SYLLABUS & COURSE OVERVIEW

English 105: Rhetoric & Composition
Dan River Work Farm; Fall 2020

Instructor: Rachel Warner **Email:** warnerr@live.unc.edu

Instructor Bio: Rachel Warner is a PhD candidate and teaching fellow in the Department of English and Comparative Literature. Her research interests include twentieth-century American literature, women's and gender studies, queer of color critique, and animal studies. She also co-directs the graduate working group Literature, Medicine and Culture Colloquium (LMCC) which explores topics in health humanities. She is currently working on her dissertation, a literary and cultural history of female masculinity in American modernism.

Course Description:
This course is designed to prepare students to write across three major academic disciplines: **Natural Sciences, Social Sciences (or Business), and Humanities.** Throughout the semester, students will learn the rhetorical conventions of these academic discourse communities and how to use such rhetorical standards to effectively communicate their ideas. Students will also learn how to distinguish between and successfully write in a variety of real-world **genres** by adopting a particular **role** and thinking through an implied **audience**. Think of this course not as a series of assignments for grades, but as encounters with the genres within particular **rhetorical situations**. The emphasis on research methods (i.e. locating, interpreting, and properly citing academic **sources**) will also prepare students to conduct scholarship across the disciplines. Finally, this course approaches **writing as a process**; engaging in the writing process means you will write multiple drafts and reflect both on your experiences and strategies in order to increase your awareness of your writing strengths and challenges.

Course Objectives:
By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- **Employ** conventions, genres, and rhetoric practiced in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities
- **Discuss** and present research-based arguments and information
- **Identify** how best to use research and evidence in discipline-specific compositions
- **Review** and revise one's own work and assist others in revising their work
- **Develop** writing strategies, awareness, and self-assessment skills to help you confidently approach future writing challenges in your academic & professional lives
- **Treat** writing composition as a process and feel comfortable with writing at every stage: prewriting, composing, revising, etc.

Required Texts: (all texts will be provided by the Friday Center)

- *The Tarheel Writing Guide (THWG)* by the UNC Writing Programs
- *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus*

- *Perfect English Grammar*
- *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing (TSIS)* by Gerald Graff & Cathy Berkenstein
- *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison

Major Course Assignments:

Each of the three units contains two short "feeder" assignments and one substantial unit project. The feeder assignments are designed to give you practice with a particular skill (such as fieldwork or analyzing secondary sources), while the unit projects ask you bring these skills together for particular rhetorical purposes and particular academic audiences.

Unit 1: Writing in the Natural Sciences
Feeder 1.1: Topic Selection & Genre Analysis (5 pts)
Feeder 1.2: Summarize & Analyze Sources (5 pts)
Unit 1 Project: Popular Science Article (15 pts)

Unit 2: Writing in Business
Feeder 2.1: Professional Field Selection & Genre Analysis (5 pts)
Feeder 2.2: Job Listing Analysis (5 pts)
Unit 2 Project: Professional Resume (15 pts)

Unit 3: Writing in the Humanities
Feeder 3.1 Close Reading of a Passage/Quote (5 pts)
Feeder 3.2: Close Reading of a Passage/Quote (5 pts)
Unit 3 Project: Literary Analysis (15 pts)

Final Reflection Paper (10 pts)
Reflection on taking a completely paper-based course.

Reading Quizzes (#1-4) (15 pts)
You will complete four short reading quizzes throughout the semester on the required texts. Although they will all be open-book, you should still use them as an opportunity to engage closely with the reading materials and articulate your thoughts.

Evaluation: Point Grading

Assignment	Percentage Per Assignment	Total
Unit 1: Writing in the Natural Sciences	Feeders – 5% each (x2) Unit Project – 15%	25%

Unit 2: Writing in Business	Feeders – 5% each (x2) Unit Project – 15%	25%
Unit 3: Writing in the Humanities	Feeders – 5% each (x2) Unit Project – 15%	25%
Reflection Paper		10%
Reading Quizzes (4 total)		15%
Total		100%

Grading Scale:
A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (<60).

Course & University Policies:
Please remember that the syllabus functions as a contract between the instructor and the students. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies. Everyone has an "off" day now and then, but when you are here, your brain should be working.

Due Dates: All assignments are due at the beginning of class, unless otherwise noted.

Late Assignments: Feeders will not be accepted more than one class period late (and you will lose 50% for being one class late). Your Unit Project will be docked a letter grade for each day it is late. I will not accept work more than two class periods late.

Plagiarism/The Honor Code: The honor code applies to everything that we do at this university, including our use of outside sources in our research and writing. Our work in this class will conform to the principles and procedures defined in the *Instrument of Student Judicial Governance* (http://instrument.unc.edu/). The research that we do this semester, whether primary or secondary, print or online, formal or informal, will require careful documentation on your part. We will review citation guidelines early and often throughout the semester. The need to cite your sources applies to all your work, including drafts as well as final versions of your feeders and projects. When in doubt: CITE.

Non-Discrimination Policy: We can never guarantee that a classroom will be a completely "safe" space. However, I believe that **our classroom should be a sacred space where students can share their thoughts and ideas without fear**. The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with these principles and applicable laws, it is therefore the University's policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status as consistent with the University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct. No person, on the basis of protected status, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under any University program or activity, including with respect to employment terms and conditions. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

Accessibility Statement
Disabilities can be visible and invisible, and I am dedicated to ensuring that all students succeed in my course. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. If you have information you wish to share with me about a disability, disorder, or neurodiversity issue, if you have emergency medical information you think I should know about, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please set up an appointment with me to discuss this during office hours.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ensures that no qualified person shall by reason of a disability be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University. In compliance with UNC policy and federal law, qualified students with psychological, physical, and other disabilities are eligible to receive "reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education opportunities, programs, and activities" (http://www.unc.edu/depts/lds/faculty-policies.html). If you anticipate such accommodations and/or have concerns that should be discussed, please notify me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Course Schedule:
A note about language:

- **Class activities:** Everything that appears next to this phrase will be work you complete on your own, such as course readings, drafts, or research. You will not be expected to turn any of this material in for a grade.

- **Class Assignments:** Everything that appears next to this phrase will be assignments you will turn in for a grade, such as feeders, unit projects, or reading quizzes.

Week 1 October 4th – 10th : General Course Review

- **Class Activities:** Review 'Key Concepts' powerpoint in booklet; familiarize yourself with the components of the rhetorical chart; Read: *THWG* "Writing in the Natural Sciences" chapter and the Unit 1 Assignment Sheet; review list of popular science topics & begin thinking about topic selection
- **Class Assignments**: Reading Quiz #1
- **Due Date**: Friday at 5pm

Week 2: October 11th – 17th: Topic Selection; Reading & Writing About Sources

- **Class Activities:** Topic selection; Read: *THWG* "Conducting Primary & Secondary Research" chapter; Read *TSIS* Introduction, "Entering the Conversation"; Chapter 1, "Starting with What Others Are Saying" & Chapter 2, "The Art of Summarizing"
- **Class Assignments:** Reading Quiz #2; Feeder 1.1
- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 3: October 18th – 24th: Distinguishing Between & Analyzing Sources

- **Class Activities:** Learn to distinguish between popular articles vs. scholarly articles; Distribute student pop-sci articles; distinguish between summary vs. analysis; learn how to write scientific introductions; review College Writing handout; Review 'Writing Effective Introductions' powerpoint
- **Class Assignments**: Feeder 1.2
- **Due date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 4: October 25th – 31st : Drafting, Editing & Revising

- **Class Activities:** Write a complete first draft of your final paper review; Read the 'Revising Drafts' handout and implement the strategies listed to revise and edit your draft'; Review Thesis Statements powerpoint
- **Class Assignments:** Unit 1 final paper
- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 5: November 1st – 7th: Introduction to Writing in Business

- **Class Activities:** Read *THWG* "Writing in Business" chapter; Read Unit 2 Assignment Sheet; begin thinking about professional field; review resume samples; Review 'How to get your resume noticed' handout
- **Class Assignments:** Feeder 2.1; Reading Quiz #3

- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 6: November 8th – 14th: Analyzing the Field

- **Class Activities:** Read '13 Career Fields' handout; Complete 'Reading a Job Description' exercise; Read Morrison ch.1 (pg. 1-30)
- **Class Assignments:** Feeder 2.2
- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 7: November 15th – 21st : Writing for a Professional Audience

- **Class Activities:** Review action verb list; complete one full draft of resume; revise & edit; Review 'Reading Out Loud' handout; Read you resume out loud from start to finish
- **Class Assignments**: Unit 2 final paper
- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 8: November 22nd – 28th: Introduction to Writing in the Humanities

- **Class Activities:** Read: *THWG* 1-3 "Writing in the Humanities"; Read *TSIS,* "The Art of Quoting" and *TSIS*, "Three Ways to Respond"; Discuss humanities core disciplinary principles; Review Unit 3 Assignment Sheet; Read Morrison chapter 4 & 5 (pgs. 90-151)
- **Class Assignments:** Feeder 3.1; Reading Quiz #4
- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 9 November 29th – December 5th: How to Close Read

- **Class Activities:** Read: Close reading powerpoint; practice drawing on quotes as evidence; Read Morrison chapters 6 & 7 (pgs. 152-172); Review 'Paragraph Formation' powerpoint; Use outline template to complete an outline of final draft
- **Class Assignments:** Feeder 3.2
- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

Week 10: December 6th – December 12th : Course Wrap-Up

- **Class Activities:** Evaluations & semester review; complete remaining course assignments; OPTIONAL: finish Morrison's novel and review 'Morrison' handout; review 'Conclusions' powerpoint; Review Reflection Paper assignment sheet
- **Class Assignments:** Unit 3 final paper; Reflection Paper
- **Due Date:** Friday at 5pm

ASSIGNMENT SHEETS

Rachel Warner
Dan River
Fall 2020

Unit 1: Writing in the Natural Sciences

Unit 1 Assignment Sheet:

Each of the three units contains two short "feeder" assignments and one substantial unit project. The feeder assignments are designed to give you practice with a particular skill (such research or analyzing secondary sources), while the unit projects ask you bring these skills together for particular rhetorical purposes and academic audiences.

The terms below should be familiar to you if you have read the '**Key Concepts'** document, which explains the differences between genre, purpose, role, and audience. For this unit project, your final paper will be written in the style of a particular genre, the popular science article.

Genre	Purpose	Role	Audience	Rhetorical Situation
Popular Science Article	To report on the latest research related to a particular science topic in an engaging and accessible manner	Writer for a popular science publication such as *Scientific American*	Internet browsers, science enthusiasts, fellow science bloggers, medical professionals	You are asked to write an article that examines recent research on a particular natural sciences topic. Your article must therefore give a comprehensive overview of your chosen topic and be written in a manner accessible for a non-specialist audience.

Feeder 1.1: Topic Selection & Genre Analysis

To begin familiarizing yourself with this genre, you will first complete a genre analysis of the popular science article provided in your booklet titled "The Covid-19 Pandemic is Changing our Dreams" by Tore Nielsen. Begin by thoroughly reading and annotating this article (e.g. highlight and underline key words; write comments in the margins; etc.). Then, complete a DOCS analysis by offering a short description (no more than **50 words**) of each of the following elements using complete sentences.

- **Design**: How is the document organized, visually? Are there recurrent features (fonts, headings and sub-headings, images, columns, color, etc.)?
- **Organization:** How is the document organized in terms of content? Are there recurring sections/sub-sections? Are the sections more or less stable or are they more flexible?
- **Content**: What kind of information is included? What kind of research is involved?
- **Style**: What kinds of sentences are used? Vocabulary? Level of technicality? Tone? Level of formality? How are sources used?

Now that you have some experience with the genre, or form of writing, you will be producing for this unit's final project, look over the provided list of Popular Science Topics. Once you have made your selection, answer the following questions about this topic. Each response should be between **75 - 100 words** and written with complete sentences. Although you do not have to be overly formal with this assignment, you must demonstrate that you have thought critically about your topic and completed some preliminary research and planning.

- **Question 1:** Why am I interested in this topic?
- **Question 2:** What do I already know about this topic? If nothing, what do I want to learn about this topic?
- **Question 3:** Using your dictionary/thesaurus combo, look up some of the key words in your topic; briefly describe what the definitions of these terms reveal about your topic.
- **Question 4:** If I had to think of three related topics, what would they be and why?

Feeder 1.2: Analyze Popular Scientific Sources

Now that you have made your topic selection, you have been provided with at least 2-3 popular science articles directly related to this topic. Spend some time annotating these sources in the same way that you did for your genre analysis. Then, analyze the sources, specifically keeping in mind our class discussion about summaries versus analysis. Some question to guide you include:

- What commonalities can you find across the sources? How about any differences?
- Do you see any key terms, concepts, or debates being mentioned?
- Do you notice a difference in perspective?
- What kind of evidence do the writers provide?
- What kinds of claims do they make?

Write 1-2 paragraphs (at least **500 words**) explaining the results of your analysis.

Unit Project Assignment: Popular Science Article

For the final unit assignment, you will write a **1000 - 1500 word** popular sciences article that synthesizes your research and offers an overview of the practical or theoretical significance of your topic. An effective paper will be written in a tone and style that fits the genre, reflect the design, organization, and content suitable for a popular science article, be free from spelling and grammatical errors, and contain accurate CSE (Name-Year) citations. See below for more details of the grading rubric. You are also welcome to use the Outline Template provided in your book to begin organizing your paper.

Unit 1 Project Rubric:

	10	**7**	**4**	**1**
Information	Writer provides a comprehensive overview of the topic and includes an appropriate amount of evidence	Writer is for the most part comfortable with their topic but has some gaps in knowledge and does not specify more specific details of topic	Writer is competent with the evidence for the most part, but finer points of the analysis elude them. Writer uses mostly popular sources	Writer frequently seems uncertain of facts or their significance and fails to adequately convey information on their topic. Writer uses no scholarly sources.
Accuracy of Genre/Rhetorical Situation	The writing project adheres to the conventions of the genre and is effectively written toward a non-scientific audience	With a few exceptions or inconsistencies, the writing project follows the genre conventions of the popular science article	The writing project only occasionally adheres to the conventions of the popular science article	The writing project rarely resembles the genre
Integration of Research	Paper demonstrates a balanced use of summaries and paraphrases to relate the work of others into its own claims.	Paper uses summaries and paraphrases in a confusing or unclear manner	Paper overuses long quotations and inadequately distinguishes its own claims from the work of others	Paper overuses long quotations and summarizes points not related to its topic, or misrepresents research claims
Organization	The paper is organized by a logical progression of sub-topics related to the argument rather than by sources	The paper is organized by topics rather than sources, although the order or choice of topics may detract from	The paper contains topics that may be out of order or not clearly related to the argument.	The paper is organized by sources rather than topics (similar to an annotated bibliography).

		the clarity of the argument		
Grammar	Article is free from mechanical errors, typos, and redundancy	Article has minimal technical errors	Article has significant number of mechanical issues	The number of mechanical errors obscures meaning

Total: /50

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Johnston Correctional
Spring 2020

Popular Science Topics:

Molecular biology & Genetics Topics

- Is the paleo diet (eating mostly meat) really the way prehistoric people lived? Is it the optimal diet for humans?
- What is the molecular evidence that humans once interbred with Neanderthals? With other now-extinct species?
- As men age, do they pass on genetic abnormalities to their children?
- Scientists who study behavioral epigenetics suggest that traumatic experiences such as the Holocaust or the Cultural Revolution in China actually affect the DNA handed down to the next generation. Is behavioral epigenetics true? If so, how should we apply this idea?

Physics and Astronomy Research Ideas

- How old is the universe?; What happened in the "Big Bang?"
- What has the International Space Station discovered that is most important?
- Is it realistic that people can live on another planet?

Chemistry & Biochemistry Paper Ideas

- What are the chemicals that trigger allergies? How can chemists help prevent allergies?
- Are chemicals from pharmaceuticals ending up in our water supply? Is this dangerous?
- How can the bioluminescence GFP from jellyfish be used in medical applications?

Environment and Ecology

- Can endangered areas and animals be saved by helping local people develop alternative economies like raising tropical fish or ecotourism?
- How are insects being used as models for miniature robots?
- Should disposable products be banned or limited?
- How important is climate change legislation?
- Is hydraulic fracking going to destroy important ecosystems?

Healthcare

- Which cancers are we closest to finding cures for?
- Why do so many women get breast cancer?
- Will global warming make tropical diseases like malaria and dengue fever travel north?
- What is the best strategy to slow the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases?
- Can memory loss and dementia be prevented?
- What is the best indicator of an increased risk of heart disease?

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Unit 2: Writing in Business

Uni 2 Assignment Sheet:

This unit is designed to help you learn to present information about your qualifications and professional interests to potential employers and job recruiters. You will create a **professional resume** that appropriately showcases your skills and presents you as a strong candidate on the job market. You will also gain practice in reading and analyzing job postings within your given field so you have a better sense of how to effectively market your skills and past experiences.

Genre	Purpose	Audience	Role	Rhetorical Situation
Professional Resume	To present information about your qualifications and professional interests	Potential employers and job recruiters	Job Applicant	You are preparing for the job market, and, in addition to your other application materials, you have decided to design a professional resume

Feeder 2.1: Topic Selection & Genre Analysis

Similar to unit 1, you will begin by first completing a genre analysis of the sample resumes provided. First, locate these sample resumes in your booklet: Cody Fredrickson; Sofia Flores; Ivy Haddington. Then, complete the following DOCS analysis providing a **50 - 100 word** response for each bullet point.

- **Design**: How does each résumé appear visually? How is the text aligned throughout the document? What type and size of font is used? Where do bullets appear? Which words are bolded, underlined, italicized, or written in a different size or font? Which formatting seems best to you? Why?
- **Organization**: How are sections ordered on each résumé? How are items ordered within each section? Which order seems most common? Which order seems most effective to you? Why?
- **Content**: What information is included in each section of the résumé? Which sections contain more information than others? Which information seems to be required and which information is optional for an effective résumé? What information should not be included on a résumé?
- **Style**: What kind of language is used in each section? Which parts of speech and verbal tenses seem more or less common? How are sentences formatted (eg, simple, complex, compound, fragments, run-ons)? Which stylistic features seem best to you? Why?

Then, you must **select a professional field** in which you would like to look for job postings and eventually craft a polished resume. You may wish to browse the list provided on the **13 Career Fields** document or select one on your own. The important thing is to have a clear professional field and job search in mind before moving on to feeder 2.2

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Feeder 2.2: Job Listing Analysis

A successful professional resume should be targeted at a specific field. Therefore, you first need to understand the values, language, and desired skills within that field. You can begin this process by identifying the career field of interest to you. Then, your instructor will provide you with **three job listings** for entry-level, fulltime positions within that field. Once you have received the three job listings, you should analyze them by compiling the following information:

- **A brief introduction** (100-200 words) to the job openings which includes the job titles, the organization or company names, and the means by which you found the job listings. This introduction should also identify the common field to which all three jobs belong.
- **A thorough analysis** (300-500 words) of the commonalities across the three job listings. In this analysis, you should identify trends in specific language or ideas across the three job listings, and you should focus your attention on the job descriptions, lists of duties/responsibilities, and lists of required/preferred qualifications. You should also speculate why these trends occur (i.e., why these common details are valued within your chosen field).
- **A short explanation** (100-200 words) of why you selected this career field. In this explanation, you should focus on why you want to pursue work in this particular field, but you could also consider why a particular position or company appeals to you.

Unit 2 Project Assignment: Professional Resume

It is common practice to include a résumé within a job application, and it is also useful to have on-hand an updated master résumé which you can modify for any specific job application. Your résumé should include all of your experiences, skills, and accomplishments so that you can track and reuse them for future résumés. When applying for a specific position, your one-page job résumé should be individualized and targeted at that particular job. A successful professional résumé will:

- Include your complete contact information
- Target a specific field and highlight experiences and skills relevant to that field
- Follow clear organization through and within sections
- Focus on your accomplishments and measurable achievements
- Be free of mechanical errors (the inclusion of which would result in your résumé getting "filed" in the trash)
- Be clear and easy to read; however, the style of the résumé should also match the field. An office position might call for a classic design, whereas a more "creative" job (eg, video production, graphic design, marketing) might call for a more "creative" résumé.
- Be confined to one page

For more information, see the grading rubric included below

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Fall 2020

Unit 2 Project Rubric:

	10	**7**	**4**	**1**
Heading □ Name □ Address □ Phone □ E-mail	All appropriate information is included. Name clearly stands out from other text. Professional e-mail is provided.	All appropriate information is included. Name does not stand out from other text. Professional e-mail is provided.	1 piece of header information is missing. Name does not stand out from the text. E-mail used is too casual.	2+ pieces of header information are missing. Name does not stand out from the text. E-mail used is unprofessional.
Design	Resume is clearly targeted for a specific purpose/industry. Both content and format provide a strong, professional presentation. Easy to locate key details, encouraging a deeper read.	Resume seems targeted for a specific purpose/industry. Format helps to locate information. Content both provides keywords and highlights some evidence of where/how skills have been developed.	Resume purpose or target may be emerging, but is broad or may fit multiple industries. Format helps to locate information. Content includes some industry-related keywords.	Resume does not seem targeted for a specific purpose/industry. Difficulties apparent in both content and format.
Described Experience	All appropriate information included (place of employment, title, dates, city, and state.) Entries are in reverse chronological order. Statements clearly describe tasks and duties of position.	All appropriate information included with 1-2 incorrect items. (ex: abbreviations) Entries are in reverse chronological order. Statements clearly describe tasks and duties of position.	1-2 pieces of content missing. Entries are not in reverse chronological order. Statements could more clearly describe tasks and duties of position.	3+ pieces of content are missing. Entries are not in reverse chronological order. Statements do not describe tasks and duties of position. There are not action statements

	Action statements demonstrate a variety of transferrable skills. Accomplishments/results quantified where appropriate.	Action statements demonstrate some transferrable skills. Accomplishments/ results are not quantified where appropriate.	Action statements do not demonstrate transferrable skills. Accomplishment/ results are not quantified where appropriate.	utilized and it is difficult to discern transferrable skills. Accomplishments/ results are not quantified where appropriate.
Positive Professional Language	Positive, engaging, and enthusiastic language used throughout resume that helps demonstrate the writer's achievements. Action verbs are varied, and well-chosen to enhance the reader's understanding of the tasks, duties, transferrable skills, and accomplishments. No negative or unprofessional content is expressed.	Language is neutral throughout the resume. Action verbs are varied, yet the selection is conventional. Descriptions could be improved to describe tasks, duties, transferrable skills, and accomplishments in a more detailed way. No negative or unprofessional content is expressed.	Language is neutral throughout the resume. Action verbs are not varied. No negative or unprofessional content is expressed.	Negative language is used in the resume. Action verbs are not varied. Unprofessional content is expressed in the resume.
Spelling/ Grammar	No errors in spelling, grammar, verb tense, personal pronouns, and/or punctuation.	1-2 errors in spelling, grammar, verb tense, personal pronouns, and/or punctuation.	3-4 errors in spelling, grammar, verb tense, personal pronouns, and/or punctuation.	5+ errors in spelling, grammar, verb tense, personal pronouns, and/or punctuation.

Total /50

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Spring 2020

Unit 3: Writing in the Humanities

Unit 3 Assignment Sheet:

For this final unit assignment, you will compose a **literary analysis** regarding one particular thematic, stylistic, or rhetorical element of Morrison's novel. You will have to first complete the assigned reading for each class period and participate in discussions over the novel's central characters, themes, history, and critical reception. Then, you will choose one specific element of Morrison's novel to develop more in depth and eventually write an argumentative paper persuading your reader of your **original interpretation.**

Your essays should demonstrate that you have not simply completed but genuinely engaged with the reading assignment. They should thus be at least one, if not more, of the following elements: **analytical** (what you think something means), **contextual** (how you think something relates to a broader theme or socio-historical moment), and/or **evaluative** (why you think something is or isn't true, beautiful, moral, etc.). Ultimately, your essays must be focused on specific elements of the text, and as such must contain explicit textual references (i.e. quotes). Although you must write your final paper on *Song of Solomon* (1977) to complete this assignment, you can draw upon outside fiction, non-fiction, and other cultural materials at your disposal.

Feeder 3.1 Close Reading of a Passage/Quote

Close reading is a technique used in the understanding of texts that places primary importance upon close scrutiny of the text itself by paying extremely careful attention to its various features such as **form, diction, progression, and voice**. In short, close reading is a deep analysis of a literary text that involves examining small components (the specific) in order to form a larger interpretation of the text (the general). Choose one specific passage (no more half a page) or quote from Morrison's novel to close read. Annotate this passage; take notes on its key images, themes, etc.; notice how Morrison is ordering her sentences and if this passage/quote relates to other elements of the novel. Then, come up with an overall interpretation of what you think the passage/quote means. In short, connect your specific observations to one general interpretation, analysis, or argument. Write **1-2 paragraphs (or about 500 words)** explaining the significance of that passage.

Feeder 3.2: Close Reading of a Passage/Quote

Choose a **different passage** or quote from Morrison's novel to close read. Annotate this passage; take notes on its key images, themes, etc.; notice how Morrison is ordering her sentences and if this passage/quote relates to other elements of the novel. Then, come up with an overall interpretation of what you think the passage/quote means. In short, connect your specific observations to one general interpretation, analysis, or argument. Write **1-2 paragraphs (or about 500 words)** explaining the significance of that passage.

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Unit 3 Project: Literary Analysis of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977)

To complete the final unit 3 project, write a **1,000-1,500 word** argumentative essay that analyzes one particular aspect of Morrison's novel and makes an argument about its significance. You must use ample supporting detail from your close reading exercises to support your claim and any other outside sources you wish. Your paper must be organized in a logical manner, and you should demonstrate your competence with both inter- and intra-paragraph organization and development. The essay should aim for depth, nuance, and originality of thought. It should be well-reasoned and have a clear, specific, and thoughtfully articulated thesis. Citations should follow proper **MLA formatting** and you must include a bibliography with your assignment.

Ultimately, your papers must have a clear **argument**: state your argument explicitly within the opening paragraph of the paper. Then, use the main body of your paper to develop your argument, providing extensive evidence drawn from the text and reiterating your central claim at various points. Your conclusion should bring together the various threads of your argument and offer any closing meditations. For further information, see the rubric attached below.

Unit 3 Project Rubric:

	10	**7**	**4**	**1**
Introduction	Introduction clearly identifies the central question or issue under study, offers helpful background or contextual information, and contains a logical progression of ideas, ending with the thesis statement	Some information about the paper's central ideas is offered, but it is confusingly organized or summarized strangely.	Introduction is cursory at best and does not provide enough information for reader to understand the significance of the thesis statement	Paper lacks introduction.
Thesis Statement	Thesis statement clearly explains to the reader how author will interpret the subject matter under discussion and persuade them of their argument	Thesis statement makes more of an observation rather than a debatable claim	Thesis statement forwards an arguable claim but does so in confusing, cliched, or unclear language	Paper lacks thesis statement or statement is totally unintelligible

Body	Body includes well synthesized information drawn from sources. It is well organized and offers multiple sub-claims that support the overall argument	Body is lacking some detail or specificity. In a few instances, more evidence is necessary to support its claims.	Body is significantly lacking in some way. Minimal or no evidence is provided to support claims.	Body contains almost no credible information drawn from scholarly sources; body is disorganized and confusing.
Paragraph Structure	Paragraphs contain an analytical topic sentence that makes one central claim and then provides evidence and analysis to support this claim. Paragraph flows well.	Paragraphs are mostly well structured with a few slip-ups; some paragraphs either do not contain adequate flow, are missing a topic or ending sentence, or do not analyze their evidence.	A few paragraphs attempt to do too much or do not advance one specific claim. Paragraphs do not contain logical flow of information.	Paragraphs are highly unorganized and very difficult to follow; paragraphs do not advance any claim at all.
Evidence	Evidence is specific, interesting, variable and is deliberately chosen to support the author's central claims	Evidence is mostly specific and interesting but at times the author needs more to support their claims	Most evidence used is too general and merely summarizes the plot; evidence used does not seem to support analysis or argument	Writer fails to provide almost any evidence of their claim; textual engagement is superficial, hyper-general or seemingly picked at random
Analysis	Analysis deftly unpacks, critiques, interrogates, or otherwise queries the evidence provided; the author actively interprets the evidence in a	Analysis makes a concerted effort to intellectually and creatively interrogate the evidence but is	Analysis is cursory at best and does not engage with the evidence; analysis merely restates or describes the	Almost no analysis is given and/or analysis is totally unintelligible

	manner that supports their argument	confusing or hard to follow	evidence rather than interpreting it	
Organization	Paper is organized with a logical and explicit pattern.	Paper is mostly well-organized, but some paragraphs seem out of order or repetitive.	Paper is very confusingly organized and does not reflect an overall organizational pattern.	Paper is organized so confusingly that it impedes the author's purpose.
Style	Paper features varied and sophisticated sentence structure and diction.	Paper uses some repetitive diction, simplistic language or sentence structures but mostly maintains a professional and objective tone.	Paper occasionally lapses into casual, colloquial discourse or subjective claims. Writing appears erratic and some sentences are hard o follow.	Major lapses into casual discourse or little attempt to maintain objectivity. Diction is highly repetitive and syntax is confusing.
Conclusion	Conclusion clearly & definitively answers the 'so what'/'who cares' questions.	Conclusion makes some effort to point to broader implications of topic.	Conclusion mostly just repeats information already stated.	Conclusion is indistinguishable from introduction.
Citations	A coherent citation system is used consistently throughout; works cited page is complete and formatted accurately	A citation system is systematically used with some lapses in providing required bibliographical information; works cited does not include all sources cited in body of text	It is very difficult to tell if a single citation style has been adopted throughout. Citations are erratic and/or works cited is incomplete	No effort at citing sources accurately and consistently is made.

Total: /100				

Rachel Warner
Dan River
Fall 2020

Final Reflection Paper

To complete this final class assignment, write a short reflection paper (**between 250-500 words)** that details your current writing process, from the moment you first receive an assignment to when you hand it in. Feel free to include as much or as little detail as you would like; this exercise is mostly designed to get you thinking self-consciously about how you write and if any improvements can be made. Some questions to consider may include the following:

- Where do I typically write?
- How do I begin composing? What are the typical steps I take to begin writing?
- Do I create an outline? Do I engage in other brainstorming activities?
- How would I describe my writing style? Is it formal or informal? Do I maintain a consistent tone throughout?
- Are there parts of each composition that seem weaker than others (i.e. introductions; conclusions; paragraph development)? Why or why not?
- What editing and proofreading techniques have I been using so far? How can these be adapted or strengthened for the final unit project?
- Do I revise? How much time do I typically allot to revising?
- Do I ask for feedback from anyone else?
- Are there certain places in the writing process in which I typically get stuck?

You are free to answer any of the preceding questions or address any other concerns you have with your writing. The important part is to critically reflect on yourself as a writer, recognize writing as a process, and think about new strategies and resources you may want to incorporate into future writing projects.

READING QUIZZES

Reading Quiz #1

Name:

1. (1 point) Which of the following is *not* a way that writers and researchers in the natural sciences gather information:
a. Observation
b. Experimentation
c. Computation
d. Speculation
e. All of the above are used

2. (1 point) It is possible for writers and researchers to be completely objective.
True
False

3. (1 point) Which of the following is a common genre of natural sciences writing?
a. Journal article
b. Conference paper
c. Conference poster
d. Literature review
e. All of the above

4. (1 point) "Hybrid Sources" are
a. Always just as credible as peer-reviewed journal articles
b. Typically written collaboratively to represent a "hybrid" perspective
c. Written by professional or academic organizations, but intended for popular audiences
d. All of the above
e. None of the above

5. (1 point) If you are looking for a reference tool, a helpful library database to start with is:
a. CQ Researcher
b. Science in Context
c. SCOPUS
d. All of the above
e. None of the above

6. (1 point) Even if a scientific article is not directly relevant to your project, it can still be useful.
True
False

7. (1 point) Which of the following is *not* an element of the IMRAD structure typically used by academic journal articles in the natural sciences
a. Introduction
b. Methods
c. Review
d. Discussion
e. All of the above are part of the IMRAD structure

8. (1 point) Which of the following is a type of visualization scientists might use to illustrate their claims?
a. charts
b. graphs
c. figures
d. All of the above
e. None of the above

9. (1 point) Deductive reasoning moves from a general claim to a specific occurrence.

True
False

10. (1 point) Which of the following sentences is using the passive voice
a. The variables were evaluated by three groups.
b. Researchers found four key similarities
c. The mice were observed at three intervals
d. The team is conducting two new trials
e. Both a & c

Reading Quiz #2

NAME:

1) Which of the following is NOT a use of the they say/I say template?

a) it helps you enter into academic conversations
b) it makes your writing more argumentative
c) it shows that you know the scholarly context for your topic
d) it helps you sounds smarter than your source material

2) Which of the following is NOT a way of responding to what "they say"?

a) ignoring
b) qualifying
c) disagreeing
d) agreeing

3) Who are the "they says" in Dr. King Letters from Birmingham Jail?

a) clergymen
b) protestors
c) politicians
d) his family

4) What was the main problem with the presentation on Dr. X?

a) it only referenced the work of Dr. X
b) it wasn't very convincing
c) it lacked connection between thesis and critical context
d) it was not organized in a logical way

5) What two key items does your thesis statement need?

a) your own p.o.v and summary of what you are responding to
b) summary of every article every written on topic
c) lots of self-reflection and personal feelings
d) nothing but emojis

6) What is the "standard view" outlined in TSIS?

a) a personally held view on a topic
b) a stereotypical view on a topic
c) a controversial view on a topic
d) a widely accepted/conventional view on a topic

7) Which of the following is NOT a technique for introducing "they say"?

a) The Direct Quote
b) The Implied View
c) The Standard View
d) The Ongoing Debate

8) What is the general rule for a good summary?

a) including every point made by author and your own reaction
b) using the same language as your author in your own main idea
c) balancing source's words with your own focus
d) refuting every point made by author

9) Which of the following is NOT a signal verb for making a claim?

a) Assert
b) Emphasize
c) Insist
d) State

10) What is the satirical summary?

a) a summary that clearly implies your critique of the source
b) a summary that makes you laugh
c) no one knows what satire is; why am I being asked this
d) a summary written by Oscar Wilde

Reading Quiz #3

1) What is plain language?

a) Casual language, slang, and idiomatic expressions
b) Easy to understand language that avoids jargon or discipline-specific language
c) Cliched language
d) Ornate, verbose, or otherwise highfalutin language

2) Which of the following is NOT an example of accessible formatting in business communications?

a) Bulleted lists
b) Bolded words
c) Images
d) Paragraphs

3) Which is the following is NOT an example of a business writing genre?

a) Essay
b) Memo
c) Email
d) Cover letter

4) What are the most important elements to include on a professional resume?

a) Name, contact information, and personal hobbies
b) Name, contact information, and past job experiences
c) Name, contact information, and social media presence
d) Name, contact information, skills

5) Which of the following is NOT a key element to include in a business email?

a) A descriptive subject line
b) An address to the audience
c) A professional and polite tone
d) Data & graphs

Reading Quiz #4

1) What is the main pitfall to avoid when quoting?

a) over quoting
b) under quoting
c) not explaining quotes
d) not quoting at all

2) What is a 'dangling quotation'?

a) a quote that is irrelevant to your argument
b) an inaccurately cited quote
c) a confusing quote
d) a quote without any framing

3) What is the 'quotation sandwich'?

a) framing; quote; interpretation
b) attribution; quote; rebuttal
c) signal phrase; quote; argument
d) introduction; quote; connection

4) Which of the following is NOT a key element of proper quoting?

a) signal phrase/framing/attribution
b) specific and appropriate language
c) interpretation/analysis
d) grammar & punctuation

5) Which of the following is NOT a way to disagree effectively?

a) challenge the source's assumption
b) highlight the source's flawed logic
c) condemn the source entirely
d) point out a contradiction

6) What is the 'twist it' move?

a) when you maneuver from an I say to a they say
b) when you use the source's evidence to support your position
c) when you agree, but with a difference
d) when you distort the source's main claim

7) Which of the following is NOT a way to agree with a difference?

a) point out evidence that the source neglects
b) cite corroborating personal experience
c) use the source's language in your paraphrase
d) create a more accessible translation

8) What is the key idea to keep in mind when agreeing?

a) mimicking a source's words makes you more credible
b) supporting the source's claim always strengthens your claim
c) agreement with some implies disagreement with others
d) none of the above

9) Is it ever okay to be ambivalent?

a) yes; you can agree and disagree simultaneously
b) no; all ambivalence is frustrating to the reader
c) yes; you can equivocate rather than stake a firm stance
d) no; ambivalence is too confusing for academic papers

10) What is the MOST important item to include when responding to sources?

a) a description of the author's background
b) a reason for your response
c) a description of the source's claim
d) your thesis statement

POWERPOINTS

Key Concepts

English 105
Rachel Warner

Genre

- The category of writing with its given rules, principles, and assumptions
- Each discipline shares a common set of genres
- These genres respond to recurring situations within a given discourse community
- Genres carry with them the expectations of the discourse community

Examples

- Genres in the Natural Sciences:
  - lab reports
  - research plans
- Genres in the Social Sciences
  - ethnography
  - case study
- Genres in the Humanities
  - literary analysis
  - film review
  - comparative essay

Role

- The position of the writer toward their audience
- The role is important because it helps to cue writers to the choices they should make, especially in terms of style and content
- Common roles include:
  - Expert to non-expert (genre = popular science article)
  - Expert to expert (genre = literature review; lab report)
  - Non-expert to non-expert (genre = science blog)

Examples

- Student scholar, undergraduate researcher in the sciences, community member, public historian, museum guide, intern

Audience

- The expectations and rhetorical situation of the group of people you are writing to
- Audience is closely tied to role, as you must consider whether the audience belongs to the same discourse community as you or a different one

Purpose

- The purpose is always to create something new and to learn through that creation.
- Defines what the reader is supposed to do (believe, be informed, give money)

Examples

- To inform, to persuade, to argue
- Although these purposes may overlap, it is important to keep in mind how the genre will demand a certain purpose from the writing (e.g. a grant proposal will call for a persuasive purpose that will convince the audience to give money)

Rhetorical Situation

- Rhetorical situation refers to the particular context, task, or problem that prompts the writer to compose a given genre
- The rhetorical situation helps the writer to determine the role they should take on, the purpose they have for writing, and the criteria for an appropriate response

Examples

- You have been invited to present your research findings from your project for a course in American History at the Undergraduate Research Celebration on campus. (genre = poster presentation or conference paper)
- As an anthropology major, you would like to get some funding to support your summer research project conducting ethnographic research at an orphanage in Guatemala. (genre = grant proposal)
- The National Science Foundation has asked your advisor, an environmental scientist, to submit a report on the latest findings to update a section of its Climate Change Report. She asks you to find and summarize the latest research so that she can refer to it in her report. (genre = literature review)

The Rhetorical Chart

Genre	Purpose	Role	Audience	Rhetorical Situation
Policy Report	Argue whether or not a particular drug ought to have a black box warning	Scientist (biology major)	Members of an FDA committee (nonexperts)	You have been hired by the FDA to be part of a research team that investigates the benefits and risks of medications with a black box warning. You will be presenting your research findings to the FDA committee.

Discourse Community

- **Discourse community is comprised of** a group of people who communicate with each other because they have shared interests, goals, values, knowledge
  - Examples: biologists, botanists, entomologists, etc.

Writing Effective Introductions

English 105i: Writing in Health & Medicine

Rachel Warner

General Tips & Tricks

Move from the general to the specific (like the inverted pyramid) by identifying the central topic, offering interesting and relevant background information, and staking a claim for the importance of your analysis

Directly answer the questions asked in the prompt

Provide adequate contextualizing information for your reader to understand your central claim

Engage your reader by beginning with a hook/attention grabber

Sentence #1

The hook: an interesting, eye-grabbing, or informative point that directly relates to topic; also may include a direct quote

The illustrative example/anecdote: an interesting instantiation of some facet of your topic

The thought-provoking question: draw the reader in by crafting a sincere and complex question that you will then address in the body of the introduction

The 'most people assume x' model: begin with a commonly held belief and then explain how it is insufficient for understanding your topic

Example: the direct quote

“In Shakespeare's Othello, Iago claims that he "who steals my purse steals trash / . . . But he that filches from me my good name / Robs me of that which not enriches him, / And makes me poor indeed" (3.3.157-161). Today, identity theft is a new way that thieves steal both the "purses" and the good names of innocent victims, and these thieves are enriching themselves at the expense of their victims. Identity theft is a serious problem that claims millions of innocent victims, and the government must implement better regulations to help put an end to this crime.”

Examples to Avoid:

Dictionary definition: “The American Heritage Dictionary defines weak as ‘lacking physical strength, energy, or vigor; feeble… likely to fail under pressure, stress, or strain; lacking resistance: a weak link in a chain.'”

Direct Statement of What You, as the Writer, are Doing: “In this essay, identity theft will be explained. I will discuss why it is such a big problem and what the government should do about it.”

Sentences #2-4: the transitional phase

Offer background information: the who, what, when, where on your topic, or the basic knowledge you would need to know to understand its more complex nuances

Summaries summaries summaries! Provide details from your sources. It's fine to give a bit of context to your essay in the introduction, but the key evidence that supports your argument should be located in your body paragraphs.

Stress the relevance of the topic to the reader's life; engage them in your topic by providing information they may or may not agree with

Sentences #2-4 continued:

Bridge the gap between your attention-grabber and your thesis; narrow your focus of the topic and explain why the hook is relevant to the specific area you will be discussing.

Define any key terms the reader might not know.

Include a “road map” that explains how you will defend your thesis. This gives the reader a general sense of how you will organize the different points that follow throughout the essay. Sometimes the “map” is incorporated right into the thesis statement, and sometimes it is a separate sentence.

Example: the historical overview

“Identity theft is not a new crime. Throughout history, unscrupulous individuals have pretended to be people they are not, often with the goal of political, social, or financial gain. With the right appearance and demeanor, people have falsely presented themselves as kings and bishops. Today, in our information age, identity theft is a far more prevalent problem. With access to names, Social Security numbers, and other personal information, thieves are able to steal identities, leaving the victims struggling to clear their good names. Identity theft is a serious problem that claims millions of innocent victims, and the government must implement better regulations to help put an end to this crime.”

Example: the roadmap

“Because drunk driving can result in unnecessary and premature deaths, permanent injury for survivors, and billions of dollars spent on medical expenses, drunk drivers should face stricter penalties for driving under the influence.”

The underlined words here are the “map” that show your reader the main points of support you will present in the essay. They also serve to set up the paper’s arrangement because they tell the order in which you will present these topics.”

Sentence #5

The thesis statement presents not only the topic to be discussed but also states a clear position about that topic that you will support and develop throughout the paper.

Instead of simply saying that the topic is important, show why the topic is important. For example, instead of writing “The development of new materials is important for the automotive industry,” you could write, “The development of new materials is necessary for the automotive industry to produce stronger, lighter vehicles, which will improve safety and fuel economy.”

Works Consulted

https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/introductions/

http://www.webster.edu/academic-resource-center/writingcenter/writing-tips/introductions.html

http://writing.msu.edu/how-to-write-a-good-introduction/

http://www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/introductions.htm

http://www.umuc.edu/current-students/learning-resources/writing-center/writing-resources/parts-of-an-essay/introductions.cfm

Thesis Statements

English 105I
April 18th, 2018

Definitions

Thesis statements:

- Clearly explain to the reader how you will interpret the subject matter under discussion
- Provide a 'roadmap' or brief summary of how the paper will persuade the reader of the argument
- Often directly address a question posed in the prompt or one you have come up with yourself
- Make a claim others may disagree with
- Typically fall near the end of the introductory paragraph

Creation

In order to create a strong thesis statement, you must first start with the following steps:

- Gathering evidence either from primary or secondary sources
- Looking for patterns within this evidence
- Thinking about the significance of these patterns & relationships
- Shaping your findings into one overall interpretation of the subject under study

Refinement

Once you have a solid working thesis derived from your evidence, refine it into a sophisticated (typically 1-sentence) statement by doing the following:

- Use specific, objective, and polished language
- Identify your topic & state your purpose, intention, or attitude toward the topic
- Suggest the arrangement or organization of the ideas to come
- Think about possible counter-arguments

Examples

Weak Thesis Statements:

- My instructor should change her attendance policy because it is unreasonable, inflexible, and unfair.
- Conflict-resolution courses should be taught to help prevent violence in America's schools.
- College students should be careful of what they put on their Facebook pages because prospective employees routinely check them.

Examples

Strong Thesis Statements:

- While both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their own right to self-government.
- Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain's Huckleberry Finn suggests that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave "civilized" society and go back to nature.

Templates

- Although many people think ____, in reality, ____ because ____.
- _____ is the most significant _____ because _____."
- _____ illuminates the role of _____ in people's lives by showing us how _____, _____, and _____."
- "Although many reasons have been suggested for _____, they all boil down to _____."
- "_____ is true for these reasons: _____, _____, _____, and _____.
- "X has argued that _____, but Y's position is stronger because _____."
- "The more important effects of _____ went beyond those of _____."

Paragraph Formation

English 105i: Writing in Health & Medicine
Rachel Warner

The Basics

Each paragraph of an academic essay provides key supporting details for your overall claim (thesis) and advances your argument in a logical manner

The topic sentence expresses the controlling idea or central claim of that paragraph

The paragraph's central claim is then supported by drawing specific, interesting examples and data from relevant source material

These examples are then analyzed in a manner that supports the paragraph's main argument

Finally, the argument advanced in that paragraph is drawn to a close, final thoughts are offered, and the writer transitions into the next paragraph

The Basics (continued)

Use transitions throughout the paragraph to explicitly signal connections/relationships between ideas (e.g. cause and effect; chronology; contradictions, etc.)

Use synonyms to introduce variety into your diction; use pronouns rather than restating central concepts over and over again

Organize your information based on a logical pattern such as chronology, order of importance, or theme

Choose only information that is relevant to the paragraph's central claim

Sentence #1: the topic sentence

The first sentence of every body paragraph should clearly state that paragraph's controlling idea; the sentence should therefore advance a concrete claim derived from the supporting details in that paragraph

It should contain the most important and relevant point you wish to make regarding your topic, thus summarizing the paragraph as a whole

Sentence #2: elaboration

Continue developing your discussion of that paragraph's central claim by providing additional commentary

Add nuance to your topic by complicating your previous sentence or offering a slightly different perspective (e.g. "On the other hand…")

Every other sentence you write should support the topic sentence and provide further detail and discussion of the issues or ideas it raises

Sentences #3-6: evidence

Corroborate your central claim with explanatory examples; define key terms

Choose your data wisely; rather than striving for an exhaustive list of details, choose only the most representative examples that fully illustrate and support your paragraph's main claim

Cite your evidence thoroughly; use specific attributions such as names of authors, dates, and methods to introduce source material

Organize your evidence with a clear strategy/pattern

Sentences #7-10: analysis

Analyze all the information you provide; tell your reader exactly how they should interpret the source material

Point out patterns of evidence arising from your sources (e.g. cause & effect; effect & consequences)

Conversely, highlight where scholars still disagree or believe more research needs to be conducted

Draw connections between sources; look for similarities or differences in methods, findings, critical background, etc.

Sentences #11-12: closing thoughts

Summarize the terrain you've covered in a pithy closing statement; stress the relevance of your claim to the reader

Transition into the next paragraph with an explicit gesture towards the next main subpoint

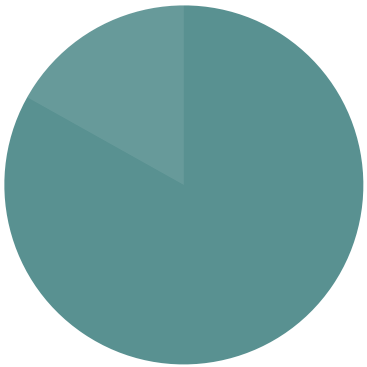
Restate the central claim but in a revised form; the topic sentence and concluding sentences should **not** be interchangeable

Works Consulted

https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Paragraph

https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/paragraphs/

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/paragraphs_and_paragraphing/index.html



Conclusions

English 105i: Writing in Health & Medicine
Rachel Warner

Overview

The conclusion essentially serves as your final word on the topic. As you close down your thoughts in a paper, you may consider the following strategies:

- reiterate the central relevance/importance of your claim
- introduce a slightly expanded or abstracted angle on your topic
- pose some final meditations to be addressed in a subsequent project

Conclusions can therefore be a great place to push beyond the boundaries of the assignment prompt and offer new angles, significance, etc. to your inquiry.

Methods

Answer the ‘so what’ question:

- Illuminate the importance of your thesis as distinct from your sources’ claims (in other words, distinguish what you say from what they say)
- Link your central (specific) claim to an issue of greater relevance (i.e. some issue you could safely assume your reader would already find important)
- Grant urgency to your writing by highlighting the relationship between a problem & solution; offer your reader a call to action

Methods

Answer the ‘who cares’ question:

- Identify a specific social group who has a stake in your claim
- Acknowledge that your paper is part of a larger scholarly or social conversation
- Consider how your research address a real-life concern relevant to a particular group of people
- Connect with your reader by applying to their sense of pathos, logos, etc.; issue a warning about the necessity of attending to your claim

Methods

Other options:

- Continue a theme, motif, anecdote, etc. initiated in the introduction to lend cyclicality and closure to your writing
- Include a ‘hook’ similar to those used in the introduction: e.g. a quote, fun fact, illustrative example, provocative question, etc.
- Synthesize (rather than repeat) the main points from the body of the essay

Works Consulted

“Conclusions.” Writingcenter.unc.edu, writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/conclusions/.

Graff, Gerald and Catherine Birkenstein. They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing. New York: Norton & Company, 2014.

“Writer's Web: Writing Effective Conclusions.” Writer's Web: A List of Important Literary Terms, writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/conclude.html.

How to Close Read

English 105i: Rhetoric & Composition

Rachel Warner

Definitions: Close Reading

Close reading is a technique used in the understanding of literary texts that places primary importance upon close scrutiny of the text itself by paying extremely careful attention to its various features such as form, diction, progression, and voice.

In short, close reading is a deep analysis of a literary text that involves examining small components (the specific) in order to form a larger interpretation of the text (the general).

Definitions: Diction

Diction: the specific word choice a writer makes

Attending to diction can help you discover why authors have chosen particular words over others, what the history of those words are (i.e. their etymologies), and how they contribute to the overall theme of the text

The best resource for conducting this style of close reading is the *Oxford English Dictionary*

Key example: the meaning of the term ‘pulps’ in Gwendolyn Brooks’s poem, “the mother”

Definitions: Speaker

Speaker: the central narrator of a text (not to be confused with the author)

Some questions to keep in mind when examining the speaker of a text may include: what is the speaker's attitude/tone toward the subject matter they discuss?; is the speaker a central character, a third person omniscient narrator, or a stand-in for the author themselves?; does the speaker seem reliable (why or why not)?; does the speaker feature any progression/development/change of heart throughout the text?

Key example: Humbert Humbert's narration of Nabokov's *Lolita*.

Definitions: Structure

Structure: how the ideas and themes of a text are presented as it unfolds; the central organizing structure of a text

When analyzing the structure of a piece, always attend to the order in which events are narrated (i.e. is it linear, circular, etc.?), any moments when a complication or surprising event occurs, and/or any instances of foreshadowing.

Key example: Arundhati Roy's use of flashbacks and non-linear narrative form in *The God of Small Things.*

Definitions: Figurative Language

Figurative language and rhetorical devices: similes, metaphors, symbols, allusions, or otherwise intriguing images found throughout the text

Key questions to keep in mind: do any recur, or do any share certain qualities?; do they express a common attitude?; how do they work with other aspects of the text to make meaning?

Key example: Gertrude Stein's use of the rose in her poem, "Sacred Emily."

Critical Angles: History

Historical Analysis: grounds your analysis in the immediate historical context of the text's production and/or the historical events depicted within the text; largely consists of putting the text back into its historical moment and illuminates the relationship between the text and the historical conditions in which it was produced

Critical Angles: Biography

Biographical Analysis: a facet of historical analysis that wants to understand why the author wrote what s/he wrote. This can include examining how the author's life influenced certain aspects or all of the text and can often act as a non-theoretical psychological reading of a text.

Biographical analysis thus helps you understand the motives of the author and how these motives influenced their textual creations; e.g. you may wish to consider if there are any specific events from the author's life that are reflected in the text (either through specific narrative events, themes, structure, etc.)

Critical Angles: Form

Formal Analysis: interrogates the form of literature without considering the content's social, cultural, or historical influences, or the author's biographical influence; prioritizes inherent qualities of text, such as language, style, tone, genre, etc.

"The cultivation of artistic techniques at the expense of subject matter, either in literary practice or in criticism" (entry for "Formalism" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 2008).

Critical Angles: Area Studies

Area Studies:

- Critical Race Theory: prioritizes racial representations
- Feminism, Gender & Sexuality Studies: prioritizes representations of gender and sexuality
- Disability Studies: prioritizes representations of disability/the disabled body
- Class & economics: often takes a Marxist angle by analyzing class disparities/tensions

Works Consulted

https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading

https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/CloseReading.html

CLASS HANDOUTS

College Writing

What this handout is about

This handout will help you figure out what your college instructors expect when they give you a writing assignment. It will tell you how and why to move beyond the five-paragraph essays you learned to write in high school and start writing essays that are more analytical and more flexible.

What is a five-paragraph essay?

High school students are often taught to write essays using some variation of the five-paragraph model. A five-paragraph essay is hourglass-shaped: it begins with something general, narrows down in the middle to discuss specifics, and then branches out to more general comments at the end. In a classic five-paragraph essay, the first paragraph starts with a general statement and ends with a thesis statement containing three "points"; each body paragraph discusses one of those "points" in turn; and the final paragraph sums up what the student has written.

Why do high schools teach the five-paragraph model?

The five-paragraph model is a good way to learn how to write an academic essay. It's a simplified version of academic writing that requires you to state an idea and support it with evidence. Setting a limit of five paragraphs narrows your options and forces you to master the basics of organization. Furthermore—and for many high school teachers, this is the crucial issue—many mandatory end-of-grade writing tests and college admissions exams like the SAT II writing test reward writers who follow the five-paragraph essay format.

Writing a five-paragraph essay is like riding a bicycle with training wheels; it's a device that helps you learn. That doesn't mean you should use it forever. Once you can write well without it, you can cast it off and never look back.

Why don't five-paragraph essays work well for college writing?

The way college instructors teach is probably different from what you experienced in high school, and so is what they expect from you.

While high school courses tend to focus on the who, what, when, and where of the things you study—"just the facts"—college courses ask you to think about the how and the why. You can do

very well in high school by studying hard and memorizing a lot of facts. Although college instructors still expect you to know the facts, they really care about how you analyze and interpret those facts and why you think those facts matter. **Once you know what college instructors are looking for, you can see some of the reasons why five-paragraph essays don't work so well for college writing:**

- **Five-paragraph essays often do a poor job of setting up a framework, or context, that helps the reader understand what the author is trying to say.** Students learn in high school that their introduction should begin with something general. College instructors call these "dawn of time" introductions. For example, a student asked to discuss the causes of the Hundred Years War might begin, "Since the dawn of time, humankind has been plagued by war." In a college course, the student would fare better with a more concrete sentence directly related to what he or she is going to say in the rest of the paper—for example, a sentence such as "In the early 14th century, a civil war broke out in Flanders that would soon threaten Western Europe's balance of power." If you are accustomed to writing vague opening lines and need them to get started, go ahead and write them, but delete them before you turn in the final draft. For more on this subject, see our handout on introductions.
- **Five-paragraph essays often lack an argument.** Because college courses focus on analyzing and interpreting rather than on memorizing, college instructors expect writers not only to know the facts but also to make an argument about the facts. The best five-paragraph essays may do this. However, the typical five-paragraph essay has a "listing" thesis, for example, "I will show how the Romans lost their empire in Britain and Gaul by examining military technology, religion, and politics," rather than an argumentative one, for example, "The Romans lost their empire in Britain and Gaul because their opponents' military technology caught up with their own at the same time as religious upheaval and political conflict were weakening the sense of common purpose on the home front." For more on this subject, see our handout on argument.
- **Five-paragraph essays are often repetitive.** Writers who follow the five-paragraph model tend to repeat sentences or phrases from the introduction in topic sentences for paragraphs, rather than writing topic sentences that tie their three "points" together into a coherent argument. Repetitive writing doesn't help to move an argument along, and it's no fun to read.
- **Five-paragraph essays often lack "flow."** Five-paragraph essays often don't make smooth transitions from one thought to the next. The "listing" thesis statement encourages writers to treat each paragraph and its main idea as a separate entity, rather than to draw connections between paragraphs and ideas in order to develop an argument.
- **Five-paragraph essays often have weak conclusions that merely summarize what's gone before and don't say anything new or interesting.** In our handout on conclusions, we call these "that's my story and I'm sticking to it" conclusions: they do nothing to engage readers and make them glad they read the essay. Most of us can remember an

introduction and three body paragraphs without a repetitive summary at the end to help us out.

- **Five-paragraph essays don't have any counterpart in the real world.** Read your favorite newspaper or magazine; look through the readings your professors assign you; listen to political speeches or sermons. Can you find anything that looks or sounds like a five-paragraph essay? One of the important skills that college can teach you, above and beyond the subject matter of any particular course, is how to communicate persuasively in any situation that comes your way. The five-paragraph essay is too rigid and simplified to fit most real-world situations.
- **Perhaps most important of all: in a five-paragraph essay, form controls content, when it should be the other way around.** Students begin with a plan for organization, and they force their ideas to fit it. Along the way, their perfectly good ideas get mangled or lost.

How do I break out of writing five-paragraph essays?

Let's take an example based on our handout on thesis statements. Suppose you're taking a United States History class, and the professor asks you to write a paper on this topic:

> Compare and contrast the reasons why the North and South fought the Civil War.

Alex, preparing to write her first college history paper, decides to write a five-paragraph essay, just like she learned in high school. She begins by thinking, "What are three points I can talk about to compare the reasons the North and South fought the Civil War?" She does a little brainstorming, and she says, "Well, in class, my professor talked about the economy, politics, and slavery. I guess I can do a paper about that." So she writes her introduction:

> A civil war occurs when two sides in a single country become so angry at each other that they turn to violence. The Civil War between North and South was a major conflict that nearly tore apart the young United States. The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons. In some cases, these reasons were the same, but in other cases they were very different. In this paper, I will compare and contrast these reasons by examining the economy, politics, and slavery.

This is a classic five-paragraph essay introduction: it goes from the general to the specific, and it introduces the three points that will be the subjects of each of the three body paragraphs.

But Alex's professor doesn't like it. She underlines the first two sentences, and she writes, "This is too general. Get to the point." She underlines the third and fourth sentences, and she writes, "You're just restating the question I asked. What's your point?" She underlines the final sentence, and then writes in the margin, "What's your thesis?" because the last sentence in the paragraph only lists topics. It doesn't make an argument.

Is Alex's professor just a grouch? Well, no—she is trying to teach this student that college writing isn't about following a formula (the five-paragraph model), it's about making an argument. Her first sentence is general, the way she learned a five-paragraph essay should start. But from the professor's perspective, it's far too general—so general, in fact, that it's completely outside of the assignment: she didn't ask students to define civil war. The third and fourth sentences say, in so many words, "I am comparing and contrasting the reasons why the North and the South fought the Civil War"—as the professor says, they just restate the prompt, without giving a single hint about where this student's paper is going. The final sentence, which should make an argument, only lists topics; it doesn't begin to explore how or why something happened.

If you've seen a lot of five-paragraph essays, you can guess what Alex will write next. Her first body paragraph will begin, "We can see some of the different reasons why the North and South fought the Civil War by looking at the economy." What will the professor say about that? She might ask, "What differences can we see? What part of the economy are you talking about? Why do the differences exist? Why are they important?" After three such body paragraphs, the student might write a conclusion that says much the same thing as her introduction, in slightly different words. Alex's professor might respond, "You've already said this!"

What could Alex do differently? Let's start over. This time, Alex doesn't begin with a preconceived notion of how to organize her essay. Instead of three "points," she decides that she will brainstorm until she comes up with a main argument, or thesis, that answers the question "Why did the North and South fight the Civil War?" Then she will decide how to organize her draft by thinking about the argument's parts and how they fit together.

After doing some brainstorming and reading the Writing Center's handout on thesis statements, Alex thinks of a main argument, or thesis statement:

> Both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, but Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their rights to property and self-government.

Then Alex writes her introduction. But instead of beginning with a general statement about civil wars, she gives us the ideas we need to know in order to understand all the parts of her argument:

> The United States broke away from England in response to British tyranny and oppression, so opposition to tyranny and a belief in individual freedom and liberty were important values in the young republic. But in the nineteenth century, slavery made Northerners and Southerners see these values in very different ways. By 1860, the conflict over these values broke out into a civil war that nearly tore the country apart. In that war, both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, but Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their rights to property and self-government.

Every sentence in Alex's new introduction leads the reader down the path to her thesis statement in an unbroken chain of ideas.

Now Alex turns to organization. You'll find more about the thinking process she goes through in our handout on organization, but here are the basics: first, she decides, she'll write a paragraph that gives background; she'll explain how opposition to tyranny and a belief in individual liberty came to be such important values in the United States. Then she'll write another background paragraph in which she shows how the conflict over slavery developed over time. Then she'll have separate paragraphs about Northerners and Southerners, explaining in detail—and giving evidence for—her claims about each group's reasons for going to war.

Note that Alex now has four body paragraphs. She might have had three or two or seven; what's important is that she allowed her argument to tell her how many paragraphs she should have and how to fit them together. Furthermore, her body paragraphs don't all discuss "points," like "the economy" and "politics"—two of them give background, and the other two explain Northerners' and Southerners' views in detail.

Finally, having followed her sketch outline and written her paper, Alex turns to writing a conclusion. From our handout on conclusions, she knows that a "that's my story and I'm sticking to it" conclusion doesn't move her ideas forward. Applying the strategies she finds in the handout, she decides that she can use her conclusion to explain why the paper she's just written really matters—perhaps by pointing out that the fissures in our society that the Civil War opened are, in many cases, still causing trouble today.

Is it ever OK to write a five-paragraph essay?

Yes. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where somebody expects you to make sense of a large body of information on the spot and write a well-organized, persuasive essay—in fifty minutes or less? Sounds like an essay exam situation, right? When time is short and the pressure is on, falling back on the good old five-paragraph essay can save you time and give you confidence. A five-paragraph essay might also work as the framework for a short speech. Try not to fall into the trap, however, of creating a "listing" thesis statement when your instructor expects an argument; when planning your body paragraphs, think about three components of an argument, rather than three "points" to discuss. On the other hand, most professors recognize the constraints of writing blue-book essays, and a "listing" thesis is probably better than no thesis at all.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial. We revise these tips periodically and welcome feedback.

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Source: The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Sciences

What this handout is about

Nearly every element of style that is accepted and encouraged in general academic writing is also considered good practice in scientific writing. The major difference between science writing and writing in other academic fields is the relative importance placed on certain stylistic elements. This handout details the most critical aspects of scientific writing and provides some strategies for evaluating and improving your scientific prose. Readers of this handout may also find our handout on scientific reports useful.

What is scientific writing?

There are several different kinds of writing that fall under the umbrella of scientific writing. **Scientific writing can include:**

- Peer-reviewed journal articles (presenting primary research)
- Grant proposals (you can't do science without funding)
- Literature review articles (summarizing and synthesizing research that has already been carried out)

As a student in the sciences, you are likely to spend some time writing lab reports, which often follow the format of peer-reviewed articles and literature reviews. Regardless of the genre, though, all scientific writing has the same goal: to present data and/or ideas with a level of detail that allows a reader to evaluate the validity of the results and conclusions based only on the facts presented. The reader should be able to easily follow both the methods used to generate the data (if it's a primary research paper) and the chain of logic used to draw conclusions from the data. **Several key elements allow scientific writers to achieve these goals:**

- **Precision:** ambiguities in writing cause confusion and may prevent a reader from grasping crucial aspects of the methodology and synthesis
- **Clarity:** concepts and methods in the sciences can often be complex; writing that is difficult to follow greatly amplifies any confusion on the part of the reader
- **Objectivity:** any claims that you make need to be based on facts, not intuition or emotion

How can I make my writing more precise?

Theories in the sciences are based upon precise mathematical models, specific empirical (primary) data sets, or some combination of the two. Therefore, scientists must use precise, concrete

language to evaluate and explain such theories, whether mathematical or conceptual. There are a few strategies for avoiding ambiguous, imprecise writing.

Word and phrasing choice

Often several words may convey similar meaning, but usually only one word is most appropriate in a given context. **Here's an example:**

- **Word choice 1:** "population density is positively correlated with disease transmission rate"
- **Word choice 2:** "population density is positively related to disease transmission rate"

In some contexts, "correlated" and "related" have similar meanings. But in scientific writing, "correlated" conveys a precise statistical relationship between two variables. In scientific writing, it is typically not enough to simply point out that two variables are related: the reader will expect you to explain the precise nature of the relationship (note: when using "correlation," you must explain somewhere in the paper how the correlation was estimated). If you mean "correlated," then use the word "correlated"; avoid substituting a less precise term when a more precise term is available.

This same idea also applies to choice of phrasing. For example, the phrase "writing of an investigative nature" could refer to writing in the sciences, but might also refer to a police report. When presented with a choice, a more specific and less ambiguous phraseology is always preferable. This applies even when you must be repetitive to maintain precision: repetition is preferable to ambiguity. Although repetition of words or phrases often happens out of necessity, it can actually be beneficial by placing special emphasis on key concepts.

Figurative language

Figurative language can make for interesting and engaging casual reading but is by definition imprecise. Writing "experimental subjects were assaulted with a wall of sound" does not convey the precise meaning of "experimental subjects were presented with 20 second pulses of conspecific mating calls." It's difficult for a reader to objectively evaluate your research if details are left to the imagination, so exclude similes and metaphors from your scientific writing.

Level of detail

Include as much detail as is necessary, but exclude extraneous information. The reader should be able to easily follow your methodology, results, and logic without being distracted by irrelevant facts and descriptions. **Ask yourself the following questions when you evaluate the level of detail in a paper:**

- Is the rationale for performing the experiment clear (i.e., have you shown that the question you are addressing is important and interesting)?
- Are the materials and procedures used to generate the results described at a level of detail that would allow the experiment to be repeated?
- Is the rationale behind the choice of experimental methods clear? Will the reader understand why those particular methods are appropriate for answering the question your research is addressing?
- Will the reader be able to follow the chain of logic used to draw conclusions from the data?

Any information that enhances the reader's understanding of the rationale, methodology, and logic should be included, but information in excess of this (or information that is redundant) will only confuse and distract the reader.

Quantify

Whenever possible, use quantitative rather than qualitative descriptions. A phrase that uses definite quantities such as "development rate in the 30°C temperature treatment was ten percent faster than development rate in the 20°C temperature treatment" is much more precise than the more qualitative phrase "development rate was fastest in the higher temperature treatment."

How can I make my writing clearer?

When you're writing about complex ideas and concepts, it's easy to get sucked into complex writing. Distilling complicated ideas into simple explanations is challenging, but you'll need to acquire this valuable skill to be an effective communicator in the sciences. Complexities in language use and sentence structure are perhaps the most common issues specific to writing in the sciences.

Language use

When given a choice between a familiar and a technical or obscure term, the more familiar term is preferable if it doesn't reduce precision. Here are a just a few examples of complex words and their simple alternatives:

COMPLEX	**SIMPLE**
efficacious	effective
utilize	use
elucidate	explain
proximal	close

In these examples, the term on the right conveys the same meaning as the word on the left but is more familiar and straightforward, and is often shorter as well.

There are some situations where the use of a technical or obscure term is justified. For example, in a paper comparing two different viral strains, the author might repeatedly use the word “enveloped” rather than the phrase “surrounded by a membrane.” The key word here is “repeatedly”: only choose the less familiar term if you’ll be using it more than once. If you choose to go with the technical term, however, make sure you clearly define it, as early in the paper as possible. You can use this same strategy to determine whether or not to use abbreviations, but again you must be careful to define the abbreviation early on.

Sentence structure

Science writing must be precise, and precision often requires a fine level of detail. Careful description of objects, forces, organisms, methodology, etc., can easily lead to complex sentences that express too many ideas without a break point. Here’s an example:

> The osmoregulatory organ, which is located at the base of the third dorsal spine on the outer margin of the terminal papillae and functions by expelling excess sodium ions, activates only under hypertonic conditions.

Several things make this sentence complex. First, the action of the sentence (activates) is far removed from the subject (the osmoregulatory organ) so that the reader has to wait a long time to get the main idea of the sentence. Second, the verbs “functions,” “activates,” and “expelling” are somewhat redundant. Consider this revision:

> Located on the outer margin of the terminal papillae at the base of the third dorsal spine, the osmoregulatory organ expels excess sodium ions under hypertonic conditions.

This sentence is slightly shorter, conveys the same information, and is much easier to follow. The subject and the action are now close together, and the redundant verbs have been eliminated. You may have noticed that even the simpler version of this sentence contains two prepositional phrases strung together (“on the outer margin of…” and “at the base of…”). Prepositional phrases themselves are not a problem; in fact, they are usually required to achieve an adequate level of detail in science writing. However, long strings of prepositional phrases can cause sentences to wander. Here’s an example of what not to do from Alley (1996):

> “…to confirm the nature of electrical breakdown of nitrogen in uniform fields at relatively high pressures and interelectrode gaps that approach those obtained in engineering practice, prior to the determination of the processes that set the criterion for breakdown in the above-mentioned gases and mixtures in uniform and non-uniform fields of engineering significance.”

The use of eleven (yes, eleven!) prepositional phrases in this sentence is excessive, and renders the sentence nearly unintelligible. Judging when a string of prepositional phrases is too long is somewhat subjective, but as a general rule of thumb, a single prepositional phrase is always preferable, and anything more than two strung together can be problematic.

Verbosity

Nearly every form of scientific communication is space-limited. Grant proposals, journal articles, and abstracts all have word or page limits, so there's a premium on concise writing. Furthermore, adding unnecessary words or phrases distracts rather than engages the reader. Avoid generic phrases that contribute no novel information. Common phrases such as "the fact that," "it should be noted that," and "it is interesting that" are cumbersome and unnecessary. Your reader will decide whether or not your paper is interesting based on the content. In any case, if information is not interesting or noteworthy it should probably be excluded.

How can I make my writing more objective?

The objective tone used in conventional scientific writing reflects the philosophy of the scientific method: if results are not repeatable, then they are not valid. In other words, your results will only be considered valid if any researcher performing the same experimental tests and analyses that you describe would be able to produce the same results. Thus, scientific writers try to adopt a tone that removes the focus from the researcher and puts it only on the research itself. Here are several stylistic conventions that enhance objectivity:

Passive voice

You may have been told at some point in your academic career that the use of the passive voice is almost always bad, except in the sciences. The passive voice is a sentence structure where the subject who performs the action is ambiguous (e.g., "you may have been told," as seen in the first sentence of this paragraph; see our handout on the passive voice for a more complete discussion).

The rationale behind using the passive voice in scientific writing is that it enhances objectivity, taking the actor (i.e., the researcher) out of the action (i.e., the research). Unfortunately, the passive voice can also lead to awkward and confusing sentence structures and is generally considered less engaging (i.e., more boring) than the active voice. This is why most general style guides recommend only sparing use of the passive voice.

Currently, the active voice is preferred in most scientific fields, even when it necessitates the use of "I" or "we." It's perfectly reasonable (and more simple) to say "We performed a two-tailed t-test" rather than to say "a two-tailed t-test was performed," or "in this paper we present results" rather than "results are presented in this paper." Nearly every current edition of scientific style guides

recommends the active voice, but different instructors (or journal editors) may have different opinions on this topic. If you are unsure, check with the instructor or editor who will review your paper to see whether or not to use the passive voice. **If you choose to use the active voice with "I" or "we," there are a few guidelines to follow:**

- Avoid starting sentences with "I" or "we": this pulls focus away from the scientific topic at hand.
- Avoid using "I" or "we" when you're making a conjecture, whether it's substantiated or not. Everything you say should follow from logic, not from personal bias or subjectivity. Never use any emotive words in conjunction with "I" or "we" (e.g., "I believe," "we feel," etc.).
- Never use "we" in a way that includes the reader (e.g., "here we see trait evolution in action"); the use of "we" in this context sets a condescending tone.

Acknowledging your limitations

Your conclusions should be directly supported by the data that you present. Avoid making sweeping conclusions that rest on assumptions that have not been substantiated by your or others' research. For example, if you discover a correlation between fur thickness and basal metabolic rate in rats and mice you would not necessarily conclude that fur thickness and basal metabolic rate are correlated in all mammals. You might draw this conclusion, however, if you cited evidence that correlations between fur thickness and basal metabolic rate are also found in twenty other mammalian species. Assess the generality of the available data before you commit to an overly general conclusion.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.

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Popular Literature vs. Scholarly Peer-Reviewed Literature: What's the Difference?

Popular Literature

Popular literature is written by journalists, who are employed by the magazine for which they write. Journalists cover news and current events in a field, write profiles of people, places, or events, and express political opinions. Some examples of popular literature are:

- *The New York Times*
- *Newsweek*
- *National Geographic*
- *Psychology Today*
- *Natural History*
- *The Nation*
- *New Republic*
- *Science News*

Scholarly Literature

Scholarly literature is written by researchers who are experts in their field. People who write for academic journals are employed by colleges, universities, or other institutions of education or research. They submit articles to the editors of the journals, who decide whether or not to publish the article. The most prestigious academic journals subject articles to the peer-review process. This means that, before an article is accepted for publication, it is reviewed by several experts in the field, who suggest possible changes, and recommend to the editor of the journal whether or not to publish the article. Some examples of academic journals are:

- *Journal of American History*
- *Psychological Review*
- *Nature*
- *Annals of the National Academy of Science*
- *Acta Archaeologia*

- *James Joyce Quarterly*
- *Journal of the American Musicological Society*

Trade and Professional Literature

Trade and professional literature resembles scholarly literature in that it is written by people working in the field. However, the articles in trade and professional journals cover news in the field, brief reports on research, and opinions about trends and events. Some examples of trade and professional journals are:

- *American Libraries*
- *AdWeek*
- *Drug Store News*
- *Anthropology Newsletter*
- *Back Stage Magazine*

A Quick Comparison

Scholarly Journals	Popular Magazines
Examples: African American Review, Philosophical Quarterly, World Politics, Human Biology	Examples: People, Time, Newsweek, Vogue, National Geographic, The New Yorker
Articles written by experts: often professors	Articles written by non-specialists
Articles often go through a peer review process: independent experts evaluate the article before it's published	Articles are reviewed by an editor, but not by a panel of experts
Articles have footnotes and bibliographies	Articles may or may not mention sources in the text
Minimal advertising, graphics, or illustrations unless relevant to the article (for example, art journals)	Extensive advertising, lavish photos, colorful cover to market the magazine

SAMPLE POPULAR SCIENCE ARTICLE

The COVID-19 Pandemic Is Changing Our Dreams

By: Tore Nielsen

Nielsen is a professor of psychiatry at the Université de Montréal and director of the Dream and Nightmare Laboratory there. *Credit: Nick Higgins*

For many of us, living in a COVID-19 world feels as if we have been thrown into an alternative reality. We live day and night inside the same walls. We fear touching groceries that arrive at our doorstep. If we venture into town we wear masks, and we get anxious if we pass someone who is not. We have trouble discerning faces. It's like living in a dream.

COVID-19 has altered our dream worlds, too: how much we dream, how many of our dreams we remember and the nature of our dreams themselves. Early this year, when stay-at-home directives were put in place widely, society quite unexpectedly experienced what I am calling a dream surge: a global increase in the reporting of vivid, bizarre dreams, many of which are concerned with coronavirus and social distancing. Terms such as coronavirus dreams, lockdown dreams and COVID nightmares emerged on social media. By early April, social and mainstream media outlets had begun broadcasting the message: the world is dreaming about COVID-19.

Although widespread changes in dreaming had been reported in the U.S. following extraordinary events such as the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the 1989 San Francisco earthquake, a surge of this magnitude had never been documented. This upwelling of dreams is the first to occur globally and the first to happen in the era of social media, which makes dreams readily accessible for immediate study. As a dream "event," the pandemic is unprecedented.

But what kind of phenomenon is this, exactly? Why was it happening with such vigor? To find out, Deirdre Barrett, an assistant professor at Harvard University and editor in chief of the journal *Dreaming,* initiated a COVID-19 dreams survey online in the week of March 22. Erin and Grace Gravley, San Francisco Bay Area artists, launched IDreamofCovid.com, a site archiving and illustrating pandemic dreams. The Twitter account @CovidDreams began operation. Kelly Bulkeley, a psychologist of religion and director of the Sleep and Dream Database, followed with a YouGov survey of 2,477 American adults. And my former doctoral student Elizaveta Solomonova, now a postdoctoral fellow at McGill University, along with Rebecca Robillard of the Royal's Institute of Mental Health Research in Ottawa and others, launched a survey to which 968 people aged 12 and older responded, almost all in North America. Results of these inquiries, not yet published in journals but available in preliminary form online, document the precipitous surge, the striking variety of dreams and many related mental health effects.

Bulkeley's three-day poll revealed that in March, 29 percent of Americans recalled more dreams than usual. Solomonova and Robillard found that 37 percent of people had

pandemic dreams, many marked by themes of insufficiently completing tasks (such as losing control of a vehicle) and being threatened by others. Many online posts reflect these findings. One person, whose Twitter handle is @monicaluhar, reported, "*Had a dream about returning as a sub teacher in the fall, unprepared. Students were having a difficult time practicing social distancing, and teachers couldn't stagger classes or have one-on-one meetings.*" And @therealbeecarey said, "*My phone had a virus and was posting so many random pictures from my camera roll to instagram and my anxiety was at an all time high.*"

More recent studies found qualitative changes in dream emotions and concerns about health. Dream reports from Brazilian adults in social isolation had high proportions of words related to anger, sadness, contamination and cleanliness. Text mining of accounts of 810 Finnish dreams showed that most word clusters were laden with anxiousness; 55 percent were about the pandemic directly (lack of regard for social distancing, elderly people in trouble), and these emotions were more prevalent among people who felt increased stress during the day. A study of 100 nurses conscripted to treat COVID-19 patients in Wuhan, China, revealed that 45 percent experienced nightmares—twice the lifetime rate among Chinese psychiatric outpatients and many times higher than that among the 5 percent of the general population who have nightmare disorder.

It seems clear that some basic biological and social dynamics may have played a role in this unprecedented opening of the oneiric floodgates. At least three factors may have triggered or sustained the dream surge: disrupted sleep schedules augmenting the amount of REM sleep and therefore dreaming; threats of contagion and social distancing taxing dreaming's capacity to regulate emotions; and social and mainstream media amplifying the public's reaction to the surge.

MORE REM SLEEP, MORE DREAMS

One obvious explanation for the surge is that sleep patterns changed abruptly when lockdowns took effect. Early publications demonstrate elevated levels of insomnia in the Chinese population, especially among front-line workers. In contrast, stay-at-home orders, which removed long commutes to work, improved sleep for many people. Chinese respondents reported an average increase of 46 minutes in bed and an extra 34 minutes in total sleep time. Some 54 percent of people in Finland said they slept more after lockdown. Overall, from March 13 to 27, time asleep in the U.S. increased almost 20 percent nationwide, and states with the longest commute times, such as Maryland and New Jersey, showed the largest increases.

Longer slumber leads to more dreams; people in sleep laboratories who are allowed to snooze more than 9.5 hours recall more dreams than when sleeping a typical eight hours. Sleeping longer also proportionally increases rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, which is when the most vivid and emotional dreams occur.

Relaxed schedules may also have caused dreaming to occur later than usual in the morning, when REM sleep is more prevalent and intense and, thus, dreams are more bizarre. Dream-tweets reflect these qualities: "*I was taking care of a newborn girl that had COVID … it was so vivid and real.*" Increased dreaming during late-morning REM intervals results from the convergence of several processes. Sleep itself cycles through deep and light stages about every 90 minutes, but pressure for REM sleep gradually increases as the need for deep, recuperative sleep is progressively satisfied. Meanwhile a circadian process that is tightly linked to our 24-hour core body temperature rhythm gives an abrupt boost to REM sleep propensity late in the sleep period and stays elevated through the morning.

After the pandemic began, many people did sleep longer and later. In China, average weekly bedtime was delayed by 26 minutes but wake-up time by 72 minutes. These values were 41 and 73 minutes in Italy and 30 and 42 minutes among U.S. university students. And without commutes, many people were freer to linger in bed, remembering their dreams. Some early birds may have turned into night owls, who typically have more REM sleep and more frequent nightmares. And as people eliminated whatever sleep debts they may have accrued over days or even weeks of insufficient rest, they were more likely to wake up at night and remember more dreams.

DREAM FUNCTIONS OVERWHELMED

The subject matter of many COVID-19 dreams directly or metaphorically reflects fears about contagion and the challenges of social distancing. Even in normal times, we dream more about novel experiences. For example, people enrolled in programs to rapidly learn French dream more about French. Replaying fragments of experiences is one example of a functional role that researchers widely ascribe to REM sleep and dreaming: it helps us solve problems. Other roles include consolidating the prior day's events into longer-lasting memories, fitting those events into an ongoing narrative of our lives and helping us regulate emotions.

Researchers have documented countless cases of dreams assisting in creative achievement. Empirical studies also show that REM sleep aids in problem-solving that requires access to wide-ranging memory associations, which may explain why so many dreams in the 2020 surge involve creative or strange attempts to deal with a COVID-19 problem. One survey respondent said, "*I was looking for a kind of cream that would either prevent or cure Covid-19. I got my hands on the last bottle*."

Two other widely claimed dream functions are extinguishing fearful memories and simulating social situations. They are related to emotion regulation and help to explain why pandemic threats and social distancing challenges appear so often in surge dreams. Many dreams reported in the media include fearful reactions to infection, finances and social distancing. "*I tested positive for pregnancy and covid … now I'm stressed*."

Threats may take the form of metaphoric imagery such as tsunamis or aliens; zombies are common. Images of insects, spiders and other small creatures are also widely represented: "*My foot was covered in ants and 5-6 black widows were imbedded in the bottom of my foot.*"

One way to understand direct and metaphoric imagery is to consider that dreams express an individual's core concerns, drawing on memories that are similar in emotional tone but different in subject matter. This contextualization is clear in post-traumatic nightmares, in which a person's reaction to a trauma, such as terror during an assault, is depicted as terror in the face of a natural disaster such as a tsunami. The late Ernest Hartmann, a Boston-area dream and nightmare research pioneer who studied dreams after the 9/11 attacks, stipulated that such contextualization best helps people adapt when it weaves together old and new experiences. Successful integration produces a more stable memory system that is resilient to future traumas.

Metaphoric images can be part of a constructive effort to make sense of disruptive events. A related process is the extinguishing of fear by the creation of new "safety memories." These possibilities, which I and others have investigated, reflect the fact that memories of fearful events are almost never replayed in their entirety during dreaming. Instead elements of a memory appear piecemeal, as if the original memory has been reduced to basic units. These elements recombine with newer memories and cognitions to create contexts in which metaphors and other unusual juxtapositions of imagery seem incongruous or incompatible with waking life—and, more important, are incompatible with feelings of fear. This creative dreaming produces safety imagery that supersedes and inhibits the original fear memory, helping to assuage distress over time.

This mechanism can break down after severe trauma, however. When this happens, nightmares arise in which the fearful memory is replayed realistically; the creative recombining of memory elements is thwarted. The pandemic's ultimate impact on a person's dreams will vary with whether or how severely they are traumatized and how resilient they are.

A second class of theories—also still speculative—may explain social distancing themes, which permeated IDreamofCovid.com reports. Emotions in these dreams range from surprise to discomfort to stress to nightmarish horror. Tweets located by the @CovidDreams account illustrate how incompatible dream scenarios are with social distancing—so incompatible that they often trigger a rare moment of self-awareness and awakening: "*We were celebrating something by having a party. And I woke myself up because something wasn't right because we're social distancing and not supposed to be having parties.*"

These theories focus on dreaming's social simulation function. The view that dreaming is a neural simulation of reality, analogous to virtual reality, is now widely accepted, and

the notion that the simulation of social life is an essential biological function is emerging. In 2000 Anne Germain, now CEO of sleep medicine start-up Noctem, and I proposed that images of characters interacting with the self in dreams could be basic to how dreaming evolved, reflecting attachment relationships essential to the survival of prehistoric groups. The strong interpersonal bonds reiterated during dreaming contribute to stronger group structures that help to organize defenses against predators and cooperation in problem-solving. Such dreams would still have adaptive value today because family and group cohesion remain essential to health and survival. It may be the case that an individual's concerns about other people are fine-tuned while they are in the simulated presence of those people. Important social relationships and conflicts are portrayed realistically during dreaming.

Other investigators, such as cognitive neuroscientist Antti Revonsuo of the University of Turku in Finland, have since proposed additional social functions for dreaming: facilitating social perception (who is around me?), social mind reading (what are they thinking?) and the practice of social bonding skills. Another theory advanced by psychology professor Mark Blagrove of Swansea University in Wales further postulates that by sharing dreams, people enhance empathy toward others. The range of dream functions is likely to keep expanding as we learn more about the brain circuits underlying social cognition and the roles REM sleep plays in memory for emotional stimuli, human faces and reactions to social exclusion. Because social distancing is, in effect, an experiment in social isolation at a level never before seen—and is likely antagonistic to human evolution—a clash with deep-rooted dream mechanisms should be evident on a massive scale. And because social distancing disrupts normal relationships so profoundly—causing many of us to spend excessive time with some people and no time with others—social simulations in dreams may play a crucial role in helping families, groups, even societies deal with sudden, widespread social adaptation.

THE ECHO CHAMBER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

There is one basic question about pandemic dreams that we would like to nail down: whether the dream surge was amplified by the media. It is quite possible that early posts of a few dreams were circulated widely online, feeding a pandemic-dreams narrative that went viral, influencing people to recall their dreams, notice COVID themes and share them. This narrative may have even induced people to dream more about the pandemic.

Evidence suggests that mainstream media reporting probably did not trigger the surge but may have amplified its scope, at least temporarily. The Bulkeley and Solomonova-Robillard polls corroborated a clear groundswell in dream tweeting during March, before the first media stories about such dreams appeared; indeed, the earliest stories cited various tweet threads as sources of their reporting.

Once stories emerged, additional surges in dream reporting through early April were detected by @CovidDreams and IDreamofCovid.com. The format of most early stories almost guaranteed amplification: they typically described some salient dream themes observed in a survey and provided a link directing readers to participate in the same survey. In addition, 56 percent of articles during the first week of stories featured interviews with the same Harvard dream scientist, which may have influenced readers to dream about the themes repeated by her in various interviews.

The surge began to decline steadily in late April, as did the number of mainstream media articles, suggesting that any echo-chamber effect had run its course. The final nature of the surge remains to be seen. Until COVID-19 vaccines or treatments are distributed and with waves of future infections possible, threats of disease and social distancing are likely to persist. Might the pandemic have produced a lasting increase in humanity's recall of dreams? Could pandemic concerns become permanently woven into dream content? And if so, will such alterations help or hinder people's long-term adjustments to our postpandemic futures?

Therapists may need to step in to help certain people. The survey information considered in this article does not delve into nightmares in detail. But some health care workers who saw relentless suffering are now themselves suffering with recurrent nightmares. And some patients who endured the ICU for days or weeks suffered from horrific nightmares during that time, which may in part have been the result of medications and sleep deprivation induced by around-the-clock hospital procedures and interminable monitor noises and alarms. These survivors will need expert help to regain normal sleep. Thankfully, specialized techniques are highly effective.

People who are not traumatized but still a little freaked out about their COVID dreams also have options. New technologies such as targeted memory reactivation are providing individuals with more control over their dream narratives. For example, learning how to practice lucid dreaming—becoming aware that you are now dreaming—aided by targeted memory reactivation or other methods could help transform worrisome pandemic dreams into more pleasant, maybe even useful, dreams. Simply observing and reporting pandemic dreams seems to positively impact mental health, as Natália Mota of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte in Natal, Brazil, found in her studies.

Short of therapy, we can give ourselves permission to ease up and to enjoy banking those surplus hours of sleep. Dreams can be vexing, but they are also impressionable, malleable and at times inspirational.

Citation: Tore Nielsen, "Infectious Dreams" in Scientific American 323, 4, 30-34 (October 2020)

Outline Template

Introduction Paragraph:

- Background Information:
- Statement of Importance:

Body Paragraph: Subtopic #1

- Supporting Evidence:
- Supporting Evidence:
- Analysis of Evidence:

Body Paragraph: Subtopic #2

- Supporting Evidence:
- Supporting Evidence:
- Analysis of Evidence:

Body Paragraph: Subtopic #3

- Supporting Evidence:
- Supporting Evidence:
- Analysis of Evidence:

[OPTIONAL] Body Paragraph: Subtopic #4

- Supporting Evidence:
- Supporting Evidence:
- Analysis of Evidence:

Concluding Paragraph:

- Summary of main points:
- Final thoughts:

Revising Drafts

Rewriting is the essence of writing well—where the game is won or lost.
—William Zinsser

What this handout is about

This handout will motivate you to revise your drafts and give you strategies to revise effectively.

What does it mean to revise?

Revision literally means to "see again," to look at something from a fresh, critical perspective. It is an ongoing process of rethinking the paper: reconsidering your arguments, reviewing your evidence, refining your purpose, reorganizing your presentation, reviving stale prose.

But I thought revision was just fixing the commas and spelling

Nope. That's called proofreading. It's an important step before turning your paper in, but if your ideas are predictable, your thesis is weak, and your organization is a mess, then proofreading will just be putting a band-aid on a bullet wound. When you finish revising, that's the time to proofread. For more information on the subject, see our handout on proofreading.

How about if I just reword things: look for better words, avoid repetition, etc.? Is that revision?

Well, that's a part of revision called editing. It's another important final step in polishing your work. But if you haven't thought through your ideas, then rephrasing them won't make any difference.

Why is revision important?

Writing is a process of discovery, and you don't always produce your best stuff when you first get started. **So revision is a chance for you to look critically at what you have written to see:**

- if it's really worth saying,
- if it says what you wanted to say, and
- if a reader will understand what you're saying.

The process

What steps should I use when I begin to revise?

Here are several things to do. But don't try them all at one time. **Instead, focus on two or three main areas during each revision session:**

- Wait awhile after you've finished a draft before looking at it again. The Roman poet Horace thought one should wait nine years, but that's a bit much. A day—a few hours even—will work. When you do return to the draft, be honest with yourself, and don't be lazy. Ask yourself what you really think about the paper.
- As The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers puts it, "THINK BIG, don't tinker" (61). At this stage, you should be concerned with the large issues in the paper, not the commas.
- Check the focus of the paper: Is it appropriate to the assignment? Is the topic too big or too narrow? Do you stay on track through the entire paper?
- Think honestly about your thesis: Do you still agree with it? Should it be modified in light of something you discovered as you wrote the paper? Does it make a sophisticated, provocative point, or does it just say what anyone could say if given the same topic? Does your thesis generalize instead of taking a specific position? Should it be changed altogether? For more information visit our handout on thesis statements.
- Think about your purpose in writing: Does your introduction state clearly what you intend to do? Will your aims be clear to your readers?

What are some other steps I should consider in later stages of the revision process?

- **Examine the balance within your paper:** Are some parts out of proportion with others? Do you spend too much time on one trivial point and neglect a more important point? Do you give lots of detail early on and then let your points get thinner by the end?
- **Check that you have kept your promises to your readers:** Does your paper follow through on what the thesis promises? Do you support all the claims in your thesis? Are the tone and formality of the language appropriate for your audience?
- **Check the organization:** Does your paper follow a pattern that makes sense? Do the transitions move your readers smoothly from one point to the next? Do the topic sentences of each paragraph appropriately introduce what that paragraph is about? Would your paper work better if you moved some things around? For more information visit our handout on reorganizing drafts.

- **Check your information:** Are all your facts accurate? Are any of your statements misleading? Have you provided enough detail to satisfy readers' curiosity? Have you cited all your information appropriately?

- **Check your conclusion:** Does the last paragraph tie the paper together smoothly and end on a stimulating note, or does the paper just die a slow, redundant, lame, or abrupt death?

Whoa! I thought I could just revise in a few minutes

Sorry. You may want to start working on your next paper early so that you have plenty of time for revising. That way you can give yourself some time to come back to look at what you've written with a fresh pair of eyes. It's amazing how something that sounded brilliant the moment you wrote it can prove to be less-than-brilliant when you give it a chance to incubate.

But I don't want to rewrite my whole paper!

Revision doesn't necessarily mean rewriting the whole paper. Sometimes it means revising the thesis to match what you've discovered while writing. Sometimes it means coming up with stronger arguments to defend your position, or coming up with more vivid examples to illustrate your points. Sometimes it means shifting the order of your paper to help the reader follow your argument, or to change the emphasis of your points. Sometimes it means adding or deleting material for balance or emphasis. And then, sadly, sometimes revision does mean trashing your first draft and starting from scratch. Better that than having the teacher trash your final paper.

But I work so hard on what I write that I can't afford to throw any of it away

If you want to be a polished writer, then you will eventually find out that you can't afford NOT to throw stuff away. As writers, we often produce lots of material that needs to be tossed. The idea or metaphor or paragraph that I think is most wonderful and brilliant is often the very thing that confuses my reader or ruins the tone of my piece or interrupts the flow of my argument.Writers must be willing to sacrifice their favorite bits of writing for the good of the piece as a whole. In order to trim things down, though, you first have to have plenty of material on the page. One trick is not to hinder yourself while you are composing the first draft because the more you produce, the more you will have to work with when cutting time comes.

But sometimes I revise as I go

That's OK. Since writing is a circular process, you don't do everything in some specific order. Sometimes you write something and then tinker with it before moving on. But be warned: there are two potential problems with revising as you go. One is that if you revise only as you go along, you never get to think of the big picture. The key is still to give yourself enough time to look at the essay as a whole once you've finished. Another danger to revising as you go is that you may short-circuit your creativity. If you spend too much time tinkering with what is on the page, you may lose some of

what hasn't yet made it to the page. Here's a tip: Don't proofread as you go. You may waste time correcting the commas in a sentence that may end up being cut anyway.

How do I go about the process of revising? Any tips?

- Work from a printed copy; it's easier on the eyes. Also, problems that seem invisible on the screen somehow tend to show up better on paper.
- Another tip is to read the paper out loud. That's one way to see how well things flow.
- Remember all those questions listed above? Don't try to tackle all of them in one draft. Pick a few "agendas" for each draft so that you won't go mad trying to see, all at once, if you've done everything.
- Ask lots of questions and don't flinch from answering them truthfully. For example, ask if there are opposing viewpoints that you haven't considered yet.

Concerns

Whenever I revise, I just make things worse. I do my best work without revising

That's a common misconception that sometimes arises from fear, sometimes from laziness. The truth is, though, that except for those rare moments of inspiration or genius when the perfect ideas expressed in the perfect words in the perfect order flow gracefully and effortlessly from the mind, all experienced writers revise their work. I wrote six drafts of this handout. Hemingway rewrote the last page of A Farewell to Arms thirty-nine times. If you're still not convinced, re-read some of your old papers. How do they sound now? What would you revise if you had a chance?

What can get in the way of good revision strategies?

Don't fall in love with what you have written. If you do, you will be hesitant to change it even if you know it's not great. Start out with a working thesis, and don't act like you're married to it. Instead, act like you're dating it, seeing if you're compatible, finding out what it's like from day to day. If a better thesis comes along, let go of the old one. Also, don't think of revision as just rewording. It is a chance to look at the entire paper, not just isolated words and sentences.

What happens if I find that I no longer agree with my own point?

If you take revision seriously, sometimes the process will lead you to questions you cannot answer, objections or exceptions to your thesis, cases that don't fit, loose ends or contradictions that just won't go away. If this happens (and it will if you think long enough), then you have several choices.

You could choose to ignore the loose ends and hope your reader doesn't notice them, but that's risky. You could change your thesis completely to fit your new understanding of the issue, or you could adjust your thesis slightly to accommodate the new ideas. Or you could simply acknowledge the contradictions and show why your main point still holds up in spite of them. Most readers know there are no easy answers, so they may be annoyed if you give them a thesis and try to claim that it is always true with no exceptions no matter what.

How do I get really good at revising?

The same way you get really good at golf, piano, or a video game—do it often. Take revision seriously, be disciplined, and set high standards for yourself. **Here are three more tips:**

- The more you produce, the more you can cut.
- The more you can imagine yourself as a reader looking at this for the first time, the easier it will be to spot potential problems.
- The more you demand of yourself in terms of clarity and elegance, the more clear and elegant your writing will be.

How do I revise at the sentence level?

Read your paper out loud, sentence by sentence, and follow Peter Elbow's advice: "Look for places where you stumble or get lost in the middle of a sentence. These are obvious awkwardness's that need fixing. Look for places where you get distracted or even bored—where you cannot concentrate. These are places where you probably lost focus or concentration in your writing. Cut through the extra words or vagueness or digression; get back to the energy. Listen even for the tiniest jerk or stumble in your reading, the tiniest lessening of your energy or focus or concentration as you say the words . . . A sentence should be alive" (Writing with Power 135).

Practical advice for ensuring that your sentences are alive:

- Use forceful verbs—replace long verb phrases with a more specific verb. For example, replace "She argues for the importance of the idea" with "She defends the idea."
- Look for places where you've used the same word or phrase twice or more in consecutive sentences and look for alternative ways to say the same thing OR for ways to combine the two sentences.
- Cut as many prepositional phrases as you can without losing your meaning. For instance, the following sentence, "There are several examples of the issue of integrity in Huck Finn," would be much better this way, "Huck Finn repeatedly addresses the issue of integrity."
- Check your sentence variety. If more than two sentences in a row start the same way (with a subject followed by a verb, for example), then try using a different sentence pattern.

- Aim for precision in word choice. Don't settle for the best word you can think of at the moment—use a thesaurus (along with a dictionary) to search for the word that says exactly what you want to say.
- Look for sentences that start with "It is" or "There are" and see if you can revise them to be more active and engaging.
- For more information, please visit our handouts on word choice and style.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial. We revise these tips periodically and welcome feedback.

Anson, Chris and Robert Schwegler. *The Longman Handbook for Writers and Readers.* 6th ed. New York: Longman, 2011.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Hairston, Maxine, John Ruszkiewicz and Christy Friend. *The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers.* 6th ed. New York: Longman, 2002.

Lanham, Richard. *Revising Prose.* 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2007.

Lunsford, Andrea and Robert Connors. *The New St. Martin's Handbook.* 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well.* 6th ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Source: The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC STUDENT AFFAIRS
University Career Services

RESUMES

Resumes highlight the specific, tangible and transferable skills and attributes you have to offer. You typically have one page to share what you have learned and accomplished while at UNC. Your goal should be to communicate your qualifications for the position and the value you will add to the organization.

Formatting Basics

A resume that is formatted well is easier to read and more likely to be given another glance. Use this checklist to catch the reader's eye:

- ❑ Margins: should be balanced on opposite sides with even tabs and spacing between lines and sections
- ❑ Font: size is between 10-12 (except your name), font type is consistent and easy to read
- ❑ Length: maximum of 1 page if you have limited work experience
- ❑ Headings: use capitalization, bold, or italics to highlight parts of headings. Be sure to remain consistent
- ❑ Reverse chronological order
- ❑ Don't include personal information such as weight, height, marital status, social security number, age, race, religion, or political affiliation
- ❑ Don't use graphics or pictures (unless you are applying for a graphic/visual design position)
- ❑ No spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors

Resume Sections

SECTION	BASICS	SUGGESTIONS
CONTACT INFORMATION	• Includes: name, address, phone number, and email address. • Name should stand out (bold, 14-20 size font)	• Be sure your answering machine message and email address are business-appropriate. • If you have roommates or if someone else might answer your calls, make sure they use proper etiquette and relay the message to you.
EDUCATION	• Begin with most recent education • Include: university name in full, degree earned, expected date of graduation, GPA • Add courses as an option. • List any study abroad or other colleges attended	• The emphasis on your GPA will vary by employer. If your GPA is a 3.0 or higher, we recommend that you include it on your resume. If your GPA is lower than a 3.0, then you may want to consider omitting it from the resume. Some students will list only their major GPA if it's higher, rather than their overall. Contact a UCS counselor if you have specific questions about your GPA.
HONORS	• Include academic honors such as the Dean's List, scholarships, and honor societies.	• Honors may be listed under a separate heading or as a subsection under Education.
EXPERIENCE ***Possible Section Names:*** *Relevant Experience* *Leadership Experience* *Work Experience* *Additional Experience*	• Include any employment, internships, significant campus leadership offices, volunteer work, and relevant class/research projects. • Include title, name of organization, location, and dates for each position. • Emphasize duties, responsibilities, skills, abilities, and accomplishments appropriate to the position for which you are applying.	• Use phrases beginning with action verbs • Do not use pronouns in your job descriptions. • You do not need to restrict this category to paid experience.
SKILLS	• Foreign languages, computer skills, and other relevant skills should be included.	• List level of fluency/proficiency with languages/computer skills.
ACTIVITIES	• List college-related activities including student government, fraternities / sororities, student clubs, sports activities, etc. not mentioned elsewhere.	• Be sure to note offices held and committee involvement.

UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES
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(919) 962-6507 | careers.unc.edu | ucs@unc.edu

UNC STUDENT AFFAIRS
University Career Services

RESUMES

Writing Strong Bullet Points

Your bullet points should convey a concise yet complete description of your story: your experiences, transferable skills, and your accomplishments. You can follow this process:

1. Start by listing your responsibilities for each experience:
   - *Example (Camp Counselor): I led a meeting with my team of 4 people every other week to plan our learning objectives and activities for the week ahead*

2. Turn each responsibility into a bullet point by answering these questions about your experience

Always start with…	**… then answer <u>at least one</u> of these questions**			
What did you do?	*How did you do it?*	*What was the purpose of it?*	*What was the result?*	*Who was your audience?*
1) Led bi-weekly meetings with 4 team members		To plan learning objectives and activities for the week		
2)				

3. Create a bullet point out of the information in the boxes:
   Example: Led bi-weekly meetings with 4 team members to plan learning objectives and activities for the week

Additional Tips for Bullet Points:

- Quantify duties when possible
- Use active voice (*i.e., managed)* rather than passive (*i.e., managing)*
- Use short phrases that convey a positive, concise description of your accomplishments; don't exaggerate your experience
- Check the spelling of every word; make sure grammar and punctuation are correct
- Don't use words such as I, me, or my on your resume
- Don't start phrases in experience section with "Responsible for" or "Duties include"
- Don't state salary or hours worked
- Don't use abbreviations without spelling out what they stand for

Submitting a Resume

If submitting a resume electronically, always submit it as a PDF document to avoid any formatting issues when the reader opens your resume. If submitting a hard copy of your resume to an employer, print it out on resume quality paper. This is a heavier quality bond paper that can be purchased at any office supply store. Use a conservative, professional color, such as off-white or crème.

Get Your Resume Reviewed by Family and Friends, Mentors and UCS!

UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES
The Wendy P. and Dean E. Painter Jr. Career Center
(919) 962-6507 | careers.unc.edu | ucs@unc.edu

Keisha R. Brown

Cary, NC 27519 | keishar_brown@live.unc.edu | (919) 000-0000

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill **May 20xx**
Bachelor of Arts: Media and Journalism - Broadcast and Electronic Journalism Concentration, GPA: 3.24
Related Coursework: Audio, Video, Film Production and Writing, Narrative Production, Interactive Media
Honors: Dean's List (all semesters)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Social Media Intern, *Myth Marketing*, San Antonio, TX **May 20xx-August 20xx**
- Assisted startup company with establishing online presence utilizing Web 2.0 technology
- Created and maintained daily blog and Twitter account to promote marketing services and increase visibility to potential clients; added over 500 new Twitter followers in 3 months
- Collaborated with 2 other interns to research current social media trends in technology and presented findings to management

Business Development Intern, *MarketUp*, Raleigh, NC **May 20xx-August 20xx**
- Managed a database of 50 potential clients to document meeting discussions and bid milestones
- Forecasted revenues for existing clients using Excel and reported results on a weekly basis
- Performed research on potential clients to communicate their needs, existing business lines, and major marketing campaigns to supervisor

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Technology Chair, *Design for America*, UNC Chapel Hill **August 20xx-Present**
- Created chapter web page to communicate the organization's upcoming events and member information
- Advised on technological tools such as Adobe and Dreamweaver for project development
- Provided technical and overall input to the executive board

Cashier, *North Carolina Museum of Life and Science*, Durham, NC **April 20xx– Sept 20xx**
- Assisted with customer relations and sales through prompt and efficient service in high volume gift shop
- Balanced register of $4,000 cash volume nightly and ensured accuracy of deposits

Youth Counselor, *Child and Family Services*, Raleigh, NC **June 20xx – August 20xx**
- Assisted students with completing academic assignments and ensured their timely completion
- Demonstrated creativity in maintaining a conducive and learning-rich environment for 15 students
- Facilitated bi-weekly meetings with 4 counselors to strengthen teamwork and define learning objectives for students

ACTIVITIES

UNC-CH Ballroom Dance Team, Member and Lead Dancer, Fall 20xx – Present
MASALA Multicultural Organization, Member, Fall 20xx – Present

SKILLS

Technology: SQL, Dreamweaver, Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite
Languages: Conversational in Spanish, Beginner in Arabic

SAMPLE RESUME

Cody Fredrickson

Baton Rouge LA • (123) 456-7891
cfredrickson@email.com

SUMMARY

Seasoned construction manager with three years' experience, responsible for the supervision, coordination, and planning of the work for trade contractors in on-site construction environments in a safe and efficient manner.

EDUCATION

Longford Tech **Aug '10 - Dec '14**
Construction Management/Business Administration

EXPERIENCE

TradeLot, Construction Manager **Feb '15 - Current**

- Sequenced the work of all trades so that a quality product was consistently delivered within the confines of the project schedule
- Ensured that an overall understanding of the scope of work existed on a daily basis while on-site leading to a 20% reduction in unplanned project delays
- Approved materials on the project and facilitated project coordination resulting in more efficient use of material
- Completed project closeout including creation of trade contractor's punch list items and proper submission of closeout documents, meeting all deadlines

River Tech, Construction Manager Assistant **Current - Current**

- Negotiated trade labor agreements without delays in beginning projects
- Proactively identified and then resolved potential problems in order to avoid unnecessary cost and delay
- Assessed work being performed to ensure that all contract specifications were being met

SKILLS

- Interpersonal
- Risk Management

SAMPLE RESUME

Sofia Flores

Hartford CT • (123) 456-7891
sflores@email.com

SUMMARY

A dedicated and skilled Utility Worker with more than three years of experience working in construction repair and maintenance, including underground and trenched electrical distribution systems. This includes pipe installation, general labor and heavy equipment operation skills for construction contract utility projects.

EDUCATION

Green Valley State **Aug '10 - Dec '14**
Utility Construction/Business Office Skills

EXPERIENCE

TradeLot Construction, Utility Worker **Feb '15 - Current**

- Cleans 17 machines and components as needed to prepare equipment for daily use
- Operates heavy equipment to and from service departments and project sites
- Organizes and repairs work tools for on-site trades
- Keeps yard and work areas clean and organized throughout the day to ensure a safe work environment, resulting in 44% decrease in accidents over two years

Cloud Clearwater Construction, Assistant Utility Worker **Current - Current**

- Consistently operated overhead cranes, hoists, power tools and other project equipment in a safe manner
- Anticipated needs of 11 on-site workers and delivered parts to 23 field technicians
- Completed weekly service reports, time cards and other related project equipment paperwork

SKILLS

- Management
- Machine Operator

SAMPLE RESUME

Ivy Haddington

Lake Charles LA • (123) 456-7891
ihaddington@email.com

SUMMARY

Adaptable and compassionate Substitute Teacher with 3+ years of experience quickly identifying student needs and picking up lesson plans to ensure uninterrupted learning.

EDUCATION

CORAL SPRINGS UNIVERSITY **Aug '10 - May '14**
Bachelor of Arts in Education

EXPERIENCE

CLOUD CLEARWATER, Substitute Teacher **Current - Current**

- Adapt quickly to a variety of subjects, grade levels and teaching styles to present information effectively to students without interrupting the lesson plan schedule
- Communicate effectively with teachers, counselors and parents to determine the best way to present information for individual class needs
- Address any student behavioural problems, calming disruptive students and escalating to principal as needed
- Supervise tests, quizzes and in-class projects, maintaining a quiet and focused environment

CRANE & JENKINS, Substitute Teacher **Current - Current**

- Designed fun and educational lessons for a variety of subjects and grade levels (K-8)
- Ensured yearly lesson plans were not interrupted by incorporating scheduled quizzes, presentations or exams into day
- Supervised quiet reading time, group discussions or educational videos based on material

SKILLS

- Strong communication skills
- Adaptability & attention to detail

13 Fields to Explore for Your Career

August 26, 2020
Choosing a career path is easier when you know what options you have. Knowing the various career fields will help you be able to choose the right job based on your talents, education and interests. In this article, we list common career fields and the example jobs within each category.

What are career fields?

Career fields are ways of categorizing different types of jobs based on common similarities. These categories help people to narrow down their career choices so they can choose a specific path that suits them. Career fields help people to easily organize the different types of labor for easier understanding. Each career field has unique requirements and duties associated with their professions. When looking for a new job, you should consider what career path you would like to follow.

13 Career fields

Below are some common career fields and examples of jobs that belong to each category:

1. Architecture and engineering

People in the architecture and planning fields are responsible for designing new structures or creating aesthetically pleasing, practical and structurally sound environments. Many positions require an undergraduate or graduate degree. Jobs in this field include:

- Architect
- Civil engineer
- Landscape architect
- Sustainable designer
- Biomedical engineer

2. Arts, culture and entertainment

This career field is dedicated to enriching people's lives through culture and the sharing of arts and self-expression. There are formal educational programs for these fields, but these careers also include self-taught people who have natural talent. Some jobs in this field include:

- Singer/songwriter
- Music producer
- Art curator
- Animator/video game designer

- Filmmaker
- Graphic designer
- Fashion designer
- Photographer

3. Business, management and administration

The business, management and administration career fields are best for business-minded individuals with a penchant for communication. They work to execute various processes necessary for the functioning of businesses. It usually involves working in an office environment. Here are some of the positions in this field:

- Human resources manager
- Marketing assistant
- Accountants
- Secretary
- Entrepreneur/small business owner
- Real estate agent
- Business development manager

4. Communications

The communications career field is about mastering the art of delivering a targeted message to diverse groups of people. Some positions in this field include:

- Journalist
- Copywriter
- Communications manager
- Public relations specialist
- Meeting/event planner
- Social media manager
- Brand manager

5. Community and social services

The community and social services career field include jobs that offer tangible support to people and communities to enrich the lives of people.

Based in ideals of social justice and equality, this career path is for people who want to improve social systems and services. Often, people go in this field because there is a specific group of people they wish to advocate for or help.

Some jobs in this field include:

- School counselor
- Speech pathologist
- Rehabilitation counselor

- Licensed clinical social worker
- Child welfare social worker
- Palliative and hospice care worker

6. Education

The education field is dedicated to the art of skillfully disseminating knowledge and information to people. The most obvious job in this field are teachers, but it is not just limited to teaching. There are also management, administrative and board member jobs, for example.

Here are some jobs you can find in this field:

- Special education teacher
- School principal
- Superintendent
- College professor
- School librarian
- Substitute teacher

7. Science and technology

Science and technology is a diverse career field that generally involves scientific research and the development of innovative technologies that benefit humanity.

Scientific professions often involved some degree of mathematics or computer science knowledge.

These professions all belong to this career field:

- Archeologist
- Software engineer
- Laboratory technician
- Microbiologist
- Physicist

8. Installation, repair and maintenance

The installation, repair and maintenance career field is dedicated to helping customers operate specialized machinery. Workers in this field have a vast knowledge of their trade. They help to install, maintain, troubleshoot and repair a variety of different objects in the modern world.

Jobs in this career field include:

- Auto mechanic
- Landscaper and groundskeeper

- Bicycle repairer
- Wind turbine technician
- Plumber

9. Farming, fishing and forestry

The farming, fishing and forestry career fields are ideal for people who enjoy the outdoors. Providing food for people, this career field is an essential part of society. These professions work directly with ecosystems and manage them in various ways. People get the opportunity to be close to wildlife and nature. It includes the growing and harvesting of plants and animals for human consumption.

Jobs in this career field include:

- Agricultural worker
- Animal breeder
- Nursery worker
- Forest and conservation worker
- Fisher

10. Government

The government career-field comprises jobs where you work directly with government institutions on a federal, state or local level. It is a diverse career-field with a variety of different occupations. Sometimes, people who seek to advance in this profession pursue an education in political sciences.

Jobs in government can include:

- School cafeteria worker
- Congressional staff
- National park ranger
- Mail carrier
- Elementary school teacher

11. Health and medicine

This career profession involves healthcare services that provide care for people. They are an essential part of our society. This professional field often requires specialized training and certification.

Here are some examples of professions in health and medicine:

- Anesthesiologist
- Dental assistant
- Nurse
- Veterinarian

- Physical therapist

12. Law and public policy

Within the law and public policy field, the variety of occupations include criminal justice, public policy advocacy and political lobbying. This career field comprises all the employment sectors. You can find a job in government, nonprofit, thinktanks and large for-profit companies.

Here are some jobs in this career field:

- Lobbyist
- Public administrator
- Paralegal
- Lawyer
- Labor relations specialist

13. Sales

Choosing a career path in sales involves working to sell items or services to individuals and businesses. People require in-depth knowledge of what they are selling. This field is customer service oriented and it often helps to have good interpersonal skills.

Jobs in this career field include:

- Sales associate
- sales development rep
- Account executive
- Regional sales manager
- VP of sales

Action Verbs

Management Skills
Administered
Analyzed
Assigned
Chaired
Consolidated
Contracted
Coordinated
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Evaluated
Executed
Organized
Oversaw
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reorganized
Reviewed
Scheduled
Supervised

Communication Skills
Addressed
Arbitrated
Arranged
Authored
Co-authored
Collaborated
Corresponded
Developed
Directed
Drafted
Enlisted
Formulated
Influenced
Interpreted
Lectured
Mediated
Moderated
Negotiated
Persuaded
Promoted
Proposed
Publicized
Reconciled
Recruited
Spoke
Translated
Wrote

Research Skills
Clarified
Collected
Critiqued
Diagnosed
Evaluated
Examined
Extracted
Identified
Inspected
Inspired
Interpreted
Interviewed
Investigated
Organized
Reviewed
Summarized
Surveyed
Systemized

Technical Skills
Assembled
Built
Calculated
Computed
Designed
Devised
Engineered
Fabricated
Maintained
Operated
Pinpointed
Programmed
Remodeled
Repaired
Solved

Teaching Skills
Adapted
Advised
Clarified
Coached
Communicated
Conducted
Coordinated
Developed
Enabled
Encouraged
Evaluated
Explained
Facilitated
Guided
Informed
Instructed
Lectured
Persuaded
Set goals
Stimulated
Taught
Trained

Financial Skills
Administered
Allocated
Analyzed
Appraised
Audited
Balanced
Budgeted
Calculated
Computed
Developed
Managed
Planned
Projected
Researched

Creative Skills
Acted
Conceptualized
Created
Customized
Designed
Developed
Directed
Established
Fashioned
Illustrated
Instituted
Integrated
Performed
Planned
Proved
Revised
Revitalized
Set up
Shaped
Streamlined
Structured
Tabulated
Validated

Helping Skills
Assessed
Assisted
Clarified
Coached
Counseled
Demonstrated
Diagnosed
Educated
Facilitated
Familiarized
Guided
Inspired
Motivated
Participated
Provided
Referred
Rehabilitated
Reinforced
Represented
Supported
Taught
Trained
Verified

Clerical or Detail Skills
Approved
Arranged
Catalogued
Classified
Collected
Compiled
Dispatched
Executed
Filed
Generated
Implemented
Inspected
Monitored
Operated
Ordered
Organized
Prepared
Processed
Purchased
Recorded
Retrieved
Screened
Specified
Systematized

Stronger Verbs for Accomplishments
Accelerated
Achieved
Attained
Completed
Conceived
Convinced
Discovered
Doubled
Effected
Eliminated
Expanded
Expedited
Founded
Improved
Increased
Initiated
Innovated
Introduced
Invented
Launched
Mastered
Originated
Overcame
Overhauled
Pioneered
Reduced
Resolved
Revitalized
Spearheaded
Strengthened
Transformed
Upgraded

From To Boldly Go: Practical Career Advice for Scientists*, by Peter S. Fiske*

How to Get Your Resume Noticed

Do you still need a traditional-style **resume**? Yes, even if a prospective employer doesn't ask for one, it's essential to smart job hunting. A well-thought-out resume enables you to put yourself in perspective for yourself: Where have you been, where are you now, and where do you want to go next? What kind of work do you want to do more of? What are you ready for?

Puzzling out this challenge empowers you speak well for yourself at interviews. It puts you in a better position to **target the right jobs** because you can recognize the most promising opportunities. It also helps you strategize your online presence to back up how you present yourself. And these days, you can't always anticipate when it's time to find a new perch. Your supervisor many change, company priorities may shift, budgets may be cut. Having a ready resume in your pocket is a big advantage.

Here are some specific ways to sharpen your resume and bring it alive.

- **Ask yourself, "Does my resume qualify me for another job just like the one I have — or the one I want?"**
  Picture your ideal next step in as much detail as you can. Then think: What have I done so far that perfectly equips me for that job? Consider your experience, positions to date, accomplishments, skills, any special qualifications in that context. You need to know why you deserve the job to that to someone else. Write a three- to five-line Summary of Experience based on this thinking to introduce yourself at the top of the resume. Give yourself a generalized job title that relates closely to your target, but honestly **interprets your experience**. Write the summary in narrative form — that is, not with bullets.

- **Use the rest of the resume to back up this introduction.**
  Begin each previous job description with a few lines of narrative that provide readers with an easy-to-grasp idea of the most important and relevant work you performed. Follow this with bullets that highlight specific results and achievements, in order of relevance to the job you want.

- **Translate responsibilities into accomplishments.**
  Completely eliminate the words, “responsible for.” This is tough, but doing so gives you much better results. Thinking about projects you handled can help, because they often seek to solve a problem and deliver tangible results. Then, rather than, “Responsible for leading team to develop new purchasing guidelines,” try for something more like, “Led task force to plan new company-wide purchasing system.” Better yet, add “which reduced expenses 3 percent within three months of implementation.” Or provide anecdotal evidence if you can’t quantify: “Recognized as employee of the month for this result.”

- **Make your job descriptions as concrete as possible.**
  Rather than relying on vague generalizations, industry jargon, or business-speak, figure out what you actually *do* that’s important and even unique. Which is better: “Create cutting-edge solutions to managing virtual collaboration channels,” or “Customize communication software that keeps virtual teams coordinated through user-friendly, time-saving systems”?

- **Watch your words.**
  Build with short, everyday words and **action verbs** throughout — to find the latter, just Google “action verbs for resumes.” Infinite possibilities come up. Do your homework on search terms, too, drawing on the language of the job positing and some research into the industry. This may lead you to use some of that business-speak I warned you against, but machines and skimming readers need to see them — so balance their presence with concrete language. And finally, edit and proofread obsessively. In a world where you face dozens or hundreds of competitors for every chance, correctness is credibility. Don’t risk losing what you want because of a single spelling error.

Reading Aloud

What this handout is about

This handout explains some of the benefits of hearing your writing read aloud. It offers tips on reading your draft yourself, asking a friend to read it to you, or having it read by a text-to-speech program or app.

Why read out loud?

If you come to the Writing Center for a tutoring session, you will probably hear your tutor say, “We always read papers out loud—would you like to read yours, or would you like to hear me read it?” Reading aloud has many benefits that we want to share with writers. Most people have far more experience listening to and speaking English than they do reading and editing it on the printed page. When you read your draft out loud or listen to someone else read it, your brain gets the information in a new way, and you may notice things that you didn’t see before.

As listeners, we need the order of ideas in a paper to make sense. We can’t flip back and forth from page to page to try to figure out what is going on or find information we need. When you hear your paper read out loud, you may recognize that you need to re-order the information in it or realize that there are gaps in your explanation. Listeners also need transitions to help us get from one main idea to the next. When you hear your paper, you may recognize places where you have moved from one topic to another too abruptly.

You may also hear errors in your sentences. Sometimes we leave out a word, mess things up as we copy and paste text, or make a grammatical mistake. These kinds of errors can be hard to see on the page, but sentences that contain them are very likely to sound wrong. For native speakers of English (and some non-native speakers, too), reading out loud is one of the most powerful proofreading techniques around.

Sometimes sentences aren’t grammatically incorrect, but they are still awkward in some way—too long, too convoluted, too repetitive. Problems like these are often easily heard. Hearing your paper can also help you get a sense of whether the tone is right. Does it sound too formal? Too chatty or casual? What kind of impression will your voice in this paper make on a reader? Sometimes hearing your words helps you get a more objective sense of the impression you are creating—listening puts in you in something more like the position your reader will be in as he/she moves through your text.

What are some strategies for reading out loud?

Reading your paper out loud has a lot of benefits, but it presents a few challenges, too. One issue is that a lot depends on how you read. It is very easy to read too quickly or to let your brain automatically "smooth over" mistakes, fill in missing words, and make little corrections without you ever becoming consciously aware that it's happening. If you don't read exactly what is on the printed page, you won't get an accurate sense of what is in your paper. **Here are some strategies to help you read out loud effectively:**

- Try working from a printed copy. This will allow you to make marks at places where something sounds wrong to you so you can return to them later.
- As you read, follow along with your finger, pointing at each word. This can help you stay focused and not skip anything.
- Try to read at a moderate pace.
- If you are proofreading, consider reading your paper out loud one sentence at a time, starting at the end and working back to the beginning. This will help you focus on the structure of each sentence, rather than on the overall flow of your argument.
- Try covering up everything but the section or sentence you are working on at the moment so you can concentrate on it and not get lost.

Another great strategy to try is to ask a friend to read your paper out loud while you listen. Make sure that your friend knows to read exactly what is on the printed page. Pay close attention to places where your friend seems to stumble or get lost—those may be places where you need to make things clearer for your readers. As your friend is speaking, you can jot notes on a printed copy of the paper. You don't have to be in the same room to do this—you could email a copy of your paper to your friend and ask him/her to call you and read to you over the phone.

How can technology help?

You don't necessarily need to recruit a friend to read to you. There are a number of text-to-speech software applications and web-based services that will help you get your computer, smartphone, tablet, or e-book reader to read your paper out loud to you. One advantage of this approach is that an automated reader will definitely not cover up any errors for you! You can also control where it starts and stops, speed it up or slow it down, and have it re-read the same paragraph as many times as you want.

If you decide to experiment with this approach, there are many free text readers available. MS Word has a text-to-speech feature built in. Recent Android and iOS phones also have text-to-speech capabilities, which you can find under accessibility settings. You may also find text-to-speech software among your Windows or Mac computer's accessibility features.

If you decide you want to acquire specialized software, "text to speech," "TTS," and "text reader" are search terms that can help you find what is available.

Here are some differences to keep in mind as you choose the best reader for you:

- **Voice quality and selection:** how many voices can you choose from, and how natural do they sound?
- **Controls:** can you determine the speed and pitch of the speaker, where the reading starts and stops, etc.? Is there a pause button?
- **Applicability:** can you convert your text file into an audio file, download it, and listen to it on your phone or music player?
- **Text handling:** does the software highlight each word as it is read (which may be especially helpful for non-native English speakers and students with reading/writing disabilities)? Do you need to copy text and paste it into a new window, or can the program work directly within an application (like Word or Powerpoint), or does it just read the text on your screen?
- **Speed:** how many pages of text or words can be converted to voice at once? How quickly does the conversion happen?
- **Type of program:** do you need an active internet connection to use the program, or can you run it without internet access once it has been installed?

While synthetic voices continue to improve, they will likely not sound completely natural to you. But you may find that if you choose a favorite voice, you can get used to its intonation and pacing over time.

I feel kind of silly doing this…

Reading aloud (or listening to your writing being read) takes some getting used to, but give it a try. You may be surprised at how much it can speed up your revision process!

Editing and Proofreading

What this handout is about

This handout provides some tips and strategies for revising your writing. To give you a chance to practice proofreading, we have left seven errors (three spelling errors, two punctuation errors, and two grammatical errors) in the text of this handout. See if you can spot them!

Is editing the same thing as proofreading?

Not exactly. Although many people use the terms interchangeably, editing and proofreading are two different stages of the revision process. Both demand close and careful reading, but they focus on different aspects of the writing and employ different techniques.

Some tips that apply to both editing and proofreading

- **Get some distance from the text!** It's hard to edit or proofread a paper that you've just finished writing—it's still to familiar, and you tend to skip over a lot of errors. Put the paper aside for a few hours, days, or weeks. Go for a run. Take a trip to the beach. Clear your head of what you've written so you can take a fresh look at the paper and see what is really on the page. Better yet, give the paper to a friend—you can't get much more distance than that. Someone who is reading the paper for the first time, comes to it with completely fresh eyes.
- **Decide which medium lets you proofread most carefully.** Some people like to work right at the computer, while others like to sit back with a printed copy that they can mark up as they read.
- **Try changing the look of your document.** Altering the size, spacing, color, or style of the text may trick your brain into thinking it's seeing an unfamiliar document, and that can help you get a different perspective on what you've written.
- **Find a quiet place to work.** Don't try to do your proofreading in front of the TV or while you're chugging away on the treadmill. Find a place where you can concentrate and avoid distractions.
- **If possible, do your editing and proofreading in several short blocks of time.** Your concentration may start to wane if you try to proofread the entire text at one time.
- **If you're short on time, you may wish to prioritize.** Make sure that you complete the most important editing and proofreading tasks.

Editing

Editing is what you begin doing as soon as you finish your first draft. You reread your draft to see, for example, whether the paper is well-organized, the transitions between paragraphs are smooth, and your evidence really backs up your argument. You can edit on several levels:

Content

Have you done everything the assignment requires? Are the claims you make accurate? If it is required to do so, does your paper make an argument? Is the argument complete? Are all of your claims consistent? Have you supported each point with adequate evidence? Is all of the information in your paper relevant to the assignment and/or your overall writing goal? (For additional tips, see our handouts on understanding assignments and developing an argument.)

Overall structure

Does your paper have an appropriate introduction and conclusion? Is your thesis clearly stated in your introduction? Is it clear how each paragraph in the body of your paper is related to your thesis? Are the paragraphs arranged in a logical sequence? Have you made clear transitions between paragraphs? One way to check the structure of your paper is to make a reverse outline of the paper after you have written the first draft. (See our handouts on introductions, conclusions, thesis statements, and transitions.)

Structure within paragraphs

Does each paragraph have a clear topic sentence? Does each paragraph stick to one main idea? Are there any extraneous or missing sentences in any of your paragraphs? (See our handout on paragraph development.)

Clarity

Have you defined any important terms that might be unclear to your reader? Is the meaning of each sentence clear? (One way to answer this question is to read your paper one sentence at a time, starting at the end and working backwards so that you will not unconsciously fill in content from previous sentences.) Is it clear what each pronoun (he, she, it, they, which, who, this, etc.) refers to? Have you chosen the proper words to express your ideas? Avoid using words you find in the thesaurus that aren't part of your normal vocabulary; you may misuse them.

Style

Have you used an appropriate tone (formal, informal, persuasive, etc.)? Is your use of gendered language (masculine and feminine pronouns like "he" or "she," words like "fireman" that contain

"man," and words that some people incorrectly assume apply to only one gender—for example, some people assume "nurse" must refer to a woman) appropriate? Have you varied the length and structure of your sentences? Do you tends to use the passive voice too often? Does your writing contain a lot of unnecessary phrases like "there is," "there are," "due to the fact that," etc.? Do you repeat a strong word (for example, a vivid main verb) unnecessarily? (For tips, see our handouts on style and gender-inclusive language.)

Citations

Have you appropriately cited quotes, paraphrases, and ideas you got from sources? Are your citations in the correct format? (See the UNC Libraries citation tutorial for more information.)

As you edit at all of these levels, you will usually make significant revisions to the content and wording of your paper. Keep an eye out for patterns of error; knowing what kinds of problems you tend to have will be helpful, especially if you are editing a large document like a thesis or dissertation. Once you have identified a pattern, you can develop techniques for spotting and correcting future instances of that pattern. For example, if you notice that you often discuss several distinct topics in each paragraph, you can go through your paper and underline the key words in each paragraph, then break the paragraphs up so that each one focuses on just one main idea.

Proofreading

Proofreading is the final stage of the editing process, focusing on surface errors such as misspellings and mistakes in grammar and punctuation. You should proofread only after you have finished all of your other editing revisions.

Why proofread? It's the content that really matters, right?

Content is important. But like it or not, the way a paper looks affects the way others judge it. When you've worked hard to develop and present your ideas, you don't want careless errors distracting your reader from what you have to say. It's worth paying attention to the details that help you to make a good impression.

Most people devote only a few minutes to proofreading, hoping to catch any glaring errors that jump out from the page. But a quick and cursory reading, especially after you've been working long and hard on a paper, usually misses a lot. It's better to work with a definite plan that helps you to search systematically for specific kinds of errors.

Sure, this takes a little extra time, but it pays off in the end. If you know that you have an effective way to catch errors when the paper is almost finished, you can worry less about editing while you are writing your first drafts. This makes the entire writing proccess more efficient.

Try to keep the editing and proofreading processes separate. When you are editing an early draft, you don't want to be bothered with thinking about punctuation, grammar, and spelling. If your worrying about the spelling of a word or the placement of a comma, you're not focusing on the more important task of developing and connecting ideas.

The proofreading process

You probably already use some of the strategies discussed below. Experiment with different tactics until you find a system that works well for you. The important thing is to make the process systematic and focused so that you catch as many errors as possible in the least amount of time.

- **Don't rely entirely on spelling checkers.** These can be useful tools but they are far from foolproof. Spell checkers have a limited dictionary, so some words that show up as misspelled may really just not be in their memory. In addition, spell checkers will not catch misspellings that form another valid word. For example, if you type "your" instead of "you're," "to" instead of "too," or "there" instead of "their," the spell checker won't catch the error.

- **Grammar checkers can be even more problematic.** These programs work with a limited number of rules, so they can't identify every error and often make mistakes. They also fail to give thorough explanations to help you understand why a sentence should be revised. You may want to use a grammar checker to help you identify potential run-on sentences or too-frequent use of the passive voice, but you need to be able to evaluate the feedback it provides.

- **Proofread for only one kind of error at a time.** If you try to identify and revise too many things at once, you risk losing focus, and your proofreading will be less effective. It's easier to catch grammar errors if you aren't checking punctuation and spelling at the same time. In addition, some of the techniques that work well for spotting one kind of mistake won't catch others.

- **Read slow, and read every word.** Try reading out loud, which forces you to say each word and also lets you hear how the words sound together. When you read silently or too quickly, you may skip over errors or make unconscious corrections.

- **Separate the text into individual sentences.** This is another technique to help you to read every sentence carefully. Simply press the return key after every period so that every line begins a new sentence. Then read each sentence separately, looking for grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors. If you're working with a printed copy, try using an opaque object like a ruler or a piece of paper to isolate the line you're working on.

- **Circle every punctuation mark.** This forces you to look at each one. As you circle, ask yourself if the punctuation is correct.

- **Read the paper backwards.** This technique is helpful for checking spelling. Start with the last word on the last page and work your way back to the beginning, reading each word separately. Because content, punctuation, and grammar won't make any sense, your focus will be entirely on the spelling of each word. You can also read backwards sentence by sentence to check grammar; this will help you avoid becoming distracted by content issues.

- **Proofreading is a learning process.** You're not just looking for errors that you recognize; you're also learning to recognize and correct new errors. This is where handbooks and dictionaries come in. Keep the ones you find helpful close at hand as you proofread.

- **Ignorance may be bliss, but it won't make you a better proofreader.** You'll often find things that don't seem quite right to you, but you may not be quite sure what's wrong either. A word looks like it might be misspelled, but the spell checker didn't catch it. You think you need a comma between two words, but you're not sure why. Should you use "that" instead of "which"? If you're not sure about something, look it up.

- **The proofreading process becomes more efficient as you develop and practice a systematic strategy.** You'll learn to identify the specific areas of your own writing that need careful attention, and knowing that you have a sound method for finding errors will help you to focus more on developing your ideas while you are drafting the paper.

Think you've got it?

Then give it a try, if you haven't already! This handout contains seven errors our proofreader should have caught: three spelling errors, two punctuation errors, and two grammatical errors. Try to find them, and then check a version of this page with the errors marked in red to see if you're a proofreading star.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.

Especially for non-native speakers of English:

Ascher, Allen. *Think about Editing: An ESL Guide for the Harbrace Handbooks.* Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2006.

Lane, Janet, and Ellen Lange. *Writing Clearly: Grammar for Editing.* 3rd ed. Boston: Heinle ELT, 2011.

For everyone:

Einsohn, Amy. *The Copyeditor's Handbook: A Guide for Book Publishing and Corporate Communications.* 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Lanham, Richard A. *Revising Prose.* 5th ed. New York: Longman, 2006.

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Literature

What this handout is about

This handout describes some steps for planning and writing papers about literary texts. For additional information on writing about drama and poetry specifically, please see the Writing Center's handouts on writing about drama and on writing poetry explications.

Demystifying the process

Writing an analysis of a piece of literature can be a mystifying process. First, literary analyses (or papers that offer an interpretation of literary texts) rely on the assumption that stories, poems, and plays must mean something. How do such texts mean something? If an author wanted to convey a meaning, wouldn't she be much better off writing an essay just telling us what she meant?

It's pretty easy to see how at least some stories, for example, convey clear meanings or morals. Just think about a parable like the prodigal son or a nursery tale about "crying wolf." Stories like these are reduced down to the bare elements, giving us just enough detail to lead us to their main points, and because they are relatively easy to understand and tend to stick in our memories, they're often used in some kinds of education.

But if the meanings were always as clear as they are in parables, who would really need to write a paper analyzing them? Interpretations of literature would not be interesting if the meanings of these texts were clear to everyone who reads them. Thankfully (or perhaps regrettably, depending on your perspective) the texts we're asked to interpret in our classes are a good bit more complicated than most parables. They frequently use characters, settings, syntax, formal elements, and actions to illustrate issues that have no easy resolution. They show different sides of a problem, and they can raise new questions. In short, the literary texts we read in class have meanings that are arguable and complicated, and it's our job to sort them out.

It might seem that these texts do have specific meanings, and the instructor has already decided what those meanings are. But even the most well-informed professor rarely arrives at conclusions that someone else wouldn't disagree with. In fact, most professors are aware that their interpretations are debatable and actually love a good argument. But let's not go to the other extreme. To say that there is no one answer is not to say that anything we decide to say about a literary text is valid, interesting, or valuable. Interpretations of literature are often opinions, but not all opinions are equal.

So what makes a valid and interesting opinion? **A good interpretation of fiction will:**

- avoid the obvious (in other words, it won't argue a conclusion that most readers could reach on their own from a general knowledge of the story)
- support its main points with strong evidence from the story
- use careful reasoning to explain how that evidence relates to the main points of the interpretation.

The following steps are intended as a guide through the difficult process of writing an interpretive paper that meets these criteria. Writing tends to be a highly individual task, so adapt these suggestions to fit your own habits and inclinations.

Writing a paper on fiction in 9 steps

1. Become familiar with the text

There's no substitute for a good general knowledge of your text. A good paper inevitably begins with the writer having a solid understanding of the work that she interprets. Being able to have the whole book, short story, poem, or play in your head—at least in a general way—when you begin thinking through ideas will be a great help and will actually allow you to write the paper more quickly in the long run. It's even a good idea to spend some time just thinking about the text. Flip back through the book and consider what interests you about this piece of writing—what seemed strange, new, or important?

2. Explore potential topics

Perhaps your instructor has given you a list of topics to choose, or perhaps you have been asked to create your own. Either way, you'll need to generate ideas to use in the paper—even with an assigned topic, you'll have to develop your own interpretation. Let's assume for now that you are choosing your own topic.

After reading your text, a topic may just jump out at you, or you may have recognized a pattern or identified a problem that you'd like to think about in more detail. What is a pattern or a problem?

A pattern can be the recurrence of certain kinds of imagery, vocabulary, formal elements (like rhyme and meter), or events. Usually, repetition of particular aspects tends to render those elements more conspicuous. Let's say I'm writing a paper on Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. In the course of reading that book, I keep noticing the author's use of biblical imagery: Victor Frankenstein anticipates that "a new species would bless me as its creator and source" (52) while the monster is not sure whether to consider himself as an Adam or a Satan. These details might help me interpret the way characters think about themselves and about each other, as well as allow me to infer what the author might have wanted her reader to think by using the Bible as a frame of reference. On

another subject, I also notice that the book repeatedly refers to types of education. The story mentions books that its characters read and the different contexts in which learning takes place.

A problem, on the other hand, is something that bugs you or that doesn't seem to add up. For example, a character might act in some way that's unaccountable, a narrator may leave out what we think is important information (or may focus on something that seems trivial), or a narrator or character may offer an explanation that doesn't seem to make sense to us. Not all problems lead in interesting directions, but some definitely do and even seem to be important parts of the text. In the novel *Frankenstein*, Victor works day and night to achieve his goal of bringing life to the dead, but once he realizes his goal, he is immediately repulsed by his creation and runs away. Why? Is there something wrong with his creation, something wrong with his goal in the first place, or something wrong with Victor himself? The book doesn't give us a clear answer but seems to invite us to interpret this problem.

If nothing immediately strikes you as interesting or no patterns or problems jump out at you, don't worry. Just start making a list of whatever you remember from your reading, regardless of how insignificant it may seem to you now. Consider an image that stuck with you, a character's peculiar behavior or comments, a word choice that you found interesting, the unusual way the narrator describes an event, or the author's placement of an action in an odd context.

There's a good chance that some of these intriguing moments and oddities will relate to other points in the text, eventually revealing some kind of pattern and giving you potential topics for your paper. Also keep in mind that if you found something peculiar in the text you're writing about, chances are good that other people will have been perplexed by these moments as well and will be interested to see how you make sense of it all. It's even a good idea to test your ideas out on a friend, a classmate, or an instructor since talking about your ideas will help you develop them and push them beyond obvious interpretations of the text. And it's only by pushing those ideas that you can write a paper that raises interesting issues or problems and that offers creative interpretations related to those issues.

3. Select a topic with a lot of evidence

If you're selecting from a number of possible topics, narrow down your list by identifying how much evidence or how many specific details you could use to investigate each potential issue. Do this step just off the top of your head. Keep in mind that persuasive papers rely on ample evidence and that having a lot of details to choose from can also make your paper easier to write.

It might be helpful at this point to jot down all the elements of the text that have some bearing on the two or three topics that seem most promising. This can give you a more visual sense of how much evidence you will have to work with on each potential topic. It's during this activity that having a good knowledge of your text will come in handy and save you a lot of time. Don't launch into a topic

without considering all the options first because you may end up with a topic that seemed promising initially but that only leads to a dead end.

4. Write out a working thesis

Based on the evidence that relates to your topic—and what you anticipate you might say about those pieces of evidence—come up with a working thesis. Don't spend a lot of time composing this statement at this stage since it will probably change. A changing thesis statement is a good sign that you're starting to say more interesting and complex things on your subject. (Our Thesis Statements handout provides an example of a developing thesis statement for a literary analysis assignment.) At this point in my *Frankenstein project*, I've become interested in ideas on education that seem to appear pretty regularly, and I have a general sense that aspects of Victor's education lead to tragedy. Without considering things too deeply, I'll just write something like "Victor Frankenstein's tragic ambition was fueled by a faulty education."

5. Make an extended list of evidence

Once you have a working topic in mind, skim back over the text and make a more comprehensive list of the details that relate to your point. For my paper about education in *Frankenstein*, I'll want to take notes on what Victor Frankenstein reads at home, where he goes to school and why, what he studies at school, what others think about those studies, etc. And even though I'm primarily interested in Victor's education, at this stage in the writing, I'm also interested in moments of education in the novel that don't directly involve this character. These other examples might provide a context or some useful contrasts that could illuminate my evidence relating to Victor. With this goal in mind, I'll also take notes on how the monster educates himself, what he reads, and what he learns from those he watches. As you make your notes keep track of page numbers so you can quickly find the passages in your book again and so you can easily document quoted passages when you write without having to fish back through the book.

At this point, you want to include anything, anything, that might be useful, and you also want to avoid the temptation to arrive at definite conclusions about your topic. Remember that one of the qualities that makes for a good interpretation is that it avoids the obvious. You want to develop complex ideas, and the best way to do that is to keep your ideas flexible until you've considered the evidence carefully. A good gauge of complexity is whether you feel you understand more about your topic than you did when you began (and even just reaching a higher state of confusion is a good indicator that you're treating your topic in a complex way).

If, for example, you are jotting down your ideas about *Frankenstein*, you can focus on the observations from the narrator or things that certain characters say or do. These elements are certainly important. It might help you come up with more evidence if you also take into account some

of the broader components that go into making fiction, things like plot, point of view, character, setting, and symbols.

Plot is the string of events that go into the narrative. Think of this as the “who did what to whom” part of the story. Plots can be significant in themselves since chances are pretty good that some action in the story will relate to your main idea. For my paper on education in *Frankenstein*, I’m interested in Victor’s going to the University of Ingolstadt to realize his father’s wish that Victor attend school where he could learn about another culture. Plots can also allow you to make connections between the story you’re interpreting and some other stories, and those connections might be useful in your interpretation. For example, the plot of *Frankenstein*, which involves a man who desires to bring life to the dead and creates a monster in the process, bears some similarity to the ancient Greek story of Icarus who flew too close to the sun on his wax wings. Both tell the story of a character who reaches too ambitiously after knowledge and suffers dire consequences.

Your plot could also have similarities to whole groups of other stories, all having conventional or easily recognizable plots. These types of stories are often called genres. Some popular genres within fiction include the gothic, the romance, the detective story, the bildungsroman (this is just a German term for a novel that is centered around the development of its main characters), and the novel of manners (a novel that focuses on the behavior and foibles of a particular class or social group). These categories are often helpful in characterizing a piece of writing, but this approach has its limitations. Many novels don’t fit nicely into one genre, and others seem to borrow a bit from a variety of different categories; the same can be said for other forms of literature, like poetry and drama. For example, given my working thesis on education, I am more interested in Victor’s development than in relating *Frankenstein* to the gothic genre, so I might decide to treat the novel as a bildungsroman.

And just to complicate matters that much more, it’s important to take into account not only the larger genre(s) a literary piece fits within (like the bildungsroman and the gothic) but also the form(s) utilized in that piece. For example, a story might be told in a series of letters (this is called an epistolary form), in a sequence of journal entries, or in a combination of forms (*Frankenstein* is actually told as a journal included within a letter).

These matters of form can also introduce questions of point of view, that is, who is telling the story and what do they or don’t they know. Is the tale told by an omniscient or all-knowing narrator who doesn’t interact in the events, or is it presented by one of the characters within the story? Can the reader trust that person to give an objective account, or does that narrator color the story with her own biases and interests?

Character refers to the qualities assigned to the individual figures in the plot. Consider why the author assigns certain qualities to a character or characters and how any such qualities might relate to your topic. For example, a discussion of Victor Frankenstein’s education might take into account aspects of his character that appear to be developed (or underdeveloped) by the particular kind of

education he undertakes. Victor tends to be ambitious, even compulsive about his studies, and I might be able to argue that his tendency to be extravagant leads him to devote his own education to writers who asserted grand, if questionable, conclusions.

Setting is the environment in which all of the actions take place. What is the time period, the location, the time of day, the season, the weather, the type of room or building? What is the general mood, and who is present? All of these elements can reflect on the story's events, and though the setting of a story tends to be less conspicuous than plot and character, setting still colors everything that's said and done within its context. If Victor Frankenstein does all of his experiments in "a solitary chamber, or rather a cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a staircase" (53), we might conclude that there is something anti-social, isolated, and stale, maybe even unnatural, about his project and his way of learning.

Obviously, if you consider all of these elements, you'll probably have too much evidence to fit effectively into one paper. In this example using the novel *Frankenstein*, your goal is merely to consider each of these aspects of fiction and include only those that are most relevant to your topic and most interesting to your reader. A good interpretive paper does not need to cover all elements of the story—plot, genre, narrative form, character, and setting. In fact, a paper that did try to say something about all of these elements would be unfocused. You might find that most of your topic could be supported, for instance, by a consideration of character alone. That's fine. For my *Frankenstein* paper, I'm finding that my evidence largely has to do with the setting, evidence that could lead to some interesting conclusions that my reader probably hasn't recognized on her own.

6. Select your evidence

Once you've made your expanded list of evidence, decide which supporting details are the strongest. First, select the facts which bear the closest relation to your thesis statement. Second, choose the pieces of evidence you'll be able to say the most about. Readers tend to be more dazzled with your interpretations of evidence than with a lot of quotes from the book. It would be useful to refer to Victor Frankenstein's youthful reading in alchemy, but my reader will be more impressed by some analysis of how the writings of the alchemists—who pursued magical principles of chemistry and physics—reflect the ambition of his own goals. Select the details that will allow you to show off your own reasoning skills and allow you to help the reader see the story in a way he or she may not have seen it before.

7. Refine your thesis

Now it's time to go back to your working thesis and refine it so that it reflects your new understanding of your topic. This step and the previous step (selecting evidence) are actually best done at the same time, since selecting your evidence and defining the focus of your paper depend upon each other. Don't forget to consider the scope of your project: how long is the paper supposed to be, and

what can you reasonably cover in a paper of that length? In rethinking the issue of education in *Frankenstein*, I realize that I can narrow my topic in a number of ways: I could focus on education and culture (Victor's education abroad), education in the sciences as opposed to the humanities (the monster reads Milton, Goethe, and Plutarch), or differences in learning environments (e.g. independent study, university study, family reading). Since I think I found some interesting evidence in the settings that I can interpret in a way that will get my reader's attention, I'll take this last option and refine my working thesis about Victor's faulty education to something like this:

> "Victor Frankenstein's education in unnaturally isolated environments fosters his tragic ambition."

8. Organize your evidence

Once you have a clear thesis you can go back to your list of selected evidence and group all the similar details together. The ideas that tie these clusters of evidence together can then become the claims that you'll make in your paper. As you begin thinking about what claims you can make (i.e. what kinds of conclusions you can reach) keep in mind that they should not only relate to all the evidence but also clearly support your thesis. Once you're satisfied with the way you've grouped your evidence and with the way that your claims relate to your thesis, you can begin to consider the most logical way to organize each of those claims. To support my thesis about *Frankenstein*, I've decided to group my evidence chronologically. I'll start with Victor's education at home, then discuss his learning at the University, and finally address his own experiments. This arrangement will let me show that Victor was always prone to isolation in his education and that this tendency gets stronger as he becomes more ambitious.

There are certainly other organizational options that might work better depending on the type of points I want to stress. I could organize a discussion of education by the various forms of education found in the novel (for example, education through reading, through classrooms, and through observation), by specific characters (education for Victor, the monster, and Victor's bride, Elizabeth), or by the effects of various types of education (those with harmful, beneficial, or neutral effects).

9. Interpret your evidence

Avoid the temptation to load your paper with evidence from your text. To get your readers' interest, you need to draw their attention to elements of the story that they wouldn't necessarily notice or understand on their own. Each time you use a specific reference to your story, be sure to explain the significance of that evidence in your own words. If you're quoting passages without interpreting them, you're not demonstrating your reasoning skills or helping the reader. Our handout on Paragraph Development can offer some guidance in this process; it provides a "5 Step Process to Paragraph Development" that prompts writers to explain, or interpret, each piece of evidence they include in a paragraph. In most cases, interpreting your evidence merely involves putting into your

paper what is already in your head. Remember that we, as readers, are lazy—all of us. We don't want to have to figure out a writer's reasoning for ourselves; we want all the thinking to be done for us in the paper.

General hints

The previous nine steps are intended to give you a sense of the tasks usually involved in writing a good interpretive paper. What follows are just some additional hints that might help you find an interesting topic and maybe even make the process a little more enjoyable.

Make your thesis relevant to your readers

You'll be able to keep your readers' attention more easily if you show how your argument relates to something that concerns or interests them. Can you tell your reader something relevant about the context of the text you're interpreting, about the human condition, or about broader questions? Avoid writing a paper that identifies a pattern in a story but doesn't quite explain why that pattern leads to an interesting interpretation. Identifying the biblical references in *Frankenstein* might provide a good start to a paper—Mary Shelley does use a lot of biblical allusions—but a good paper must also tell the reader how those references are meaningful. Your thesis should be able to answer the brutal question "so what?"

For example, you can ask yourself how the topic you've selected connects to a larger category of concern. Think broadly. Literature scholars have identified connections between literature and the following: economics, family dynamics, education, religion, mortality, law, politics, sexuality, history, psychology, the environment, technology, animality, citizenship, and migration, among others. For readers, these concerns are also crosscut race, class and gender, which makes these intersecting categories dependable sources of interest. For example, if you've traced instances of water imagery in a novel, a next step may be to look at how that imagery is used in the text to imply something about, for instance, femininity and/or race.

Don't assume that as long as you address one of these issues, your paper will be interesting. As mentioned in step 2, you need to address these big topics in a complex way. Avoid going into a topic with a preconceived notion of what you'll find. Be prepared to challenge your own ideas about what gender, race, or class mean in a particular text.

Select a topic of interest to you

Though you may feel like you have to select a topic that sounds like something your instructor would be interested in, don't overlook the fact that you'll be more invested in your paper and probably get more out of it if you make the topic something pertinent to yourself. Pick a topic that might allow you

to learn about yourself and what you find important. At the same time, your argument will be most persuasive if it's built on the evidence you find in the text (as mentioned in step 5).

Make your thesis specific

The effort to be more specific almost always leads to a thesis that will get your reader's attention, and it also separates you from the crowd as someone who challenges ideas and looks into topics more deeply. A paper about education in general in *Frankenstein* will probably not get my reader's attention as much as a more specific topic about the impact of the learning environment on the main character. My readers may have already thought to some extent about ideas of education in the novel, if they have read it, but the chance that they have thought through something more specific like the educational environment is slimmer.

A note about genre and form

While this handout has used the example of a novel, *Frankenstein*, to help illustrate how to develop an argument about a literary text, the steps discussed above can apply to other forms of literature, too. But just as, however, fiction has certain features that guide your analysis (like plot and point of view), other literary forms can have their own unique formal elements that must be considered and can also fit within certain larger genres or literary traditions. For example, John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a long poem in the epic tradition that utilizes a specific meter (unrhymed iambic pentameter); these particularities of genre and form would likely shape your analysis of that text. For more information about how to analyze poetry, see our Poetry Explications handout; for more information about how to analyze drama, see our Drama handout.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find additional publications. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial. We revise these tips periodically and welcome feedback.

Barnet, Sylvan, and William E. Cain. *A Short Guide to Writing About Literature.* 12th ed. Pearson, 2011.

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Toni Morrison

Chloe Anthony Wofford Morrison (born **Chloe Ardelia Wofford**;[2] February 18, 1931 – August 5, 2019), known as **Toni Morrison**, was an American novelist, essayist, book editor, and college professor. Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. The critically acclaimed *Song of Solomon* (1977) brought her national attention and won the National Book Critics Circle Award. In 1988, Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved* (1987); she gained worldwide recognition when she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993.[3]

Born and raised in Lorain, Ohio, Morrison graduated from Howard University in 1953 with a B.A. in English.[4] In 1955, she earned a master's in American Literature from Cornell University. In 1957 she returned to Howard University, was married, and had two children before divorcing in 1964. In the late 1960s, she became the first black female editor in fiction at Random House in New York City. In the 1970s and 1980s, she developed her own reputation as an author, and her perhaps most celebrated work, *Beloved*, was made into a 1998 film.

In 1996, the National Endowment for the Humanities selected her for the Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for achievement in the humanities. Also that year, she was honored with the National Book Foundation's Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. On May 29, 2012, President Barack Obama presented Morrison with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2016, she received the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction.

Life and career

Early years

Toni Morrison was born in Lorain, Ohio, to Ramah (née Willis) and George Wofford. She was the second of four children from a working-class, black family.[5] Her mother was born in Greenville, Alabama, and moved north with her family as a child. Her father grew up in Cartersville, Georgia. When Wofford was about 15, a group of white people lynched two black businessmen who lived on his street. Morrison later said: "He never told us that he'd seen bodies. But he had seen them. And that was too traumatic, I think, for him."[6] Soon after the lynching, George Wofford moved to the racially integrated town of Lorain, Ohio, in the hope of escaping racism and securing gainful employment in Ohio's burgeoning industrial economy. He worked odd jobs and as a welder for U.S. Steel. Ramah Wofford was a homemaker and a devout member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.[7]

When Morrison was about two years old, her family's landlord set fire to the house in which they lived, while they were home, because her parents could not pay the rent. Her family responded to what she called this "bizarre form of evil" by laughing at the landlord rather than falling into despair. Morrison later said her family's response demonstrated how to keep your integrity and claim your own life in the face of acts of such "monumental crudeness."[8]

Morrison's parents instilled in her a sense of heritage and language through telling traditional African-American folktales, ghost stories, and singing songs.[7][9] Morrison also read frequently as a child; among her favorite authors were Jane Austen and Leo Tolstoy.[10] She became a Catholic at the age of 12 and took the baptismal name Anthony (after Anthony of Padua), which led to her nickname, Toni.[11] Attending Lorain High School, she was on the debate team, the yearbook staff, and in the drama club.[7]

Adulthood and editing career: 1949–1975

In 1949, she enrolled at Howard University in Washington, D.C., seeking the company of fellow black intellectuals.[12] It was while at Howard that she encountered racially segregated restaurants and buses for the first time.[6] She graduated in 1953 with a B.A. in English and went on to earn a Master of Arts from Cornell University in 1955. Her master's thesis was titled "Virginia Woolf's and William Faulkner's treatment of the alienated."[13] She taught English, first at Texas Southern University in Houston from 1955–1957, and then at Howard University for the next seven years. While teaching at Howard, she met Harold Morrison, a Jamaican architect, whom she married in 1958. She was pregnant with their second son when she and Harold divorced in 1964.[9][14]

After her divorce in 1965, Morrison began working as an editor, for L. W. Singer, a textbook division of publisher Random House,[7] in Syracuse, New York. Two years later, she transferred to Random House in New York City, where she became their first black woman senior editor in the fiction department.[15][16]

In that capacity, Morrison played a vital role in bringing Black literature into the mainstream. One of the first books she worked on was the groundbreaking *Contemporary African Literature* (1972), a collection that included work by Nigerian writers Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, and South African playwright Athol Fugard.[7] She fostered a new generation of Afro-American writers,[7] including poet and novelist Toni Cade Bambara, radical activist Angela Davis, Black Panther Huey Newton[17] and novelist Gayl Jones, whose writing Morrison discovered. She also brought to publication the 1975 autobiography of the outspoken boxing champion Muhammad Ali, *The Greatest: My Own Story*. In addition, she published and promoted the work of Henry Dumas,[18] a little-known novelist and poet who in 1968 had been shot to death by a transit officer in the New York City Subway.[6][19]

Among other books Morrison developed and edited is *The Black Book* (1974), an anthology of photographs, illustrations, essays, and other documents of black life in the United States from the time of slavery to the 1920s.[6] Random House had been uncertain about the project but received good reviews. Alvin Beam reviewed the anthology for the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, writing: "Editors, like novelists, have brain children—books they think up and bring to life without putting their own names on the title page. Mrs. Morrison has one of these in the stores now, and magazines and newsletters in the publishing trade are ecstatic, saying it will go like hotcakes."[7]

First writings and teaching, 1970–1986

Morrison had begun writing fiction as part of an informal group of poets and writers at Howard University who met to discuss their work. She attended one meeting with a short story about a black girl who longed to have blue eyes. Morrison later developed the story as her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, getting up every morning at 4 am to write, while raising two children alone.[14]

Morrison's portrait on the first-edition dust jacket of *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

The Bluest Eye was published (by Holt, Rinehart and Winston) in 1970, when Morrison was aged 39.[16] It was favorably reviewed in *The New York Times* by John Leonard, who praised Morrison's writing style as being "a prose so precise, so faithful to speech and so charged with pain and wonder that the novel becomes poetry ... But *The Bluest Eye* is also history, sociology, folklore, nightmare and music."[20] The novel did not sell well at first, but the City University of New York put *The Bluest Eye* on its reading list for its new black-studies department, as did other colleges, which boosted sales.[21] The book also brought Morrison to the attention of the acclaimed editor Robert Gottlieb at Knopf, an imprint of the publisher Random House. Gottlieb later edited most of Morrison's novels.[21]

In 1975, Morrison's second novel *Sula* (1973), about a friendship between two black women, was nominated for the National Book Award. Her third novel, *Song of Solomon* (1977), follows the life of Macon "Milkman" Dead III, from birth to adulthood, as he discovers his heritage through the magic of the Black experience. This novel brought her national acclaim, being a main selection of the Book of the Month Club, the first novel by a black writer to be so chosen since Richard Wright's *Native Son* in 1940.[22] *Song of Solomon* also won the National Book Critics Circle Award.[23]

At its 1979 commencement ceremonies, Barnard College awarded Morrison its highest honor, the Barnard Medal of Distinction.[24]

Morrison gave her next novel, *Tar Baby* (1981), a contemporary setting. In it, a looks-obsessed fashion model, Jadine, falls in love with Son, a penniless drifter who feels at ease with being black.[25]

In 1983, Morrison left publishing to devote more time to writing, while living in a converted boathouse on the Hudson River in Nyack, New York.[26][27] She taught English at two branches of the State University of New York (SUNY) and at Rutgers University's New Brunswick campus.[28] In 1984, she was appointed to an Albert Schweitzer chair at the University at Albany, SUNY.[29]

Morrison's first play, *Dreaming Emmett*, is about the 1955 murder by white men of black teenager Emmett Till. The play was performed in 1986, at the State University of New York at Albany, where she was teaching at the time.[30] Morrison was also a visiting professor at Bard College from 1986 to 1988.[31]

The *Beloved* Trilogy and the Nobel Prize: 1987–1998

In 1987, Morrison published her most celebrated novel, *Beloved*. It was inspired by the true story of an enslaved African-American woman, Margaret Garner,[32] whose story Morrison had discovered when compiling *The Black Book*. Garner had escaped slavery but was pursued by slave hunters. Facing a return to slavery, Garner killed her two-year-old daughter but was captured before she could kill herself.[33] Morrison's novel imagines the dead baby returning as a ghost, Beloved, to haunt her mother and family.[34]

Beloved was a critical success and a bestseller for 25 weeks. *The New York Times* book reviewer Michiko Kakutani wrote that the scene of the mother killing her baby is "so brutal and disturbing that it appears to warp time before and after into a single unwavering line of fate."[35] Canadian writer Margaret Atwood wrote in a review for *The New York Times*, "Ms. Morrison's versatility and technical and emotional range appear to know no bounds. If there were any doubts about her stature as a pre-eminent American novelist, of her own or any other generation, *Beloved* will put them to rest."[36]

Not all critics praised *Beloved*, however. African-American conservative social critic Stanley Crouch, for instance, complained in his review in *The New Republic*[37] that the novel "reads largely like a melodrama lashed to the structural conceits of the miniseries," and that Morrison "perpetually interrupts her narrative with maudlin ideological commercials."[38][39]

Despite overall high acclaim, *Beloved* failed to win the prestigious National Book Award or the National Book Critics Circle Award. Forty-eight black critics and writers,[40][41] among them Maya Angelou, protested the omission in a statement that *The New York Times* published on January 24, 1988.[16][42][43] "Despite the international stature of Toni Morrison, she has yet to receive the national recognition that her five major works of fiction entirely deserve," they wrote.[6] Two months later, *Beloved* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.[35] It also won an Anisfield-Wolf Book Award.[44]

Beloved is the first of three novels about love and African-American history, sometimes called the *Beloved* Trilogy.[45] Morrison said that they are intended to be read together,

explaining, "The conceptual connection is the search for the beloved – the part of the self that is you, and loves you, and is always there for you."[8] The second novel in the trilogy, *Jazz*, came out in 1992. Told in language that imitates the rhythms of jazz music, the novel is about a love triangle during the Harlem Renaissance in New York City. That year she also published her first book of literary criticism, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), an examination of the African-American presence in white American literature.[44] (In 2016, *Time* magazine noted that *Playing in the Dark* was among Morrison's most-assigned texts on U.S. college campuses, together with several of her novels and her 1993 Nobel Prize lecture.)[46]

Before Morrison published the third novel of the *Beloved* trilogy, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993. Her citation reads that she, "in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American reality."[47] She was the first black woman of any nationality to win the prize.[48]

In her Nobel acceptance speech, Morrison talked about the power of storytelling. To make her point, she told a story. She spoke about a blind, old, black woman who is approached by a group of young people. They demand of her, "Is there no context for our lives? No song, no literature, no poem full of vitamins, no history connected to experience that you can pass along to help us start strong? ... Think of our lives and tell us your particularized world. Make up a story."[49]

In 1996, the National Endowment for the Humanities selected Morrison for the Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for "distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities."[50] Morrison's lecture, entitled "The Future of Time: Literature and Diminished Expectations,"[51] began with the aphorism: "Time, it seems, has no future." She cautioned against the misuse of history to diminish expectations of the future.[52] Morrison was also honored with the 1996 National Book Foundation's Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, which is awarded to a writer "who has enriched our literary heritage over a life of service, or a corpus of work."[53]

The third novel of her *Beloved* trilogy, *Paradise*, about citizens of an all-black town, came out in 1997. The next year, Morrison was on the cover of *Time* magazine, making her only the second female writer of fiction and second black writer of fiction to appear on what was perhaps the most significant U.S. magazine cover of the era.[54]

Beloved onscreen and "the Oprah effect"[edit]

Also in 1998, the movie adaptation of *Beloved* was released, directed by Jonathan Demme and co-produced by Oprah Winfrey, who had spent ten years bringing it to the screen. Winfrey also stars as the main character, Sethe, alongside Danny Glover as Sethe's lover, Paul D, and Thandie Newton as Beloved.[55]

The movie flopped at the box office. A review in *The Economist* suggested that "most audiences are not eager to endure nearly three hours of a cerebral film with an original storyline featuring supernatural themes, murder, rape and slavery."[56] Film critic Janet Maslin, however, in her review "No Peace from a Brutal Legacy" called it a "transfixing, deeply felt adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel. ... Its linchpin is of course Oprah

Winfrey, who had the clout and foresight to bring 'Beloved' to the screen and has the dramatic presence to hold it together."[57]

In 1996, television talk-show host Oprah Winfrey selected *Song of Solomon* for her newly launched Book Club, which became a popular feature on her *Oprah Winfrey Show*.[58] An average of 13 million viewers watched the show's book club segments.[59] As a result, when Winfrey selected Morrison's earliest novel *The Bluest Eye* in 2000, it sold another 800,000 paperback copies.[7] John Young wrote in the *African American Review* in 2001, that Morrison's career experienced the boost of "The Oprah Effect, ... enabling Morrison to reach a broad, popular audience."[60]

Winfrey selected a total of four of Morrison's novels over six years, giving Morrison's novels a bigger sales boost than they got from her Nobel Prize win in 1993.[61] The novelist also appeared three times on Winfrey's show. Winfrey said, "For all those who asked the question 'Toni Morrison again?'... I say with certainty there would have been no Oprah's Book Club if this woman had not chosen to share her love of words with the world."[59] Morrison called the book club a "reading revolution."[59]

The early 21st century[edit]

Morrison continued to explore new art forms when she returned to Margaret Garner's life story, the basis of her novel *Beloved*, to write the libretto for a new opera, *Margaret Garner*. Completed in 2002, with music by Richard Danielpour, the opera was premièred on May 7, 2005, at the Detroit Opera House with Denyce Graves in the title role.[62] Meanwhile, *Love*, her first novel since *Paradise*, came out in 2003. In 2004, Morrison put together a children's book called *Remember* to mark the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954 that declared racially segregated public schools to be unconstitutional.[63]

From 1997 to 2003, Morrison was an Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell University.[64]

In June 2005, the University of Oxford awarded Morrison an honorary Doctor of Letters degree.[65] In the fall of that year, Morrison visited the Louvre museum in Paris as the second in its "Grand Invité" program to guest-curate a month-long series of events across the arts on the theme of "The Foreigner's Home."[66]

In 2006, *The New York Times Book Review* named *Beloved* the best work of American fiction published in the previous 25 years, as chosen by a selection of prominent writers, literary critics, and editors.[67] In his essay about the choice, "In Search of the Best," critic A. O. Scott said: "Any other outcome would have been startling, since Morrison's novel has inserted itself into the American canon more completely than any of its potential rivals. With remarkable speed, 'Beloved' has, less than 20 years after its publication, become a staple of the college literary curriculum, which is to say a classic. This triumph is commensurate with its ambition, since it was Morrison's intention in writing it precisely to expand the range of classic American literature, to enter, as a living black woman, the company of dead white males like Faulkner, Melville, Hawthorne and Twain."[68]

Morrison's novel *A Mercy*, released in 2008, is set in the Virginia colonies of 1682. Diane Johnson, in her review in *Vanity Fair*, called *A Mercy* "a poetic, visionary, mesmerizing tale that captures, in the cradle of our present problems and strains, the natal curse put on us back then by the Indian tribes, Africans, Dutch, Portuguese, and English competing to get their footing in the New World against a hostile landscape and the essentially tragic nature of human experience."[69]

Princeton years[edit]

From 1989 until her retirement in 2006, Morrison held the Robert F. Goheen Chair in the Humanities at Princeton University.[10] She said she did not think much of modern fiction writers who reference their own lives instead of inventing new material, and she used to tell her creative writing students, "I don't want to hear about your little life, OK?" Similarly, she chose not to write about her own life in a memoir or autobiography.[12]

Though based in the Creative Writing Program at Princeton, Morrison did not regularly offer writing workshops to students after the late 1990s, a fact that earned her some criticism. Rather, she conceived and developed the Princeton Atelier, a program that brings together students with writers and performing artists. Together the students and the artists produce works of art that are presented to the public after a semester of collaboration.[70]

Morrison speaking in 2008

Inspired by her curatorship at the Louvre Museum, Morrison returned to Princeton in fall 2008 to lead a small seminar, also entitled "The Foreigner's Home."[15]

On November 17, 2017, Princeton University dedicated Morrison Hall (a building previously called West College) in her honor.[71]

Final years: 2010–2019

In May 2010, Morrison appeared at PEN World Voices for a conversation with Marlene van Niekerk and Kwame Anthony Appiah about South African literature, and specifically van Niekerk's 2004 novel *Agaat*.[72]

Morrison wrote books for children with her younger son, Slade Morrison, who was a painter and a musician. Slade died of pancreatic cancer on December 22, 2010, aged 45.[21][73] Morrison's novel *Home* (2012) was half-completed when Slade died.[21]

In May 2011, Morrison received an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Rutgers University–New Brunswick during the commencement ceremony,[74] where she delivered a speech on the "pursuit of life, liberty, meaningfulness, integrity, and truth."

Morrison in 2013

Morrison debuted another work in 2011: She worked with opera director Peter Sellars and Malian singer-songwriter Rokia Traoré on a new production, *Desdemona*, taking a fresh look at William Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello*. The trio focused on the relationship between Othello's wife Desdemona and her African nursemaid, Barbary, who is only briefly referenced in Shakespeare. The play, a mix of words, music and song, premiered in Vienna in 2011.[15][12][75]

Morrison had stopped working on her latest novel when her son died. She said that afterwards, "I stopped writing until I began to think, He would be really put out if he thought that he had caused me to stop. 'Please, Mom, I'm dead, could you keep going ...?'"[76]

She completed *Home* and dedicated it to her son Slade Morrison.[11][77][78] Published in 2012, it is the story of a Korean War veteran in the segregated United States of the 1950s, who tries to save his sister from brutal medical experiments at the hands of a white doctor.[79]

In August 2012, Oberlin College became the home base of the Toni Morrison Society,[80] an international literary society founded in 1983, dedicated to scholarly research of Morrison's work.[81][82][83]

Morrison's eleventh novel, *God Help the Child*, was published in 2015. It follows Bride, an executive in the fashion and beauty industry whose mother tormented her as a child for being dark-skinned – a childhood trauma that has dogged Bride her whole life.[84]

Morrison was a member of the editorial advisory board of *The Nation*, a magazine started in 1865 by Northern abolitionists.[85][63]

Death and memorial[edit]

Morrison died at Montefiore Medical Center in The Bronx, New York City, on August 5, 2019, from complications of pneumonia. She was 88 years old.[3][86][87]

Upon her death, Morrison had a net worth of 20 million dollars.[88]

A memorial tribute was held for Morrison on November 21, 2019, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan in New York City. At this gathering she was eulogized by, among others, Oprah Winfrey, Angela Davis, Michael Ondaatje, David Remnick, Fran Lebowitz, and Edwidge Danticat.[89] The jazz saxophonist David Murray performed a musical tribute.[90]

Politics, literary reception and legacy[edit]

Politics

Morrison was not afraid to comment on American politics and race relations.

In writing about the 1998 impeachment of Bill Clinton, she claimed that since Whitewater, Bill Clinton was being mistreated in the same way black people often are:

> Years ago, in the middle of the Whitewater investigation, one heard the first murmurs: white skin notwithstanding, this is our first black President. Blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime. After all, Clinton displays almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas.[91]

The phrase "our first Black president" was adopted as a positive by Bill Clinton supporters. When the Congressional Black Caucus honored the former president at its dinner in Washington, D.C. on September 29, 2001, for instance, Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), the chair, told the audience that Clinton "took so many initiatives he made us think for a while we had elected the first black president."[92]

In the context of the 2008 Democratic Primary campaign, Morrison stated to *Time* magazine: "People misunderstood that phrase. I was deploring the way in which President Clinton was being treated, vis-à-vis the sex scandal that was surrounding him. I said he was being treated like a black on the street, already guilty, already a perp. I have no idea what his real instincts are, in terms of race."[93] In the Democratic primary contest for the 2008 presidential race, Morrison endorsed Senator Barack Obama over Senator Hillary Clinton,[94] though expressing admiration and respect for the latter.[95] When he won, Morrison said she felt like an American for the first time. She said, "I felt very powerfully patriotic when I went to the inauguration of Barack Obama. I felt like a kid."[11]

In April 2015, speaking of the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Walter Scott — three unarmed black men killed by white police officers — Morrison said: "People keep saying, 'We need to have a conversation about race.' This is the conversation. I want to see a cop shoot a white unarmed teenager in the back. And I want to see a white man

convicted for raping a black woman. Then when you ask me, 'Is it over?', I will say yes."[96]

After the 2016 election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, Morrison wrote an essay, "Mourning for Whiteness," published in the November 21, 2016 issue of *The New Yorker*. In it she argues that white Americans are so afraid of losing privileges afforded them by their race that white voters elected Trump, whom she described as being "endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan", in order to keep the idea of white supremacy alive.[97][98]

Relationship to feminism[edit]

Although her novels typically concentrate on black women, Morrison did not identify her works as feminist. When asked in a 1998 interview, "Why distance oneself from feminism?" she replied: "In order to be as free as I possibly can, in my own imagination, I can't take positions that are closed. Everything I've ever done, in the writing world, has been to expand articulation, rather than to close it, to open doors, sometimes, not even closing the book — leaving the endings open for reinterpretation, revisitation, a little ambiguity."[99] She went on to state that she thought it "off-putting to some readers, who may feel that I'm involved in writing some kind of feminist tract. I don't subscribe to patriarchy, and I don't think it should be substituted with matriarchy. I think it's a question of equitable access, and opening doors to all sorts of things."[99]

In 2012, she responded to a question about the difference between black and white feminists in the 1970s. "Womanists is what black feminists used to call themselves," she explained. "They were not the same thing. And also the relationship with men. Historically, black women have always sheltered their men because they were out there, and they were the ones that were most likely to be killed."[79]

W. S. Kottiswari writes in *Postmodern Feminist Writers* (2008) that Morrison exemplifies characteristics of "postmodern feminism" by "altering Euro-American dichotomies by rewriting a history written by mainstream historians" and by her usage of shifting narration in *Beloved* and *Paradise*. Kottiswari states: "Instead of western logocentric abstractions, Morrison prefers the powerful vivid language of women of color ... She is essentially postmodern since her approach to myth and folklore is re-visionist."[100]

National Memorial for Peace and Justice[edit]

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, includes writing by Morrison.[101] Visitors can see her quote after they have walked through the section commemorating individual victims of lynching.[102]

Papers[edit]

The Toni Morrison Papers are part of the permanent library collections of Princeton University, where they are held in the Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.[103][104] Morrison's decision to offer her papers to Princeton

instead of to her alma mater Howard University was criticized by some within the historically black colleges and universities community.[105]

Toni Morrison Day[edit]

In 2019 legislation was introduced in Morrison's hometown Lorain, Ohio, to officially recognize February 18, her birthday, as "Toni Morrison Day".[106][107][108]

Documentary films[edit]

Morrison was interviewed by Margaret Busby in a 1988 documentary film by Sindamani Bridglal, entitled *Identifiable Qualities*, shown on Channel 4.[109][110]

Morrison was the subject of a film titled *Imagine — Toni Morrison Remembers*, directed by Jill Nicholls and shown on BBC One television on July 15, 2015, in which Morrison talked to Alan Yentob about her life and work.[111][112][113]

In 2016, Oberlin College received a grant to complete a documentary film begun in 2014, *The Foreigner's Home*, about Morrison's intellectual and artistic vision.[114] The film's executive producer was Jonathan Demme. It was directed by Oberlin College Cinema Studies faculty Geoff Pingree and Rian Brown,[115] and incorporates footage shot by Morrison's first-born son Harold Ford Morrison, who also consulted on the film.[116]

In 2019, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders' documentary *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.[117] People featured in the film include Morrison, Angela Davis, Oprah Winfrey, Sonia Sanchez, and Walter Mosley, among others.[118]

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