbook can be used for classes with assignments based on the purposes of writing (emphasis on Chapter Three, The Rhetorical Situation), for classes with assignments based on modes of discourse (emphasis on Chapter Five, Organizing Written Texts), for classes with assignments based on process and revision (emphasis on Part Two, Composing and Revision), and for classes with assignments based on reading and responding (emphasis on Chapter Two, Writing Begins with Reading). Beyond the classroom, however, this is a textbook for anyone who wants to improve his or her skill at writing while learning more about how writing works.

PART ONE

Writing: An Introduction

CHAPTER

1 *Why Write?*

Whether you are a college student, or a person who writes as a part of your job, or even someone who writes for pleasure alone, you would not be reading this book if you were not in some sense a working writer. Some people become working writers only when required by instructors or employers to write. Other people are compelled to write by their own passion. For people such as these, writing is as necessary as breathing. It is impossible for them not to write. In the act of writing they create themselves and give meaning to the world around them. Moreover, their reasons for writing are as varied as the writing they produce.

For Roald Dahl, writing was a "form of therapy," whereas for James Baldwin it was "a political instrument." In her essay "Why I Write," Joan Didion said, "I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear . . . what is going on in these pictures in my mind."

However, even for people not compelled by passion to write, the ability to write well is extraordinarily empowering. On a purely practical level, students who are good writers get better grades than students who are not. Professionals and even non-professionals who write well are more likely to succeed in the workforce than their counterparts who do not. Even more significant, however, than the worldly success associated with writing proficiency is the fundamental role that language (and its visible form, writing) plays in human existence. Language is the only thing we have at our disposal for making meaning out of experience and communicating that meaning to other people.

Furthermore, rather than being a mysterious inborn talent, writing is a learned skill. We learn to write by being exposed to language through reading, listening, and speaking. We develop

our skill as writers by examining how writing works and practicing what we have learned. Whatever your skill level, you can continue to grow as a writer by studying the writing process and applying what you learn as you write.

CHAPTER

2

Writing Begins with Reading

> "Read, read, read. Read everything—trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master."
>
> William Faulkner

The evidence for a profound connection between reading experience and writing ability is overwhelming. People who read regularly simply are better writers than their counterparts who do not. In much the same way that humans learn spoken language from listening to those speaking around them, people learn written language by being exposed to it on the page. The repeated practice of reading gives you the opportunity to internalize the structures of written language so you can reproduce those structures when you write.

In addition to learning general structures of written language through reading, people are introduced to the specific kinds of writing that goes on in the communities they enter by reading texts produced by those communities. For example, people entering the business community are introduced to the forms of business communications by reading memos, reports, and business letters. Similarly, individuals who enter a particular academic community are introduced to the scholarly writing that goes on in that community by reading its journals and other publications.

The Critical Reading Process

Like the writing process, critical reading is a process with discernible steps. Furthermore, people who learn the steps of the

process and follow those steps consciously are apt to read challenging texts more accurately and efficiently. The critical reading process contains the following steps:

Prereading
Holistic reading
Reading for meaning
Formulating a response

The critical reading strategies explicated in the following sections can help you determine the meaning of challenging written texts.

Prereading

Prereading is the step of the reading process in which the reader familiarizes him- or herself with the text and looks for signals about where to start. Prereading includes the following activities:

Determining the Genre and Completeness of a Text

Determining the genre of a text you are about to read will help you read more efficiently by pointing you in the direction of the text's purpose. In French, the word *genre* means "species." In literary parlance, the word means "specific type." For example, is the text a work of fiction or nonfiction? If nonfiction, is it an essay in which you can expect to find the writer's opinions and reflections? Is it a report in which you can expect to find facts rather than opinions? Is it some other kind of nonfiction prose? If so, what kind, and what are the general characteristics of that particular genre? In addition, is the text complete as originally published, or has it been excerpted from a longer piece of writing?

Scanning

Scanning is reading rapidly some parts of a text looking for clues to the text's meaning. Quickly skimming introductory and concluding paragraphs, headings, and other organizational or formatting features can point you toward the writer's main and supporting points, thus helping you to get more out of that text later when you read it straight through during the holistic reading stage of the critical reading process.

Researching the Author and Place and Date of Publication

Gathering information about the text's author and its place and date of publication can help you put the text into a historical or cultural context.

Holistic Reading

During holistic reading, the entire text is read with the purpose of gathering as much meaning from it as possible. The following techniques will help you search for meaning as you read texts holistically.

Focused Reading

If a text is particularly difficult to follow, the following **focused reading** technique can help you unlock it.

- Read the first one or two paragraphs slowly, concentrating on the passages and words you understand.
- At the end of the first or second paragraph, stop reading and **summarize** what you have read so far.
- If you are confused, go back and **reread** those things you do not understand.
- Then **predict** what direction you think the text will take next.

As you continue to read, compare your predictions with what happens in the text. Keep repeating this process as long as focused reading seems necessary.

Annotating

Annotating is writing on a text to comment on its meaning with responses or questions. This exercise helps you read more accurately and retain more of what you read. When annotating you enter into active conversation with the text you are reading, and you record that conversation in an abbreviated form.

The following are some suggestions for annotating:

- Mark any passage you find interesting, compelling, or confusing, or any passage with which you strongly agree or disagree.

- Mark recurring ideas and emerging patterns.
- Outline the text; look for blocks of materials, then mark and identify them.
- Mark summary statements, topic sentences that summarize parts of the text, and more general statements that might summarize the text's main idea.
- Mark unfamiliar words or references.
- Write out questions for research or inquiry.

Keeping a Reading Journal

Annotating is the first step toward keeping a reading journal. In a reading journal, you record the results of your reading at every stage of the process. If reading purely for entertainment, you probably will not annotate the text you are reading or go one step further to keep a complete record of your responses in a journal. However, if you are reading challenging texts to which you will be asked to respond by writing, it usually is a good idea to keep a reading journal. A reading journal often is the place at which a writer enters the writing process by *prewriting* about a subject.

Determining the Writer's Purpose and Intended Audience

Determining the purpose and audience of a text will make it easier for you to understand the text's overall meaning. In addition, determining the purpose and audience will help you understand the ways in which the writer is out to change you and other readers.

Purpose: The writer's **purpose** is the objective the writer wishes to accomplish by constructing the particular piece of writing. Most of the texts you encounter have audience-based purposes: they are written to change what you and other members of an audience know, think, or feel, or how you and others act by expressing, informing, interpreting, entertaining, or persuading. Some of the texts you encounter will be written to accomplish more than one purpose. For example, an email from a friend about an upcoming trip to Mexico might be written to **inform** you about the dates and itinerary, **express** the writer's excited anticipation, and **persuade** you to come along.

Intended Audience: The audience is the person or group of people to whom the piece of writing is addressed. Audiences can range in age, socioeconomic background, education level, gender, and values. Language or content that is comprehensible and inoffensive to one audience can be totally incomprehensible or offensive to another. Studying the language and content in a text and imagining the impact of both on possible audiences should lead you to an accurate determination of a text's intended audience.

Reading for Meaning

In this step of the reading process, you study a text carefully by **researching** and **analyzing** it, then making judgments about the text's meaning.

Researching Unfamiliar Material

To get as much as possible from your reading experience, it is important to research unfamiliar material in the texts you encounter. Consult a good dictionary for the meanings of unknown words. Confer with the staff member at the **reference desk** of your local or college library for help in finding answers to questions about unknown content in the texts you read.

Focusing on the Developmental Features

The developmental features of a text encompass the actual material the writer must communicate to the reader to accomplish the text's purpose. In addition to the text's **controlling idea,** general developmental features include **information** about the subject as well as the writer's **intellectual** and **emotional responses** to the subject, in other words, the **facts, judgments**, and **emotions** revealed or described in text.

Focus on Facts: Identify (list on a separate piece of paper or mark in the text with a highlighter) as many facts in the text as you can.

Focus on Judgments: Identify the judgments or conclusions the writer makes (or quotes from another source) about the subject of writing.

Focus on Emotions: Identify the emotions the writer expresses or describes in the text.

Determining the Controlling Idea

The **controlling idea** of a text is the **thesis** or **central message** the writer wishes to communicate to the audience. In many texts the

The Role of Discussion in the Critical Reading Process

"For excellence, the presence of others is always required."
Hannah Arendt

Discussing the texts you read with others who also have read them (in a reading group, classroom, or workplace) will enhance your reading experience in significant ways. Not only will it allow you to share in other people's perspectives and therefore compel you to put critical pressure on your responses to the reading, but it also will help you to retain what you read by giving you the opportunity to revisit your reading in the context of thoughtful conversation.

controlling idea is stated explicitly in one or two sentences in the introduction. However, in some pieces of writing, rather than being openly stated, the message is suggested by the developmental material, which adds up to a message the reader must infer.

Determining the controlling idea is the most important step in the critical reading process because in this step the reader makes a summary judgment about what he or she thinks the text "means." To do this, you must study the results of the "reading for meaning" step of the process up to this point and make an evidence-supported case for a judgment of meaning.

The key words here are "evidence-supported case." Determining the controlling idea of a piece of writing is not as easy as it might seem. In reading, we bring all our prejudices and preconceived judgments to the reading. Therefore, it is easy to "read things in" and leap to conclusions about meaning for which there is actually little evidence. Although the ultimate meaning of some texts (particularly very expressive texts such as works of fiction and poems) may be open to interpretation, most of the informational, explanatory, and persuasive texts we encounter have straightforward controlling ideas. However, even in cases in which the controlling idea is open to interpretation, the reader must make an evidence-supported case for a judgment of meaning just as he or she must in cases in which the controlling idea is straightforward.

Formulating a Response

Once a reader has made an evidence-supported case for the meaning of a text, he or she is ready to formulate a response to that text. Sometimes the reader's response will be in the form of a formal writing assignment. For example, in a college literature class a student might be asked to respond to a short story or novel by writing an interpretative essay. In a corporation an employee might be asked to respond to the company's annual report by writing a letter to stockholders summarizing that report. If the response is an assignment, the text that has been read will be the **subject** in a **rhetorical situation** (see Chapter Three, The Rhetorical Situation), and that particular rhetorical situation will have to be evaluated as the first step in the process of fulfilling the assignment.

However, even if you are not asked to respond formally to a text in writing, actually writing down your responses in the form of informal writer-based journal entries will ensure that you think more deeply about your reading experience and retain more of what you have read.

The most obvious informal response would be to the **controlling idea** (**main idea** or **thesis**) of the text you have read. How do you respond to that idea? Is it an idea to which you agree or disagree? What evidence can you supply from your own experience to support your agreements or disagreements?

CHAPTER

3

The Rhetorial Situation

The Elements of the Rhetorical Situation

A working writer is simply someone who is regularly given writing assignments. These assignments may be self-imposed. Poets, fiction writers, diarists, and essayists regularly formulate their own writing assignments. Often, however, writing assignments are imposed by someone other than the writer, for example, an instructor or employer. Whatever the source or genre, each writing assignment you encounter is a **rhetorical situation** containing the following four interactive elements:

Subject
Writer
Audience
Purpose

A rhetorical situation is defined by the **writer** who is writing, the **subject** being written about, the **audience** to whom the piece of writing is addressed, and the **purpose** that the writer is trying to accomplish. When you write to fulfill an assignment, all four of these elements interact and influence the choices you make as you construct your text.

Subject

A **subject** is any topic of inquiry, study, or discussion about which a writer constructs a text. For example, if you are in a college composition class, you might write a persuasive essay with capital punishment as its subject. If you are a city engineer, you might

write a letter to a homeowner with a fence violation as its subject. If you are a poet, you might write a sonnet with love as its subject. Unquestionably, the subject of your writing determines the choices you make as you write. An official letter to a homeowner about a fence violation would be entirely different in genre and content from a sonnet celebrating or mourning the consequences of love.

Writer

Furthermore, what you write is produced ultimately by you, the **writer**, a particular human being with a unique personal and educational history that influences the content and language you choose to include in the texts you construct. Given the same assignment, no two people will construct exactly the same text. A persuasive essay about capital punishment written by the family member of a death row inmate is likely to be vastly different from an essay on the same subject written by the family member of a murder victim.

Audience

Just as the sum total of the writer's knowledge and experience influences what he or she chooses to put down on the page, so the **audience** for whom the text is constructed also affects the writer's choices. For instance, no matter what your age, a letter to your mother describing your weekend activities would be very different from a letter to your best friend describing the same weekend. You would make different choices as you write to each of your audiences, emphasizing , leaving out, and including different things.

Purpose

Finally, what you write will also be affected by your **purpose** for writing. Your purpose is the objective you wish to accomplish by writing, or, to put it another way, the specific change in knowledge, thought, or action you desire from your audience. The change you want can be as mild as getting your audience to know factual information or as demanding as getting the audience to change its position on a controversial issue.

When you write to an audience hoping to accomplish one purpose, you create one kind of text. However, when you write to that same audience with a different purpose in mind, you con-

struct a different text altogether. For example, an article written for a newspaper reporting on an execution would be very different in form and content from an editorial arguing against capital punishment.

Researchers and teachers of writing commonly group purposes of writing into the following categories:

Writing to learn
Writing to express
Writing to inform
Writing to interpret
Writing to entertain
Writing to persuade

Writing to Learn

> "It's like every discovery job; you don't know what's going to happen until you try it."
>
> William Stafford

Perhaps the most elemental reason why people write is to discover what it is they think and feel. The act of writing not only helps you recall information, sensations, and emotions you have forgotten, but it also allows you to create new knowledge by combining previously learned bits of information in new ways. Virtually every finished text has begun with a writer writing to learn.

Writing to Express

Writers also write to express their emotions, conclusions, and judgments about experience. Poetry, fiction, and personal essays and journals are the kinds of writing that most readily come to mind when we think of expressive writing, but all kinds of writing, from journalism to scientific writing, can be highly expressive. Expressiveness in writing can take many forms, from the simple expression of interest to the expression of powerful judgments.

Writing to Inform

In informational writing, the writer's goal is to help the audience understand the subject. Informative writers are more knowledgeable about the subject than the audience. The primary emphasis in informational writing is on subject.

Writing to Interpret

When you write interpretively, you make evidence-supported judgments about the meaning or significance of a text, problem, issue, or event. Interpretive writing has a powerful persuasive element because the writer is making and defending claims about the meaning or significance of the subject of writing. Most writing in the academic community is interpretative.

Writing to Entertain

In writing to entertain, the writers aim is to engage the imagination of an audience by appealing to that audience's sense of what is beautiful, moving, or amusing.

Writing to Persuade

When you write persuasively, your goal is to convince your audience to agree with your judgments about a subject. Editorials and opinion pieces are examples of persuasive writing.

Combined Purposes

Although many writings combine purposes to accomplish more than one objective, most have one primary, controlling purpose. For example, a letter to the editor with persuasion as a **primary purpose** might also have a **secondary purpose** of informing its readers.

Conventional Genres

Purpose dominates the choices a writer makes during the writing process more than any other element in the writing situation. One of the most obvious influences that purpose has in any rhetorical situation is on the writer's choice of genre. In fact, the influence of purpose on genre is so profound that communities create **conventional writing genres** to expedite the writing process.

A *convention* is a practice or custom on which members of a community generally agree. The writing conventions of a particular community usually influence—and sometimes dictate—the form, content, and style of texts constructed within that community. For example, the city engineer's letter to the homeowner would likely follow a form for writing letters generally agreed on

by people working in government offices. The content of the letter would be factual and informative, and the language employed would be distant and formal. Similarly, a high school student's essay about a literary work would likely follow the form and style of the five-paragraph essay, which currently is a convention in American secondary schools. It is important to remember, however, that writing conventions, like social customs, are governed by the values and concerns of the communities that establish them and are, therefore, subject to change.

Analyzing the Writing Situation

Before a writer can begin to construct a text, he or she should evaluate each of the elements in the rhetorical situation to determine whether that element is open or restricted. Determining the options and restrictions in a particular writing situation at the very start of the writing process will clarify the objectives of the assignment and allow you to write more purposefully and efficiently. Because writing things down helps clarify vague notions into clear ideas, it is a good idea to write an informal response detailing the options and restrictions of each element.

Subject

Some writing situations come into being when an individual is compelled by interest or belief to write. For example, literary works and editorials, and other opinion pieces usually are the result of a writer's passionate response to a subject. Although writing situations of this kind often produce the best writing, they contain inherent dangers. A writer who is passionate or exceptionally knowledgeable about a subject can find it difficult to maintain audience awareness. The writer assumes the audience shares his or her interest, knowledge, or viewpoint and may in consequence fail to be sufficiently clear and persuasive.

Writing situations in which the subject is given or the writer must choose a subject from a list or category of topics present other difficulties. The writer may not have the knowledge to begin writing without first engaging in research. In addition, a writer's lack of interest can be a problem. The writer's task then is to find a fit between his or her interests and the assignment.

Writer

Every piece of writing expresses to some degree the unique personality of the human being who creates it. However, effective writing requires writing critically as well as expressively. If you fail to test the ideas you express by being self-critical, your writing is likely to be egocentric and superficial rather than persuasive.

Furthermore, the amount of your actual personality that finds its way into a piece of writing should depend on the demands of the particular writing situation. Some genres, such as personal essays and letters, demand the writer's presence on the page. Other genres, such as legal briefs and business letters, require that the writer remain in the background.

Writing Collaboratively

A great deal of governmental, business, and academic writing and some creative writing (e.g., screen writing) is produced by groups of writers working together. Writing collaboratively has both advantages and drawbacks. If the practical issue of dividing tasks is dealt with effectively early on, writing with others in a group can streamline the **prewriting** stage of the writing process—the step in which the subject is researched and ideas are generated—and make that stage much more efficient.

However, writing with others can often be difficult at the **drafting** stage in which the writer-based notes of prewriting are transformed into the sentences of audience-based writing, because each writer—whether he or she recognizes it—has a personal voice, an idiosyncratic way of using words and structuring sentences. The phenomenon of the personal voice often leads collaborative writers to struggle over the ways things "sound" in the texts they are constructing.

Audience

When you write to an audience other than yourself, your objective is to change the real people who constitute that audience, either by imparting knowledge to them or by compelling them to new thought or action. However, the ways in which you effect

that change will depend on the knowledge and values of the particular audience you are addressing. Language, form, and developmental material that is appropriate for one audience might be inappropriate for another. Focusing on the following important areas will help you to develop a clear sense of audience:

WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

What is its age, gender, and socioeconomic status?

What is its education level?

What are its values and beliefs?

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU, THE WRITER, AND THE AUDIENCE?

Do you and the audience have similar (or different) values and beliefs?

What is your opinion of the audience?

WHAT IS THE AUDIENCE'S RELATION TO THE SUBJECT?

How much knowledge does the audience have about the subject?

What are the judgments of the audience about the subject? Are those judgments rational?

WHAT KIND OF TEXT WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THIS AUDIENCE?

Is there a particular genre or conventional form that would be most appropriate?

What level of language would be most appropriate in communicating with this audience?

Purpose

Because purpose has such a profound influence on the choices a writer makes during the writing process, writing out your purpose in as few sentences as possible and keeping it close as you develop your text, can help your writing to be more focused. Tape a copy of your purpose to the top of your computer screen, or if you write longhand, copy it at the top of your paper.

PART TWO

Composing and Revision

CHAPTER

4 Developing Written Texts

Writing is a Process

In the last twenty years, researchers have come to agree that **writing is a process** with discernible steps and that people who understand the process and consciously follow it are likely to be better writers than people who do not. Understanding how the process works and using it as you write will demystify writing and help you begin writing tasks more easily and complete them more efficiently. The writing process contains the following steps:

Prewriting and research
Drafting
Revision
Editing
Proofreading

However, even though writing is a process with discernible steps, it is not a rigid, lockstep process. Writing is thinking made visible on the page (or on the computer screen). Therefore, writing is **recursive** rather than linear. It is a process that loops back to earlier phases, allowing its practitioner (the writer) to reexamine initial conclusions in the light of new discoveries.

Of the five steps of the writing process in the preceding list, the most crucial and most recursive step is **revision**. Experienced writers constantly revise their writing as they compose it. They read their emerging prose aloud and listen for accuracy of meaning, precision of language, and correctness. Then they rethink and rewrite by adding and deleting, by replacing and rearranging.

The three chapters that make up Part Two of this textbook—Developing Written Texts, Organizing Written Texts, and Focusing on Style—explicate the writing process while underscoring the essential continuity of composing and revising by focusing on the three kinds of revision in which writers engage: developmental, organizational, and stylistic revision.

Prewriting and Research

Prewriting is the generational stage of the writing process. In prewriting the writer gathers information, formulating and exploring ideas about the subject of writing. Prewriting is perhaps the most important step of the process because it is during prewriting that the writer discovers what he or she wishes to communicate about the subject.

Researching

Research is the gathering of information from sources beyond ourselves. Many people think of research as an activity limited to specialized fields or to high school and college "research papers." However, almost any writing assignment can be enhanced by adding research to the writing process. Research is not just a way of supporting our own conclusions about a subject by citing authorities who agree with our conclusions, but a way of knowing, and the more we know about a subject, the easier it is to write about it. Chapter Seven, Research and Writing, provides detailed strategies for researching and documenting sources.

Using a Word Processor

In the past few years, word processing programs have become standard tools for writing. Word processing makes writing easier and more efficient at every step of the process, from the early writer-based stages through the preparation of the final, finished audience-based text. Word processing allows you to use the steps of the process as a cohesive (and recursive) whole. With a word processor you can easily mine your prewriting and research notes for material as you draft, and you can cut, rearrange, reword, and add to drafted material as you revise. Word processing gives you the opportunity to be a better writer because it makes rewriting, correcting, and polishing (the very activities that separate good writers from those who are not so good) much easier than handwriting or typing.

Keeping a Journal

For many writers prewriting begins with journal writing. A journal provides an open writing space in which a writer can explore ideas freely or cache significant material for later use.

Generational Activities

The activities that follow are techniques commonly used by writers to generate and develop ideas about the subjects of their writing.

Freewriting: In freewriting the writer writes quickly without stopping, putting down whatever comes to mind about the subject without worrying about spelling and punctuation. The point of freewriting is to open the writer's mind and stimulate thinking about a topic.

Clustering: Clustering is a visual form of free associating. It allows the writer to follow one train of thought about a topic for as long as he or she wishes, then switch easily to another train of thought. The writer writes a topic in the middle of a blank sheet of paper, then draws short lines from the topic and writes down as many things as he or she can that are associated with the topic. The following clustering exercise explores the topic of spring.

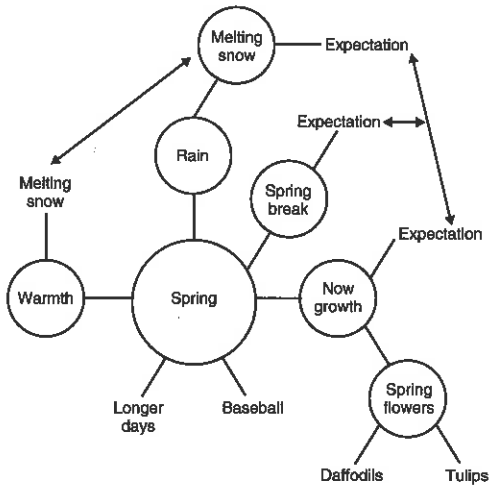

FIGURE 1 Clustering.

Double-Entry Notes: Double-entry notes are another form of free association. The writer starts by drawing a line down the center of a paper. On the left side, the writer free associates and writes down as many words about the subject as come to mind. Then on the right side the writer comments on each word. On the "comments" side, the writer supplies evidence and examples and records reflections and judgments about the words listed on left side.

Spring

Brainstorm	Comments
Rain	From the coast, melting the icy snow—the gutters run with it and it runs off the eves and soaks the garden.
Change of clothes	The first warm day when everyone suddenly exposes his or her white legs in shorts. Wool is put away and in its place appear linen and cotton.
The first flowers	Yellow daffodils sprout in the lawn, and there are bunches of red tulips in the flower beds.

FIGURE 2 Double entry notes.

Outlining: Because it focuses on the arrangement of material, outlining works best in rhetorical situations wherein the writer is especially knowledgeable about a subject and mainly interested in finding the most appropriate form by which to communicate with an audience. Outlining often is used as a secondary prewriting technique after the writer has engaged in freewriting or the writing of double-entry notes.

Spring

I. Rain from coast melts icy snow
   A. Water runs off roof and soaks the garden
   B. Water runs beside curbs and gurgles into storm drains

II. Sudden change in people's clothes
   A. White legs exposed in shorts
   B. Linen and cotton replace wool

III. First flowers
   A. Yellow daffodils sprout in yard
   B. Bunches of red tulips in flower beds

FIGURE 3 Outlining.

Sketching: Sketching can be a useful way of exploring and clarifying subjects that have a visual element. Below is a sketch of a hiking trail in the Colville National Forest in Washington State.

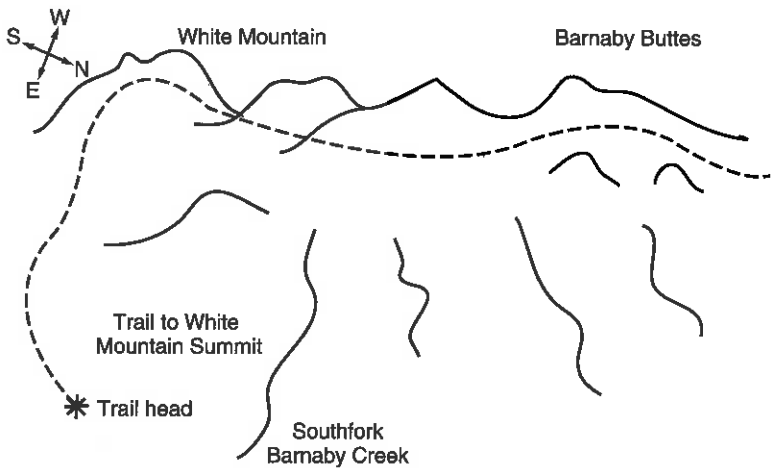

FIGURE 4 Sketching.

Looking for Logical Patterns: The following logical patterns are natural and familiar ways in which people think and communicate. They often are used as organizational patterns for entire texts or single paragraphs within texts. However, they also can be useful as prewriting techniques because they allow writers to examine subjects from different logical perspectives. The following logical patterns are discussed and illustrated fully in Chapter Five.

narration
illustrating a judgment
definition
comparison/contrast
causal analysis
process analysis
division and classification
analogy

Focusing on a Controlling Idea

The *controlling idea* (in academic writing, the *thesis*) of a text is the central message the writer wishes to communicate to the audience. Although all controlling ideas are to some degree claims made by the writer, their persuasiveness can range from moderately suggestive to openly argumentative, depending on the parameters of the writing situation. For example, an article written about an emerging nation to entertain readers of a travel magazine is likely to have a controlling idea more like a dominant impression than an argumentative assertion. Conversely, an article written about the same subject to persuade readers of a political science journal is likely to have a controlling idea that is openly argumentative.

In some rhetorical situations, the controlling idea is given or implied by the assignment. For example, the rhetorical situation prompting the city engineer's letter to the homeowner would insist on the controlling idea "rectify your fence violation or face consequences." However, in many assignments, the writer will need to define and articulate a controlling idea for the text he or she is constructing. For example, many high school and college writing assignments, in which the writer is asked to take and defend a position about the meaning or significance of a subject, would demand that the writer define and articulate a controlling idea.

In many texts the controlling idea is stated explicitly in one or two sentences. In some pieces of writing, however, the message is left for the reader to infer. Whether you plan to state the controlling idea explicitly in the text or not, it is important that you write out a working message in one or two sentences to focus your writing as you draft.

Drafting

Drafting is the stage at which you begin to make the shift from the scattered writer-based notes of prewriting to the coherent sentences and paragraphs that make up a unified audience-based text. Generally, the more prewriting you have done for the assignment, the easier drafting will be.

Keep in mind that drafting is the stage at which you begin to make the shift from writer- to audience-based writing. Drafting is very much like an advanced form of freewriting. You should feel the same freedom to explore or leave details out if you are following an idea because a great deal of what you put down will be incomplete and subject to revision.

However, because the purpose of drafting is to begin creating a text that will persuade an external audience, it is important for you to maintain a balance between free exploration and audience awareness.

The following features exist in all writing:

Developmental features
Organizational features
Stylistic features

However, the basic features of successful audience-based writing are much more complete and precise than those of writer-based writing. In writer-based prose, wherein the reader and the writer are the same individual, the basic features can be mere reminders of material known to the writer. However, in audience-based prose the basic features must be sufficiently clear and complete for the text to be credible and persuasive to the specific external audience for whom the writer is writing.

Audience-Based Developmental Features

The developmental features of a text encompass the actual material the writer must communicate to the reader to accomplish the text's purpose. In addition to the text's controlling idea, general developmental features include information, ideas and concepts as well as the writer's conclusions about the subject of writing. More specific developmental features are background information that makes the writer's purpose clear to the reader, along with evidence, reasons, and examples that support the controlling idea and make the ideas, concepts, and conclusions presented in the text credible and persuasive.

Aristotle divided the developmental material writers use to persuade readers into three kinds. Writers often employ all three appeals in a single piece of writing as follows:

Logos, appealing to the audience's **reason**: Appeals to reason are directed at the audience's mind, using evidence, examples, and reasons to support a claim. To be convincing, appeals to reason must be logical and seem practical to the audience.

Ethos, appealing to the audience's sense of **ethics**: Ethical appeals are directed at the audience's sense of right and wrong. Effective ethical appeals entreat the audience to do what is fair, just, and honest. To be convincing, the writer employing an ethical appeal must gain the trust of the audience by appearing to be evenhanded and concerned.

Pathos, appealing to the audience's **emotions**: Emotional appeals are directed at arousing the audience's feelings of empathy, sympathy, or animosity.

Revision

"What makes me happy is rewriting. . . . It's like cleaning house, getting rid of all the junk, getting things in the right order, tightening things up."

Ellen Goodman

As discussed earlier, of the five steps in the writing process, the most crucial and most recursive step is revision. The word *revise* means "to see again," and experienced writers are continuously seeing their writing anew and amending it throughout the process of constructing a text. Good writers constantly revise their writing as they compose it. They rethink their ideas, reading their emerging prose aloud and listening for accuracy of meaning, precision of

Seeking Response in Editorial Relationships

No serious writer goes from draft to finished text without editorial assistance. Because it often is difficult for a writer to see his or her own writing from the perspective of an external reader, regularly getting feedback by participating in editorial relationships is a crucial part of the writing process. Editorial relationships come in two kinds, formal and informal. In **informal** editorial relationships, the participants are peers who read and offer criticism to each other about their writing. Classroom and workplace writing workshops and editing groups and partnerships are examples of informal editorial relationships. In **formal** editorial relationships, one member is an expert (usually a professional editor, instructor, or more experienced colleague) with a greater or more specialized knowledge of the kinds of writing that are likely to be demanded of the writer.

language, and correctness. The three kinds of revision in which writers engage correspond to the three categories of audience-based features: developmental, organizational, and stylistic.

Developmental Revision

During developmental revision, the writer evaluates the developmental material in his or her draft to determine whether the emerging text is moving toward accomplishing its purpose. Developmental revision entails testing ideas and conclusions, and rewriting, aiming for credibility, completeness, and appropriateness for the audience. The writer should be prepared to alter (or change completely) general developmental features as well as specific ones. For example, if the controlling idea is discredited by information contained in the draft, the writer must reassess the controlling idea and the compromising information and make whatever changes are necessary to create a text that is persuasive. Although such drastic rethinking may send the writer back to the prewriting stage of the process, in the long run, the move will turn out to be more efficient than wasting more time pursuing a developmental plan that has no chance of being persuasive. In addition to focusing on general developmental features, the writer must evaluate and be ready to revise specific developmental features.

Problem-Solving Strategies for Developmental Revision

In addition to problems with the text's controlling idea, general developmental problems include problems with the logic and completeness of the information, ideas, or concepts presented in the text, or problems with the writer's conclusions about the subject of writing. More specific developmental problems may include problems with the text's background information, or with the evidence, reasons, and examples that support the controlling idea. During developmental revision, the writer evaluates the developmental material in his or her draft to determine whether the emerging text is sufficiently persuasive to accomplish its purpose.

Common Problems with Development

Problem 1: Inappropriate or Illogical Controlling Idea

The controlling idea of a text is the **central message** the writer wishes to communicate to the audience. Although all controlling ideas are to some degree claims made by the writer, they can range in persuasive strength from the **implied** dominant impressions commonly found in creative writing to the **openly stated** assertions found in argumentation.

Persuasiveness Continuum

IMPLIED ◄---------► **OPENLY STATED**	
(creative writing)	(argumentation)
poetry	academic writing
fiction	editorials
personal essays	opinion pieces

Because controlling ideas are by their nature persuasive claims, problems with them generally concern their credibility or appropriateness for an audience. A descriptive list of common problems with controlling ideas follows. Studying the list and learning to identify problematic controlling ideas will ensure that the ideas you develop are credible and appropriate to your audience. For additional problems with controlling ideas, see the descriptive list of fallacies under the rubric Avoiding Fallacious Thinking later in this section.

Inappropriate For the Audience. The controlling idea must be an idea that both you and the audience are willing to agree is part of your common experience. For example, a creationist (a person who believes in the fundamentalist religious belief that the world was created in six days) would have little hope of successfully presenting a controlling idea based on creationism to an audience of mainstream biologists who believe in evolution.

Either Empty or Implausible. The controlling ideas you develop must be those for which you can make a case. Although they need not be argumentative, the controlling ideas should be arguable. Even the implied controlling ideas of creative texts are to some degree arguable. In a poem, for example, the writer may make a case for a particular way of viewing the world.

Controlling ideas that are not arguable fall into two classes: empty and implausible. An *empty* controlling idea is a statement with which no one would disagree. For example, the statement "Cancer is bad" would be an empty controlling idea. On the other end of the spectrum are *implausible* controlling ideas, which are claims so wild that a writer would never be able to make a case for them, for example, "We should eliminate cancer by dedicating the entire federal budget to fighting the disease."

Faulty Generalization. All-inclusive language (all, none, no, always, never) in a controlling idea may be a signal that the writer is overgeneralizing and extending some instances to include all instances of an occurrence or situation. The statement "There is no reason to exclude women from fighting alongside men in combat" is an example of faulty generalization.

Indefinite. Rather than making a definite assertion, the indefinite controlling idea attempts to straddle the middle ground. "Abortion is very controversial" and "There are many reasons to go straight to college from high school and many reasons to take time off between high school and college" are examples of indefinite controlling ideas.

Circular. The circular controlling idea does not assert anything. It merely restates what it has already expressed. The statement,

"The growing popularity of films shows that more people are going to the movies than ever before," is an example of a circular controlling idea.

Problem 2: Failure to Make Judgments or Draw Interpretative Conclusions

A great many rhetorical situations require writers to make judgments or draw interpretative conclusions about the meaning or significance of subjects. Many college writing assignments fall into this category. However, making judgments and drawing interpretative conclusions can be difficult for beginning writers, particularly when the audience for whom they are writing is far more knowledgeable about the subject than they are. When confronted with an intimidating audience, inexperienced writers often avoid making judgments altogether. They either knit claims and interpretations gathered from outside sources together into a patchwork that contains none of their own ideas, or they hedge by making claims that are empty or indefinite (see earlier section, Problems with the Controlling Idea).

Solutions. The best way to overcome habitual problems with making judgments or drawing conclusions is to know the subjects of your writing as thoroughly as possible. You may need to spend more time engaging in critical reading or research to gain more knowledge, or more time prewriting to explore your ideas.

Problem 3: Fallacious Argumentation

The more openly persuasive a piece of writing is, the more its success will depend on the quality of the claims and judgments it contains. To stand up to scrutiny, judgments and interpretations must be logical and capable of being supported with credible evidence.

Solutions. A fallacy is an error in thinking, and a conscious deception which results in a faulty conclusion. Fallacies often sound reasonable. However, when examined closely, they reveal insufficient causality to make them credible. Although the three kinds of fallacies in the following discussion correspond to the three kinds of persuasive appeals—logos (appealing to reason), ethos, (appealing to ethics), pathos (appealing to emotion)—they all are

the result of faulty logic. Understanding what fallacies are and learning how to identify them will not only help you to avoid them in your own thinking and writing but also protect you from being manipulated by them.

COMMON LOGICAL FALLACIES

- The Latin phrase **non sequitur** means "it does not follow."

  In a non sequitur fallacy, the writer or speaker draws a conclusion that is not causally related to its premises.

  Example: "Senator Max Baucus comes from a farm family. Therefore, he will vote for increased farm subsidies in the Senate."

  Just because Senator Baucus comes from a farm family does not necessarily mean that he will vote for increased farm subsidies.

- When a writer or speaker **begs the question**, he or she implies that a proposition is true when it actually is open to debate.

  Example: "Because they're irresponsible and careless, teenagers should not be allowed to drive."

  The writer suggests that all teenagers are irresponsible and careless. However, that conclusion is debatable.

- The **post hoc ergo propter hoc** ("after this, therefore because of this") fallacy assumes that one event or condition is caused by another even though no proof is provided. Post hoc fallacies confuse correlation with causality, assuming that because one event has followed another, the first event must have caused the second.

  Example: "Another example of Clinton's success as a president was the increase in new home construction during his tenure as president."

  Although new housing starts may have increased during Clinton's presidency, there is no clear connection between his administration's policies and the increase.

- A **hasty generalization** is a broad general statement that lacks adequate support. One of the most common forms of this fallacy is stereotyping.

Example: "The committee hired a male candidate for the job. Clearly, the committee is sexist and biased against women."

COMMON ETHICAL FALLACIES

- In **guilt by association** the speaker or writer tries to discredit an opponent by connecting him or her with a person the audience views as disreputable.

  Example: "Don't vote for Craig Rathdrum for the school board; his brother is an alcoholic."

- In an **ad hominem** ("against the man") fallacy the writer or speaker ridicules an opponent or attacks his or her character instead of concentrating on the issue.

  Example: "Former Vice President Dan Quayle misspelled the word "potatoes." Therefore, he is not fit to be president."

COMMON EMOTIONAL FALLACIES

- The **bandwagon** fallacy suggests that since "everyone is doing it, you should do it as well." In a fallacy of this kind, the speaker or writer suggests that the audience should accept a proposition because everyone thinks it is true.

  Example: "Ninety-five percent of the county's residents are against annexation. Shouldn't you oppose it too?"

- **Veiled threats** or **scare tactics** are appeals that attempt to frighten audiences into taking a course of action or agreeing with a particular position.

  Example: "Anyone who protests the government's policies is a traitor. Therefore, we must outlaw all protests."

Problem 4: DEVELOPMENT THAT LACKS SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Perhaps the most common developmental problem faced by writers is the failure to provide sufficient evidence. A well-developed text contains not only logical judgments or interpretative conclusions about the subject, but also sufficient evidence, reasons, or examples to support the writer's judgments and make them convincing to an external audience.

Solutions

Consider the Audience. There are two main reasons why writers fail to develop their texts with sufficient evidence. The first is a problem with **audience awareness**. When writers fail to develop or maintain a sense of audience awareness, it is easy for them to forget that their readers may not be as knowledgeable about a subject as they are and need to be "shown" evidence to be convinced. It is worth noting that some audiences need to be supplied with quantities of evidence even when they know more about the subject than the writer does. For example, teachers and professors who are experts in their fields demand evidence in the papers they assign because the purpose of their assignments is to test students' knowledge and thinking about subjects of writing.

If you often have problems maintaining the sense of audience awareness necessary for fully developing the texts you construct, you may need to spend more time evaluating the rhetorical situation, paying particular attention to audience analysis.

Prewrite and Research. A second major reason why writers fail to furnish sufficient evidence is because they have not spent enough time engaging in the **prewriting** and **research** necessary to provide supporting evidence. No skill at writing can replace knowledge and understanding of your subject. For a complete discussion of prewriting and research strategies see the beginning of this chapter under the heading "Researching" and also see Chapter 7.

CHAPTER

5 Organizing Written Texts

Organization is the writer's chosen pattern of sequencing the developmental material in a text. As speakers we constantly are making organizational choices when we communicate with other people. We decide to say one thing before we say another because we think our listeners will understand us more easily if we do. However, the natural logical sequencing in which we engage when we speak about relatively simple subjects can become garbled during the process of constructing complex texts, which we must extensively revise. Consequently, when we write, we need to be much more attentive to our organizational choices than when we speak.

A well-organized text moves logically from one developmental feature to another without including unrelated material. A well-organized piece of writing also contains transitional words and devices that connect one developmental feature to another. **Organizational revision** focuses on the form and structure of emerging texts. The point of organizational revision is to make the meaning of your text as easy as possible for the reader to follow. In addition to focusing on conventional forms, general logical patterns, and paragraphing, organizational revision entails rearranging material to emphasize logical connections, cutting extraneous material, and adding transitional devices.

Problem-Solving Strategies for Organizational Revision

Common Organizational Problems

Problem 1: FAULTY LOGICAL ORDER

Like many writing errors, problems with logical order often develop when a writer fails to distinguish between writer-based prewriting and audience-based drafting. When you prewrite, you usually are reminding yourself of what you know, so you need

only to write down cues that will help you recall ideas or information that you hold in memory. However, when you draft, you must be aware of your audience's needs and write with those needs in mind.

Solutions

Attend to Paragraphing. Tightening the structure of your paragraphs and adding transitional paragraphs when necessary can make your writing easier for your audience to follow. Paragraphing indicates logical movement in writing. **Introductory paragraphs** familiarize readers with the general subjects of texts. **Concluding paragraphs** summarize the material presented in texts and consider the implications of controlling ideas. **Topic paragraphs** are groups of logically sequenced sentences that present and develop important aspects of subjects. **Transitional paragraphs** explain logical connections between topic paragraphs, or between topic paragraphs and introductory or concluding paragraphs.

Include Topic Sentences or Forecasting Statements. Topic sentences and forecasting statements help readers to anticipate the ways texts will be developed. A **topic sentence** tells readers the general subject of a paragraph. **Forecasting statements** give readers a breakdown of the general divisions that will be discussed in a text or paragraph.

Employ Familiar Patterns of Organization. The following familiar logical patterns can be used to structure paragraphs or entire texts.

Narration: The elements of narration are character, action, and setting. Narrative is storywriting, and it usually is chronologically ordered. The following is a narrative paragraph written by the late Native American writer, Michael Dorris:

> Half a millennium ago, my ancestors on my father's side, Modocs who lived in the lava flats of northern California, were going about their lives—hunting, fishing, falling in love, mourning their dead, completely unaware of an Atlantic Ocean, much less any human beings on the other side of it. Irish peasants—my mother's people—toiling the rocky fields of the western county of Roscommon, speaking Gaelic and worrying when the next attack from the sea might come, had little notion of Spain, much less the possibility of

America. Somewhere in the tree of my particular lineage there were French farmers, Swiss shepherds, German professors, Coeur d'Alene° salmon fishermen, all innocent of the complications of contact, oblivious° of each others' priorities and concerns, insular, ethnocentric,° proud . . . and unfathomable° to a contemporary person.

Illustrating a Judgment: Illustrating a general judgment with a specific example is one of the most familiar logical patterns used in human communication. In the paragraph that follows, writer Tom Daly begins with a topic sentence that identifies the general focus of the paragraph, then ends with a sentence that makes a judgment:

About the time I left the primary grades, things began to change. I learned that the sacred belonged in church, that stories of mythic heroes and fabulous quests weren't for real, and that magic and witchcraft were bad. I learned that being dirty and sweaty and loud and passionate weren't okay. And all this at a time when my hormones were really beginning to kick in. I began a period of profound confusion and self-consciousness that lasted well into manhood.

Definition: Definition develops a subject (or an aspect of a subject) by explaining the meaning of a word or concept. Writer Gabriele Lusser Rico defines the concept of "storying" in the following paragraph:

Storying is a term created by psychologist Renée Fuller, who maintains that this act is so fundamental to intellectual development that we underestimate its importance. The child's ability to create wholeness out of his or her manifold experience, in the form of stories, occurs at the most formative stage of intellectual development according to Fuller, and it occurs in all cultures. As soon as children learn to talk, words and ideas tumble forth in an uninhibited flow, limited only by the boundaries of their vocabulary. Storying expresses an innate human need to make mental connections, to perceive patterns, to create relationships among people, things, feelings, and events—and to express these perceived connections to others.

Comparison and Contrast: Comparing and contrasting things points out their similarities and differences. Comparison and contrast can be used in two ways to structure paragraphs or entire texts. In using a **point-by-point** structure, the writer moves back and forth between the two items being discussed. In using a **block** structure, writer Bruce Catton discusses one item completely before discussing the other:

Lee embodied the noblest elements of this aristocratic ideal. Through him, the landed nobility justified itself. For four years, the Southern states had fought a desperate war to uphold the ideals for which Lee stood. In the end, it almost seemed as if the Confederacy fought for Lee; as if he himself was the Confederacy . . . the best thing that the way of life for which the Confederacy stood could ever have to offer. He had passed into legend before Appomattox. Thousands of tired, underfed, poorly clothed Confederate soldiers, long since past the simple enthusiasm of the early days of the struggle, somehow considered Lee the symbol of everything for which they had been willing to die. But they could not quite put this feeling into words. If the Lost Cause, sanctified by so much heroism and so many deaths, had a living justification, its justification was General Lee.

Grant, the son of a tanner on the Western frontier, was everything Lee was not. He had come up the hard way and embodied nothing in particular except the eternal toughness and sinewy fiber of the men who grew up beyond the mountains. He was one of a body of men who owed reverence and obeisance to no one, who were self-reliant to a fault, who cared hardly anything for the past but who had a sharp eye for the future.

Causal Analysis: Causal analysis involves examining results and reasons for certain results. The following paragraph by writers Paul Almato and Sonia Partridge explores the causes of vegetarianism:

The movement was carried on into the twentieth century by vegetarian societies working at the grass-roots level, religious groups such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, and prominent figures such as George Bernard Shaw and Mohandas Gandhi. Vegetarian organizations formed in most Western countries, and newsletters, books, and other publications promoting the diet became common. In 1908 the International Vegetarian Union was formed, with its main function being to organize conferences at which vegetarians from around the world meet and share information. The union continues to be active today.

Division: Division analyzes a thing by separating it into the parts that compose it. The following paragraph by nature writer Annie Dillard analyzes by dividing:

Weasel! I'd never seen one wild before. He was ten inches long, thin as a curve, a muscled ribbon, brown as fruitwood, soft-furred, alert. His face was fierce, small and pointed as a lizard's; he would have made a good arrowhead. There was just a dot of chin, maybe two brown hairs' worth, and then the pure white fur began that spread

down his underside. He had two black eyes I didn't see, any more than you see a window.

The weasel was stunned into stillness as he was emerging from beneath an enormous shaggy wild rose bush four feet away. I was stunned into stillness twisted backward on the tree trunk. Our eyes locked, and someone threw away the key.

Analogy: An analogy is a type of comparison. Analogies communicate judgments by comparing the similarities in things usually thought of as very different. In the following paragraph, writer Emma Goldman communicates a negative judgment about marriage by comparing it to an "insurance pact:"

> Marriage is primarily an economic arrangement, an insurance pact. It differs from the ordinary life insurance agreement only in that it is more binding, more exacting. Its returns are insignificantly small compared with the investments. In taking out an insurance policy one pays for it in dollars and cents, always at liberty to discontinue payments. If, however, woman's premium is a husband, she pays for it with her name, her privacy, her self-respect, her very life "until death doth part." Moreover, the marriage insurance condemns her to lifelong dependency, to parasitism, to complete uselessness, individual as well as social. Man, too, pays his toll, but as his sphere is wider, marriage does not limit him as much as woman. He feels his chains more in an economic sense.

Problem 2: INCLUSION OF IRRELEVANT MATERIAL

No matter how interesting, material that does not relate directly to the controlling idea of a text is likely to confuse readers by dragging them off in irrelevant directions.

Solutions. Writing out your controlling idea and comparing it to your emerging text as you draft is a good way of ensuring that you stay on track as you write. Likewise, comparing your controlling idea with your completed draft as you revise will help you cut extraneous material.

Problem 3: NEED FOR TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

Writing is **coherent** when its sentences and paragraphs are connected to each other in terms of their meaning. Transitional expressions signal logical connections among ideas, helping to push the reader along by explaining how one idea is related to the next.

Solution. Use the following transitional expressions to explain to your audience how one idea is related to the next:

TO INTRODUCE AN ADDITION

also
in addition
moreover
and
furthermore
equally important

TO INTRODUCE AN ILLUSTRATION OR EXAMPLE

for example
for instance
thus
particularly
to illustrate

TO SIGNAL A CONTRAST

in contrast
however
but
yet
on the contrary
on the other hand
conversely

TO SIGNAL A COMPARISON

in the same way
similarly
likewise

TO SIGNAL A CAUSE OR RESULT

therefore
consequently

thus
so
because
since
for

TO SIGNAL A NEW ITEM IN A SERIES

first
second
in addition
next
finally
and

TO SIGNAL A CONCLUSION

in conclusion
finally
in summary
to summarize

Solutions. Also use the following transitional words to signal temporal and spatial relationships:

TO SIGNAL A PARTICULAR TIME

then
now
before
next Monday
on Wednesday
last winter

TO SIGNAL THE BEGINNING

in the beginning
at first
at the start of

TO SIGNAL THE MIDDLE

meanwhile
simultaneously
then
as this was happening

TO SIGNAL THE END

finally
at last
eventually

TO SIGNAL DIRECTION

up
down
around
beside
across
to the left or right
north, south, east, or west

CHAPTER

6 Focusing on Style

Style, like competitive ice-skating, can be evaluated on both its **artistic** and **technical** merits. On the artistic side, a writer's style is the **voice** or persona that he or she creates on the page through choices in words and sentence structures. An artistically meritorious style is unified and appropriate to the writer's audience and purpose. Generally, an artistically meritorious style sounds like a single person addressing a particular and discernible audience. For example, a well-chosen voice would not veer out of control from formal to informal language. Likewise, a well-chosen voice would not employ diction far beyond the level of its audience's understanding.

On the technical side, a meritorious style is free of errors in sentence structure, diction, spelling, and punctuation.

Stylistic Revision: Stylistic revision focuses on the clarity, appropriateness, and correctness of the language in a text. **Higher-level stylistic revision** focuses on the artistic aspects of a writer's style, on the unity, clarity, and precision of meaning of the writer's created voice, and on its appropriateness to audience and purpose.

Lower-level stylistic revision focuses on the technical aspects of a writer's style, on such matters as spelling, punctuation, and other conventions of usage.

Problem-Solving Strategies for Stylistic Revision

Common Higher-Level Stylistic Problems

Problem 1: PRETENTIOUS LANGUAGE

Problems with pretentious language occur when writers use flowery language and overly ornate sentence structures, attempting

to impress their audiences. Pretentious word and sentence structure choices often obscure the meaning they are trying to communicate, and wind up undercutting rather than enhancing the credibility of the writer. Wordiness and the use of jargon and euphemisms are all results of a desire to impress an audience with "sophisticated" language choices rather than the quality of a text's ideas. In extreme cases, texts written in pretentious voices make no sense either grammatically or developmentally. As the writer strains to impress, sentence structures break down completely, and the result is an incomprehensible jumble of sentence fragments and run-on sentences.

Solutions. For most writers with this problem (many of whom are intelligent people who love language), the simplest solution is often the most effective one: Just try writing in simple, clear, plain language. Focus on communicating rather than impressing. You probably will be surprised at the positive responses you get from your readers.

Regular reading in good-quality general-interest magazines (e.g., the *New Yorker* and *Harper's*) can give you experience with clear yet lively writing. In addition, you should try keeping a "clear-language" personal journal in which you write about those things that matter to you most in the clearest, simplest language you can muster. Writing only for yourself and reading what you have written will help you to develop an appreciation for the elegance of your own personal voice.

Problem 2: INFORMAL LANGUAGE

Rather than straining to impress, writers who have problems with informal language just write the way they speak without considering the effect that their inappropriately informal language will have on their audiences. The use of slang, regionalisms, and nonstandard English all are the result of inappropriately casual word choices. In addition, problems with informal language often can be the underlying cause of such lower-level stylistic problems as sentence fragments, grammatical mistakes, and faulty connotation and denotation.

Solutions. Consider your audience and purpose, then choose a level of formality that is appropriate for both. Although an infor-

mal voice may be appropriate for a friend or a close business colleague, an essay written for a college course or a letter applying for a job will demand a higher level of formality.

Extreme, habitual problems with informal language usually indicate a lack of experience with reading and writing in general. If you believe you have extreme problems with informal language, make reading for pleasure a part of your daily routine.

Problem 3: INCONSISTENT LANGUAGE

The writer's voice in any given piece of writing should not only be appropriate to the purpose and audience, but also **unified**. A voice that swings from casual to very formal and back to casual is jarring and inelegant.

Solutions. Reread your text aloud (preferably to another person). Listen to the language carefully (and note your audience's responses). Then consider your purpose and audience and revise your language, aiming for appropriateness and consistency.

Common Lower-Level Stylistic Problems

Lower-level stylistic problems indicate gaps in writers' knowledge concerning the conventions of English usage. To overcome lower-level stylistic problems you will need to identify the problems you have, learn the proper convention, then practice what you have learned.

Problem 1: SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

A **sentence** is a group of words that can stand alone because it is understood to constitute a complete thought. A sentence has a subject and a verb. **Sentence fragments** are only parts of sentences. They do not make complete sense when they are read in isolation. Fragments are a serious problem because they interfere with the meaning the writer is trying to communicate.

Solutions. To identify sentence fragments in your writing, read your draft backward, starting with the last sentence. Reading your sentences in isolation will make it easy for you to pick out those that are not complete. If you find fragments in your writing, learn to recognize the proper conventions by studying the examples that follow. Then **practice** what you have learned as you revise your draft and do subsequent writing assignments.

FRAGMENT STARTING WITH A WORD THAT MAKES IT DEPENDENT

Incorrect: The union is preparing to negotiate for the next contract. Which will be put in place in 2002.

Revised: The union is preparing to negotiate for the next contract, which will be put in place in 2002.

FRAGMENT MISSING A SUBJECT

Incorrect: He records how the students react to the movies when they are surrounded by others. And compares it to their reactions when they are alone.

Revised: He records how the students react to the movies when they are surrounded by others and compares it to their reactions when they are alone.

FRAGMENT MISSING A COMPLETE VERB

Incorrect: The man bought five ties. Each of a different color.

Revised: The man bought five ties. Each one was a different color.

Problem 2: LACK OF PARALLEL STRUCTURE

For your readers to grasp the meaning of sentences that list or compare two or more elements or examples, the elements or examples you list or compare should be expressed in a parallel grammatical structure.

Solutions. To identify a lack of parallel structure in your writing, study the examples that follow and compare them with similar sentences in drafts of your own texts. Learn the proper convention. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Incorrect: After reading Holley's essay, I believe there is nothing more important than being a mother, belonging to a family, and to have a strong traditional marriage.

Revised: After reading Holley's essay, I believe there is nothing more important than being a mother, belonging to a family, and having a strong traditional marriage.

Problem 3: SHIFT IN TENSE

Shifting from one tense to another in a single piece of writing is awkward and confusing to your readers. Writers commonly fall into the trap of shifting tense when they write narrative and also when they write about literature. The current convention for writing about literature (including films) is to use the present tense when describing the narrative action.

Solutions. To identify tense shifts in your writing, study the examples that follow and compare them with similar passages in drafts of your own texts. Learn the proper convention. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Incorrect: Malcolm kept his hands on Ivy's shoulders, but he backs up so he's holding her at arm's length.

Revised: Malcolm kept his hands on Ivy's shoulders, but he backed up so he was holding her at arm's length.

Incorrect: In Smith's story, Malcolm is the only character who is not wounded in some way. Not only did he promise to take his old friend money when he needed it, but he also brought Ivy the symbolic "fresh tasting" raspberry soda.

Revised: In Smith's story, Malcolm is the only character who is not wounded in some way. Not only does he promise to take his old friend money when he needs it, but he also brings Ivy the symbolic "fresh tasting" raspberry soda.

Problem 4: SHIFT IN PERSON

Shifting from one person to another in a single piece of writing breaks the unity of the writer's voice. The most common pronoun shift—from "one" to "I" or "you"—usually happens when the writer is straining to maintain a pretentious voice.

Solutions. To identify shifts in person in your writing, study the examples that follow and compare them with similar passages in drafts of your own texts. Learn the proper convention. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Incorrect: If one agreed with Hollmann, you would have to conclude that all cyclists should be banned from the downtown area.

Revised: If you agreed with Hollmann, you would have to conclude that all cyclists should be banned from the downtown area.

Incorrect: When we consider the congestion that exists in the center of town, you can understand why banning bikes has been suggested as a partial solution to the problem.

Revised: When we consider the congestion that exists in the center of town, we can understand why banning bikes has been suggested as a partial solution to the problem.

Problem 5: MISPLACED AND DANGLING MODIFIERS

Clause, phrases, or words that are too far away from the words they modify confuse readers.

Solutions. To identify misplaced or dangling modifiers in your writing, study the examples that follow and compare them with similar passages in drafts of your own texts. Learn the proper convention. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Incorrect: Sinking like a bright orange ball, the boy watched the moon from his perch in the sugar maple.

Revised: From his perch in the sugar maple, the boy watched the moon as it sank like a bright orange ball.

Problem 6: FAULTY SUBJECT–VERB AGREEMENT

In standard English, the subject and verb in a sentence must agree in number. Subject–verb agreement most often is a problem for non-native speakers of English and for individuals who have been brought up speaking nonstandard English. However, a common type of faulty subject–verb agreement happens when a sentence contains more than one noun and the writer mistakes the noun closest to the verb for the verb's subject.

Solutions. To identify faulty subject–verb agreement in your writing, study the examples that follow and compare them with similar passages in drafts of your own texts. Learn the proper convention. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Incorrect: The boy go to school every morning.
Revised: The boy goes to school every morning.

Incorrect: Only a small percentage of women make as much as she does.
Revised: Only a small percentage of women makes as much as she does.

Problem 7: FAULTY PRONOUN REFERENCE

Use pronouns precisely to avoid confusing readers about who is actually doing what to whom.

Solutions. To identify faulty pronoun references in your writing, study the examples that follow and compare them with similar passages in drafts of your own texts. Learn the proper convention. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Incorrect: Ted told Reed that he was the one chosen for the position.
Revised: Ted told Reed that Reed was the one chosen for the position.

Problem 8: FAULTY PRONOUN–ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT

The pronoun you use to replace a word should agree in both gender and number with the word to which it refers.

Solutions. To identify faulty pronoun–antecedent agreement in your writing, study the examples that follow and compare them with similar passages in drafts of your own texts. Learn the proper convention. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Incorrect: Neither of the men felt that they had been treated fairly.
Revised: Neither of the men felt that he had been treated fairly.

Problem 9: WORDS OFTEN CONFUSED

Solutions. To identify confusion of words in your writing, study the list of commonly confused words that follow. Learn the proper conventions. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

TO/TOO

Too means "an excessive amount" or "also."

Examples: He's a good horseman too.
The kitchen is too hot.

To refers to direction or movement.

Example: I carried the glass to the sink.

PAST/PASSED

Passed is the past tense form of the verb *pass*.

Example: The bus passed here ten minutes ago.

Past is an adjective or noun that refers to events that have already occurred.

Example: He struck me as a man with a shady past.

WHOSE/WHO'S

Whose is the possessive form of *who*.

Example: Whose pen is this?

Who's is the contraction of *who is*.

Example: Who's that stunning man over there?

THERE/THEIR/THEY'RE

There refers to place.

Example: I will meet you right over there.

Their is a possessive pronoun, meaning "belonging to them."

Example: Have you seen their pictures of Italy?

They're is the contraction of "they are."

Example: They're going to Italy again in October.

Problem 10: PUNCTUATION ERRORS

Solutions. To identify punctuation errors in your writing, learn the proper conventions by studying the examples that follow. Then practice what you have learned as you revise your drafts and do subsequent writing assignments.

Run-On Sentences

Fused Sentence: A fused sentence is created when a writer combines two or more sentences without using any punctuation to join them.

Incorrect: The plan would discourage sprawl development council members said the plan would decrease the cost of housing and create a better distribution of housing within city limits.

Revised: The plan would discourage sprawl development. Council members said the plan would decrease the cost of housing and create a better distribution of housing within city limits.

Comma Splice Run-on: A comma splice occurs when a writer "splices" two sentences together with a comma.

Incorrect: The plan would discourage sprawl development, council members said the plan would decrease the cost of housing and create a better distribution of housing within city limits.

Revised: The plan would discourage sprawl development. Council members said the plan would decrease the cost of housing and create a better distribution of housing within city limits.

Absence of Comma in a Compound Sentence. A compound sentence is composed of two or more independent sentences joined together with a comma plus a **coordinating conjunction** (and, or, but, for, nor, yet, so). A comma *or* a coordinating conjunction used alone is incorrect. When you join independent sentences to form a single **compound sentence**, you must use both a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

Incorrect: Glazer said he still doesn't advocate strict affirmative action mandates by the government *but* he does believe in some degree of affirmative action in education.

I am twenty-seven and my baby daughter is almost three.

Correct: Glazer said he still doesn't advocate strict affirmative action mandates by the government, *but* he does believe in some degree of affirmative action in education.

I am twenty-seven, *and* my baby daughter is almost three.

Absence of Commas to Separate Items in a Series. To avoid confusing your readers, separate items in a series with commas.

Incorrect: The burrito was piled high with sautéed veggies black beans rice lettuce cheese homemade salsa fresca and sauce.

Correct: The burrito was piled high with sautéed veggies, black beans, rice, lettuce, cheese, homemade salsa fresca, and special sauce.

Absence of Commas Around Nonrestrictive Elements. A nonrestrictive element is a word or phrase that can be taken out of a sentence without changing its meaning. To avoid confusing your readers, set off nonrestrictive elements with commas.

Incorrect: Modern English especially written English is full of bad habits that spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble.

Correct: Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits that spread by imitation and that can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble.

Absence of Comma After an Introductory Element. To avoid confusing your readers, set off introductory words or phrases with commas.

Incorrect: As I have tried to show modern writing at its worst does not consist of picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images to make the meaning clearer.

Correct: As I have tried to show, modern writing at its worst does not consist of picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images to make the meaning clearer.

Incorrect Semicolon Use

Semicolons most often are used like "tight" periods to pull two or more independent sentences together in terms of their meaning. Semicolons can be used in place of periods to correct comma-splice run-on sentences when the two independent sentences are related in terms of their meaning. In the following example, the

second independent clause develops and refines the meaning of the first one.

Example: Malcolm doesn't enter into life; he comments on it from the sidelines.

In addition to their use as tight periods, semicolons are used to separate items in a series when the items contain commas.

Example: Sometimes distancing requires a trip like the one the author describes, whereas at other times it requires a "cooling off" period (say after a fight); an opinion by a respected, uninvolved judge; or even the ability to say "Well, let's take another look."

Incorrect Colon Use. A colon is used to signify an equivalence between the items on either side of it. A colon should be used after a complete statement.

Incorrect: The CEO has been working with: the hiring committee, the finance committee, and the space committee.

Correct: The CEO has been working with three committees: the hiring committee, the finance committee, and the space committee.

Incorrect Dash Use. Use dashes to signal an abrupt break in thought.

Examples: Each of us must set his or her own limits of the tolerable—which changes in our world we will accept and which ones we will reject.

Each week our staff goes to 35,000 villages physically to meet—do business at the doorstep of—two million.

Omission of Apostrophe to Signal Possession. Apostrophes are used to signal when nouns are possessive. If the noun does not end in s, you add 's.

Example: the girl's ring

If the noun is singular and ends in s, you add 's. However, in cases wherein the double s sound would be awkward, you may add only the apostrophe; either use is acceptable.

Examples: Les's house
Moses' son

To show possession by more than one noun, you use 's or s' with the last noun that appears in writing.

Examples: Kevin and Christine's garden
Margaret and James' pickup truck

PART 3

Strategies for Researching and Writing Under Pressure

CHAPTER

7 Research and Writing

Research is the gathering of information from sources beyond ourselves. Almost any writing assignment can be enhanced by adding research to the writing process. Research is not just a way of supporting our own conclusions about a subject by citing authorities who agree with our conclusions. Research is a way of knowing, and the more we know about a subject, the more persuasive our writing will be.

Library Research

These days most libraries are extremely user friendly. They are well staffed with people ready to answer questions, and most offer explanatory pamphlets and handouts. In addition, most libraries now are computerized to some degree.

Catalogs

A catalog is a list of all the documents and other sources housed in a library. In many libraries the old print **card catalogs** that list holdings on index cards have been replaced by efficient **local online** (computerized) **central cataloging systems** that can tell you not only whether the library houses a source, but also where that source is located and whether it is available or checked out. Many libraries allow **remote access** to their catalogs through homepage listings on the Internet (see the section on the Internet in this chapter).

In addition to local online central catalogs, many libraries have online central catalogs for regional networks that allow you to order materials from other libraries through **interlibrary loan** services.

Most computerized catalogs are self-explanatory or have printed instructions set up nearby.

Reference Sources

Reference sources are the resources in the library (or on the Internet) that guide you and provide you with background information in your area of research. In addition to containing print reference sources, most libraries provide access to reference information through electronic sources.

A List of Reference Sources

Bibliographies. Bibliographies are lists of sources for a particular subject, existing in many different forms. They are published in books, articles, and government documents. In addition, they are increasingly available online. Some bibliographies are unannotated lists of sources on a particular subject, whereas others contain summaries and evaluations of the listed sources.

Indexes. Indexes are frequently updated guides to sources of a particular kind. Some indexes are guides to general areas. For example, the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* indexes articles from general interest magazines. Some indexes are guides to sources in specific fields.

Encyclopedias. Encyclopedias introduce a subject, provide background information on it, and often supply a brief bibliography. There are both general encyclopedias (e.g., *Encyclopedia Americana*) and those that are specialized (e.g., *Encyclopedia of Banking and Finance*).

Unabridged Dictionaries. Unabridged dictionaries are more complete and extensive in their explanations than desk dictionaries.

Biographical Works. Biographical works provide brief biographies of noteworthy people.

Atlases. Atlases contain maps and demographic and geologic information.

Almanacs and Yearbooks. Almanacs and yearbooks are annual publications that contain statistical and factual information about a particular year.

CD-ROM Labs. CD-ROMs are compact discs that store data accessed through a personal computer. Many libraries have CD-ROM labs where patrons can view or print bibliographical and other type of reference information from discs.

Computer-Based Searches. Many libraries offer computerized literature searches done by librarians on a cost-per-search basis. These searches result in bibliographies of books, articles, reports, and other documents.

Internet Services. Some libraries offer access to the Internet through personal computer labs.

The Internet

The Internet is a worldwide network of more than 200 million computers that share information. With online access you can use data bases all over the world, send and receive email, and join in discussion groups about specific subjects.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that a great deal of the information you find on the Internet has not gone through the rigorous processes of evaluation routinely given to traditionally published material. Anyone with a computer and the appropriate software can put anything he or she wants on the Internet. To evaluate sources, you should consult published guides for lists of reputable sources and consider the origin of the documents you locate.

Web page addresses, called Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), usually end with a series of letters indicating what kind of organizations maintain them. For example, colleges and university URLs usually end with the letters .edu indicating that they are maintained by educational institutions. The following is a list of URL endings and their meanings.

.edu educational institution
.gov governmental office
.mil U.S. military
.com commercial organization
.net networking organization
.org nonprofit organization

Browsers

Browsers are software applications that allow you to access and move about on the Internet. Two of the most well-known browsers are Internet Explorer and Netscape. In addition to the usual menu bar and tool bar buttons at the top, a browser screen contains a location or "go to" box. The location box displays the Web page address (URL) of the current Web site. To move from one site to another, you simply type the URL of the site to which you wish to move into the location box and press "enter" on your keyboard or the appropriate tool bar button.

Search Engines

The Internet has no central catalog. However, individual search engines are in place to help you retrieve information. For the best results, you should perform a search using more than one engine. The following Web pages contain charts that compare search engines and their features.

http://imt.net/~notess/search/index.html
http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/may/sidebar2.htm#chart

Although the Internet is not centrally organized, it does contain a multitude of helpful teaching sites created by university libraries, computer science departments, and individuals interested in computer technology and its applications. Virtually all Internet applications can be learned on the "Net" by making use of free **tutorials.** For an excellent tutorial on using search engines to retrieve information, visit the University of California at Berkeley's site: Finding Information on the Internet—A Tutorial. You can find the site at the following URL:

http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html

A LIST OF POPULAR SEARCH ENGINES AND THEIR URLS

AltaVista	http://altavista.digital.com/
Excite	http://www.excite.com/
Infoseek	http://www.infoseek.com/
Webcrawler	http://webcrawler.com/
Yahoo	http://www.yahoo.com/
Hotbot	http://www.hotbot.com/

Dogpile	http://www.dogpile.com/
Internet Sleuth	http://www.isleuth.com/

Tools for Focusing Searches

The following tools can help you conduct Internet searches more efficiently. However, not all search engines are programmed to allow you to use all of these techniques. Study the Web page or the help feature of the search engine you are using to learn what techniques you can employ.

Plus/Minus

Most search engines allow you to focus your search using the plus/minus system. Just place a plus sign before a term that must appear and a minus sign before a term that you want to exclude from your search.

Example: The phrase +cowboys –Dallas will find pages about cowboys and exclude pages about the Dallas Cowboys football team.

Quotation Marks

Most search engines allow you to narrow your search for multiple word items by enclosing them in quotation marks.

Example: The phrase "Vogue Magazine" will retrieve only pages with that specific phrase.

Boolean Operators

Some search engines support the use of *Boolean operators* (logical words that narrow or expand a search).

And: The connecting word "and" will search for two or more concepts in the same document.

Example: The search "boys" and "girls" will retrieve pages with the word "boys" and the word "girls," but it will not retrieve pages containing only the word "boys" or only the word "girls."

Not: The word "not" (in some search engines "and not") narrows a search by searching for one concept and not another.

Example: The search "Clinton not President" will retrieve pages with the word "Clinton," but it will not retrieve pages with the two words "President Clinton."

Or: The word "or" broadens a search by searching for two or more concepts not necessarily located in the same document.

Example: The search "Clinton or Gore" will retrieve pages that contain both the word "Clinton" and the word "Gore," pages that contain only the word "Clinton," and pages that contain only the word "Gore."

Truncation

Truncation allows you to use a designated character with the root of a word to retrieve all possible endings of that word. Truncation is often used as an additional refinement in Boolean searches.

Example: The word "instruct*" will retrieve pages with the words "instruct," "instructs," "instructor," "instruction," "instructed," and so on.

Evaluating Specialized Sources

Specialized sources are the actual documents on which you base your research. Although reading carefully and critically (see Chapter Two, Reading and Writing, for critical reading strategies) should take you a long way in the process of evaluating specialized sources, the following strategies will help you judge the usefulness and credibility of the specialized sources you locate.

Gather Numerous Sources

To get an accurate picture of your research area, gather numerous sources that represent a variety of viewpoints.

Consider the Publisher

Reputable publishing houses, university presses, and scholarly journals have rigorous processes of evaluation that ensure the credibility of the works they publish.

Consider the Author's Professional Status

A writer's biographical information, often included in journals, magazines, and books, can provide you with information about the author's experience in the field and previous publications.

Consider the Date of Publication

In some fields up-to-date information is crucial. Consider the field and compare sources to decide if a source is still relevant.

Consult Annotated Reference Sources

Consult annotated bibliographies, indexes, and reviews to find evaluations of the specialized sources you have collected.

Documenting Sources

The process of acknowledging sources by explicitly identifying them is called documentation. Documentation credits the author of the source and gives readers a way to check information or explore the subject further. In addition, properly documenting sources can help you avoid inadvertent plagiarism.

Plagiarism occurs when a writer appropriates and passes off as his or her own someone else's ideas or written language. In the academic and professional writing communities, passing off someone else's intellectual property as your own is illegal and can be punished under the law. To avoid plagiarism, use the following techniques for documenting sources.

Conventions for Documenting Sources

Two commonly recommended forms of documentation in the academic community are those put forward by the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The MLA style is used mainly in the humanities, whereas the APA style is used mainly in the social sciences.

Other communities and professional organizations have their own conventions for documenting sources. However, most include the author of a work, the title, the publisher, the date and place of publication, and the location in the work of the material being cited. To learn the appropriate conventions for documenta-

tion used by the community in which you are writing, check with an expert from that community.

Conventions for Citing Sources in the Text

MLA: According to critic Jane Stone, McNamer's work is "technically brilliant and intellectually elegant" (72).

APA: According to Garvey (1998), Barker's study of sero discordant couples is "a major contribution to medical social work" (p. 16).

The two styles differ only in the inclusion of the year of publication and the "p." before the relevant page number in the APA style.

If you quote material that is itself quoted in one of your sources, acknowledge the author of the quotation in your text, but cite the source that quoted the material.

MLA: In their discussion of irony in Trumbell's work, Markson, Hoyle, and Barnet state that "Marian Trumbell was a person entirely without irony" (qtd. in Patterson 78).

APA: In their discussion of inaccuracy in sociological studies, Ottegar and Simpson state that "the expectations of the observers often lead them to a biased reading of the data" (cite in Hawthorne, 1988, p. 11).

If you cite material from the Internet, put the name of the source in parenthesis after the quoted material.

Example: On their Internet home page, members of a group advocating open space called the Gold Star Mining Corporation's bid to buy Mount Haggin "potentially the worst environmental disaster in Wyoming history" (Northern Plains Open Space Coalition).

Conventions for Lists of Sources

The MLA and APA call their lists of sources cited in the text "Works Cited" and "References," respectively. However, other writing communities and professions have other names for their lists of referenced sources. Check with texts published or circulated in the community in which you are writing for the appropriate conventions. In the MLA and APA styles of documentation (and in the documentation styles of most other writing and professional communities) only sources that you have used and acknowledged in your text should be in your list of cited sources.

Books

BY ONE AUTHOR

MLA: Lindsay, Margaret. *The Road to Rock Creek*. New York: Harper, 1999.

APA: Lindsay, M. (1999). *The road to rock creek*. New York: HarperCollins.

BY MORE THAN ONE AUTHOR

MLA: Grenwell, Marie B., Sharon Letts, and Lois Cogs. *Research Methodology*. New York: Macmillan, 1988.

APA: Grenwell, M. B., Letts, S., & Cogs, L. (1988). *Research methodology*. New York: Macmillian.

BY AN UNKNOWN AUTHOR

MLA: *American Heritage College Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton, 1993.

APA: *American heritage college dictionary* (3rd ed.). (1993). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

EDITED RATHER THAN AUTHORED

MLA: Benson, Jackson J., ed. *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. Durham, NC: Duke, 1990.

APA: Benson, J. J. (Ed.). (1990). *New critical approaches to the short stories of Ernest Hemingway*. Durham, NC: Duke, University Press.

BY AN ASSOCIATION OR AGENCY

MLA: Association for the Advancement of Biometronics. *A Report on Transitions in Recent Biometronic Research*. New York: Worldwide, 1993.

APA: Association for the Advancement of Biometronics (1993). *A report on transitions in recent biometric research*. New York: Worldwide Publishing.

IN AN ANTHOLOGY

MLA: Adams, Alice. "The Last Lovely City." *Best American Short Stories 1992*. Ed. Robert Stone. Boston: Houghton, 1992. 1–14.

APA: Adams, A. The last lovely city. In R. Stone (Ed.), *Best American short stories 1992* (pp. 1–14). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Articles

FROM A MAGAZINE

MLA: McGinty, Kevin. "The Remarkable Thomas Lazlo." *Union World* 12 March 1999: 6, 9.

APA: McGinty, K. (1999, March 12). The remarkable Thomas Lazlo. *Union world, 6*, 9.

FROM A NEWSPAPER

MLA: Harper, Gary. "What became of Margaret Halpin." *Phillipsburg Standard* 21 June 1998: 1, 9.

APA: Harper, G. (1998, June 21). What became of Margaret Halpin. *Phillipsburg Standard*, pp. 1, 9.

FROM A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL

MLA: Fiske, Marnie. "Music of the Incas in the Third Kingdom." *The Journal of Ethnomusicology* 34 (1998): 123–34.

APA: Fiske, M. (1998). Music of the Incas in the Third Kingdom. *Journal of Ethnomusicology, 34*, 123–134.

WITH AN UNKNOWN AUTHOR

MLA: "Stretching for Your Health." *Great Falls Tribune* 17 April 1999, sec 3:1.

APA: Stretching for your health. (1999, April 17). *Great Falls Tribune*, section 3, p. 1.

AN EDITORIAL

MLA: "Education in Crisis." Editorial. *Orlando Register* 18 Feb. 1998, sec 1, 8.

APA: Education in crisis [Editorial]. (1998, February 18). *Orlando Register*, section 1, p. 8.

A REVIEW

MLA: Diamond, Barbara. "The Search for Meta Truth." Review of *These Times*, by Helen Morris. *CutBank* 56. (1999): 65–8.

APA: Diamond, B. (1999). The search for meta truth [Review of the book *These times*]. *CutBank, 56*, 65–68.

Electronic Sources

When documenting electronic sources, in addition to the usual information (author, title, date and place of publication), you also include the name of the electronic source and (when you use MLA style) the date when you accessed the information.

FROM A COMPUTER SERVICE

MLA: Park, Alicia. "Swallows Return to Capistrano." *New York Times* 17 Jan. 1998: *New York Times Online*. Online. Nexis. 9 Feb. 1998.

APA: Park, A. (1998, January 17). *New York Times* [Online]. Available: Nexis.

THROUGH A COMPUTER NETWORK

When you cite a source accessed through a computer network, you should include the document's number of pages or paragraphs. If you use MLA documentation style and no number is given, write "n.pag." for "no pagination" after the publication information.

MLA: McCarthy, James. "Ghosts of the Lusitania." *Net Forum* 1.5 (12 Aug. 1999): n. pag. Online. Internet. 30 Sept. 1999.

APA: McCarthy, J. (1999, August 12). Ghosts of the Lusitania. *Net Forum* [On-Line], *1.5*. Available: Internet.

Two excellent Web sites that provide information on documenting sources are West Texas A&M University's "Citing Internet and Print Sources" and the University of Massachusetts Amherst's "Citing Internet Sources." You can find the sites at the following URLs.

http://www.wtamu.edu/library/citation.html
http://www.library.umass.edu/toolbox/cite.html

CHAPTER

8 Writing Under Pressure

The important thing to keep in mind about timed writing assignments (e.g., essay examinations or employment application writing samples) is that they are not much different from other writing assignments. Morever, as with all writing assignments, the best way to handle assignments constrained by time is to employ the process approach to writing. The key to writing successfully in a timed situation is to begin the writing process long before you enter the room on the day the test is being administered.

Evaluate the Rhetorical Situation

Like all writing assignments, timed writing assignments are rhetorical situations, and each has a unique system of options and restrictions.

Purpose

As the first step in your preparation, you should consider the purpose of the assignment. In virtually all timed writing assignments purpose is imposed on the writer. Essay examinations, for example, are assigned to test students' knowledge of specific subjects as well as their thinking and writing abilities. Employment writing samples are administered to test candidates' writing skills and their suitability for particular jobs.

To focus your preparation to write in a timed situation, consider the objectives of the examination or sample. Then, write those objectives out and use them as guides throughout the writing process.

Audience

In timed writing assignments the audience also is imposed on the writer. You may be writing to an instructor or to a hiring or admissions committee. Consider the interests and concerns of your audience. In some cases, grading criteria and writing guidelines may be published or available for the particular examination or writing sample.

If you are writing to an instructor, look over your class notes and mark recurring judgments and concepts. If you are writing to a hiring or admissions committee, consider the goals of the institution they represent. Then write out a detailed description of your audience.

Subject

The subject matter of timed writing is invariably constrained to some degree. Essay examinations for college courses contain questions about the subject matter of those courses. Employment writing samples often ask candidates to describe how they are qualified for the job for which they are applying.

Although you usually will not have access to the actual questions until the examination is administered, in most timed writing situations, there are a finite number of questions that you might reasonably be asked. In addition, questions from previous examinations may be available as examples, or you may be able to ask people who have taken the examination at a prior session what to expect. Study your determinations of purpose and audience. Then formulate possible questions in writing.

The Writer

Just how much you, the writer, will be present in your response depends entirely on the nature of the question you are asked. Some essay examinations will ask you for your personal interpretations and responses. Others may want you only to supply information.

Employment and admissions writing samples often ask for personal evaluations because one of their purposes is to discover if a candidate is an appropriate fit for their business or institution.

Prewriting and Research

Handle the questions you have formulated just as you would in any writing assignment. Writing answers to your formulated

questions will allow you to see gaps in your knowledge and understanding of the subject and also give you practice in writing about the subject in purposeful ways. Even if you are not asked exactly the question(s) you formulated, what you are asked is bound to correspond in some way.

Strategies During the Examination

Read the Entire Examination Carefully

Reading over the entire examination will give you an overview. In addition, careful, critical reading will ensure that you answer the actual question being asked. Failure to do so is a common problem in timed responses.

Keep in mind that each individual question on an examination is a separate writing situation with its own purpose and specific subject. Focusing on the verbs that define the purpose and the nouns that define the subject in each question will help you answer the specific question asked, and also help you evaluate the rhetorical situation. For example, the question "Explain your understanding of the Francis Bacon statement quoted above" tells you that your purpose is to explain what you (the writer) think about the subject (the Francis Bacon statement).

Keep in mind also that your response to each question should have a single, clear controlling idea backed up with evidence, reasons, or examples.

Consider Time Restrictions

Appraise the time restrictions for the examination and proportion your time accordingly. If there are multiple questions, start with the one that seems easiest. Answering it first will get your mind warmed up and help you remember information you can use in your responses to the other questions.

Keep in mind that you will need time at the end of the examination to read over your responses and make corrections.

Outline Answers

Prewrite briefly for each question. Planning your answers before you begin drafting will help you use time more efficiently and ensure that your responses are more complete.

Write Legibly

In most cases you will not have time to recopy your examination. Therefore, you should write as legibly as possible. Neatly cross out corrections and make your text as easy to read as possible.

Be Specific

Supply evidence, examples, and reasons for your judgments.

Make Final Corrections

Read over your completed examination and make corrections. Remember, spelling, punctuation, and correct usage do count on essay examinations and writing samples, so proofread carefully and neatly make corrections and additions.

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Note: **Boldface** numbers indicate illustrations.