

English Composition

English 214 Course Reader

Michael John Martin

English Department

San Francisco State University

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Short story analysis example Error! Bookmark not defined.

Proofreading Key

Note: You'll receive a descending level of feedback on mechanical problems: The first paper will have a check mark and one of the following categories in the left margin for each problem; the second will have the check and code the first time, but only the check thereafter; the third and ensuing papers will have a check with the categories indicated only on the comment sheet.

RTS: Run together sentences: sentence clauses connected with only a comma (also called "comma splice" or "fused sentence").

Example of error: *Cultural difference has made this community an exciting place to live, it is one of the most interesting in the world.

Example of solution: Cultural difference has made this community an exciting place to live, **because** it is one of the most interesting in the world.

FRAG: Incomplete sentences (fragments), which need to be connected to a complete one.

Example of error: *But differences in culture also bring difficulties. Problems that seem impossible to solve.

Example of solution: But differences in culture also bring difficulties, **problems** that seem impossible to solve.

(See also pages 26-7 for more on sentence boundaries.)

FOC: Something is off in the sentence's focus (S/V relationship, the way the words are arranged, or the sentence has an unnecessary passive or expletive construction).

Example of error: *There were three problems that he saw in the arrangement. [expletive]

Example of solution: He saw three problems in the arrangement.

Example of problem: *Most marriages are a result of poor communication. [predication]

Example of solution: Most marital problems result from poor communication.

Example of problem: *The situation was made worse by government inaction. [passive]

Example of solution: The government inaction made the situation worse. (Or *worsened* the...)

PP/-ed: Problem with past participle for past tense or descriptive verbs (e.g., missing -ed ending); other past tense or past participle problems; missing past participle in passive constructions.

S/V, V/S, V/A: Agreement between subject and verb either in main sentence clauses or in adjective (that/which/who) clauses.

ID: Idiomatic usage problem. (I'll supply a correction that seems more idiomatic to me; keep notes in a separate set of notes on these problems.)

AC: Adjective clause problem (usually verb agreement)

PL: Plural -s endings missing on nouns or a problem with plural formation.

POS/PLPOS: 's or s' missing for nouns possessing other nouns or confusing 's with the plural -s.

PNA: Pronoun agreement with its referent is off.

Example of problem: *A child who fails in school begins to feel inadequate in other ways, since they apply the negative lesson generally to themselves.

Example of solution: **Children** who fail in school begin to feel inadequate in other ways, since they apply the negative lesson generally to themselves.

TS: A tense change (shift) that doesn't make sense.

HOM: Homonym confusion.

Example of problem: *I went their to find myself, but failed miserably.

Example of solution: I went **there** to find myself, but failed miserably.

COND: Conditional verb use (would, should, might, etc.) missing when appropriate.

CFH: Extraneous (unnecessary) commas, usually corresponding to an oral pause, rather than a grammatical division or a missing comma when one is needed.

Yellow highlight = Spelling error.

<OTN>: Lacking connection between new and previous material.

While a few other problems may show up, these are the main kinds of proofing errors. They're fairly simple to correct but difficult to find. When you put on your copy editing hat, during the time block you plan for that purpose, to go over the copy you'll give me, remind yourself of what your past demons have been, read aloud slowly, checking each sentence for mistakes. Don't read for meaning, just look for mistakes, checking for agreement, inflections like -ed, the plural -s, spelling, and so on. Reading the way you normally read won't give you much traction in terms of working with these mechanical problems, because we've all learned to read for meaning_ but because you wrote the text, you know its intended meaning, and it will *always* say what you mean. One method that's helped people learn to read as an editor is to read through the paper backwards, read aloud sentence by sentence, looking for your particular editing demons. Allow enough time! Also at this time, check to make sure you have a title, page numbers or headers, a list of sources and write them in if you don't. If you've got a lot of editing problems and

feel uncertain about them, see me. I'll work with you after I grade the papers, of course, but I'm willing to go over drafts with you, too. and the reference section of the main library has a selection of handbooks as well, which can help you develop your understanding of this stuff. (And remember, after "internalizing" the right/wrong concept about error categories, you'll eventually stop making them, or make them much less often.) The Bedford/Saint Martin company's writers' handbooks, by Diana Hacker, are the best general guides to grammar rules and conventions that I know of. For clues to idiomatic usage of words, try *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. *Fog City Fundamentals: A proofreading skills workbook*, by the SFSU English Department staff, has very good exercises for improving proofing ability; it's available at the bookstore and is due to go on line as an interactive text soon.

A few Internet resources:

<http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu/>

<http://www.dianahacker.com>

<http://www.eslcafe.com/>

A final note on proofreading: We all have editing demons. I make the same errors I made in seventh grade, but I've gotten much better at finding and correcting them. This should be your goal, too—not to stop making errors, but instead to become a more effective proofreader of your own writing. Part of the “post production” work on your writing will be to make corrections (that should have been made earlier) and to work with one example of each type of error after copying it (the actual mistake) onto an analysis sheet and explaining the technical problem (why it's an error and what the correct form is).

This contrastive analysis (the error side by side with the correction) and help you learn new style techniques and deal with spelling and formatting problems, too. If your first language was not English or if you spoke a dialect very different from “standard edited English,” looking at the contrast between “correct” and “mistake” can also develop a stronger sense of the given problem and its solution.

I will be happy to work with you on such problems in conference or via email.

Michael's Brief Style Guide

To me, style is just the outside of content, and content the inside of style, like the outside and inside of the human body--both go together, and they can't be separated.

--Jean-Luc Godard

This guide outlines some of the standard typographical and stylistic conventions for academic writing, generally accepted by most audiences. It's a good idea to check on these expectations with different instructors or other audiences, though, and keep in mind that different kinds of writing have differing requirements.

Appearance

- 8.5 x 11" paper, no cover or folder. Pages should be stapled or clipped.
- Separate title pages are unnecessary.
- Your name, the date, course and section, and draft description in upper left corner, page 1.
- No number on page 1.
- A title that reflects content or point of paper.
- An epigraph after the title. (Optional)
- A page number, preferably in a header with your name or the title of the paper. (But no number on the first page—check “different 1st page in header tools.)
- 12 font in a readable typeface (I prefer Times New Roman).
- .5" paragraph indentations.
- Be sure to spell-check *and* proofread for spelling.

Style

- For a clear, readable sentence style, try to use real characters doing real actions.
- Avoid passive constructions (*e.g.*, "Mistakes have been made.")
- Avoid *there is/it is* constructions.
- Try not to overuse "to be" or linking verbs.
- Try for a balance of sentence types and lengths, avoiding overly choppy stretches and difficult to read, turgid writing with lots of long sentences.
- Avoid *It is X that...* sentences. (They work in oratory much better than in writing.)
- Try to use some "big punctuation" for variation—as well the different kinds of modifiers.

Global Coherence

- Remember to connect new to previous information.
- Understand your point of view, your argument, and consistently make connections with it.
- Try to use backward referring (anaphoric) nouns and pronouns for coherence.
- Work to explain what your readers should see in examples or argumentation.
- Tangents or topic shifts are good things *if* you bring out or create connections to what comes before them.
- Consider using a draft conclusion as the introduction, since they often provide a strong "umbrella" point, indicating the content and argument.
- Consider outlining drafts (after you write them) and rearranging paragraph order.

Proofreading

- Proof or copy edit final drafts and make corrections to errors, omissions, and spelling.
- Proofread for your particular editing demons, maybe with a list of what they are.
- Proofread aloud to slow down your reading. (Some people find reading backwards, sentence by sentence, helps avoid reading for grammar and style problems instead of content.)
- Expect to find about the number of errors you've made in past papers.
- A grammar handbook (like Diana Hacker's *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* or *A Pocket Style Manual*) might help answer questions.
- Proofread for formatting (like page numbers and quotation marks), as well as grammar and spelling.

Quotations

- Source material should be used according to an accepted format (MLA, APA, Chicago).
- All direct quotations should be "... " quoted.
- Phrases, individual words, and portions of sentences can be integrated with your sentence.
- Use colon or comma to lead to a quoted sentence or passage, normally, or a noun clause construction

- Quotes of more than three lines should be blocked.
- Refer to authors by their last names, after introducing with full name.
- Avoid writing, *According to Jane Smith, she says....* Instead, just write, *Jane Smith says, "..."* or *According to Jane Smith, "..."*.
- Try to explain what readers should see in the quote or understand from it, rather than letting it stand on its own.
- Consider summarizing key sources, as well as quoting from them.
- Interior quotations get single quote marks: *Smith writes, "The central argument, that 'reform' equals 'repeal' certainly rings true with welfare 'reform.'"*
- Periods and commas go inside quote marks; large punctuation goes inside if it's in the original and outside if you add it.
- Always cite page numbers and provide a full bibliographic citation at the end in a source list.
- For more information and reference, use a style manual or handbook.

Rhetoric

Although people often use the term disparagingly—as in “That’s just rhetoric”—rhetoric in ancient times was seen as one of the most important branches of study. The rhetorician used language and logic to persuade, which is the non-pejorative definition most have for the word now, but people also used formal rhetorical devices and structures to debate issues, make civic decisions, and to develop policies.

Historically, rhetoric has been defined in many ways, to fit different purposes, but for most of its history it has been seen primarily as a discipline for training students 1) to perceive how language functions orally and in writing, and 2) to become proficient in applying the resources of language in their own speaking and writing.

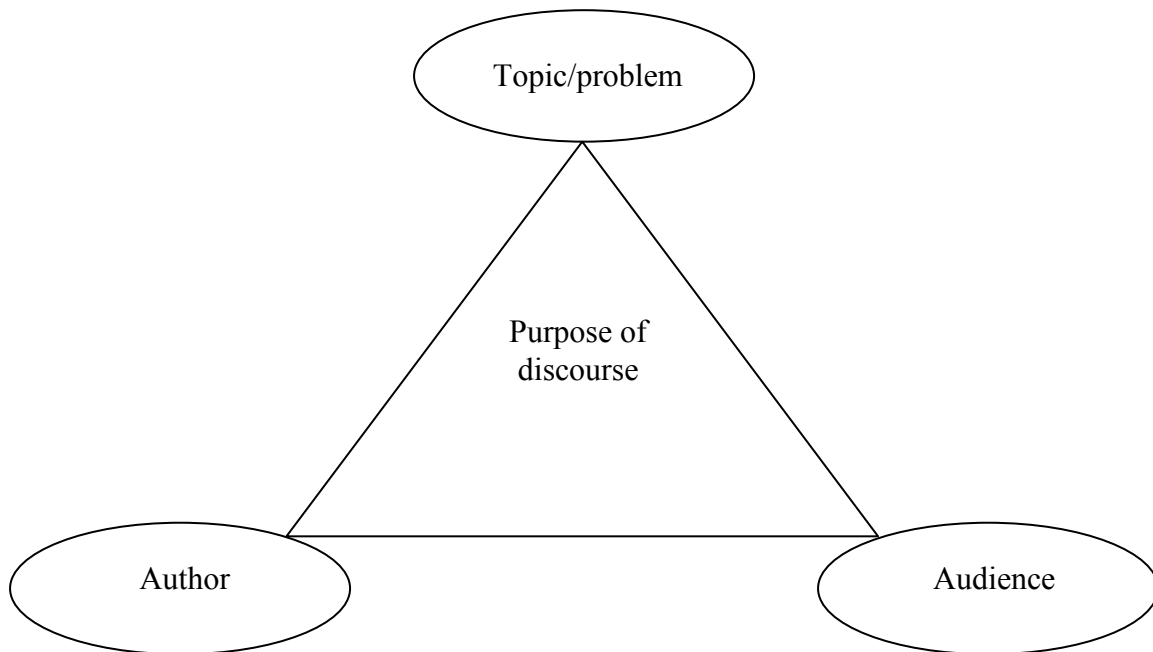
To see how language is working in written or spoken texts, we must separate form and content—*what* is being said as opposed to *how* it is said. Since rhetoric examines closely the *how* of language, the methods and means of communication, it has sometimes been discounted as something only concerned with style or appearances, and not with the quality or content of communication. For many rhetoric deals with the superficial at best, the deceptive at worst (“mere rhetoric”), when one might better attend to matters of substance, truth, or reason as attempted in dialectics, philosophy or politics.

Dialectics can be thought of as a branch of rhetoric that deals with argumentation, especially in terms of opposition. Georg Hegel, the 19th century German philosopher, formulated a theory of dialectics that became the foundation of German idealism and, later, formed the basis of Marxist theory. In the Hegelian dialectic an argument begins with a thesis position regarding a topic/problem, then concedes one or more counterexamples (the antithesis). He thought of the conclusion of as a synthesis, which is ideally a compromise between the thesis and antithesis, although the conclusion can also argue that the antithetical view(s) is wrong. The conclusion in a dialectical argument often posits a new thesis or a new way to understand the problem an argument or essay considers.

Since such arguments end with compromise, they often work well when they begin a little more dramatically than you actually feel. For example, say you want to write about U.S. military spending. You might begin with the thesis position that we should end all spending that is not for actual defense of the states. A possible antithesis could be that we have interests that are territories (like the Philippines or Guam) and vital interests like open shipping routes that we also must defend. You could concede that others might say this, but the conclusion (the synthesis) could read something like, “This is true, and we should have the military strength to protect interests like those, but we have no good reason to invade other countries like we have done in Iraq and Afghanistan. We must end our foreign aggression, which will greatly reduce the cost of our military and devote those resources to our many needs at home.” This would both resolve the tension between thesis and antithesis and lead to a new thesis.

Dialectic theory, though, does not deal with the style of writing and speaking so much with the logical organization, while rhetoric concerns *what* writers can say, as well as *how* they might say it. A basic premise for rhetoric is the connection of manner and meaning; how one says something conveys meaning as much as what one says. Rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language comprehensively, including its emotional impact (pathos), as much as its propositional content and organization (logos).

In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle sees communication as a dynamic set of relationships in which each element determined the outcome of discourse—the speaker or writer’s purpose, the organization of the piece, even the style or tone of the writing:



This “rhetorical triangle” structures or leads to the large body of theory in advanced rhetoric, though I use just a few of the basic concepts or topics:

- *Logos* is the argument of a piece of writing, the logical structure as well as the appeal to audience and other structural (organizational) elements,
- *Ethos* means the writer’s presentation of him or herself in the paper, whether the personal pronoun appears or not, as how the writer uses information (e.g., from sources or other kinds of examples).
- *Pathos* refers to emotion or passion, and in writing this comes largely from how writers understand or see (construe) their audience.

In less esoteric terms, it comes down to looking at texts (as writer or reader) in terms of how well a piece of writing:

- Motivates the audience and responds to audience concerns
- Makes length and the style or tone of the writing commensurate to purpose, topic, and audience
- Is organized logically and coherently
- Balances abstract or telling sentences with concrete statements/evidence and analysis of evidence.

For our purpose, these terms or concerns will give us a way to structure analysis of our writing and that of others, to evaluate drafts, and to talk about texts and arguments. (This seems more useful to me than studying rhetoric as a discipline, but we need a common language for responses to discourse, including for my responses to your writing.)

One distinction to keep in mind: Texts produced in some settings assume that readers share background knowledge, and so many features of writing used for general audiences become unnecessary. Think, for example, of a lab report in a medical setting or a market analysis in business writing. These kinds of texts, along with many written for teachers, assume readers to be part of a common discourse community, so they need not explain examples, interpret information, or give context. A paper written in a psychology course, to use another example, seeks to show that the writer knows the material (and the terminology, etc.), more than to persuade the reader. But readers outside the psychology field need to see a purpose aimed at them, along with development that takes into account their lack of specialized knowledge.

Some Essay/Book Openings

Introductions to some non-fiction books and articles.

Not long after I moved with my family to a small town in New Hampshire, I happened upon a path that vanished into a wood on the edge of town.

—Bill Bryson, *A Walk in the Woods*

Often I have gazed into a chimpanzee's eyes and wondered what was going on behind them. I used to look into Flo's—she was so old, so wise. What did she remember of her young days? David Greybeard had the most beautiful eyes of them all, large and lustrous, set wide apart. They somehow expressed his whole personality, his serene self-assurance, his inherent dignity—and, from time to time, his utter determination to get his way. For a long time, I never liked to look a chimpanzee straight in the eye. I assumed that, as is the case with most primates, this would be interpreted as a threat or at least a breach of good manners. Not so. As long as one looks with gentleness, a chimpanzee will understand and may even return the look. And then—or such is my fantasy—it is as though the eyes are windows into the mind. Only the glass is opaque so that the mystery can never be full revealed.

—Jane Goodall, "The Mind of the Chimpanzee"

A bit of wisdom from cowboys of yore: "Always drink upstream from the herd." This is—and always has been—sound advice for swallowing journalism, too. The conventional media overwhelmingly impart the message of officialdom, of the economic powers, of the status quo...of the herd. Consume it at your own risk.

—Jim Hightower, Foreward to *Media Looking Glass*

I come from a generation who didn't do sports. Being a cheerleader or a drum majorette was as far as our imaginations or role models would take us. Oh yes, there was also being a strutter—one of a group of girls who marched and danced and turned cartwheels in front of the high school band at football games. Did you know that big football universities actually gave strutting scholarships? That shouldn't sound any more bizarre than football scholarships, yet somehow it does. Gender politics strikes again.

—Gloria Steinem, *The Politics of Muscle*

We all come from the factory wired for language. By the time we know what it is, we've got it. Toddlers don't think about language; they just talk. Grammar is a later addition, an ever-evolving set of rules for using words in ways that we can all agree on. The laws of grammar come and go. English today isn't what it was a hundred years ago, and it's not what it will be a hundred years from now. We make up new rules when we need them, and discard them when we don't. And when do we need them? When our wires get crossed and we fail to understand one another.

—Patricia T. O'Connor, *Woe is I*

Advertising is a funny thing. We tell it our dreams, we tell it what to say, but after a while, it starts telling us.

—George Felton, "The Selling of Pain"

Through the ages, women's lives have centered about their sex role. Little girls have been told as soon as they could toddle that some day they will be brides, and a little later, mothers, and, finally, if they live, grandmothers. Every other activity--learning to spin and weave, cook and bake, dance, sing, and skate, whatever the current accomplishments of young girls are--has been directed at achieving a lifelong career as wife and mother. Whereas for men actual sex activity, however insistently it may intrude upon attention, is a matter of a few minutes, for women each of these few minutes is laden with commitment before and commitment afterward.

Margaret Mead, "Modern Marriage"
The Nation, October, 1953

It was an unbearably steamy August afternoon in New York City, the kind of sweaty day that makes people sullen with discomfort. I was heading back to a hotel, and as I stepped onto a bus up Madison Avenue I was startled by the driver, a middle-aged black man with an enthusiastic smile, who welcomed me with a friendly, "Hi! How you doing?" as I got on, a greeting he proffered to everyone who entered as the bus wormed through the thick midtown traffic. Each passenger was a startled as I, and, locked into the morose mood of the day, few returned the greeting.

Daniel Golman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*

The young man boards the bus as it leaves the terminal. He wears an overcoat. Beneath his overcoat, he is wearing a bomb. His pockets are filled with nails, ball bearings, and rat poison.

Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*

On January 12, 1971, in his inaugural address as governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter spoke of the problem of adult illiteracy: "If Switzerland and Israel and other people can end illiteracy, then so can we. The responsibility is our own and our government's. I will not shirk this responsibility." Today, nine years later, the problem of adult illiteracy is considerably worse than when the future president spoke those words.

Jonathan Kozol, *Prisoners of Silence:
Breaking the Bonds of Adult Illiteracy in the United States*

Some endings...

Each of us can begin to infuse science with heart and humor. We can reach out to colleagues and build cooperative networks based on love, trust, and curiosity. In doing so, we become living Philosopher's Stones. Everyone we touch with our lives will see the value in this way of doing science. I believe in the power of the small, the cumulative power of individuals leading conscious, ethical lives. As chaos science teaches us, once we reach a critical threshold, the institutions of science will reorganize themselves.

Linda Jean Shepard, *Lifting the Veil: The Feminine Face of Science*, 284

Perhaps most of all there is a need for both partners, but especially for the woman, to individualize their marriage, to think more about each other's rhythms, each other's capacities for change and fulfillment. The kind of sex literature which merely gives statistics on frequency of sex relationships and reported types of satisfaction, so that a man or woman can compare his or her record with some national norm, is the least fitted to inform. Rather, women--and men--need to know how infinitely varied the sex capacities of human beings are, how complex the patterns which release emotion, how various and wonderful the ways that lead to ecstasy. As they come to realize the extent and depth of sex feeling--in the feelings of the young child and the parent, in the young lover who lives on in the middle-aged, and the vision of old age which makes the kisses given by the young already falter in uncertainty--the place of sex in the world, the importance of understanding sex, should take on a new dimension.

Margaret Mead, "Modern Marriage" (*The Nation*, 12/19/1953)

Pull open the glass door, feel the rush of cool air, walk inside, get in line, and look around you, look at the kids working in the kitchen, at the customers in their seats, at the ads for the latest toys, study the backlit color photographs above the counter, think about where the food came from, about how and where it was made, about what is set in motion by every single fast food purchase, the ripple effect near and far, think about it. Then place your order. Or turn and walk out the door. It's not too late. Even in this fast food nation, you can still have it your way.

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*

The "control of nature" is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man. The concepts of applied entomology for the most part date from that Stone Age of silence. It is our alarming misfortune that so primitive a science has armed itself with the most modern and terrible weapons, and that in turning them against the insects, it has also turned them against the earth.

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

Both the learner and teacher undergo change. The change is irreversible and profound. The world will never be the same again—not for the one, not for the other. The silence is broken. The slave begins to learn to be free.

Jonathan Kozol, *Prisoners of Silence: Breaking the Bonds of Adult Illiteracy in the United States*

No doubt our descendants thousands of years from now (should our species survive) will still be bipedal, symbol-generating apes. Not likely they will be adept at using sophisticated technologies. But will they still be human in the way we, shaped by a long heritage of cooperative breeding, currently define ourselves?

Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, “Mothers and Others”

Ironically, organizations like Earth First!, Rainforest Action Network, and Greenpeace have now become the real capitalists. By addressing such issues as greenhouse gases, chemical contamination, and the loss of fisheries, wildlife corridors, and primary forests, they are doing more to preserve a viable business future than are all the chambers of commerce put together. While business leaders hotly contest the idea of resource shortages, there are few credible scientists or corporations who argue that we are not losing the living systems that provide us with trillions of dollars of natural capital: our soil, forest cover, aquifers, oceans, grasslands, and rivers. Moreover, these systems are diminishing at a time when the world's population and the demand for services are growing exponentially.

Paul Hawkin, “Natural Capitalism” (*Mother Jones* 4/97)

I have not here been considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought. Stuart Chase and others have come near to claiming that all abstract words are meaningless, and have used this as a pretext for advocating a kind of political quietism. Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism? One need not swallow such absurdities as this, but one ought to recognize that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end. If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy. You cannot speak any of the necessary dialects, and when you make a stupid remark its stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself. Political language—and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists—is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase—some jackboot, Achilles' heel, hotbed, melting pot, acid test, veritable inferno, or other lump of verbal refuse—into the dustbin, where it belongs.

George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”

An Essay Makes a Point

Watsonville

My hometown is Watsonville, California. Watsonville is a small town of about 20,000 which originated around the year 1860. The main source of business in Watsonville is agriculture. Located in the fertile Pajaro Valley between Monterey and Santa Cruz on the Pacific coast, Watsonville's climate is ideal for growing lettuce, strawberries, artichokes, and especially apples. Watsonville is the official apple capitol of the world.

The people of Watsonville are like those of any small town, very conscious of what goes on and how things look to the public. In a small town, news travels very fast--especially bad news. Such is the case in Watsonville. We have our socially prominent families giving elegant dinners every Christmas Eve--you know, the ones to which everyone who is anyone is invited. We have the Mayor who used to own a photography shop on main street. We have the old section of town, with our small town department stores and grocery stores. Very few chain stores come to Watsonville.

Watsonville is small now, but it used to be a very important railway stop, so what town there is grew fast. We even had a section where the laborers lived. But the agriculture had to stay, so the city had to stop growing.

We still have the city plaza, which is as old as the city, and we still have the migrant workers. We have the problems of any small town. I could write volumes.

San Jose

My hometown is San Jose, California.

San Jose used to be a fairly decent place to live. It was not a hick town, yet it didn't have the clutter or sprawl of San Francisco or L.A. Being such a nice place to live, however, had disadvantages in that many people who feel the same way but who are not residents decide to become residents.

The result is that over the past fifteen years or so, San Jose has gained about 500,000 new inhabitants. Now I don't know about you, but I have a hard time getting along with 500,000 strangers--especially when it necessitates a complete change in the face of the city. Examples: Capitol Expressway, a four to six lane monstrosity. Or take that huge field that used to be down the street from my old house; my friends and I used to chase squirrels there on our way to school--and during the winter rains, ducks would migrate to wallow in the makeshift ponds. Now that piece of land has an apartment complex, a gas station, a Banco de San Jose, and a McDonald's, as well as assorted housing tracts here or there.

I could name further examples, but it seems pointless to try to "go home again"--even in my mind. I regret that being so young I could not more fully appreciate those fields and orchards and little two lane roads.

My memories are very vague and it is often very hard to me to picture San Jose as being any other way than it is now. This, to me, is the saddest fact of all.

An Approach to Topics

To just say "an essay makes a point" and leave it at that means little: What is a point? How do you get there? Aren't some points better than others? How can you know? To answer these questions, vital concerns for the effectiveness of any expository writing piece, think about this kind of procedure.

Take any topic—from quantum mechanics to trains to motorcycles to the use of imagery in a novel—and think about what it means from your own perspective. I know a lot about motorcycles, a little about trains, and next to nothing about quantum physics. Say I'm required to write about it by an English teacher. What can I do? How can I come up with a "thesis"?

- Step one: Use my response. (I know nothing about it. I'm forty-two years old, have had 20 years of school, college, and grad school, but I know nothing about q.m. and little about physics in general. For that matter, I don't know a lot about science, which will affect how my daughter learns about science, too, probably. I think it's wrong that I didn't learn much science or math....)
- Step two: Connect to audience [CONTEXTUALIZE]: So what? How does it apply to other people, society, community? This is a connection with audience, and it helps you realize your point. Here, it might be that MOST or nearly ALL of us know little about science or math for whatever reason... is it kept shrouded in mystery? Maybe we don't need to know much about it? Or we're just not very good at teaching it? We might say it's too late for old dogs to learn, but can we turn it around for kids? (AHH...an ARGUMENT POINT.)
- Step three: Recurve_ take this point to the opening. Now the draft has a focus, an argumentative point, one you can get behind. Connect all that you write next to this point, thinking about how development and examples relate logically (illustration, causation, alternative, or conclusion--and/or/but-yet/so).
- Step four: use real examples from experience, memory, people you know (can be generalized) or material from sources, always connecting to audience and to your own central purpose.

So working with any topic becomes a combination of your response to it, surfacing its relationship to others or to an audience, and writing about that relationship. The process is enriched, but not *created* by, the use of textual sources. The writing is generated by your relationship to the topic. With literary texts, a similar process can be engaged, as you write about your response as a reader and work to convey a point about the text to your reader: your related experiences can a way "into" the text, just as your experience of reading it does. In the example above, in writing about DeLillo's *Ratner's Star* or Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (two novels about science and scientific method), I might have the same kind of response and could use it in the same way.

Dave Barry On College

College is basically a bunch of rooms where you sit for roughly two thousand hours and try to memorize things. The two thousand hours are spread out over four years; you spend the rest of the time sleeping and trying to get dates.

Basically, you learn two kinds of things in college:

1. Things you will need to know in later life (two hours).
2. Things you will not need to know in later life (1,998 hours). These are the things you learn in classes whose names end in -ology, -osophy, -istry, -ics, and so on. The idea is, you memorize these things, then write them down in little exam books, then forget them. If you fail to forget them, you become a professor and have to stay in college for the rest of your life.

It's very difficult to forget everything. For example, when I was in college, I had to memorize -- don't ask me why -- the names of three metaphysical poets other than John Donne. I have managed to forget one of them, but I still remember that the other two were named Vaughan and Crashaw. Sometimes, when I'm trying to remember something important like whether my wife told me to get tuna packed in oil or tuna packed in water, Vaughan and Crashaw just pop up in my mind, right there in the supermarket. It's a terrible waste of brain cells.

After you've been in college for a year or so, you're supposed to choose a major, which is the subject you intend to memorize and forget the most things about. Here is a very important piece of advice: be sure to choose a major that does not involve Known Facts and Right Answers. This means you must not major in mathematics, physics, biology, or chemistry, because these subjects involve actual facts. If, for example, you major in mathematics, you're going to wander into class one day and the professor will say: "Define the cosine integer of the quadrant of a rhomboid binary axis, and extrapolate your result to five significant vertices."

If you don't come up with exactly the answer the professor has in mind, you fail. The same is true of chemistry: if you write in your exam book that carbon and hydrogen combine to form oak, your professor will flunk you. He wants you to come up with the same answer he and all the other chemists have agreed on.

Scientists are extremely snotty about this.

So you should major in subjects like English, philosophy, psychology, and sociology -- subjects in which nobody really understands what anybody else is talking about, and which involve virtually no actual facts. I attended classes in all these subjects, so I'll give you a quick overview of each:

ENGLISH: This involves writing papers about long books you have read littl*e snippets of just before class. Here is a tip on how to get good grades on your English papers: Never say anything about a book that anybody with any common sense would say. For

example, suppose you are studying Moby-Dick. Anybody with any common sense would say that Moby-Dick is a big white whale, since the characters in the book refer to it as a big white whale roughly eleven thousand times. So in your paper, you say Moby-Dick is actually the Republic of Ireland. Your professor, who is sick to death of reading papers and never liked Moby-Dick anyway, will think you are enormously creative. If you can regularly come up with lunatic interpretations of simple stories, you should major in English.

PHILOSOPHY: Basically, this involves sitting in a room and deciding there is no such thing as reality and then going to lunch. You should major in philosophy if you plan to take a lot of drugs.

PSYCHOLOGY: This involves talking about rats and dreams. Psychologists are obsessed with rats and dreams. I once spent an entire semester training a rat to punch little buttons in a certain sequence, then training my roommate to do the same thing. The rat learned much faster. My roommate is now a doctor. If you like rats or dreams, and above all if you dream about rats, you should major in psychology.

SOCIOLOGY: For sheer lack of intelligibility, sociology is far and away the number one subject. I sat through hundreds of hours of sociology courses, and read gobs of sociology writing, and I never once heard or read a coherent statement. This is because sociologists want to be considered scientists, so they spend most of their time translating simple, obvious observations into scientific-sounding code. If you plan to major in sociology, you'll have to learn to do the same thing. For example, suppose you have observed that children cry when they fall down.

You should write: "Methodological observation of the sociometrical behavior tendencies of pre-maturated isolates indicates that a casual relationship exists between groundward tropism and lachrimatory, or 'crying,' behavior forms." If you can keep this up for fifty or sixty pages, you will get a large government grant.

Showing development

Version 1 paragraph:

Since English is my second language, I always encountered difficulties in my English classes, especially in writing essays. Grammar and sentence structure are probably the two most problems I have with writing. The English teachers I have had always commented that I should work on my verb tense and sentence structure. It is not hard to understand that the highest grade I received in all of the English classes I took was a 'C.' Thus, I have none of the confidence when comes to writing essays.

Version 2 paragraph:

Since English is my second language, I always encountered difficulties in my English classes, especially in writing essays. **I remember many times sitting and staring at the blank screen and waiting for some miracle to happen and the essay to start, and this never got any easier for me. But** grammar and sentence structure are probably the two most problems I have with writing. The English teachers I have had always commented that I should work on my verb tense and sentence structure. **However, no matter how hard I worked on these things, in the next paper, I always get the same response and all that red ink all over my paper.** It is not hard to understand that the highest grade I received in all of the English classes I took was a 'C'. Thus, I have none of the confidence when comes to writing essays.

To realize:

Making and focusing on a point *about*

Showing v. telling (representational and textual)

Explanation or analysis: what do the examples show? How should readers understand them?

Note: *Showing* in exposition often consists of the writing of others, of quotations, paraphrases, and summaries rather than (or along with) writing that represents experience or aspects of reality.

Sentence and paragraph focus:

1. The means by which Asian products have successfully competed with your products in the Western Pacific markets will constitute the objective of the first phase of this study. The labor costs of competitors and their ability to introduce new products quickly are the first issues to be examined. A plan that will demonstrate how your industry can take advantage of unexpected market opportunities, particularly on the Pacific Rim, will be developed from this study.
2. In the first phase of this study, we will examine how Asian products have successfully competed with your products in Western Pacific markets. The study will first examine labor costs of competitors and how they are able to introduce new products quickly. We will develop from this study a plan that will demonstrate how your industry can take advantage of unexpected market opportunities, particularly on the Pacific Rim.

Group work: Revise the following to improve flow and cohesion. (Hint: you may need to use the passive to follow the old to new rule, and that's okay. In the second problem, take a look at how the topics of sentences relate.)

1) The Hart Queen is one of the best skis for beginning skiers. A thin layer of tempered ash from hardwood forests of Kentucky makes up its inner core. Therefore, two innovations for strength and flexibility are built into its outer construction. Two sheets of ten-gauge steel reinforce a layer of ash for increased strength. A wrapping of fiberglass thus surrounds the two steel sheets for increased flexibility. Most conventional bindings can be used with the Queen. The Salomon Double is the best, however. A cushion of foam and insulation firmly cradles the foot and ankle, yet freedom of movement is still permitted.

2) The power to create and communicate a new message to fit a new experience is not a competence animals have in their natural states. Their genetic code limits the number and kind of messages that they can communicate. Information about distance, direction, source, and richness of pollen in flowers constitutes the only information that can be communicated by bees, for example. A limited repertoire of messages delivered in the same way, for generation after generation, is characteristic of animals in the same species, in all significant respects.

Anaphora: Connecting New Information to Old

Erdrich is able, in *The Bingo Palace*, to create a world of imagination that houses the caldron of dysfunctional relationships that develop in poverty. For American Indians, especially those who live on reservations, **this** is the norm, not the exception, but their struggle leads often to an awareness of themselves in the world that saves them—some of them. Other authors have created imaginary communities or regions that function in a **similar way**. William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, for example, served as a rich location for many kinds of characters, through whom he was able to show the same kinds of human struggle that Erdrich does. In "Lyman's Luck," we see failure of community and family in Lyman's isolation from others: "His features were a mask. His outside expression was fixed, serene, but beneath that, on the real face that was hidden, he could feel his look of bewildered dread." (*The Bingo Palace* 92) Faulkner's Emily has a stronger connection to community, but this is primarily through how the narrator speaks of her: "That was when people began to feel really sorry for her," but Faulkner goes on to say, "We had long thought of them as tableaux." (528) **This** suggests that Emily and her family are, like Lyman, effectively isolated from the benefits we associate with a viable community.

How does the author maintain coherence in this passage? In the essay, she shows how Erdrich's characters show a range of relationships to the larger world and illustrate the "third worldness" of the tribes Erdrich writes about. The comparison to Faulkner that we see here gives contextual support that she refers to later in arguing that the story concerns how we live together, both functionally and dysfunctional.

Notice the "old to new" principle. The end of the paragraph before the full one above comments on previous information "this is the norm" which refers back to the development of the two paragraphs before. This is "recursion," in Sommers' terms, and "listening to yourself" in my terms. This is one of the most important aspects of coherency, since it works from paragraph to paragraph or from section to section, and gives the reader the sense of developing meaning in a well focused way. But it works on the micro level, too: The second paragraph here has a sentence that ends with "same" and Erdrich," and the sentence that follows that begins with the title of the novel, which links the two sentences, as well as to the larger topic here in comparing the two authors.

Implication for writing: What all this means is that you have to really pay close attention to what you say: Since readers want what you say later to grow out of what you said earlier, the operative trick is to always look at how you can connect the meaning of what you say at point N to point M. You can often force this to happen by beginning sentences with "anaphoric" pronouns and nouns, words which, like appositive phrases, refer back to a previous noun, agent, or situation. Here's an example: **This** is important because one of your goals is to build a web of meaning, fully inter-connected. When you use quotations or other support, tie it to previous information. When you introduce a new idea or point, tie it to previous information. Readers need to have large and small portions fit in with the overall structure, and this is done with such connections.

From "With Economic Inequality for All," James K. Galbraith, *The Nation*, 9/7-14, 1998, 24.

Since 1970 pay gap between good and bad jobs in America has grown. It is now so wide that it threatens, as it did in the Great Depression, the social stability of the country. It has come to undermine our sense of ourselves as a nation of equals. Economic inequality, in this way, challenges the essential unifying myth of American national life.

The most visible sign of this challenge emerges not in the marketplace or on the factory floor, not in civil society or ordinary life, but in politics. It surfaces in bitter discussions of budgets, welfare and entitlement programs. A high degree of inequality causes the comfortable to disavow the needy. It increases the psychological distance separating these groups, making it easier to imagine that defects of character or differences of culture, rather than an unpleasant turn in the larger schemes of economic history, lie behind the separation.

High inequality has in this way caused our dreadful political condition. It has caused the bitter and unending struggle over the transfer state, the ugly battles over welfare, affirmative action, healthcare, Social Security and the even more ugly preoccupation in some circles with the alleged relationship between race, intelligence and earnings. The "end of welfare as we know it," to take just one example, became possible only as rising inequality insured that those who ended welfare did not know it, that they were detached from the life experiences of those on the receiving end. The present attack on Social Security, custom-designed to increase poverty among the old, likewise cannot imagine trading places with those who would lose.

But what caused this rise in inequality? According to popular perception, a high level of inequality is a kind of black rain, a curse of obscure origin with no known remedy, a matter of mystery covered by words like downsizing, deregulation, or globalization. Some believe capitalism has simply become more savage, that there is a new brutality of markets. Many speak of a paradox, in which the social evil of rising inequality accompanies rising average incomes and general prosperity for the country as a whole.

And there is a darker possibility....

Noun Phrase Appositives

1) The home of good talk, then, is the third place—a meeting ground between the work place and the family circle, between the "rat race" and the "womb."

Christopher Lasch, The Revolt of the Elites, 120

2) Looked at in this way, disease seems a violation of nature, an appalling mistake. There must be a better way to go.

Lewis Thomas, Medusa and the Snail, 133

3) When I first started to read about the emerging science of chaos, I was immediately struck with similarities to characteristics that had been ascribed to the Feminine: unpredictability, nonlinear processes, the importance of context, and the inseparable relatedness of the parts to the whole.

Linda Jean Shepard, Lifting the Veil: The feminine face of science, 90

4) But deep in the coke trade's shadow, marijuana, the dowdy green matron of the drug scene, has become one of the largest cash crops in the United States.

The Examiner, 9/25/88, A7.

5) But overall, these classrooms were exciting places, places of reflection and challenge, of deliberation and expression, of quiet work and public presentation.

Mike Rose, Possible Lives 416.

6) The photographer was thought to be an acute but non-interfering observer—a scribe, not a poet.

Susan Sontag, On Photography, 89.

7) But the intervention of consciousness also leads in time to the idea of art as a conscious idea--the greatest intellectual achievement in the history of humanity.

John Dewey, Art as Experience

8) Malawi's cash crops_peanuts, tea, coffee, sugarcane, and tobacco_were unchanged, though their value on the world market continued to fluctuate.

Paul Theroux, "Malawi," National Geographic, 9/89, 377.

9) This was the old slap-on-the-fingers-if-your-modifiers-were caught-dangling stuff—*correct* spelling, *correct* punctuation, *correct* grammar, hundreds of itsy-bitsy rules for itsy-bitsy people.

Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, 183

10) I understood what she was describing_ that post-feminist erotic polarization in "sensitive" men.

Naomi Wolf, Promiscuities, 213.

Sentence Combining: Appositive Noun Phrases

Example: The Republican candidate for governor of California is William Simon.

He is the son of a former secretary of the Treasury.

He is a wealthy businessman.

William Simon, son of a former secretary of the Treasury and a wealthy businessman, is the Republican candidate for governor of California.

Son of a former secretary of the Treasury, William Simon, a wealthy businessman, is the Republican candidate for governor of California.

William Simon, the Republican candidate for governor of California and a wealthy businessman, is the son of a former secretary of the Treasury.

1) A range of icy peaks stretches across northern New Mexico.

They are the Sangre de Cristos mountains.

It means "Blood of Christ mountains."

2) The President of the U.S. chaired an "economic forum" today."

His name is George Walker Bush.

He is the son of the former president.

The former president's name is George Herbert Walker Bush.

3) A San Francisco Giants player hit his 600th home run this week.

His name is Barry Bonds.

He is only the 7th batter in history to do so.

4) Her music lessons covered the basics.

The basics were scales, chords, arpeggios, and harmony.

5) She sold four paintings.

She sold a portrait of her friend.

Her friend's name is Jeneil.

She sold two landscapes.

She sold her beautiful and dark depiction of a rainy night on the corner of Hyde and Green Streets.

6) All of these have undermined confidence in the economy.

The stock market is falling.

Many corporations have big scandals.

The "Internet economy" has collapsed.

8) Massive floods hit many European countries in 2002.

The countries included Italy, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Russia, France.

Appositives with adjective clauses:

1) Scores are important, but not as important as the process that produces them, a point of view that should surprise no one, since America was the first nation to be argued into existence.

—Neil Postman (1995), The End of Education, 72

2) Since the other girls are often at odds over boys, Becca, the one who is less socially adept, tends to take on the role of the peacemaker.

—Peggy Orenstein (1994), SchoolGirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap, 67

3) I see a few familiar names among the fifteen students on the roster: LaRonda, of course, along with her friend Sacha, a light-skinned African American girl who frequently explodes at her teachers.

—Orenstein, 167

4) I see a priest from an inner-city parish, Father Dowling, who appears on ABC, but he interests the network only for his ability of deduce the murderer of a prostitute—tracking down the cop gone bad, but not even getting to deliver a homily about it.

—Bill McKibben (1992), The Age of Missing Information,

92

5) Nearly all the youth violence increase that has occurred nationwide over the past decade has been among nonwhites, a fact [that is] obscured by national crime totals that do not separate whites and Hispanics.

—Mike A. Males (1996), The Scapegoat Generation, 110

6) Martin Luther King, who lived in this neighborhood in 1966, said there was a 10-to-20 percent "color tax" on produce, an estimate that still holds true today.

—Jonathan Kozol (1991), Savage

Inequalities, 42

7) Huxley grasped, as Orwell did not, that it is not necessary to conceal anything from a numb public, people who are insensible to contradiction and narcotized by technological diversions.

—Neil Postman (1984), Amusing Ourselves to Death (111)

8) Poincaré then hypothesized that this selection is made by what he called the "subliminal self," an entity that corresponds exactly with what Phaedrus called preintellectual awareness.

—Robert M. Pirsig (1974), Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, 267

Appositives--Explanation

Noun phrase appositives are elaborative additions to sentences based on a N + N (+ phrase or clause) pattern. Normally, they are separated with a comma or other punctuation:

1) The fog was heavy tonight.

With appositives:

The fog, *a thick and freezing mist*, was heavy tonight, *the sixth cold summer night in a row*.

Appositives are especially useful for defining and specifically identifying key terms and characters.

2) *A neurotransmitter*, serotonin is one of the keys to the neuro-musculature process.

3) Smith (*former CEO of a major auto company*) spoke to the graduating class of the virtues of free trade.

4) The head of the company's engineering unit, *Linda Tan*, testified about how they had developed the software.

Appositives also allow you to emphasize (often with great stylistic effect) things that you think need emphasizing:

5) The dinner became a disaster for him, *an unmitigated failure that he would never live down...*

and because you can keep adding them in parallel sequence, they can build even stronger responses from your readers:

, a collection of burned, underdone, inedible lumps, things that might have once been food but now bore little resemblance to it.

Appositives can also be simple examples:

7) Some major newspapers--*the Washington Post and the Philadelphia Enquirer*, for example--still do real investigative reporting.

Any noun can be paired with an appositive noun phrase. When you feel like you need to sharpen the meaning or increase the weight of a noun, especially an important character in a sentence, you can add to it with this kind of addition, improving the depth as well as the voice of your writing.

Exercises:

—Write a paragraph retelling something that happened today, for real or in the news, then go back and add noun phrase appositives to the key characters.

—Look around you now and write down some of the things that you see in a list, then go back and try to add appositives to what you named to further define/show what they are.

—If you want to get a surer sense of how they work, go through a few pages of published writing and try to spot some. Though I think being able to identify them is less useful than having a feel for when *you* can use that added noun, it may help clarify your sense of what they are.

Verbal Modifiers

Examples of Verbal Modifiers

1) People were learning things, both cognitive and social, and doing things, individually and collectively, making contributions, connecting ideas, generating knowledge.

Mike Rose, Possible Lives, 416

2) It is so hard to have insight into a spider's mind that it is almost impossible to guess whether it loves its eggs, based on present knowledge.

A.M Masson and S. McCarthy, When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Life of Animals, 68

3) Eating disorders themselves can have harrowing long-term consequences, including anemia, liver and kidney damage, infertility, and loss of bone mass that may contribute to osteoporosis.

Peggy Orenstein, School Girls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap, 93

4) Having no choice but to be what they were—Ben and Jerry selling ice cream—their message was "unpretentious and down home," to use Ben's term.

Paul Hawkin, Growing a Business, 33-4

5) Even where the actual difference in spending between districts is not so vast, the poorer districts—waiting often up to the last minute to receive part of their budget from other sources—find themselves repeatedly held hostage to decisions of suburban legislators who have no direct stake in the interests of low-income children.

Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools, 204

6) This is the greatest danger for our species, to try to pretend that we are another kind of animal, that we do not need to satisfy our curiosity, that we can get along somehow without inquiry and exploration and experimentation.

Lewis Thomas, Medusa and the Snail, 75

7) Since they were found at Ocean Beach a week ago, the two rare beaked whales—named Nicholas and Alexander—have inspired a remarkable but very human effort to save them.

S.F. Examiner, 8/31/89

8) As I approach [the building], I see two eighth grade boys, students at Audubon, sitting the curb, watching for slow cruising cars whose drivers might be interested in buying crack; they smile and wave as I pass by.

Orenstein, 173

9) In defiance of a federal judge's temporary restraining order, about 250 anti-abortion protesters blocked an Oakland Planned Parenthood clinic for nearly four hours, singing hymns, reciting prayers and taunting pro-choice counter-demonstrators.

S.F. Examiner, March 12, 1989, B-1

Verbal Modifiers: A brief explanation

Verbals are phrases based on one of three verb forms which modify sentences:

- Verb + -ing
- Verb + -ed (or whatever its normal past tense form is)
- The infinitive or to + the verb.

The only rule, besides punctuating them, is that the logical or implied subject for the verb in the verbal should be the nearest grammatical subject to it. (If not, it is said to be "dangling," which just means a phrase that doesn't fit right, or that is not anchored (attached or connected) to a logical subject for it. Otherwise, you're free to pile them up, mix the different kinds, play around, be creative, and so on.

Verbals of the -ing variety are great for showing simultaneous action, as when you're describing a scene or someone's thought process.

Feeling a little overwhelmed, she walked to the podium for the first time, trembling noticeably, and addressed the audience.

Trembling and *feeling* form the bases for the two modifiers. Notice how they show these things happening at once. This kind of verbal is probably the most common, and if you watch for them in things that you read or hear--from fiction and poetry to formal essays to sports broadcasting--you'll find a lot of them.

The past participle verbals are also very descriptive, and in fact more explicitly so. They have an unspoken full sentence beneath them:

Dressed in a red suit with a blue tie and one of those beanie caps with a propeller on it, the guy didn't expect to be taken seriously at the interview.

Verbs that have an irregular past participle use that in modifiers, like this:

*Dismayed at the lack of progress and **left** with few options,* the students finally took over the administration building.

Infinitive verbals imply a logical connection, usually meaning *in order to* plus the verb.

To overcome his feelings of inadequacy, he took up the sport of jousting.

Again, as with all additions or elaborations to basic sentences, verbals are way to become a little more creative, instilling a strong sense of movement and detail or groundedness in your writing. The types can be mixed and moved around (but keep in mind the subject rule), and you'll find that using them creates a strong sense of style in your writing. They also generate content. Say I want to write this:

I'm sitting at home the day before school starts.

But I think, "I could do more in this sentence." So I add, before or after I write the independent sentence:

Tired after a long day of long meetings, I sit at home the day before school starts, staring at my keyboard, wondering how I will ever get done all the work I'd planned.

The addition adds content, giving me something I can go on from and sharpening for me the sense of what I might actually be writing about. They do the same thing for my reader. Again, having the sound in your mind or the possibility of using them in any sentence you write is probably more important than being able to recognize them or understanding their syntactic structure, and the main thing is to be willing to try them out, to play around with the language, to increase what you say as you say it.

Exercises

- 1) Write brief description of a scene--real, imagined, or fictive--using verbals consciously to get in all the detail you can.
- 2) Write a choppy paragraph with no additions to sentences, then go back and add verbals to sentences, making sure that they connect with the subjects.
- 3) Write two or three sentences with each kind of verbal modifier to get a feel for how they work and sound.
- 4) Take a look at a page of published work, especially fiction, and try to identify the verbal modifiers. (Remember: They'll be set off with punctuation, usually commas, and have one of the three forms.

Absolute Modifiers

1) With so many oil spills in recent years, the most notable of course [being] the Exxon spill in Alaska, oil companies such as Chevron have to concentrate not only on winning back the trust of oil and gasoline buyers, but also instilling trust into the future oil and gasoline buyers.

Tricia Salaman, "Advertising: Slick as Oil"

2) Marxism is dead, the Communist system utterly discredited by human experience, but the ghost of Marx hovers above the landscape, perhaps with a knowing smile.

William Grieder, *One World, Ready or Not*

3) The remaining two [women] are toiling away on the farm, one gathering hay while the other plows the field. (K Brown)

4) We catch our breath as we approach over the moat, its water tangled now with green growth in which a man and a bullock stand knee-deep.

Caroline Drews, "Report from Cambodia"

5) Two little girls, one dressed in blue jeans, the other in purple tights, are sound asleep at their desks.

Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities: Children in American Schools

6) European cities are beginning to experience many of the problems of urban social dislocations—unemployment increasing, poverty becoming more and more concentrated, ethnic conflicts heightening—that have traditionally plagued American cities.

William Julius Wilson, When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor

7) There almost has to be a person in charge, someone running matters of meticulous detail beyond anyone's comprehension, a skilled engineer and manager, a CEO, the head of the whole place.

Lewis Thomas, *Medusa and the Snail*

8) A handsome man dressed in shiny leather shoes and freshly pressed pinstripe suit, Paul stood out from the other men, most of whom wore jeans and leather jackets.

Alex Kotlowitz, *There Are No Children*

Here

9) But the auditorium is all in ruins, two thirds of the stained-glass panels missing, replaced by plexiglass, chunks of wall and sections of the supporting pillars blasted by rot, lights falling out of the ceiling.

Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in American Schools*

10) A remarkable 70 percent of Amsterdam's addicts are registered and monitored, mainly through a pioneer mobile methadone clinic designed by the Medical-Social Union for Hard Drug Users, a functioning, government-financed bargaining union composed of hard drug users.

Rone Tempest, "Amsterdam's War on Drugs," *SF Examiner*, 10/4/89

11) Cultivating an ability to imagine these vast basins [aquifers] beneath us is an imperative need. What is required is a kind of mental divining rod that would connect this subterranean world to the images we see every day: a kettle boiling on the stove, a sprinkler bowing over the garden, a bathtub filling up.

Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream:
An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment*

Concessives

1) Although it had considerable impact in the short term, the Diab case soon disappeared from the press and the loss of media attention effectively put an end to its public discussion.

--David Macy, The Lives of Michel Foucault (1993), 313.

2) The danger is that, although the first generation of immigrants usually works hard, the next may not.

--Lawrence M. Mead, The New Politics of Poverty (1992),
229.

3) While the drift toward inequality is undeniable, the extent is disputed.

--Mead, 97

4) While cyberspace may be filled with words, a growing portion of the American population will not be able to use, understand, or benefit from those words.

--D. Burstein and D. Kline, Road Warriors (1995), 345

5) Though more and more patients seek a more humane medicine, it is becoming endangered

--Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence (1995), 184.

6) Although quantum theory has great predictive value, the meaning of the theory remains mysterious.

--Linda Jean Shepard, Lifting the Veil (1993), 243.

7) Whereas in principle all subjects are worthy pretexts for exercising the photographic way of seeing, the convention has arisen that photographic seeing is clearest in offbeat or trivial subject matter.

--Susan Sontag, On Photography (1977), 136-7.

8) Further, although the skulls indicate that the brains had been extracted through the base, we do not know if the flesh and marrow was eaten.

--Lewis Mumford, The Myth of the Machine (1967), 18.

9) What is seen stirs emotion indirectly, through interpretation and allied idea, whereas sound agitates directly, as a commotion of the organism itself.

--John Dewey, Art as Experience (1934), 189.

10) Although objectivity has its origins in moral philosophy and aesthetics, the natural sciences have been thought to be its fullest realization. --Shepard, 99.

11) The poorest districts in [New York] receive 90 cents per pupil from these legislative grants, while the richest districts have been given \$14 for each pupil.

--Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities (1991), 98.

Correlative Conjunctions

A very simple--almost mathematical--strategy for making a comparison at the sentence level in writing is to use what we grammarians call the "not/but" correlative. Similar to this are "either/or" and the negative "neither/nor" set-ups; "both/and" constructions; and the very emphatic "not only/but also" arrangement. Correlatives can compare full sentences as well as phrases or embedded clauses. Here are some examples:

- 1) It was not I, but your other son, Johnny, who broke the window.
- 2) Not only has the greenhouse effect caused some dramatic meteorological changes, but it may also be responsible for the intense El Niño we have this year.
- 3) Either a student gets the English composition requirements out of the way early on in her career, or it seems to drag on forever.
- 4) It should be the aim of the essayist to both inspire and to educate her readers.
- 5) We can either create another a new program to solve the problem, or we can write an addition to the existing program.
- 6) The instructor could neither inspire his students to really get into the work, nor could he get many of them to come to class on time, if at all.
- 7) Both the character--the style and voice--of his writing and the content of the essay are very strong, although its development leaves something to be desired.
- 8) Not only does the evidence from his biography show an essential connection to US history, but it makes clear the overall significance of his life to our concept of democracy.
- 9) The CSU is not only not only exploring the possibilities of forming partnerships with private corporations, but some argue the it should be completely privatized.
- 10) Shakespeare is not only difficult to read silently because of the archaic words that are impossible to understand, but reading his work aloud often reveals the beauty and power of his writng.

Adjective Clauses

1) Like other cities around the country, "Hollywood, which lies between Miami and Fort Lauderdale, has seen an explosion in the number of homeless people over the past decade.

—SF Chronicle, 8/7/89

2) An elegant elderly Asian woman with shadowed eyes, who carries a bird cage covered with white cloth, sits near. —SF Examiner, 9/10/89

3) These [poultry] processors have shifted almost all their production to the rural South, where the weather tends to be mild, the workforce is poor, unions are weak, and farmers are desperate to find some way of staying on their land.

—Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*, 139

4) Writing is the principle medium that allows you to interact with yourself.

—Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers

5) Wall Street had always been the locus of the greatest financial evil of them all, the faceless "money power" that senselessly and arrogantly brought boom or bust, flush times or despair, prosperity or ruin to industries, businessmen, and workers alike.

—Thomas Frank, *One Market Under God*

6) The leaders must believe in the potentialities of the people, whom they cannot treat as objects of their own action; they must believe that the people are capable of participating in the pursuit of liberation.

—Paulo Freire Pedagogy of the Oppressed

7) Ben would pause--the thoughtful pause that was characteristic of him--and then point out the fact that the sessions, by all the signs, were valued by these folks, that just using English in the company of native speakers was a good thing.

_Mike Rose, Lives on the Boundary

8) The discourse of academics is marked by terms and expressions that represent an elaborate set of shared concepts and orientations: alienation, authoritarian personality, the social construction of the self, determinism, recursion, reinforcement, and so on.

Rose, again.

9) It is important to realize the concept that a text file such as *pressure.dat* is simply a *sequence of characters*.

J. Adams, *et al.*, *C++: An introduction to computing*

Punctuating Adjective Clauses

Some adjective clauses take commas to set them off, and some don't. The noun that the clause modifies determines whether the clause will be a comma clause or a no-comma clause, instead of something in the clause itself. Here are some general guidelines:

Comma clauses modify these kinds of nouns:

1. *Proper nouns*

Maria Torres, who works at Xerox, was recently promoted.

Golden Gate Park, which borders Ocean Beach, has a museum, a tea garden, and an arboretum.

2. *Any noun indicating all members of a class of things or group of people or other living creatures*

Telephone numbers, which have many important new uses, are becoming scarce.

Homeowners hate crabgrass, which spoils the appearance of lawns.

Japanese cars, which are very well built, have captured a large share of the American market.

3. *Nouns preceded by possessive words usually take comma clauses.*

My neighbor, who moved in a year ago, likes loud music.

Johnson's theory of turbulence, which is not well accepted by economists, may prove itself right this year.

No-comma clauses modify nouns that require further identification.

The man who lives next door also has sixteen cats.

But economic theories that win broad acceptance need to apply for several years.

Sometimes we do or do not use commas around a clause depending on whether we want to indicate that information in the clause refers to all the members of the class indicated by the noun, or only to some of those members.

Presidents, who lie, should be impeached.

(indicates *all* presidents lie)

Presidents who lie should be impeached.

(indicates that only *some* lie)

Simplified Comma Rules

- Use commas before (not after) coordinating conjunctions (for, and, but, or, yet, so) *when they connect sentences.*

I think it might rain, but I'm not sure.

- Don't use them when coordinating conjunctions connect less than a sentence, *except when separating items in a series of more than two.*

They took my wallet, my keys, and my shoes, but they left my hat.

- Use a comma to set off an introductory phrase.

In case of fire, jump quickly out the window on the north side of the room.

- Use a comma to set off *who* clauses when they follow proper nouns.

Mr. Jones, who teaches economics, is a sad, strange little man.

- Use comma to set off *which* clauses when you mean them to refer to all of the group the noun referred to.

Yugos, which were some of the worst cars ever made, were very inexpensive.

- Don't use them with *which* clauses when you don't mean all.

Hondas which last over 200,000 miles are rare but not unheard of.

- Don't use them with *that* clauses.
- Use commas to separate two coordinate adjectives:

She left the crowded, noisy store in disgust. But, She drove off in her big old SUV.

- Use them to set off verbals, appositives, absolutes.
- Use them before or after quotations.

Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," a line that rings hollow in this day and age.

- Don't use them between subject and verb or between verb and object unless you're adding a phrase.

WRONG: I think, this is not a good idea.

WRONG: My father, thought that it was a good idea, but he was wrong again.

And the general comma rule: When in doubt, leave it out.

"Big Punctuation"

1) You take your analytic knife, put the point directly on the term Quality and just tap, not hard, gently, and the whole world splits, cleaves, right in two--hip and square, classic and romantic, technological and humanistic--and the split is clean.

Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 218

2) [Brent] Berlin's hypothesis makes this prediction: People from, say, an urban culture that treats trees as basic level should still have the general human capacity for gestalt perception and should thus be capable of learning to discriminate among trees.

George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 37

3) Now, the new gene-splicing technologies allow researchers to produce commercial volumes of vanilla in laboratory vats--by isolating the gene that codes for the vanilla protein and cloning it in a bacterial bath--eliminating the bean, the plant, the soil, the cultivation, the harvest, and the farmer.

Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work*, 124

4) Just look at this place. Depression and decay. The rusted sign waves and rattles in the wind: capitalism gone bad. We pass on.

Edward Abbey, *The Best of Edward Abbey*, 89

5) Haitian and West Indian immigrants have brought entrepreneurial ambitions with capitalism; it will be interesting to see what becomes of the West African sidewalk vendors who have become a New York fixture, also.

Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations: Black, White, Separate, Unequal*, 154

6) The Vai, like their neighbors, practice slash-and-burn rice farming using simple iron tools, but they have attained a special place in world history as one of the few cultures to have independently invented a phonetic writing system, (Dalby, 1967; Gelb, 1952; Koelle, 1854)

Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole, "Unpackaging Literacy" 76

7) We know, for example, something about *how* our spaceship was created. We know *when* our spaceship was created. We know *where* we are in the universe--on a planet orbiting a star that is situated at the edge of a spiral galaxy, which is near the outskirts of a supercluster of galaxies.

Neil Postman, *The End of Education*, 112

8) These are the costs of greed coupled with market power--power unrestrained by the normal checks and balances of the free market, or by any fears of getting caught.

James B. Stewart, *Den of Thieves*, 21

9) The birth of a new fact is always a wonderful thing to experience: it's dualistically called a "discovery" because of the presumption that it has been in existence independent of anyone's awareness of it.

Pirsig, 311

Sentence Development Recap

Since finding your unique voice in writing becomes important in terms of both impressing your readers and finding the most effective way to say what you want, feeling comfortable with stylistic options can be important. We've looked at a range of modifiers—free and bound—and many of you are using them well. But let's take a minute to look at them once more and practice their use. These are some of the most important:

- Appositives: William Jefferson Clinton, our beleaguered president, received a summons to testify before a grand jury, a panel investigating allegations of sexual impropriety.
- Appositives and adjective clauses: The investigation, an inquiry that has cost us more than \$45,000,000, is seen by many as a partisan witchhunt, but has continued for nearly six years, most of the time that Clinton has been in office.
- Verbals: Struggling to maintain a sense of dignity, Clinton has spent a lot of time out of the country, while back at home Kenneth Starr, the lawyer in charge of the investigation, has dogged his every step.
- Absolutes: Starr, a man driven by a need to convict the highest officials that he can, has lost the respect of much of the public, many of whom feel now that the whole thing is ludicrous.
- Concessives: While Starr does have legal grounds for the investigation, some think that the "crimes" Clinton is accused of are not really serious enough to warrant the expense or the publicity that it creates.
- Correlatives: Not only has Clinton been shamed by the process, but the country itself has been embarrassed internationally.
- Parallelism: This has gone on for a very long time, dominating the headlines, appearing nightly on television news, taking up all kinds of time in Congress, and costing the Clintons and others millions in legal defense fees.

Finally, the other major stylistic factor that we've looked at has concerned how sentences are focused. The focus is what readers pay attention to—like what's in the center of a photograph—and what looks best in a sentence, what makes the clearest meaning, is a focus on characters doing things. This means that you should avoid verbs that aren't actions and, assuming sentences have action verbs, use subject that are the people or things doing them. Also:

- Avoid the passive construction: Ø *The grand jury process is seen as out of control by many. (Many think the grand jury process is out of control.)
- Avoid "There is"/"It is": Ø *There are some good reasons to think this. (People have some good reasons to think this.)
- Avoid overusing "to be" verbs: *The cost of the investigation is what disturbs many people. (The cost of the investigation disturbs people most of all.)
- Avoid "It is this...that": Ø *It is this enormous waste that angers me the most, personally. (I am most angered by this enormous waste.)

Sentence Boundaries

One of the editing problems that shows up often in student writing (at all levels) concerns sentence boundaries. There are two key abilities that you need to develop: Knowing when a sentence is incomplete (known as a fragment) and knowing when two sentences are punctuated as one (a "run-together-sentence").

Identifying fragments:

- 1) The day was rainy and cold.
- 2) A terrible day to be outside.
- 3) My brother is talking about going to back to school.
- 4) His goal to be a political scientist and work in politics.
- 5) A beautiful park, which is located behind the campus so no one can see it.
- 6) The school has at least one great feature.
- 7) The video showed Rodney King on the ground while four to six officers beat him with clubs. As if they wanted to kill him.
- 8) It was a terrible thing to watch on your nightly news. Something most people though no longer happened.
- 9) Even though there's a lot of talk about it now doesn't mean anything is going to change.
- 10) What we need is someone like Martin Luther King to get the people excited again. To get everyone concerned about injustices going on everywhere.

Identifying RTS problems

- 1) I feel this class will make me a better writer, without it I feel like I just would not have the confidence I need.
- 2) Ron Kovic was a good boy, he was from a proud home in a small town in New York.
- 3) Even though he knew what he was doing when he went into the army, what he learned as a young man wasn't true, it was mostly myths about what a hero was.
- 4) One thing Malcolm X did to become a writer was to study words by copying the whole dictionary.
- 5) He did it one page at a time, he filled many writing tablets while he was in prison.
- 7) It's good to know about because he was a good role model for people to follow, he was an intelligent man, but not really different from anyone else.
- 8) When he followed orders, he thought he was doing good. But it wasn't always true, he didn't know sometimes orders are wrong.
- 9) One thing to learn from Kovic is that you don't always know what you'll become, if you follow your conscience, you can end up being someone different from who you thought you would be.

Sentence focus: Characters and actions

Revise the passages below, substituting characters and actions for a clearer focus. Remember that **character : action** structures go hand in hand with clear **subject : verb** (or **object/complement**) arrangements, which lead readers to stronger understanding of your meanings.

- 1) The existence of differences in interpretation about the meaning of the discovery of America has led to a reassessment of Columbus's place in Western History.
- 2) A solution to the UFO problem is impossible without a better understanding about the possibility of extraterrestrial life.
- 3) Decisions about forcibly administering medication in an emergency room setting despite the inability of an irrational patient to provide legal consent is an on-scene medical decision.
- 4) In recent months preliminary data have been collected which are beginning to define the economic burden of the disease.
- 5) There are five categories into which the severity of this disease have been divided.
- 6) Resistance has been growing against building new mental health facilities in residential areas because of a distrust founded on the belief that the few examples of improper management are typical. There is a need for a modification of these perceptions.
- 7) It was found that data about resources allocated to the states must be obtained, which action is needed so that it can be determined how resources can be redirected when conditions change.
- 8) An investigation was begun into why so few interviews were done.
- 9) Of concern is the increasing cost of protecting museum artifacts. Their mere storage is a contributing factor to deterioration, to say nothing of the effects of their display. The concept of conservation means that higher expenditures are necessary to ensure the availability of skills and equipment to ensure their preservation for future generations.
- 10) Recent assertions about failures to present information with fairness are accurate in regard to journalism in the Middle East today. A comparison of press coverage from different countries reveals many inaccuracies in reporting by politically biased newspapers. The omission of facts and the slanting of stories show the failure of the press to carry out its mission with objectivity. As a result, lack of knowledge has resulted in a public opinion based more on emotion than on reason.

Sentence and paragraph focus

Compare these passages:

1. The means by which Asian products have successfully competed with your products in the Western Pacific markets will constitute the objective of the first phase of this study. The labor costs of competitors and their ability to introduce new products quickly are the first issues to be examined. A plan that will demonstrate how your industry can take advantage of unexpected market opportunities, particularly on the Pacific Rim, will be developed from this study.
2. In the first phase of this study, we will examine how Asian products have successfully competed with your products in Western Pacific markets. The study will first examine labor costs of competitors and how they are able to introduce new products quickly. We will develop from this study a plan that will demonstrate how your industry can take advantage of unexpected market opportunities, particularly on the Pacific Rim.

Group work: Revise the following to improve flow and cohesion. (Hint: you may need to use the passive to follow the old to new rule, and that's okay. In the second problem, take a look at how the topics of sentences relate.)

1) The Hart Queen is one of the best skis for beginning skiers. A thin layer of tempered ash from hardwood forests of Kentucky makes up its inner core. Therefore, two innovations for strength and flexibility are built into its outer construction. Two sheets of ten-gauge steel reinforce a layer of ash for increased strength. A wrapping of fiberglass thus surrounds the two steel sheets for increased flexibility. Most conventional bindings can be used with the Queen. The Salomon Double is the best, however. A cushion of foam and insulation firmly cradles the foot and ankle, yet freedom of movement is still permitted.

2) The power to create and communicate a new message to fit a new experience is not a competence animals have in their natural states. Their genetic code limits the number and kind of messages that they can communicate. Information about distance, direction, source, and richness of pollen in flowers constitutes the only information that can be communicated by bees, for example. A limited repertoire of messages delivered in the same way, for generation after generation, is characteristic of animals in the same species, in all significant respects.

Examples of effective style

A pond, especially, has the fascination of the miniature. It is a world clearly limited by the shores and bottom and surface: a sufficiently self-contained world, a world small enough so that one should be able to figure out everything going on there, describe it, analyze it, perhaps fit the relationships among the living things into neat equations—and, solving the equations, solve all the mysteries. But the mystery of the pond still eludes me.

—Marston Bates, "There's Magic in a Pond," in The World Around Us

The key note [of pretentious style] is the elimination of simple verbs. Instead of being a single word, such as *break, stop, spoil, mend, kill*, a verb becomes a *phrase* made up of a noun or an adjective tacked on to some general-purpose verb such as *prove, serve, play, render*. In addition, the passive voice is wherever possible used in preference to the active, and noun constructions are used instead of gerunds (*by examination of* instead of *examining*). The range of verbs is further cut down by means of the *-ize* and *de-* formations, and the banal statements are given an appearance of profundity by means of the *not un-*formation.

—George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language"

Generations of students have struggle through prose that they could not understand, blaming themselves because they thought they could not read well enough or were not smart enough to comprehend the ideas so seemingly complex. Some have been right about that, but most could have blamed the tangled writing they were trying to understand.

—Joseph M. Williams, *Style: Ten Lessons in Grace and Clarity*

My little brother, Micah, hadn't finished college and he was already making more money than I was; he was playing semi-professional poker, day trading with his card room winnings. Part way through the winter quarter of his senior year, he applied for a fancy tech job for which he was highly under qualified. Each successive interviewer told him this, and he replied the same way every time: "I'm an engineer who knows how to write a clear and grammatical sentence." They made him a generous offer.

—Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction* (11)

Using quotations and textual support

Most academic writing is structured so that the beginnings give a broad overview of what others writing about the topic say in what is called the "review of the literature," where the author basically lists the key sources to give readers an idea of what the central thinking is or of the shape of the debate that the current piece is concerned with. Here's a passage from "Rhetoric as a Course of Study" by David Fleming, an assistant professor of English at the University of Wisconsin at Madison:

...The only way to avoid the charge [of "mereness"] is to make [rhetoric] equivalent to *all* means of persuasion. By the standards of "little" rhetoric, on the other hand, conceptual expansions of the term have only diminished its "definitive power" (Moss 23): "rhetoric" has been transformed into "a free-floating signifier" (Gaonkar, "Idea" 38), stretched "to the point that it has lost virtually all meaning" (Leff, "Modern" 22), widened "to the point of no return" (Vickers 439 n. 9), and "aggrandized virtually beyond recognition" (Cole 20).

Source

Fleming, David. "Rhetoric as a Course of Study." *College English*, 61:2 (November, 1998), 169-191.

Here, Fleming uses terms and quotations that show how people have seen his subject, giving his readers a broad idea of what's "out there." The writing assumes some background knowledge, for he writes to others in his profession; for a more general audience, such a narrowly defined focus wouldn't work too well. One compromise between the technical writing format of a discipline and more broad-based writing is to use some of the key references, or a couple really important ones.

One thing to see here is how Fleming *integrates* the quotations and references into his writing to make it read smoothly. Each name in the text (in parentheses) has a reference in his source list at the end of his paper; the references that have a title, along with the author's name, are one of more than one source from the same author. *College English* uses the MLA citation style; if it were APA, the year of publication would be with the references. If it were footnotes, which are used in Chicago style, they would follow the standard styles of footnoting, although the Latin terms (like *ibid* or *op. cit*) are rarely used anymore.

Fortunately, most publications and most instructors do have set methods for citing; you can usually check to see how this should be done. Universal requirements for information include:

- author or authors' name (at place of reference or in your writing, and in the bibliography)
- title (formatted to show whether it's a book or article)
- source (periodical, book, URL, and so on--what it's in)
- place of publication (for books)
- date of publication (for URLs, date of access or last update)

The process is pretty straightforward, but source citation has a lot of arcane conventions, too, so having something to check--a handbook or informative web page--can be the biggest help.

Documenting Sources

Use a recognized system of citation (MLA or APA, or Chicago) to consistently give credit for direct quotations, paraphrases, or information that comes from a source, including personal interviews, course readers, lectures, and so on. The library has information on these systems, and you can purchase handbooks at a relatively low price. Also cite internet sources by giving the URL.

When possible, use the author's name in the your writing, and describe the source. Quotations should be integrated with your writing, made to fit. Full sentences or longer (5+ lines) blocked quotes are usually preceded by a colon, which leads to the quote: "Shorter quotes--of phrases or words--are preceded by commas usually." (Smith, 99) Page numbers in line systems like MLA/APA go after the period with the author's name(s) if who said is not given in your text. *Each source should be listed in conventional format at the end of the paper.*

I realize this stuff may sound nitpicky, unimportant, but it improves the overall appearance of a paper, lends credibility to the writer, and avoids plagiarism. Writing, like most fields, has conventional ways of doing things that require attention to detail, as when you learn to do quadratic equations, write a computer program, or run a chemistry experiment. If you want more information or titles of decent handbooks, see me or my web page (see "Brief Style Guide" and the link to MLA).

Central sources should receive fuller treatment: longer *descriptions*, more about the author(s), paragraph length or longer summaries, but working directly with the text, except in book reviews, should not overcome your own writing: it should be balanced, with the weight on your own work. This is not true when your task is to primarily deal with text, as in a bibliographic essay or a

Finally, when you use quotes, don't just throw them in. Do some writing about them, analyzing and explaining what they mean. You might consider defining the writer's key terms, making connections to other parts of the paper, evaluating the writer's point of view or perspective, comparing the quote to other writers. A research paper is not necessarily less creative than other kinds of writing, despite how formal it looks. Try to respond honestly to other writers, writing *with* or *against* the material, so that your own view and argument is made clear, too. Explaining what readers should see in or understand from source material can be crucial to readers understand your own argument, or to whether or not they accept it.

Using Quotations

Quote Accurately: One of the key skills in becoming a good writer of critical essays is learning how to explain and exploit direct textual evidence (quotations and paraphrases). One of the easiest ways to compromise this skill is to quote inaccurately - it demonstrates inattention to textual detail. So, the first important task in using quotations is to pay close attention and quote accurately.

Short Quotations: One of the most useful skills you can develop is to learn how to embed short quotations within the body of your own text, weaving smoothly between your argument and the material to which you are referring. The following example might serve illustrate this process (using Raymond Carver's poem, "To My Daughter"):

In "To My Daughter," Carver creates a vivid picture of family dysfunction, with images such as "two people who loved each other knocking each other around." But he also shows how this way of life recreates itself, presenting his daughter as "a beautiful drunk" with "lips a man/should kiss instead of split." The poem also suggests the utter helplessness the narrator feels, seeing his daughter beginning (or continuing) to recreate the problems that did so much damage to his family when she was younger. "Our family was made," the speaker says, "to squander not collect," but he also conveys the definite sense that he has not given up when he begs his daughter to "turn this around."

Blocked or indented Quotations: When you feel the need to include a quotation that is more than a few lines long, you should format it as a block quotation (they look like the above example). Block quotes are usually indented half an inch from the left margin and are single spaced. You can use the same font size for the whole paper. As in the example above, block quotations are usually introduced by a colon.

Quoting Poetry: Because line-breaks important to readers' sense of the rhythm, meter and sense of poetry, always be sure to mark these points with "/" marks at the points where the original has line breaks, as in the example does. Always use the spelling, punctuation and capitalization of the original text, unless you signal your changes using square brackets or ellipses.

Changing the quote: If you leave out some words within a quotation, show that you did by using an ellipsis (...). If you *have* to change wording in the original, as in supplying a full name instead of a pronoun or changing the tense of the text, indicate which words are yours (and not the authors) with square (angle) brackets: "[Drinking] will kill you...". Normally, though, you can as easily find a way to fit the words you want to quote into your writing, supplying the necessary context or connection in your sentence before the quoted words.

The Art of Conducting a Great Interview

Thanks to Adam Bessie

A great interview, which yields crops of information for your research project, does not occur by accident. Usually, the effectiveness of the interview grows out of the quality of your questions; asking solid questions is an art—a vital, eminently practical one—which requires practice. As in any art, time-honored techniques can serve as guidelines to help you refine and improve your skill.

A good question inspires people to discuss their experience fully and honestly, perhaps making them reflect on it in a new and interesting way; a poorly conceived question, conversely, results in a trickle of information that does not build to much more.

HOW AND WHY QUESTIONS

Remember the “five Ws”? Who, what, where, when, why (and how). Though we use all of these interrogative pronouns in interviews, HOW and WHY questions can spark particularly thoughtful responses, driving people to think more deeply.

Both types push people to consider causes and motives—“HOW did you get arrested?” “WHY do you think you decided to drive after drinking so much?”

RICH QUESTIONS

The Hypothetical WHAT IF question: Ask the interviewee to imagine what might happen in a particular situation:

- “Imagine this is your first day in prison. What would you expect?”
- “If you received a D- on the assignment, what would that tell you?”

The Devil’s Advocate Question: Challenge the interviewee to consider an opposing point of view:

- “The CHP office I talked to believes the punishment is commensurate with the crime. What would you say to her?”

The Ideal Position Question: Ask the interviewee to imagine an ideal situation.

- “What would the ideal diet for a fairly active 30 year old woman be?”
- “What’s the best kind of exercise for cardiac patients?”

The Summary Question: Gives you a chance to check your own understanding and to get the interviewee to move more deeply into an area of interest:

- “It seems like you’re saying that a certain state mind is as important as diet and exercise. Can you say a little more about that?”

QUESTIONING VERBS

Describe, explain, summarize, paraphrase, clarify, illustrate, interpret, imagine, conceive, conclude, judge, compare, contrast, classify, identify, propose, argue

PROBING MORE DEEPLY

Questioning resembles jazz music in the sense that what you ask often depends on or plays off of the answers that you get, which means you have to think on your feet:

PROBING QUESTIONS

- What do you mean?
- I'm not sure I follow you.
- Could you explain that?
- What did you say/think/do when _____?
- Can you give me an example?
- Take me through your experience.
- How did that make you feel?
- How did the experience change your view of _____?

QUESTIONS TO AVOID

1. YES/NO QUESTIONS

“Do you think she was right to do that?” “Yes./No.”

2. MULTIPLE QUESTIONS

Example: “How do you feel about the cuts and their effects on students and our sports program?”

Revision: “What, to you, is the worst effect of the cuts?” “How are the affecting students in particular?” “What impacts do you see on the sports program?”

3. LEADING QUESTIONS

These are questions based on your opinion or those that imply an answer.

“It must be hard to balance family and a job. Tell me how it's difficult”

Better: “Can you tell me what it's like to balance work and family life? What do you experience every day?”

“Don't you think the government fails to meet its responsibility?”

Better: “How do you think the government could help?”

Lisa Landes
English 414.08
May 15, 2006
Final Draft

Lessons Lost: The Futility of Prohibition

A prohibition law strikes a blow at the very principles upon which our government was founded.

—Abraham Lincoln

Historians, political scientists, even law enforcement experts agree that the prohibition of alcohol in the United States did little good—and, in fact, it created social harm. This essay will explore why and how this is true and raise the obvious question: If prohibiting alcohol became a dismal failure, why should anyone think that prohibiting other drugs today benefits society or individuals? Drawing on the work of recognized experts such as Peter McWilliams, author of the exhaustive analysis, *Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do*, Joseph McNamara, former San Jose, California police chief, and material from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, I will argue that, like the misguided Prohibitionists of yesterday, drug prohibition creates more harm than good.

Alcohol was banned in America during the 1920's. It was thought at the time that this ban, or prohibition as it came to be called, would make our society a better place to live. Alcohol was seen to be a problem and prohibition was to be the means by which this problem would be brought under control. In his book, *The Great Illusion*, Herbert Asbury vividly explains what happened.

The American people had expected to be greeted, when the day came, by a covey of angels bearing gifts of peace, happiness, prosperity, and salvation, which they had been assured would be theirs when the rum demon had been scotched. Instead, they were met by a hoard of bootleggers, moonshiners, rum-runners, triggermen, venal judges, corrupt police, crooked politicians, and speakeasy operators, all bearing the twin symbols of the eighteenth amendment—the Tommy gun and the poisoned cup (Qtd. in McWilliams, 67).

We suffer from these unintended consequences still today.

On December 18, 1917, Congress proposed a prohibition amendment. By January 1919, the 18th amendment had been ratified by two-thirds of the states. The amendment's actual enforcement mechanisms were set forth by the Volstead Act. Prohibition, the Volstead Act stated, would begin on January 29, 1920. The 18th amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale, transportation, and importation of alcohol in the United States (McWilliams, 66). A great national experiment would fail; however, the repercussions and consequences of this failure would live on. Legacies of prohibition endure in American attitudes and customs to this day. The lessons, which should have been learned from prohibition, were disregarded, and consequentially, the U.S is now experiencing the same social ills that accompanied the Volstead Act.

We are now in the throes of a second prohibition. Americans, however, refuse to look at our own history for possible solutions to our costly and destructive prohibition on drugs. This so-called “war on drugs” often translates to a war against people. The problems facing us today are not new. Those who came before us faced similar problems and made similar mistakes. However, they eventually had the good sense to try new solutions when the old ones had obviously failed. An analysis of alcohol prohibition can give us insights that raise serious questions about our present drug policies. So, let us take a look back at history and examine the effectiveness of our present prohibition.

Alcohol prohibition in America during the 1920’s resulted from numerous social pressures and trends. Temperance organizations (groups that wanted to ban alcohol) fought aggressively for prohibition. The most powerful of these groups were the Women’s Christian Temperance Society and the Anti-Saloon League. By the turn of the century, each group had millions of members. Both organizations raised millions of dollars, which they used to produce propaganda and to contribute to campaign funds of pro-temperance politicians. Both groups were most powerful during World War I (Goshen, 17-18). During that period Americans felt idealistic and full of hope and energy. They also felt morally superior to the Germans, who had brought beer to the United States and manufactured much of the supply. The Anti-Saloon League, under the control of Wayne Wheeler, used these anti-German feelings to their fullest. In Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America, Edward Behr writes,

The war drastically altered the picture and advanced the dry cause beyond Wheeler’s wildest hopes. After Britain and France went to war with Germany in 1914, Wheeler, accurately gauging the feelings of his fellow Americans, was aware that the increasingly anti-German mood, rapidly amounting to hysteria, would be a godsend to the dry cause. He would exploit this cynically and cruelly, but with enormous effectiveness. As the strength of the dry vote became increasingly apparent, it was clear to him that the Great War would administer the final coup de grace to the opponents of prohibition. In fact, Wheeler’s victory was assured the day America itself entered the war on April 6. In the last resort, it was a misguided form of patriotism, amounting to jingoism, that would insure the prompt passing of the 18th amendment (60).

Although many assume that prohibitionists were motivated by concern for others’ weakness when it came to drinking, we can see how down-home, old-fashioned American prejudice played a role, too.

Besides the Germans, many white Protestants looked down on the Italians and the Irish. They disapproved of their Catholicism and their drinking. The Protestants thought that if these groups would stop drinking, they would become more like them. Also, during this period, many stories circulated about black men drinking alcohol and raping white women (McWilliams, 64-65). The recipe for prohibition was a mixture of moralism, naiveté, a distaste for foreigners, and racism. The recipe for drug prohibition was similar.

In Pipe Dream Blues, Clarence Lusane describes how the anti-drug campaigns incited people’s racial fears. One official report issued by Dr. Hamilton Wright, considered the Father of America’s drug laws, “described in horrifying detail the superhuman strength and extreme madness experienced by blacks on cocaine, and explained that cocaine drove black men to rape (Lusane, 34).” An article in the *New York Times* was called “Negro Cocaine ‘Fiends’ Are a New

Southern Menace.” It told how “southern sheriffs had switched from .32- caliber guns to .38- caliber pistols to protect themselves from drug-empowered blacks.” The article was subtitled “Murder and Insanity Increasing Among Lower Class Blacks Because They Have Taken to ‘sniffing’ Since Deprived of Whiskey by Prohibition (Lusane, 34).”

The prohibition of marijuana followed a similar path. In 1930, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, a drug enforcement agency, was formed. Harry Anslinger became its first commissioner and he was determined to make a name for himself. Washington first noticed him when he was working on behalf of alcohol prohibition. In his essay, “An Irrational History of Drug Prohibition,” J. Collings writes,

Cannabis, moral degeneracy, violence, and racism mingled freely in graphic detail within Anslinger’s ‘gore-file’. Some of Anslinger’s favorites were: West Va.—Two Negroes took a girl fourteen years old and kept her for two days in a hut under the influence of marijuana. Upon recovery she was found to be suffering from year-old daughter. When his wife returned home in the evening, she found him lying across the bed in a stupor and the little child torn and bleeding. He couldn’t remember (11-12).

Anslinger’s purpose was served. In 1937 Congress gave in to popular myth and banned marijuana. The *American Medical Association* spoke out against the ban, but their voice went unheeded (McWilliams, 540). Of course, marijuana didn’t go away, it only went underground...and not very deep. Gary Johnson, the ex-governor of New Mexico, says, “A teenager today will tell you that a bottle of beer is harder to come by than a marijuana joint. That’s where we’ve come today with regard to controlling alcohol, but it shows how out of control drugs have become (144).”

Many people believed that once prohibition was started, alcohol would become increasingly rare. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Clandestine systems of transportation and distribution were immediately created. Smugglers and middlemen delivered contraband liquor to illicit bars located in private homes and in the back rooms of stores. Many people began to distill liquor in secret stills. Ironically, in the first week of prohibition, an illegal still was seized on the farm of congressman who had authored the Volstead Act (McWilliams, 70). The failure of prohibition began on the day of its initiation. All government controls over the production, distribution, taxation, and consumption of alcohol disappeared. Prohibitions are intended to gain control over a problem. In actuality, they lead to a loss of control.

For example, contempt for prohibition laws grew rapidly, and this contempt poisoned citizens’ attitudes toward the government and its other laws. Bribery and corruption became pervasive in official circles. Contrary to what it seems to think, the government cannot control natural market forces. When there is a demand, there will always be a supply. As the authors of Drug War Politics tell us, “The criminalization of a trade makes it a black, and particularly pernicious, market. Black markets in various goods or services have long bedeviled government attempts to eliminate them, especially when the twin factors of high demand and high profits are at work (Bertram, 12).” The substances might change, but the effects of banning sought after substances do not. While the criminal element was flourishing, the most law-abiding citizens were forced, through taxes, to subsidize the enforcement of a policy that could not be enforced. The same thing is happening today. Each year we spend billions of dollars in an unsuccessful attempt to enforce our drug laws.

The suppliers in a black market can gain wealth and power, which we seen in another unintended effect of prohibition: organized crime. Gangs of criminals seized the opportunities created by prohibition. They produced, packaged, imported, distributed, and retailed bootleg liquor. Gangsters like Al Capone presided over vast operations. These gangsters initially became rich by smuggling liquor into America from Canada, but the richer they became, the more they could grow and diversify (McWilliams, 71). Organized crime today is involved in gambling, prostitution, protection rackets, and of course, narcotics. Drug War Politics explains, The black markets in cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are very similar to the black market in alcohol during prohibition in the 1920's and early 1930's. Then, too, the illegal products were ordinarily cheap and easy to produce, store, transport, and sell. Government policies aimed to interfere in the market and to make the product scarce and expensive by outlawing it. Enforcement indeed raises prices by increasing the risks and costs faced by suppliers. But given the continued demand for alcohol and illicit drugs, this merchandise also becomes, as a result of government prohibition, extraordinarily profitable for producers and traffickers, precisely because it is scarcer and more expensive than it otherwise would be. (Bertram, 12).

According to McWilliams, we spend 40 billion dollars each year on drug arrests (522) and 60% of our federal inmates are imprisoned on drug charges (242). We have the highest rate of incarceration in the world and our jails house nearly half of all prisoners in the world (Media Awareness Project, n.p.). When President Reagan first announced his “war on drugs” in 1982, there were fewer people in jail for all offenses than there are now for drug offenses alone (McWilliams, 10). All of these drug arrests are causing our prisons to overflow making it necessary to build more. In fact between 1987 and 1995 the state of California increased its spending on prisons by 30% while at the same time it decreased its spending on higher education by 18% (Media Awareness Project, n.p). The “war on drugs” has blinded us to what our top priority should be—the safety and education of our children. Our current drug policies have jeopardized our children’s education by causing our school budgets to be cut; these resources are being used to house drug offenders. Our policies have also caused our children’s safety to be jeopardized. Children are living in gang-infested neighborhoods because our drug policies make it possible for gangs to thrive. Our streets are also less safe because our drug prohibition has resulted in the misallocation of our criminal justice funds.

How does our government deal with these massive problems? Since 1986 the average prison term for drug offenders has risen by 22%, while the average term for a violent criminal has decreased by 30% (McWilliams, 242). Joseph McNamara, a former police chief of San Jose, California, puts it into perspective,

It’s bizarre. We make 700,000 arrests for marijuana a year. The public is not terrified of marijuana. People are terrified of murderers, molesters, school shootings, and people stalking women and children. The police are not putting the resources into those crimes where they could be effective if they gave them top priority (McNamara, 5).” McWilliams quotes a passage from The Hottest Politician’s Guide to Crime Control, which explains the problem:

The prime function of the criminal law is to protect our persons and our property; these purposes are now engulfed in a mass of other distracting, inefficiently performed, legislative duties. When the criminal law invades the spheres of private morality and

social welfare, it exceeds its proper limits at the cost of neglecting its primary tasks. This unwarranted extension is expensive, ineffective, and criminogenic (234). His final term means that the law can actually *create* crime, which, of course, all laws do, but many do not realize the extent of social dysfunction prohibition laws not only encourage but make inevitable.

We must ask ourselves who are the true perpetrators and who are the true victims? We would be wise to listen to the words of Abraham Lincoln when he said,

Prohibition will work great injury to the cause of temperance. It is a species of intemperance within itself, for it goes beyond the bounds of reason in its attempts to control a man's appetite by legislation, and makes a crime out of things that are not crimes. A prohibition law strikes a blow at the very principles upon which our government was founded (Qtd. In McWilliams, 525).

Finally Congress had the good sense to repeal prohibition; it ended in 1933. While the repeal was not a panacea (almost all pleasure producing substances, when abused, have the potential to create social problems), it was undeniably an improvement over prohibition. The experiment was over, but what had we learned?

Sadly, if one examines the United States Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) web-site, the answer to that question would have to be "not much." The U.S Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has an extensive web-site chock-full of information; in fact, it would take days to read the entire site. There are hundreds of pages—all put there in the hope that they will support the DEA in realizing its goals of stopping all illegal drug distribution into and within the United States and stopping all illegal drug use in the United States. Indeed those are lofty goals; but the manner in which the DEA has tried to achieve these goals has not worked and, in fact, will never work-- unless the United States becomes a police state... and even that does not guarantee success judging from the plentiful drug flow behind our prisons' walls.

The DEA presents their point of view in a very dramatic and zealous manner. They want to elicit an emotional response from the viewers of this site, and they are successful in this regard-- just like Wayne Wheeler and the Anti-Saloon League. They see themselves as an army fighting for a just cause and they salute their fallen "soldiers" as lost heroes in the struggle. Their site devotes many pages to their fallen "soldiers," which include photos, personal information, and the manner in which they died (DEA, "Wall of Honor," n.p.). One particularly revered "soldier," Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, has a much more extensive tribute than the others—as though he was the "star" of the fallen "soldiers." There are many photos of "Kiki" and his family throughout the web-site. One page includes a family photo, a wedding photo, a graduation photo, and a funeral photo. The DEA even has a special week each year called "Red Ribbon Week" in which people celebrate this man's life by wearing red ribbons and by pledging to live a drug free life (DEA, "kiki," n.p.). When viewing this section, it is impossible not to have an emotional reaction—one feels terrible for this man, his family, and the others that died thinking they were making a difference. Nonetheless we must look beyond our emotions and ask ourselves, were these men and women sacrificed for a good reason? Is it harder to obtain drugs today than it was before this "war" began? Sadly, the answer to both questions is a resounding no, and ironically the evidence can be found right on the DEA's site.

A society's laws should balance freedom and order. Laws that prohibit murder, theft, and assault undeniably make our society a better place to live. They justifiably limit freedom in order to guarantee security and order. The benefits clearly outweigh the costs. However, when a law takes away freedom and brings with it conflict, suffering, and injustice, it should be done away with. The long-term benefits of a good law should exceed the enforcement costs to society and individuals.

Prohibition fails this test. In the name of our nation's future, we must look into our past and present and honestly ask ourselves, "Do our laws make sense? Do they make our society a better place? Are our laws worth the price we must pay to enforce them?" Most of our laws will pass this test, but some will not. Our drug laws (like alcohol prohibition) do not work. We must start looking at our drug problem as a health issue, not a criminal one. Our current drug laws do not serve society or the individual in a beneficial way. Prohibition did not work in the 1920's and it does not work now. Finally, the accompanying cost of prohibition must be considered. Removal of freedom of choice in the areas of victimless crime stunts the moral and intellectual capacities of the controlled citizenry. The always eloquent John Stuart Mill put it this way: "A State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands, even for beneficial purposes, will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished (Qtd. In McWilliams, 47)."

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