Instructor’s Manual
to accompany

Ballenger
THE CURIOUS WRITER
Fifth Edition
THE CURIOUS WRITER
Brief Fifth Edition
THE CURIOUS WRITER
Concise Fifth Edition

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

When Bruce Ballenger wrote the first edition of this textbook, I had the privilege of watching The Curious Writer develop from a vague idea into the text you have in your hands, and I've now spent weeks reading every page and writing this Instructor’s Manual. In many ways, I know this book about as well as Bruce Ballenger does, and I've enjoyed witnessing him develop the approach to inquiry in the writing classroom that you'll find here. I’m in the unusual position of having known Bruce when he was first an adjunct instructor and then a doctoral student at the University of New Hampshire before we both became part of the faculty at Boise State University, and I've told him many times that the Bruce of those days could not have written this textbook. It seems obvious, I suppose, that our theories and practices change during our career, but I’ve not witnessed this kind of development before, a kind of synergy between the practical demands of a textbook and the theoretical complexities of research and theory on writing instruction. Many current textbooks reflect the latest developments in rhetoric and composition theory, of course, but few of us get to see the revision process at work while those authors move between what Bruce would call the Sea of Practical Experience and the Mountain of Theory and Reflection. I've always been fascinated with the drama of dialectic, so I've found Bruce's intellectual journey from graduate school, to The Curious Researcher and The Curious Reader, and now to The Curious Writer to be a wonderful example of why I'm in this profession to begin with.

During the three years it took Bruce to write the first edition of this book, I asked new teaching assistants in our program at Boise State University to use draft chapters of it for their English 101 courses. In our composition program, new TAs are required in their first semester to use a book we choose, but for their subsequent courses, they can choose whichever textbook they believe will help them teach effectively. In the first several years during which the textbook was drafted and the first edition published, twenty-eight TAs taught from this text. That means the first drafts were class tested with over 750 students per year at Boise State University—not including those students taught by the part-time writing instructors in our program who also chose the book in its manuscript form. During our TA Seminar every fall I learned from the TAs how students respond to Bruce's engaging voice, to the writing activities in every chapter, to the suggestions about reading strategies, and to the overall focus on inquiry. Students “get it.” The writing prompts, the sample readings, the workshop and revision strategies, all create “inquiry experiences,” so students don’t simply read about it all, but learn inquiry by doing it.

That is one thing I love about this textbook. Students are writing as they read, and those moments of surprise, reflection, and questioning convince them that inquiry is at the heart of academic writing. I also love that every chapter is full of writing exercises students can do during class or in their journals at home. It seems rare, in fact, to see a textbook with such a range of concrete writing prompts that get students focusing on their own questions first, exploring their ideas through experience and research, and then using the genre expectations to help them choose what a promising subject is and what is not.
Our TAs, in fact, have always struggled to teach students how to reread their raw writing and choose a rich subject for whatever essay they are writing. This text offers guided prompts for students to make those decisions, all within the rhetorical context of the particular essay and the particular inquiry question at the heart of it. Instead of learning the features of the genre before they have something to say, students begin with questions and learn how to use rhetorical principles to figure out 1) which of their questions are promising, and 2) how the features of the genre can help them develop their ideas and craft them. In this approach, form isn’t something writers impose on their ideas, but rather a method for further developing what they might have to say about them.

Another thing I love about this book reflects one of Bruce’s many strengths as a writing teacher: the twenty-two revision strategies in Chapter 14. The instructors and TAs in our program have used at least half of these strategies in different forms over the years, assigning specific ones to students given the stage of the draft, and students consistently report they finally learned what revision means. Describing revision to students, even putting revision-oriented comments on their drafts, seems to work less effectively than offering specific strategies for particular problems. The same holds true for Appendix A, where you will discover an extensive discussion about working in groups and commenting on drafts, tasks students struggle with because they don’t have much experience in them. Appendix A gives practical advice on how to respond to peers’ drafts, and it describes nine different formats for workshopping that are geared toward what a writer needs given the stage of the draft. No more guessing about how to teach students to respond to each other’s drafts or how to make workshops more productive.

If you have used Bruce’s other books in the Curious series, you will probably guess that much of his work on the research essay will be reflected here. And you’d be right. Research is not presented as a separate kind of activity, dependent on a specific assignment, or simply a separate essay. Instead, research is part of the process of inquiry for every essay in the book, illustrating the ways writers use multiple sources of information when they write and allow their questions to guide their inquiry, not their sources or the genre’s form. The fifth edition emphasizes this even more.

You will also notice a more fully developed model for the inquiry process that has emerged from his work with The Curious Researcher and The Curious Reader. These two texts have also informed Chapter 2: Reading as Inquiry, a chapter that shows students how to use inquiry strategies when they read and to adapt their roles as readers to the purpose for reading. This chapter challenges students to be more conscious as readers, and the other chapters reinforce conscious reading strategies through the questions posed at the end of the sample essays for each genre.

Because I created the daily syllabus for the new TAs and their 101 courses for several years, I can attest to how flexible the chapters are and how easily a daily syllabus can be created simply from the chapters themselves. In fact, the weekly syllabus I’ve written for the Instructor’s Manual is based on the one our new TAs used for English 101. But you’ll find that this book can be used for
many different types of courses, and I’ve grouped chapters around several types of course goals to help you see the possibilities.

**WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL**

Because the Instructor’s Preface to *The Curious Writer* (and the Students’ Preface, for that matter) explains the central principles of the book, the kinds of assignments included, and the various ways the book can be used, I have chosen not to summarize those in a typical introduction to the Manual. Instead I highlight those issues as they emerge in each particular chapter. That is also why I have chosen to integrate general strategies for teaching writing throughout the Instructor’s Manual rather than in a separate section. If you are new to teaching, the suggestions in each chapter of the Manual will guide you, and you can rely on the coherence of the textbook and on the practical advice and activities offered here to create a purposeful and directed course.

Our first-year teaching assistants often express their fear that they are not sure what the big picture is for the course, and I assure them this textbook and the syllabus I have given them reflects a big picture that will come together for them as it does for their students. The teaching guides you will find under “Additional Resources: Readings and Web Links” are incredibly helpful as well, especially for new writing teachers. So, whatever you do not find in this Instructor’s Manual can probably be found in that bibliography.

In the pages that follow, I offer several ways of designing your course, and then I offer the following for each of the chapters in *The Curious Writer* (this Manual will also assist instructors who use *The Curious Writer: Concise* and *Brief* editions):

**Overview: Goals and Principles to Emphasize**

Here you’ll find the key concepts for each chapter and the learning outcomes you might have when using it. For the assignment chapters, I list the “Features of the Form” as well. These can be helpful references as you decide on class activities and essay assignments. The PowerPoint slides for this edition also highlight these learning outcomes and the features of the form.

**Discussion Starters: How to Talk About the Chapters**

Here I’ve included some prereading activities that you can assign before students read the chapter, as well as descriptions of the different types of sidebars that are included in every chapter. Often these sidebars can be used during class time or with students’ journal writing to emphasize the chapter concepts. In this section I also offer suggestions on using the writing activities. In the PowerPoint slides I have included these suggestions in the “Notes” to illustrate how one might structure a class session.

**Assignment Design: Suggestions for Designing the Essay Assignment**

The textbook offers brief essay assignments under “The Writing Process” titled “Inquiry Project,” and I offer additional suggestions for anticipating students’ challenges with the
inquiry project, responding to the drafts, and encouraging both reflection and productive feedback on students' work.

Discussing the Readings: Summary and Teaching Activities

Each of the assignment chapters in Part 2, as well as Chapter 10, include examples of the genre students are learning how to write. These include both published and student essays. You may not want to assign all of the readings in a chapter (though they are often short), so I've summarized their content and presented up to three additional writing activities you might try with each one.

Additional Writing Activities

This section contains a large number of writing exercises and in-class activities you can use to supplement what’s in each chapter. All of them reflect the key concepts of the genre being studied and the overall focus of the book on inquiry. Many of them have been used in classrooms at Boise State, by me, Bruce, or our writing faculty (including part-time instructors and teaching assistants).

Writing Projects

In this section I have included projects that students might do, sometimes in small groups, which work from the chapter principles and goals. These can be assignments for the required essays in the course if you want alternatives to what is included in the textbook.

Additional Resources: Readings and Web Links

If you'd like to read further about strategies for teaching writing, this bibliography provides a list of materials: from general resources for teaching to responding to student writing to teaching the research essay to multimodal composition to teaching an inquiry-based course. Included is a section of guides for teaching writing often used in training seminars for teaching assistants and that are full of great practical teaching ideas.

Course Handouts

Here I’ve collected images from the textbook that you might want to use as well as potential assignment sheets for some of the essays or versions of the textbook exercises you can copy for handouts.

Enjoy!

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But I also need to thank Bruce Ballenger, who asked me to write this Manual, along with the Appendices to The Curious Writer, and asked me to collaborate with him on The Curious Reader years ago. Our professional collaboration over the years has fed me as a teacher, a scholar, and a writer, and I’ve learned as much if not more from his mentorship than I did during my graduate-school years. Our friendship has been even more important to me, and I’m grateful he convinced me to take the Boise State position that cold February day we stood on Friendship Bridge, looking out over the Boise River. Lastly, my young daughter, Nicole, has been incredibly patient with me as I took time in the evenings and wee hours of the morning to write this on top of teaching classes and administering the English Department. As Bruce notes in his acknowledgements to the textbook, writing is a selfish act when it demands we steal time from our family and friends, and I can only hope I still have some cash left in those banks.
DESIGNING YOUR COURSE

The Instructor’s Preface to *The Curious Writer* covers much of what usually goes in this section of an Instructor’s Manual, so it is best to consult Ballenger's advice for constructing your course and then refer to the syllabi outlined in this section for more specific ideas about how to use the chapters and the exercises. What you will find here are some general suggestions about teaching a writing course using this textbook, and then a range of course structures. Later, at the beginning of each chapter in the Instructor’s Manual, you will find a list of the principles, goals, and learning outcomes for both the section overall and the chapters more specifically. These chapters also include additional activities to supplement those in the textbook and tips on teaching the assignments.

TYPES OF WRITING

If you follow the activities in the textbook, you will see several types of writing for students to do. As Ballenger notes, you do not need to move lockstep through every writing activity, but instead choose among them according to your course goals and your students. Each chapter includes a set of learning outcomes that can guide your assignments and activities, as well. Here is the range of writing students might do in a course using *The Curious Writer*:

- **Generative writing:** Under “The Writing Process” in each of the assignment chapters (Chapters 3–10), you will find writing prompts to help students discover a promising essay subject. These prompts do not simply stop at listing and brainstorming, however. They continue with research and visual prompts, and then students are invited to review their generative writing based on specific questions and criteria for each genre, to choose the best subject. These prompts can be responded to at home and/or during class in a journal, notebook, or on the computer. More activities for generative writing are located in the Instructor’s Manual under each chapter and online at the MyWritingLab for the textbook.

- **Reading responses or reading journal:** In all the assignment chapters, four to six questions follow each of the sample readings, prompting students to apply the four modes of inquiry to the readings. These can be composed in a reading journal or as an individual reading response. You might have your own questions for students to address, and you will find additional ideas in the Instructor’s Manual.

- **Reflective writing:** Ballenger notes that reflection is one of the modes of academic inquiry, so throughout the book you will find numerous ideas for reflective writing. For example, while students are generating ideas for essays, they will find prompts asking them to reflect on their informal writing, their reading process, or their writing process. In addition, you will find at least three reflection questions at the end of every assignment chapter under “Using What You’ve Learned.” All of this writing can be done in their journals/notebooks and/or online.

- **Essay assignments:** The assignment chapters, Chapters 3–10 and 13, begin by explaining the purposes of each kind of essay and its most common features, then they guide students to
generate and evaluate their own ideas for topics, draft an essay, workshop it, and revise it. If students have been writing while they read each chapter, they will have an abundance of material from which to compose their essays and knowledge about the genre conventions required. In our program we allow at least two weeks per essay in English 101 and four to five weeks in English 102.

Here are some guidelines for designing your own assignments:

**Inquiry-based Assignments:**

1. Are driven by questions, and teach what constitutes a *good* question.
2. Put students in charge of their own investigations.
3. Engage students' curiosity.
4. Initially encourage uncertainty.
5. Emphasize exploration before judgment, and allow time in the process for open-ended investigation.
6. Complicate prior beliefs about learning and knowledge.
7. Celebrate discovery and surprise.

- *Multimodal assignment options:* New to this edition, each assignment chapter includes opportunities and support for creating digital and/or visual projects, ways of crafting each type of essay using images, sound, graphics, movement, etc. Use the sidebars in each chapter that show students how to use the various kinds of tools available for multimodal projects. In addition, each chapter has a Prose+ model of the assignment, a visual representation of the features of the form. These can be used to illustrate the kinds of projects students might consider and the kinds of texts that can demonstrate the habits of inquiry. These options also connect to Chapter 13.

**Types of Classroom Activities**

You will notice that the activities in the textbook combine independent work with small group work and whole-class discussions. Students are invited to respond in their journals, explore an idea, reflect on it, and then share it in small groups, considering the patterns they notice and the questions raised. Ballenger’s discussion of workshops in Appendix A is important for any kind of small group work because it asks students to reflect on the roles they usually assume in groups (under "Additional Writing Activities" you will find an evaluation form and group-problem-solving activity). If you will be using groups for activities beyond workshopping, provide class time for evaluation so students are reviewing the group’s effectiveness, their own role in that, and taking responsibility for improving the group’s work. If you are able, arrange two or three kinds of classroom activities per class period, in 20-minute intervals, for example, so students are moving between the mountain and the sea—generating and judging—in everything they do.
SUGGESTED SYLLABI
Using The Curious Writer

This section presents several different ways of organizing a course with chapters from The Curious Writer. It begins with a weekly syllabus for the first composition course in a two-course sequence—English 101 at most universities—and then briefly outlines alternative courses:

- 101 for a quarter system,
- 102 for a semester and a quarter system (with a focus on research and academic writing),
- An advanced nonfiction writing course for a semester system

The detailed 101 syllabus can guide you when adapting the other course structures.

ENGLISH 101
SYLLABUS PROGRESSION: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The following weekly syllabus is organized around the sources of information writers often use for their essays. This approach emphasizes having something to say—being curious, having a question—and then using inquiry strategies to discover what one thinks about the question before learning the specific features of the genre. This approach contrasts the option below that surveys nonfiction genres: in such a survey, the emphasis is on genre features and conventions rather than sources of information.

In the sources-of-information structure, writing processes are also emphasized: homework and class activities begin with generating questions and ideas. Students write informally to generate ideas, and then they learn the specific genre features through published examples and drafting their own essays. Questions, that is, precede genre. In addition, reflection is integrated into every activity. Here is a way of seeing it visually:
**SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES: EMPHASIS ON PROCESS AND INQUIRY**

This sequence of activities is evident in the detailed 101 syllabus that follows.

As you plan your daily syllabus, however, it might be useful to employ an internal structure like the one below, organized around predictable class activities:

**SYLLABUS PROGRESSION: CLASS ACTIVITIES**

Rather than structuring the class around certain ideas about how writers develop, the course can be organized around certain repeatable and predictable classroom activities, such as workshops, conferences, in-class writing, readings, and the like. With this structure, students always know—and can anticipate—what is happening in class on Monday or Friday.
ENGLISH 101

SUGGESTED SYLLABUS

Week 1: Writing Habits and Generating Ideas

Focus:

✓ recognizing beliefs about writing (through journal work and discussion)
✓ learning ways to generate ideas, explore through writing
✓ reflection on writing habits and processes students already use
✓ emphasis on a variety of processes and habits for different purposes and contexts
✓ journal work toward first essay (personal essay) using memory and observation as sources for ideas

Reading: Chapter 1 and Appendix B (The Writing Portfolio) in The Curious Writer

Writing: Exercises in Chapter 1 (depending on the time you have, doing some in class (1.1, 1.2) and some as homework (1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7))

In class: writing activities in Chapter 3

Prereading activities for Chapter 2 (Instructor’s Manual)

• Introduction to course
• Brief discussion of portfolios, journals/working folder
• In-class writing toward first essay (personal essay)

Week 2: Reading Habits and Processes

Focus:

✓ recognizing beliefs about reading (through journal work and discussion)
✓ emphasis on dialectical thinking, a key habit of mind throughout the course

Over the course of the week:
In class each day, spend at least 20 minutes or more asking students to generate ideas in their journals—give them prompts, have them freewrite, then review their freewriting for surprises and continue exploring those ideas. Prompts are located in the assignment chapters and in the corresponding chapters of the Instructor’s Manual.
✓ introduction to believing and doubting, double-entry journal
✓ reading strategies, reading rhetorically

**Reading:** Chapter 2 in CW

**Writing:** Exercises in Chapter 2 (depending on the time you have, doing some in class (2.1, 2.2) and some as homework (2.3, 2.4, 2.5))

In-class journal work on generating ideas for essays

- Discuss journal writing for each day.
- Emphasize “Dialectical Thinking” during the discussions.
- Emphasize role of surprise in writing to learn.

**By the end of these two weeks, students should have generated a large amount of writing in their journals mined later for essay ideas.** This material will have drawn on memory and observation for ideas. Go around the room during group work and simply mark off that students have done the prompts (if they were assigned for homework) or have them show you at the end of class.

**Week 3: Ways of Inquiring and Introduction to Personal Essay**

**Focus:**

✓ mining journal writing for essay subjects, using dialectical thinking to “essay” a subject
✓ continued work using memory and observation as sources for essay ideas
✓ introduction to personal essay
✓ features of the personal essay

**Reading:** Chapter 3 (all but the examples of a personal essay)

**Writing:** Prereading activities for Chapter 3 (see Instructor’s Manual)

- Discuss the features of the personal essay, using the examples from the chapter.
- Focus on “Judging What You Have” to help students know how to choose subjects from their journal work.
Week 4: The Personal Essay

Focus:

✓ mining journal writing for essay subjects, using dialectical thinking to “essay” a subject
✓ drawing on material generated in first three weeks and using the methods of inquiry
✓ analysis of examples of personal essay

Reading: Examples of personal essay in Chapter 3

Writing: Respond to questions about the readings.

Bring in two sketches for a personal essay for in-class workshop.

• Discuss what a “sketch” is, using the sample in this chapter (or others).

• Bring in your own sketch from the journal work for these last few weeks and put it on the overhead (or ask a student to volunteer their draft). Ask students to comment on what is interesting and why; where the tension is; what they want to know more about. Try to steer them away from “I like it/don’t like it” and other judgments and instead focus on the possibilities in the draft.

• Sketch workshop: see Chapter 3 for suggestions about how to structure this (as well as the Instructor’s Manual). By the end of class, they should have a well-focused subject with tension, specific scenes to focus on, a tentative sense of purpose, and lots of writing to draw from. In the last 10 or 15 minutes of class, go over the material in this chapter about developing a draft.

Week 5: Workshopping

Focus:

✓ introduction to workshopping
✓ helping students become better responders to each other's work
✓ conferencing with students on personal essay, giving them three strategies for revision

Reading: Appendix A

Writing: From Appendix A, “Group Problem-Solving”

Draft of Personal Essay due (three copies)

• Discuss how to respond during workshop; outline, on the board, some ground rules—ask them to list what they want to see happen in workshop and what they don’t want to have happen. Use these guidelines for the rest of the term, referring back to them.
• Workshop, using suggestions in Chapter 3 and/or choosing a format from Appendix A that is appropriate.

• Cancel one class period for conferences.

At this point, you have taken students through the pattern they will have throughout the term:

• Generate and explore ideas in journal/in-class writing.

• Write a sketch of evolving idea and workshop.

• Read examples of effective writing and practice strategies on own work.

• Revise sketch based on journal work and response from peers.

• Conference with instructor (ideas for later revision).

Week 6: Profile Essay

Focus:

✓ features of the profile
✓ analysis of examples
✓ generating ideas

Reading: Chapter 4

Writing: Prereading activities for Chapter 4 (see Instructor’s Manual)

Response to questions after sample profiles

• Work in-class on interviewing.

• Emphasize how profile is different from/similar to the personal essay.

Week 7: Profile Essay

Focus:

✓ interviewing skills
✓ narrowing focus
✓ telling details
✓ workshopping

Writing: Further journal work toward essay from Chapter 4
Draft of Profile Essay due

• Workshop profile essay

Week 8: Revision

Focus:

✓ revision as generative, as reshaping and re-seeing an idea
✓ introduction to several revision strategies students can use throughout the semester to internalize certain principles
✓ further practice with workshopping

Reading: Chapter 14 through “Five Categories of Revision”

Writing: “Guide to Revision Strategies” for the profile and/or for the personal essay

Choose an essay to revise (or a new essay to write from the material you generated the first four weeks)

• Emphasize the purpose of revision.
• In class, have students do some of the revision strategies listed.
• Require another workshop for the revised essay.

Week 9: Writing the Review or Argument Essay

Take two weeks for this next essay, choosing either the review (Chapter 5) or the argument essay (Chapter 7). Either of these types of essays will help students when they revise their earlier essays and when they compose their research essay, which will be next.

Week 10: Continued Work on Third Essay

Writing: Draft of Third Essay due

• Workshop

Week 11: Writing the Research Essay

Reading: Chapter 10 through “Judging What You Have”

Writing: Prereading exercises (in Chapter 11 of Instructor’s Manual)

Responses to sample research essays

At this point, you should schedule mid-term evaluation conferences to let students know where they stand in the course.

Journal work from prompts under “Thinking About Subjects”

- Spend class time discussing students’ beliefs about research.
- Emphasize features of the research essay in the samples from the chapter.
- Focus on what makes a good research question.
- Reemphasize the importance of using different reading strategies for research.

**Week 12: Continued Work on Research**

**Reading:** Chapter 11

**Writing:** Note taking on sources

Exercises on developing a working knowledge and digging deeper

Sketch workshop

- Focus on dialectical note taking, and on research as conversation.
- Do a lot of in-class writing with sources.
- Schedule tour of the college or university library.

**Week 13: Continued Work on Research**

**Reading:** Chapter 12

**Writing:** Exercise 12.1

Further note taking and drafting

Finish writing activities in Chapter 12

- Do in-class work with citation, quotations, paraphrasing, and summary.
- Discuss plagiarism and use examples of paraphrased material that are and are not plagiarized.
- Ask students to bring their Works Cited pages to class for a focused workshop on format.

**Week 14: Workshop Research Essay**

**Writing:** Draft of Research Essay due

- Workshop
• Revision strategies for research essay, done in class or at home

**Week 15: Revision–Portfolio**

**Reading:** Appendix B to end (and/or Chapter 13: Re-Genre)

• Discuss reading from Appendix B and how to choose what to include in portfolio, as well as reflective essay.

• Have students bring in a revision each day, along with the two or more revision strategies they used from Chapter 14.

• Workshop revised essays throughout the week, drawing from Appendix A for format styles.

**Week 15: Revision–Portfolio**

**Writing:** Portfolio due

• Continued revision work and workshops on essays for portfolio

• Workshop reflective essay for portfolio

Here is an adaptation of the 101 course above, but for a quarter system rather than a semester:

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**Quarter System: 101**

*Three assignments*

**Chapters 1–2:** Writing as Inquiry, Reading as Inquiry

**Chapter 3:** *Writing a Personal Essay OR Chapter 4:** *Writing a Profile OR

**Chapter 5:** *Writing a Review OR Chapter 6:** *Writing a Proposal OR

**Chapter 7:** *Writing an Argument OR Chapter 13:** *Re-Genre

**Chapters 10-12:** Writing a Research Essay, Research Techniques, Using and Citing Sources

OR

**Chapters 9, 11-12:** Ethnographic Essay and Research Techniques, Using and Citing Sources

**Chapters 14:** Revision Strategies and **Appendix A:** The Writer's Workshop

**Appendix B:** The Writing Portfolio
ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF ORGANIZING A SYLLABUS

The following discussion gives you several ways to structure a course using *The Curious Writer*, depending on the goals of your course and the length. When scheduling the first three chapters of the textbook—a section that is foundational to the assignment chapters—you might consult the detailed syllabus for 101 above. In addition, even if you do not assign a research essay but want students to use research in all their essays, consult Chapters 11 and 12 in the Instructor's Manual for ideas about integrating research strategies with other assignments. Chapters 14 (Revision Strategies) and Appendix A (The Writer's Workshop) are ones you will draw from with each assignment, rather than asking students to read the chapters in their entirety, and the 101 syllabus can guide how you assign them.

When deciding how to use the revision strategies in Chapter 14, consult the “Guide to Revision Strategies” at the end of every assignment chapter.

In fact, every chapter of the Instructor's Manual offers tips on assigning the readings and using the activities, so you can draw on those suggestions as you plan your course.

SYLLABUS PROGRESSION: METHODS OF ACADEMIC INQUIRY

Textual Research
• Research Essay

Field Research
• Ethnographic Essay

Argument OR Analysis
• Argument OR Analytical Essay

This course focuses on academic genres and academic methods of inquiry, often the purpose of a second-semester composition course. If students have already read Chapters 1 and 2 in their first-semester course, then you can simply review the principles in those chapters. This syllabus begins with textual research—online and print sources—then moves toward field research—interview and observation—and ends with a method of inquiry that connects both types of research—argument. Of course, you can begin the course with argument to provide the groundwork for the argument strategies you want students to use in the research and ethnographic essays later; if you do so, then you will want to combine Chapter 7 with Chapters 11 and 12.

Throughout the course, emphasize the connections among these academic genres, discussed explicitly in the assignment chapters, as well as the connections between these kinds of essays and those in Chapters 3 through 9 and 13. Doing so will help students see the methods of inquiry that thread through all the genres and see those genres on a continuum, rather than on opposing ends of a dichotomy between academic and nonacademic writing.
With three assignments in a semester course, allow three to four weeks per essay for writing, researching, and drafting, if not more. Then reserve the last two weeks of the term for workshops.

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<th>Second-Semester Course: 102</th>
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<td>Three assignments</td>
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<td><strong>Chapters 1–2:</strong> Writing as Inquiry, Reading as Inquiry (if needed)</td>
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<td><strong>Chapters 10–12:</strong> Writing a Research Essay, Research Techniques, Using and Citing Sources</td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 9:</strong> Writing an Ethnographic Essay</td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 7:</strong> Writing an Argument OR <strong>Chapter 8:</strong> Analytical Essay</td>
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<td><strong>Chapters 13–14:</strong> Re-Genre, Revision Strategies AND <strong>Appendix A:</strong> The Writer’s Workshop</td>
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OR

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<td><strong>Appendix A:</strong> The Writer’s Workshop</td>
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Syllabus Progression: Forms of Argument

This approach focuses on the methods of inquiry used in various forms of argumentative writing. One option is to arrange assignments to move from those commonly found outside of academia—in magazines, newspapers, and business—and then move toward more formal kinds of argumentative writing required in college, like the analytical essay, opinion essay, and research essay.

Forms of Argumentative Writing

Semester-length

Five assignments

Chapters 1–2: Writing as Inquiry, Reading as Inquiry
Chapter 5: Writing a Review
Chapter 6: Writing a Proposal
Chapter 7: Writing an Argument
Chapter 8: Writing a Analytical Essay
Chapter 10: Writing a Research Essay
Chapters 11–12: Research Techniques, Using and Citing Sources
Chapters 13–14: Re-Genre, Revision Strategies
Appendix A: The Writer’s Workshop
Rather than organizing the course around particular writing processes or classroom activities, this approach structures a syllabus by genre. This structure implies students need to learn the features of particular forms of nonfiction prose, their relationships to one another, and the discourse communities within which they function. Appropriate for an advanced nonfiction writing course, this structure integrates research strategies into every assignment. Choose genres that fit the goals of your course, allowing two to three weeks per essay and two weeks at the end of the semester for revision and workshops.

**Nonfiction Writing/Genres of Nonfiction**

Semester-length

*Four assignments*

**Chapters 1–2:** Writing as Inquiry, Reading as Inquiry

**Chapter 3:** Writing a Personal Essay

**Chapter 4:** Writing a Profile

**Chapter 5:** *Writing a Review* OR **Chapter 6:** *Writing a Proposal* OR **Chapter 7:** *Writing an Argument*

**Chapter 8:** Writing a Analytical Essay

**Chapters 11–12:** Research Techniques, Using and Citing Sources

**Chapters 13–14:** Re-Genre, Revision Strategies

**Appendix A:** The Writer's Workshop
As Ballenger notes in the Instructor’s Preface to the book, a single-course requirement for composition might include the following chapters, covering the goals of both the 101 and 102 courses outlined above.

<table>
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<th>Critical Thinking, Argument, and Research</th>
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*Four assignments*

- **Chapters 1–2:** Writing as Inquiry, Reading as Inquiry
- **Chapter 3:** Writing a Personal Essay
- **Chapter 5:** Writing a Profile
- **Chapter 5:** Writing a Review  **OR Chapter 8:** Writing a Analytical Essay
- **Chapter 7:** Writing an Argument
- **Chapter 9:** Writing an Ethnographic Essay  **OR Chapter 10:** Writing a Research Essay
- **Chapters 11–12:** Research Techniques, Using and Citing Sources
- **Chapters 13–14:** Re-Genre, Revision Strategies
- **Appendix A:** The Writer’s Workshop
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

TEACHING GUIDES: PRINT RESOURCES

Bramblett, Anne, and Alison Knoblauch, eds. What to Expect When You’re Expected to Teach: The Anxious Craft of Teaching Composition. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002.


THEORIES OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT: PRINT RESOURCES


RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING: PRINT RESOURCES


RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING: WEB RESOURCES

For general resources on responding:

Teacher Response

Responding to Student Writing—Principles and Practices

REFLECTION AND INQUIRY-BASED TEACHING: PRINT RESOURCES


**INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING: WEB RESOURCES**

*Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*. Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, Stoney Brook, NY.

*Articles on critical thinking from the Campus Writing Program*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

**Example of an assignment in a sociology course** that explicitly asks students to engage in the believing and doubting game

**PORTFOLIOS IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM: PRINT RESOURCES**


**MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION: PRINT RESOURCES**


**MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION: WEB RESOURCES**

Journet, Debra, Tabetha Adkins, Chris Alexander, Patrick Corbett, Ryan Trauman. “Digital Mirrors: Multimodal Reflection in the Composition Classroom”

Kent State: “Assessing Multimodal Student Work”

Data from the CCCC-Sponsored "Survey of Multimodal Pedagogies in Writing Programs"

**GENERAL RESOURCES: PRINT**


**General Resources: Web**

[Paradigm Online Writing Assistant](#)

Web site on students' attitudes toward writing

"Empowering Your Students with Learning Strategies"

"Reflection in the Electronic Writing Classroom"
PART ONE: THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY

The two chapters in Part One work together as a unit and are best assigned at the beginning of the course, before students start working on the inquiry projects in Part Two. Here are the themes that run through all three chapters:

• Writing and reading are recursive processes.
• Using inquiry-based learning strategies when writing and reading will help students discover ideas and new ways of seeing.
• Some of our prior beliefs about writing and reading may not be helpful, so we need to reflect on them and consciously learn productive, helpful ones.
• Two beliefs that are core to the book and students' learning process: allatonteness and believing one can learn to write well.
• There are several habits of mind at the core of inquiry:
  o Start with questions, not answers; make the familiar strange.
  o Suspending judgment
  o Being willing to write badly
  o Searching for surprise
• All writing and reading take place within a rhetorical context that influences how meaning is made.

Chapter 1, "Writing as Inquiry" and Chapter 2, "Reading as Inquiry" introduce these themes. More specifically, Chapters 1 and 2 are structured to move students from their current beliefs about writing and reading, to reflections on their writing and reading processes, to learning new strategies for their writing and reading challenges. The subheadings for these two chapters describe well what students will learn and do as they read the textbook:

• Motives for Writing/Reading
• Beliefs about Writing/Reading
• Writing/Reading Situations and Rhetorical Choices

Educational research suggests that students learn best when they surface prior beliefs about the subject they are studying. When they do so, they recognize which beliefs may no longer be helpful or accurate, and which continue to be effective and useful. They are also more open to learning new ideas once those ideas are connected to something they already know or believe.
Ballenger suggests to students that they constantly reflect on their beliefs and their writing/reading processes—something that is integrated throughout the textbook—and that they assess how their writing and reading do or do not benefit from those beliefs and strategies.

To help your students unlearn prior beliefs that may interfere with their learning in your course, be sure to assign the first exercises in both chapters and discuss them in class. Emphasize the ways that writing and reading are recursive, meaning-making activities—not treasure hunts or first-draft/last-draft processes. The exercises in the chapters are designed so students can learn actively about the concepts presented. Following you’ll find additional activities that complement these exercises, including activities which students can do before they read each chapter.

**CHAPTER 1: WRITING AS INQUIRY**

**Overview: Goals and Principles to Emphasize**

**Principles**

- No matter which genre we prefer, writing can lead to discovery and surprise—it is a mode of inquiry.

- “The Spirit of Inquiry” is at the heart of the book, particularly the habit of mind reflected in dialectical thinking (which will be developed more in the next two chapters).

- Writing well means believing that writing can lead to discovery and that reflecting on the writing process—or thinking about how we write—can help us write more effectively.

- Learning to write more effectively involves “unlearning” beliefs about the writing process that may be obstacles.

- We have several motives for writing: to share ideas with others; to discover what we think and feel; and to follow our curiosity, our confusion, and our uncertainties.

- How we write is influenced by the rhetorical context.

**Goals and Learning Outcomes**

1. **Students will learn to reflect on and revise their beliefs about themselves as writers.** They will gain an understanding of their beliefs about writing, why they believe them, how they compare to their classmates, and which ones seem to conflict with each other; this process will enable them to learn more effectively. Students will have an understanding of their approaches to learning situations, and their attitudes toward writing. They will learn practical strategies for dealing with their writing challenges.
2. **Students will understand what kinds of questions will sustain inquiry into any subject.** Students will be introduced to the idea of dialectical thinking and asking questions as they write.

3. **Students will practice a method of writing and thinking that will help them generate ideas.** They will experience how fastwriting and brainstorming lead to new ideas—how “bad writing” can lead to strong writing.

4. **Students will learn how to apply rhetorical knowledge to make choices in specific writing situations.**

**DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTERS**

**PREREADING ACTIVITIES**

Students often absorb more from a reading if they have a context for understanding it and have already thought about the ideas they will be learning. You can assign any of the following activities before students read Chapter 1. Each addresses a particular concept in the chapter, and students can respond to them in their writing journal or turn them in to you.

1. Write a letter to your instructor about your best and worst writing experiences. Describe the conditions under which you write best and those that interfere with your writing process; explore why they help /do not help you.

2. If you were teaching a class about writing, what would you emphasize/not emphasize and why?

3. Describe your best/worst learning experiences. Form groups and compare what each group member has written. Develop a list of qualities of the best/worst learning experiences. What do they have in common? What seems central to how well something is learned? How would you describe the attitudes of everyone involved toward what was being learned? Toward themselves as learners?

4. Think about some of your learning experiences at home—learning to ride a bike, learning to fish, learning to cook, or learning to change the oil in the car. How were you taught to do these things? Were you, for example, taught a skill in steps? Did you learn by doing it all at once and getting feedback throughout the process?

5. How would you describe your parents’ attitudes toward learning? How do they approach new challenges? How have their attitudes influenced yours?

6. Do a quick Google search for movies and/or TV shows about teaching. How are teachers presented in these media? How are students presented? What beliefs do these images present about how people learn best (passive learning/active learning)?
7. Think about a time when you had to unlearn something you thought you knew in order to learn something new. For example, if you learned to fish using a spinning rod, you probably had to unlearn those techniques when you learned to fly fish. Or, suppose you learned tennis before racquetball, canoeing before kayaking. What was either like? How difficult was it to put aside what you had learned before? How necessary was it to “unlearn” some skills and habits before you could improve at the new ones you were learning?

8. Think of a time when you did something about which you were embarrassed or that you later realized probably did not display good judgment. Write a letter to your parents about the event and then write one to your close friend. Now compare the two letters and fastwrite about why they are so different.

**SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS**

**Journals:** Most of the sidebars in this chapter give students tips on how to generate ideas, from using fastwriting to talking to others to observing. Before you discuss these techniques, talk to your students about keeping a writing notebook or journal for the class, where they can do all their idea generating and collect their writing for the course (“Inquiring into the Details”). Some students will equate a journal with a diary, so it’s important to describe the differences. While the audience for both a diary and a writing journal is the self, their purposes are quite different. A writing journal is a place to experiment with ideas and with writing techniques, a place where “bad’ writing is celebrated as a means to strong writing. The goal is to generate a lot of material from which to craft essays, not primarily to record one’s daily activities and thoughts (though a writing journal does that as well).

As an instructor, you’ll need to decide how you will (or if you will) evaluate students’ journal work. Because the journal is a place to celebrate bad writing, many instructors choose not to evaluate it—to create an “evaluation-free zone”—but instead simply record that students have completed the assigned writing activities. If you do evaluate the writing journal, you might develop some criteria that clearly support the journal as a place to experiment without being penalized.

**Invention Strategies:** This sidebar is one which your students should bookmark for those times when they can’t get started on a writing assignment. All of the informal writing activities in the book use one or more of these invention strategies to help students generate ideas and engage in inquiry.

One of the most common invention strategies used in this book is fastwriting (see “Rules for Fastwriting”), where students write as quickly as possible without judging or editing their work. This is not writing to perform, but writing to think and discover. Sometimes fastwriting won’t produce much that seems interesting, yet that’s part of progressing to rich and stimulating ideas. Students need to know that fastwriting—or any invention technique—is not simply about writing whatever comes to mind. The key is to engage in what Peter Elbow calls “cooking” and The Curious Writer calls the “habits of mind” of academic inquiry: focusing on questions, suspending judgment, and searching for surprise. Dialectical thinking is at the core of these habits of mind—moving from belief to doubt, from observing to judging, from specifics to conclusions. Without the tension of
opposing ideas, fastwriting often feels less satisfying and productive than it can be. Experienced writers seem more likely to think dialectically when they fastwrite than do inexperienced writers, so it's important that writing instructors emphasize that feature of invention strategies for inexperienced student writers.

**Using the Writing Activities**

In this edition of *The Curious Writer* (4th), the writing activities have changed slightly. After reflecting on what they believe about writing, students are asked to write about their own writing literacies in a series of exercises that immerse them in the habits of inquiry, engaging in dialectical thinking as they generate material toward an essay. Assigning these writing exercises introduces students to the central principles and activities for the course that are then reinforced in all the subsequent chapters.

**Exercise 1.1: This I Believe (and This I Don't)**

Your students have had years of writing instruction that they will draw on in your class, instruction upon which your class will build and improve. But some of what they’ve learned may not be helpful to them in this new context of writing in the university. And some of what they've learned may be in conflict with what they need to learn. Before you discuss any writing principles, then, you need to bring to the surface the prior knowledge your students have about writing and then figure out ways to respond to those beliefs throughout the course.

If you've had your students complete some of the prereading activities above that involve their experiences and beliefs about learning and writing, you can introduce these activities by referring to what they've already written. The most important point to emphasize as you discuss this activity is: “Unlearning involves rejecting common sense if it conflicts with what actually works.” Whether you assign this exercise for homework or ask students to do it in class, you might consider dividing students into groups to discuss what they’ve written. Ask them to look for patterns in 1) what they believe in most strongly as well as with what they disagree on; and 2) their reasons why (common experiences, common beliefs and reasons). This exercise is an opportunity to talk to students about the beliefs and assumptions about writing that inform your class. Some of their beliefs may conflict with the assumptions of the course and the textbook, such as:

- **#1 Writing proficiency begins with learning the basics and then building on them, working from words to sentences to paragraphs to compositions; and**

- **#3 People are born writers in the same way that people are born good at math. Either you can do it, or you can’t.**

So how do you address these conflicts during the discussion? One way is to ask the question which Ballenger suggests: “What do I have to gain as a writer if I try believing this is true?” Another is to ask students to keep this activity in their journal and refer to it with each essay they write so they can reflect on whether the beliefs they held at the beginning are reflected in the work they are actually doing.
Exercise 1.2: Roomful of Details

This exercise gives students an experience of being surprised by what they write. Most students haven’t thought about the room in which they spent the most time as a child, let alone really focused on the details of that space. Students tend to enjoy doing so in writing, however, and frequently see the room or themselves, their parents, or their childhood, in a new way. The goals for this activity, then, are to give students further experience with invention strategies, to experience surprise and discovery through “bad writing,” and to focus on the importance of surprise.

You can assign this activity in class before students read the chapter, or you can ask them to do it at home as they are reading it. As follow-up, you might ask each student to share during class what he/she learned from the activity, what surprised him/her about it, and use each student’s answer to reinforce the chapter’s main principles about writing to discover, writing badly, and generating ideas.

Exercise 1.3: Literacy Narrative Collage

This exercise prompts students to reflect on their literacy histories by focusing on specific events, memories, and experiences in their past. Students will have a “collage” of scenes or descriptions that they can then reflect on, a collage of detailed moments on which to reflect and analyze in terms of the patterns they see. Each of the exercises following this one builds upon it. The section “A Writing Process That Harnesses Two Currents of Thought” emphasizes the central principle in this exercise—in the entire book, in fact—one that students will use repeatedly: dialectical thinking is a movement between specifics and generalities, observations, and conclusions.

Exercise 1.4: What Is Your Process?

Students who have completed this exercise say that they learned a great deal about their writing process and the challenges they face. In this textbook, students won’t simply be asked to follow a process that guarantees them an A on their essays. They will be asked to analyze what works and what doesn’t in the process they currently use, and then learn from the textbook ways of addressing the latter.

As with the other activities in the book, this one can be discussed in small groups (Step Two) and tallied so everyone can see what the dominant processes seem to be for the class. You’ll find that the group faces similar challenges, such as beginning and ending a paper, and you can make a list of those challenges to guide you in planning your daily class as well as conferencing. You might also discuss the table of writing problems and solutions found in Chapter 1 under the heading “Problem Solving in Your Writing Process.” During class discussion, though, you can connect the patterns you see in the class to the chapter’s discussion of different models of the writing process, particularly to the model embraced by the book, a recursive model of composing. This model leads into the next discussion about dialectical thinking.
Exercise 1.5: Two Kinds of Thinking

As Ballenger explains, this exercise emphasizes the movement between generating ideas—suspending judgment—and judging them, between thinking creatively and thinking critically while writing. Students focus on their writing experiences with technology, one aspect of most people’s writing literacies. While Exercise 1.4 introduces students to generating and judging, this one adds reflecting to the process of developing ideas.

Exercise 1.6: A Mini-Inquiry Project: Cell Phone Culture

This exercise asks students to reflect on cell phone culture by moving through writing prompts/questions that alternate between generating and judging, exploring and evaluating, and then reflecting. It is similar to Exercise 1.5. By the end, students might very likely have an essay subject for a future assignment.

Exercise 1.7: Scenes of Writing

This exercise prompts students to reflect on their writing from Exercises 1.1, 1.3, and 1.4 and to imagine the kind of writer they would like to be. Students then compose a 200- to 250-word post or response on what they’ve learned, drawing on the terminology about the writing process discussed in this chapter. It is an excellent way to close the chapter and emphasize all the learning outcomes.

Additional Writing Activities

1. **Overcome Your Own Challenges**: Ask students to return to the Self-Evaluation Survey in Exercise 1.4 and respond to the following questions:

   a. What are the biggest challenges to your writing process?

   b. How can you overcome these challenges?

   This activity pulls the chapter together by asking students to return to the Self-Evaluation Survey and take note of their biggest writing challenges and the strategies they might use to overcome them. Ask students to return to these responses later in the term and reassess them. Have their challenges changed? Have their strategies worked? What do they need to work on now?

2. **Practicing Dialectical Thinking**

   **Step One**: Think of a moment in your past that seemed typical for you. Perhaps you spent time sitting on a bench in a bay window reading or playing football at the park down the street. Possibly you grew up with an alcoholic parent and would wait anxiously for him to come home. Use this moment as the topic of a fastwrite. Write quickly without stopping, but try to remain within the boundaries of this moment. Begin writing in the present tense, putting yourself back into this moment and using all of your senses. Describe the moment in
detail. Don’t worry if the tense shifts and don’t try to explain the moment’s meaning. Just keep writing.

**Step Two:** Reread your initial fastwrite, underlining words, lines, or passages that seem significant in some way. Now compose a short paragraph that begins with the following words: *As I look back on this moment now, I realize that...*

**Step Three:** After completing your short paragraph, skip a few lines in your journal and compose a response to one or more of the following questions about your writing experience.

- How differently, if at all, would you have approached the fastwrite if you knew that you would read the results aloud to others?
- Did you imagine an audience other than yourself?
- What, if anything, surprised you?
- What problems arose during the fastwrite, if any, and how did you resolve them?
- Was there anything different about the ways you approached the writing from the ways you usually do?

3. **Suspending Judgment:** This activity will help students experience what it means to suspend judgment, search for surprise, and begin with curiosity. It does so by focusing them on a very common object and challenging their belief that everyday topics are boring. You can use any common object for this activity during class time. You might, in fact, do it at the beginning of the class period after students have read Chapter 1: It can be a way to begin discussing the ideas in the chapter by asking, “What does this exercise have to do with writing? How is it connected to what you read for today?”

Organize the students in several small groups. Each group will need a piece of newsprint taped to the wall before them, or a piece of paper everyone can see. Students should choose a recorder and a timekeeper.

Give each group a rock and ask them to pass the rock around, looking at it closely. When the groups are ready, follow these steps:

**Step One:** Spend a full ten minutes “brainstorming” a list of observations about your rock, and posting them on the newsprint or piece of paper. When you look at your object, what do you see? What does it make you think about? *Be specific.* The goal is to make your group’s list of observations as long as you can in ten minutes.

**Step Two:** When the time is up, review your list as a group. Now do two things: Circle the most *obvious* observation, and the *least obvious* or most surprising observation. Share these with the rest of the class.
Step Three: Take a few minutes—say, five—and use one or more of the following questions as a prompt for an open-ended fastwrite in your notebook or journal. Discuss what you discovered as you reflected on the exercise in writing.

Journal Prompts

- What does this exercise have to do with writing?
- What do you notice about the location of the most and least obvious observations? Is there any pattern to when each group arrived at these? If so, how do you explain this pattern?
- What surprised you most about the exercise? Why did it surprise you?
- Were there any similarities or differences between the process your group used to come up with information in this exercise and the process you use to write essays?

Bring the class together and discuss what they’ve discovered. Here’s a list of some thoughts they might come up with to explain the ways this exercise is connected to writing:

- The more you look, the more you see. Texts, objects, data, experiences, art—anything, really—are much more likely to yield surprise if we prolong our gaze, resisting the temptation to rush to easy conclusions. Good writing—and thinking—often demands that willingness to look really, really closely, with openness to surprise. This is often the most valuable kind of revision.

- There are no boring topics. A writer’s challenge is not to find subjects that are dramatic or unfamiliar to his/her readers, but to help readers to see what they’ve probably already seen in a way they haven’t seen it before. This isn’t easy, but a willingness to suspend judgment and approach a subject openly will help a lot.

- Hunting is not those heads on the wall. This is the title of an essay by Amiri Baraka, an African American writer and intellectual, who argued that it is the process of bringing art into being that is the essential element of a creative act; in other words, it’s the act of painting, not the painting itself. The key to writing and thinking well is, at least initially, to pay close attention to our writing processes. That way, we gain more control over them.

4. What Is “Good Writing”? This activity is an effective way to begin discussing students’ beliefs about writing because it asks them to articulate what they believe “good writing” is. Their definitions of good writing will influence what they write; how they approach the writing process; how they judge their own work; what they think you, the instructor, expect; and how they read other people’s writing. There are several ways to encourage students to think about this issue:
Ask them to bring in copies of what they consider “good” writing (or provide a range of examples yourself that will challenge their beliefs, such as texts from different genres which are targeted at different audiences). In groups, ask them to list the qualities that make these texts strong writing. They probably will not all agree, so ask them to keep two lists: one that they all agree on and one with qualities on which they do not agree. You can have a rich discussion about what affects the qualities of good writing: audience, purpose, culture, history, a writer’s background, genre, and so on.

Ask students to make a focused list in response to the following question:

What do you believe are the most important qualities of “good” writing?

Then, ask them to choose the quality they believe is most important, and begin a focused fastwrite for seven minutes, exploring what exactly they mean by this idea and where they got this belief. For example, if a student wrote, “writing has got to be interesting to be good,” he would explore what he means by “interesting.” Suggest they also write about people, moments, scenes, and experiences that may have given rise to this belief. If the writing stalls, students need to choose another idea from their lists of qualities of good writing and explore that.

**Writing Projects**

1. **Ask** your classmates if you can collect their responses to Exercises 1.1 and 1.4 to analyze as part of a research project on college students’ beliefs about writing. Ask them to take their names off the activities. Look for patterns in what everyone says, but look for surprises as well. What seems interesting to you in what they’ve written? Then, brainstorm a list of questions you have about students and writing. These questions might lead you to interview high school English teachers about how they teach writing and why, or to find current research on the teaching of writing, or even to investigate the kinds of writing students will be expected to do in the university and in their jobs. See where the surveys take you and compose an essay based on what you find.

2. **Follow-up to the Literacy Narrative Collage:** This activity appeared in the 3rd edition of The Curious Writer and offers an opportunity for students to return to their earlier journal work on their literacy histories and use the inquiry strategies in the book to develop a three- to five-page essay.

**The Writing Literacy Memoir:** Drawing on the writing you’ve done on this topic so far and the writing will continue to generate, compose a three- to five-page essay that is a memoir of your history as a writer. Like all inquiry projects, this essay should investigate some question about your writing experiences, and this question should be behind the stories you tell. To start with, look for a question that explores a relationship between two things in your writing life. For example, “What is the relationship between my success with online writing and my struggles with school writing?” Or something like this: “What is the
relationship between my memories of earning praise about my writing from teachers and the lack of confidence in writing I've always felt, and still feel?"

As you compose your writing history, consider the following:

- Don't just tell one story. Tell several from different parts of your life that might illuminate your question.

- Does it make sense to tell your story out of order, in a structure that doesn't strictly follow chronology?

- Incorporate other sources. Nonfiction writers, no matter what the genre, can turn to four sources of information: personal experience, observation, interview, and reading. While this assignment will mine your personal experience most heavily, would it be useful to talk to a parent about your writing?

**Taking a Reflective Turn:** This exercise prompts students to reflect on how they wrote their literacy narratives, asking them to step back from the content and think about the process of writing it. These reflective questions also link back to Exercise 1.1, which asks students to consider their writing beliefs. Invite them to compare their responses to that first exercise with their responses to this one. Doing so is part of the process of learning and unlearning attitudes and beliefs about writing.

In your notebook, use one or more of the following prompts for a fastwrite:

- What was different about how you approached the process of writing this essay from the way you approach other writing for school?

- Where did you run into problems? How might you have solved them if you had the chance to repeat the process of writing this essay?

- What did your writing memoir reveal to you about your writing habits, beliefs, and hopes? What do you see more clearly now that you didn’t see before you wrote it?

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS**

**WRITING PROCESSES**

A compilation of Web sites on the writing process, with tips and activities from Effective Writing Center, University of Maryland University College

Questions and strategies for generating ideas from the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL):

- [Prewriting (Invention) General Questions](#)
- [More Prewriting (Invention) Questions](#)
“Brainstorming” from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center

“Writing Anxiety” from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center

Infographic: How Does the Act of Writing Affect Your Brain?

COURSE HANDOUTS

Here you'll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
THE WRITING LITERACY MEMOIR

Drawing on the writing you've done on this topic so far and the writing you will continue to generate, compose a three- to five-page essay that is a memoir of your history as a writer. Like all inquiry projects, this essay should investigate some question about your writing experiences, and this question should be behind the stories you tell.

To start with, look for a question that explores a relationship between two things in your writing life. For example, "What is the relationship between my success with online writing and my struggles with school writing?" Or something like this: "What is the relationship between my memories of earning praise about my writing from teachers and the lack of confidence in writing I've always felt, and still feel?"

Tips: As you compose your writing history, consider the following:

- Don’t just tell one story. Tell several from different parts of your life that might illuminate your question.

- Does it make sense to tell your story out of order, in a structure that doesn’t strictly follow chronology?

- Incorporate other sources. Nonfiction writers, no matter what the genre, can turn to four sources of information: personal experience, observation, interview, and reading. While this assignment will mine your personal experience most heavily, would it be useful to talk to a parent about your writing?

Reflection: After you have composed a substantive draft, in your notebook, use one or more of the following prompts for a fastwrite:

- What was different about how you approached the process of writing this essay from the way you approach other writing for school?

- Where did you run into problems? How might you have solved them if you had the chance to repeat the process of writing this essay?

- What did your writing memoir reveal to you about your writing habits, beliefs, and hopes? What do you see more clearly now that you didn’t see before you wrote it?
CHAPTER 2: READING AS INQUIRY

In this chapter, students will learn to be more conscious and purposeful in their reading strategies, as well as how to use inquiry strategies when they read and when they write. These methods are part of academic inquiry, and they function as questions which students can ask as they respond to texts they read or ideas they are trying out in their drafts. The challenges with this chapter are 1) helping students reflect on how and why they read, and 2) helping students understand why and how inquiry strategies can benefit their writing. This final chapter in Part One gives them practical strategies to use for the writing projects in Part Two. You may find that this chapter is one to which you return frequently as students work on those writing projects.

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- Reading is a recursive process that is analogous to the writing process and involves the habits of mind of intellectual inquiry.

- Our beliefs about reading influence the strategies we use and how successful we are in reading for a particular purpose.

- How we read is influenced by the rhetorical situation: the writer, the reader, the purpose for reading, and the text.

- Strategies we use to read written texts can be applied to visual texts as well.

- Design principles to consider for texts include: layout, images, graphics, color, typefaces, and fonts.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will learn to apply reading purposes relevant to reading in college.

2. Students will examine their existing beliefs about reading and how they might be obstacles to reading effectively.

3. Students will recognize reading situations and the choices about approaches to reading they imply.

4. Students will understand the special demands of reading to write and practice doing it.

5. Students will understand some conventions of academic writing and recognize them in texts.
DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTERS

Like Chapter 1, this chapter begins by asking students to consider what they already believe about the reading process so they can figure out which beliefs are helpful to reading in the university setting and which may not be. The rest of the chapter offers strategies for students to learn that will make them more effective readers, but first students need to understand the beliefs they bring with them to the course.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

1. Exercise 2.2 (following)

2. My Life as a Reader: Before students discuss their beliefs about “good” reading methods, ask them to explore in a fastwrite their own history as a reader. In telling this story, they may discover the origins of some of their feelings and beliefs about the process.

   Step One: Think back to moments, scenes, situations, or people that you associate with reading. Perhaps you recall a day in the local public library, surrounded by stacks of notecards, reading the Encyclopedia Britannica for a paper on China. Or maybe you remember sitting on the couch with your father, your head resting on his chest, feeling the vibrations of his voice as he read Lassie Come Home. Tell this story in a fastwrite with as much detail as you can. Write for five minutes.

   Step Two: Spend two or three minutes fastwriting or composing an answer to the following questions: Do you think you’re a good reader? Why or why not? How would you describe your own reading habits and methods?

   Step Three: In small groups, share your responses to Step Two. What do you notice about the experiences and beliefs about reading that you all seem to share? What do you have in common? Join another group and look for patterns. Once the class has combined groups into two large ones and each has a list of the patterns and commonalities shared by group members, your instructor will have you post them on newsprint/the chalkboard or whiteboard.

   • What do you notice?

   • Why might so many people in one class share such similar beliefs and experiences with reading?

   • Which of the items on the lists seem connected to what you’ve learned so far about inquiry from Chapters 1 and 2?

3. Reading Strategies: For this activity, give students an excerpt from a published text to read (try a nonfiction essay or an academic piece that is relatively accessible, but challenging).

   Step One: Read the excerpt as you normally would if your purpose was to understand what the author is saying.
Step Two: In your own words, explain what you understand the author to be saying.

Step Three: Reflect on your reading strategies: what did you do when you read? Consider the list in the sidebar “Reading Perspectives” and the following list of reading behaviors, then fastwrite about which of these behaviors and perspectives you used when you read this excerpt:

Step Four: What do you notice about the perspectives and strategies you used? Are they typical for you? How would your strategies have been different (or would they be different?) if you had been asked to compose an argument in response to the text, rather than to summarize it?

4. The day before you assign the reading of Chapter 2, spend time in class doing the following: Preview Chapter 2 by telling students they will be reading about four methods of inquiry: exploring, explaining, evaluating, and reflecting. Ask them to fastwrite for five minutes on how each of these ways of seeing is different from one another. How is exploring different from explaining? When would we do one or the other? During your discussion, emphasize the ways that these four methods are part of inquiry and dialectical thinking. Explain that, in reading Chapter 2, they will learn specific strategies for reading texts and developing ideas in their essays.
**SIDEARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS**

**Reading Perspectives:** This lists the various strategies we can use when we are reading. It emphasizes that we can consciously choose which strategies are best for what we are reading.

**Reading the Visual:** As the title suggests, this sidebar offers five strategies for reading visual texts: framing, angle, relationship, color, arrangement, and light.

**USING THE WRITING ACTIVITIES**

**Exercise 2.1: Using the Four Purposes for Academic Reading**

This exercise, as the title suggests, prompts students to use the four purposes—explore, explain, evaluate, reflect—as they read a data table on employment patterns for college undergraduates. Students could do this activity in class then share in their groups, eventually reporting back to the whole class on the Step Four. It would be a useful way to begin a discussion of the purposes for reading academic texts.

**Exercise 2.2: A Reader's Memoir**

This activity parallels the writing literacy memoir in Chapter 1, focusing this time on reading. Have students respond to this exercise as they are reading the chapter; it prepares them to understand the sections that follow about reading as a process and reading to write. This exercise leads naturally into the chapter's discussion about “Reading Situations and Rhetorical Choices,” as well as “Reading as a Process.” These sections illustrate how the rhetorical situation influences how readers read—just as it influences how writers write. Effective readers are attuned to their purposes for reading. They are also attuned to the rhetorical situation of the text itself—the intended audience, the genre, the writer, and the kind of expertise demanded of readers. Ballenger identifies four important lenses readers use:

- Purposes for reading
- Genres—a reader's knowledge and expectations of the genre
- Self-perception—a reader's beliefs about his/her abilities
- Knowledge of the subject matter

**Exercise 2.3: Reading a Life**

This exercise asks students to read a photograph of a woman's dressing table, title “Ruth's Vanity (on the day she died),” by applying the four frames of reading that they have just been introduced to. Students should refer to the sidebar “Reading the Visual” for tips on how to understand the language of a visual text. Ballenger also notes that this writing activity is connected to the ethnography essay in Chapter 9, so you might loop back to this exercise when you assign Chapter 9.

**Exercise 2.4: Double-Entry Journaling with a Visual Text**

This activity prompts students to analyze an ad using the rhetorical analysis tools they've been introduced to. This time, however, they will respond to the writing prompts using a double-
entry journal, which Ballenger has just described (or the two alternatives, Three-Act Notes and After-words). Students should refer to the sidebar “Reading the Visual” for tips on how to understand the language of a visual text, as well as Figure 2.4 for tips on keeping a double-entry journal. In this type of response, students literally have to separate what they are reading from what they are thinking. This helps them visually to see the dialogue they need to have with the text; it also forces them to slow down when they read, consciously put it in their own words, and practice inquiry-based habits of mind.

As Ballenger notes, this exercise connects to Chapter 7 and writing arguments, so you might loop back to this activity when you assign Chapter 7.

**Exercise 2.5: Reading Creatively, Reading Critically**

For this exercise, students read Ballenger’s short piece, “The Importance of Writing Badly,” and apply the inquiry strategies just discussed in the chapter, using the double-entry journal technique. When discussing students’ responses in class, refer to the sidebar “One Student’s Response: Briana’s Journal.”

**ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES**

(Organized by chapter sub-headings)

**BELIEFS ABOUT READING**

1. **What Do You Believe?** This exercise appeared in the previous edition of *The Curious Writer* and is a good prereading activity, one you can have students finish before they read the chapter. You could assign it for homework or as class work the day before you assign Chapter 2. Once students get into groups and look for patterns in what they’ve written, you can get a sense of what the entire class believes. The students will also begin to see that they already choose different reading strategies in different contexts (as listed in Step Three), and the class discussion that follows can emphasize becoming more conscious and purposeful about using different strategies.

**Step One:** In your journal, draft a brief definition of a “good” reader. What exactly is a good reader able to do?

**Step Two:** Answer the following questions in your journal:

- Do you think you’re a good reader? Why or why not?
- How would you describe your own reading habits and methods?

**Step Three:** It’s helpful to think about the characteristics of a good reader in certain contexts. For example, what should a good reader be able to do when in certain contexts. For example, what should a good reader be able to do when

- Taking computerized exams like the ACT and the SAT?
• Research a paper for school?
• Reading a textbook for an exam?
• Analyzing a poem or a short story?
• Reading a friend’s Facebook page?
• Reading instructions on how to set up a new computer?
• Reading a novel for pleasure?

Choose two of these reading situations (or two others that you can imagine), and in your journal write a definition of what a good reader should be able to do in each situation.

Reading Situations and Rhetorical Choices

2. How Rhetorical Context Affects Reading: Another way to illustrate how the rhetorical context affects the reading process is to ask students to read excerpts from very different genres:

Step One: Give students one page from different genres—something from a novel, a news magazine or popular magazine, and one from an academic journal or book. Distribute them for homework.

Step Two: Ask students to respond to the following questions in their journal and bring them to class:

• Which of these excerpts seemed easier to read? More difficult? Why?
• Look at the ways you may have marked up each of the texts. What do you notice about your reading strategies? How did you decide what was important?
• What one thing would you need to know more about in order to understand these excerpts better?
• What has surprised you about your reading process from doing this activity? How is it connected to the discussion from Chapter 1 of the writing process?

Step Three: Ask students, either the entire class or in groups, to talk about the strategies they used when reading each excerpt, and guide them to understand how the audience, the writer, the genre, and their purpose for reading all play a role in how they read. Ask them to look for patterns in what their classmates say, and finish the activity with a brainstormed list of strategies, written on the board, which students can use when they read.
A Process for Reading to Write

4. Reading as a Process: [Choose an excerpt that will likely expose gaps in students’ knowledge about the subject.] Read this excerpt and respond to it using the dialogue journal, putting quotes on the left and your responses to them on the right. Reread your responses and then compose a paragraph that explains what you’ve just read. Skip a few lines and compose another paragraph that explains the reading, using comparisons. Reread it and underline ideas or words that need definition and then rewrite the paragraph, adding those definitions.

Lastly, fastwrite for seven minutes about the following statement: What I need to understand more about this subject is ______. What gaps in your own knowledge have you discovered from trying to explain this reading?

Find three articles on the same subject that are written to different audiences and in different genres. For example, if you’re interested in the rise in obesity in America, search for articles on obesity using First Search or EBSCOhost (through your library). Then, using different magazine sources, choose pieces that are written in different forms, such as a personal essay, an opinion piece, and an academic article.

As you read them, mark the places where the writer seems to be using the forms of inquiry discussed in Chapter 3. Where is s/he explaining? Evaluating? Exploring? Reflecting? Then, fastwrite in your journal on the following question: Given the writer, the audience, the form, and the subject, why might the author have used the forms of inquiry s/he did?

4. Dialogue Journal/Explaining a Marketing Strategy: In this exercise, students use the dialogue journal approach to analyze the marketing strategy of an ad. They suspend judgment first by listing all the details of what they see, then they move to the mountain and write down the “story” that each ad seems to be telling and decide whether such a story is effective in selling the product. These steps slow down the dialectical process involved in explaining so students will focus on both sides of the dialectic. They may ask you why they have to take so much time doing each step when they probably have already analyzed the ad very quickly just by looking at it. One response can be that it is often easier for us to quickly jump to the mountain of reflection when we are explaining something, and that means we often miss things. By focusing first on what we see—the details—we can develop a richer explanation of the ad because this latter explanation is grounded in the details.

Step One: Choose two ads that market very different products. Open your journal to blank opposing pages. On the left page, make a fast list that describes, in order, the details your eyes take in as you look at each advertisement: What do you notice first? Then what? Then what? And then? Be as specific as possible; that is, rather than saying “the man’s arm,” note “the sculpted biceps in the man’s left arm.”

Step Two: Based on what your eyes are drawn to in each ad, what story does each ad seem to be telling to its intended audience? On the right page of your journal, tell
those stories in your own words, and then explain why you think the story which
the ad seems to be telling would or would not succeed in selling its product to its
intended audience.

**Step Three:** In small groups, compare the two ads and discuss which of the two ads
you think is the more effective and why.

3. **An Alternative to the Double-Entry Journal:** Divide students into groups and challenge them
to come up with an alternative to the double-entry journal. This alternative must reflect all
the principles about reading that are discussed in Chapter 2, and they can use any of the
exercises as models. It must promote reading as conversation and dialectical thinking. Then,
each group must exchange their alternative with another group and use it to write a
response to a reading which you provide. Ask them to bring the response to class, along
with a reflective letter to the group of students who designed the activity, explaining what
worked and what needs revising. Then discuss it as a class.

5. **Evaluating Arguments:** Using the dialogue journal again, the exercise asks students to focus
on questions about how strong an argument is. The strategy here is to use the believing and
doubting game to evaluate the excerpt and then compose a paragraph that reflects the
students’ position on it. As you talk about what the students wrote, ask them how much
they also used exploring and explaining when they responded using the dialogue journal
and then wrote the paragraph. Doing so will emphasize how we use all these methods of
inquiry at the same time, but it’s useful to focus on one or two of them when we begin
writing.

**Step One:** Choose an excerpt from an essay that presents an argument. Carefully
read the excerpt, and on the left page of your notebook jot down quotations that you
find provocative, puzzling, truthful, or doubtful. Write down at least three
quotations.

**Step Two:** On the opposing page of your notebook, respond in a fastwrite to one or
more of the quotations which you collected. In this step, however, first play the
believing game; that is, try to see things the way the writer sees them for five
minutes. With what do you agree? What would you concede might be true? What
seems to be his/her strongest argument, or his/her most believable evidence? How
does what he/she says connect with your own experiences and observations?

**Step Three:** Now play the doubting game. On the right page of your journal,
continue your fastwriting on the excerpts you selected, but this time take a critical
stance. What does the writer fail to understand? What does he/she fail to consider?
How do your own experiences and observations challenge his/her judgments?

**Step Four:** Reread the excerpt and your journal work. Craft a 200-word response to
the writer’s views. What is your own take on the issue and what is your evaluation
of the writer’s claims?
6. **Inquiry in Motion**: This activity brings the whole chapter together by asking students to apply all four forms of inquiry to one text. It moves students from the sea to the mountain and back again with each step, showing them how to discover what they want to say about the article chosen and then compose a well-developed thesis statement from it. In the end, students compose a 300- to 500-word draft of their response to the essay and turn in a reflective letter about the writing process with it.

Divide students into groups during class and share their work, particularly their reflective letters. Have them look for patterns in what other students have said. If some of the students have struggled with the exercise, why have they struggled? What might they do differently?

**Step One: Collect.** Read the article you or your instructor has chosen for this activity using a double-entry journal to collect notes as you read. On the left page of your journal, jot down passages that seem important to your understanding of the piece, facts, important details, and so on. Collect any fragments from the essay that you find especially puzzling, powerful, or potentially significant and give them more thought.

**Step Two: Explore.** On the opposing right page of your journal, begin an open-ended fastwrite that explores your reaction to the facts and the details of the story that you have written on the left-hand page. Answer the following questions: *What does this essay mean to you? In what ways does it connect to your own experience? What does it make you think or feel? What might be the meaning of the passages or other fragments you collected, and how might they contribute to the themes of the essay?*

**Step Three: Focus.** Shift to a critical mode of thinking, and analyze what you have written and collected so far. In no more than three sentences, state what you currently believe to be the main concept or idea behind the article. This is your thesis statement. Do this in the right column, underneath your fastwriting from the previous step.

**Step Four: Explain.** Immediately below your thesis statement, explain to yourself how the passages or fragments you collected from the essay in the left column (and others you may yet gather) contribute to your interpretation of the article.

**Step Five: Collect.** Reread the essay and collect evidence—quotes, passages, details—that seem to support or extend your thesis. Add these to the notes you have already collected on the left page of your notebook.

**Step Six: Focus.** Revise your thesis statement to reflect your latest thinking about the article. Do this on the right page.
Step Seven: **Evaluate.** Reread your journal and jot down, in the right column, at least four reasons for why you think your interpretation of the essay is correct. These are "because" statements that might naturally follow your thesis. For example, “I think _____'s essay is about ______ because _____.”

Step Eight: **Draft.** Using the writing and thinking you've generated so far, draft a 300- to 500-word response to the essay. It should declare and support your thesis statement. If you can, begin your piece with a passage from the article that is important to your understanding of it.

Step Nine: **Reflect.** After completing your response, write a cover letter for it addressed to your instructor. Your letter should address the following questions:

- As you were using your writing to think through your response to the article, did you find that your ideas about it evolved, or did they stay pretty much the same? Did anything surprise you?
- Which step in the exercise seemed most productive for you? Why?
- Can you imagine how you might use a process like this to write your own essays?

**Reading Visual Texts**

4. **Reading Visual Texts:** Ask students to go to a public place and analyze the space, the visuals, and so on. What do they “read” in this space? What is the space trying to convey? Have them compare it to a similar place, such as two coffee shops, two different kinds of restaurants, or two gyms.

5. **Exploring a Photograph:** Each step moves students from focusing first on fleeting impressions, feelings, and details to focusing on a dominant impression of the photograph. The last step invites students to consider where they move from creative to critical thinking, a way to reinforce dialectical thinking.

**Step One:** Choose a photograph to study (a well-known photo, one from a historical-society library, one from home, one from a Web site such as corbis.com). Pay attention to how it makes you feel, but try to avoid rushing to judgment about how you might interpret the image; that is, hold off deciding what seems to be the dominant feeling it evokes in you, or what the photograph says to you.

**Step Two:** In your journal, explore your reactions to this photograph through a fastwrite. Your writing should be open-ended—but avoid making up a story about the photo. For now, at least, focus your fastwrite on what you see, feel, and think about the image.
Journal Prompts: If you need a prompt, choose one of the following options:

**Narrative of thought:** When I first look at the picture, I feel or think _______. And then _______. And then _______. And then ... and then ... And now?

**Telling details:** After fastwriting, reread what you’ve written. Underline sentences or passages in your writing that say or imply what you think or feel the photograph depicts. Where do you come closest to naming the dominant impression it creates, or what it seems to say to you? In other words, where did you shift from creative to critical thinking? Discuss what you discovered in class. If you were to write a one- or two-sentence caption for the photograph, what would you write?

**WRESTLING WITH ACADEMIC DISCOURSE**

1. **Reading Reality TV:** This activity (originally published in the fourth edition of *The Curious Writer*) is a way to introduce students to the idea of academic discourse that Ballenger has just introduced in the section “Wrestling with Academic Discourse.” Students read two excerpts on reality TV, one from an academic journal and the other from a website. Then, students are prompted to analyze each excerpt using the strategies discussed so far.

   This exercise works well to introduce students to analyzing academic discourse and preparing them for the chapter’s next section on typical features in academic writing. If students are struggling to understand what this section means, try one of the following “Additional Activities,” which ask them to read different genres and reflect on their reading process. In the end, one of the more important goals of this chapter is to help students see that the more we understand the ways in which reading is a process, the more control we can have over how we read.

   __________

   You probably know that the journal excerpt (excerpt 1) is more authoritative than the web excerpt, particularly if you are reading them for a college paper. But do you know why? Read the excerpts closely, thinking about the differences.

**Excerpt 1**

*There has been a considerable interest in how real reality television shows are as well as how such programming creates and reinforces gender and racial stereotypes (Cavender and Bond-Maupin 1993; Eschhotz et al. 2002; Estep and Macdonald 1983; Oliver 1994; Prosise and Johnson 2004).*

   Many researchers focus on crime-based reality television because this type of television programming blurs the line between entertainment and fact. Televised police offers are theoretically sent on real-life calls to interact with actual criminals. More than two decades ago, Sheley and Ashkins (1981) documented that the officer and perpetuator most

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likely depicted on police television dramas was far from reality (see too Oliver 1994; Oliver and Armstrong 1998). Oliver (1994), in a content analysis of reality-based police shows, found that white characters on these shows were more likely to be portrayed as police officers than perpetrators of crimes, whereas black and Hispanic characters were more likely to be shown as criminals than police officers. If viewers appreciated that this was Hollywood entertainment albeit docudrama, such images might not be so troublesome. However, as Prosise and Johnson (2004) write, most people report that their knowledge of crime, as well as their understanding of law enforcement generally, comes through the media rather than from direct experience (see too Oliver and Armstrong 1998).

Excerpt 2

Reality TV: An Insider’s Guide to TV’s Hottest Market

For all of Reality’s faults, I still liken critics who blanketly bash it while favoring sitcoms and dramas to wine snobs who can’t just enjoy an orange soda now and then. Good Reality TV rivals the best traditionally scripted television for entertainment value, and its positive impact on popular culture cab be felt just as deeply, if not more so, than its negative . . . .

Consider the number of people emboldened by shows like The Biggest Loser to make positive changes in their lives. The popular Reveille series for NBC started a national movement to get in shape that echoed across America, making heroes (and moguls) of personal trainers Bob Harper and Jillian Michaels. While the show has been taken to task by critics for its wall-to-wall product placement, one can hardly argue that any other show in recent history has done so much measureable good for viewers.

Generating

Step One: Explore your reaction to each excerpt. Which are you most inclined to believe? Why? What exactly is it about the less persuasive excerpt that makes it unconvincing? How do your own feelings about beliefs about reality TV figure into your reaction? Fastwrite for three minutes, thinking through writing about your reasons for believing one excerpt more than the other.

Judging

Step Two: Focus your analysis on the persuasiveness of each excerpt by summarizing what you discovered in the fastwrite. Make a list of at least three reasons why, if you were writing a college essay on the influence of reality TV on fans, you might prefer one excerpt over another.

Step Three: In excerpt 1, what do you notice about the author’s relationship with others who have written on the topic of reality TV? How would you contrast that with the same relationship in excerpt 2? Jot down a few ideas.

Step Four: You probably noticed that the second excerpt uses the first person, while the first doesn’t. Much, though not all, academic discourse avoids the first person. This isn’t a rule. It’s a convention, a feature of this kind of writing that people typically use because it serves some rhetorical purpose. What purpose might it serve in excerpt 1? List a few ideas about this.

Step Five: Because the excerpts are so brief, you don’t have much to work with. But can you speculate on what kind of evidence might be sufficient to support an assertion when someone writes an essay on a commercial website and what might be necessary in the field of criminology?

Step Six: Try to pull some of this together in a short paper or discussion-board post. Using examples from the excerpt, write about 200 words in response to the following two questions:

What are some characteristics distinguishing between the discourse of criminology and the discourse of popular writing on the web? How might these differences influence how you read and use each as a college writer and a reader writing a paper on reality TV?

2. Applying Academic Reading Strategies: Find a challenging essay for students to read and ask them to apply what they’ve learned in this chapter to reading it. Ask them two things: Which strategies helped you the most, and why; and what new strategies might you suggest to Ballenger to add to this chapter?

   Step One: [Find a text for students to read and respond to using the dialogue journal.] Read and respond using the dialogue journal approach from Chapter 2. Compose a paragraph that captures your response to the text—offers an interpretation, provides commentary or critique, captures a memory which the text triggered for you—whatever you want.

   Step Two: Reread both the dialogue journal response and the paragraph you composed. Using a colored highlighter or pen, underline the places where you’d say you are exploring. Choose a different colored pen/highlighter and underline the places where you’d say you were explaining. Do the same for places where you are evaluating and reflecting.

   Step Three: Try to come up with definitions for what it means to use exploring as a way of thinking about an idea. Do the same for explaining, evaluating, and reflecting.

   Step Four: In groups, compare your responses to the above activities and present to the class your collective definitions. Why might it be important to name the different
kinds of thinking in this response? How might it help you improve your writing? How do they connect to what you’ve read in Chapters 1 and 2?

WRITING PROJECTS

1. Students who hope to be teachers might be interested in doing research on how reading is taught in high school, using the principles in Chapter 2 to help them brainstorm interview questions and to think about what they learn.

2. Ask students to find five different images of the same subject (for example, five ads for a similar product—like batteries or cell phones—or five renderings of an ocean scene, etc.). Then, ask them to use the strategies for reading images to analyze the texts and develop an essay. Encourage them to use the four inquiry questions (exploring, explaining, evaluating, and reflecting) as they generate ideas and analyze the visual texts.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

 USING READING IN A WRITING COURSE: PRINT RESOURCES


 USING READING IN A WRITING COURSE: WEB RESOURCES
 Reading and Writing Together from Hobart and William Smith Colleges

 “Reading to Write” from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center

 Close Reading from the University of Washington

 COURSE HANDOUTS
 Here you’ll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?**

**Step One:** In your journal, draft a brief definition of a “good” reader. What exactly is a good reader able to do?

**Step Two:** Answer the following questions in your journal:

- Do you think you’re a good reader? Why or why not?
- How would you describe your own reading habits and methods?

**Step Three:** It’s helpful to think about the characteristics of a good reader in certain contexts. For example, what should a good reader be able to do when in certain contexts?

- Taking computerized exams like the ACT and the SAT?
- Research a paper for school?
- Reading a textbook for an exam?
- Analyzing a poem or a short story?
- Reading a friend’s Facebook page?
- Reading instructions on how to set up a new computer?
- Reading a novel for pleasure?
**KEEPING A DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNAL**

Here are some guidelines for having a dialogue with what you are reading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page #</th>
<th>Notes from Reading</th>
<th>Exploratory Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Direct quotations</td>
<td>Focused fastwrite on material in left-hand column or page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Summaries of key ideas</td>
<td>■ What’s relevant to the question?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>■ Paraphrases of assertions, claims</td>
<td>■ What questions does it raise?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>■ Facts, specific observations, data</td>
<td>■ What do I think and feel about this?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Premises and reasons</td>
<td>■ How does it change the way I think about the subject?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>■ Interesting examples or case studies</td>
<td>■ What surprised me?</td>
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<td>■ What’s the most important thing I take away from the reading?</td>
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<td>■ How does it connect to what I’ve heard, seen, or read before?</td>
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### Summary of Inquiry Methods and Rhetorical Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exploring</th>
<th>Explaining</th>
<th>Evaluating</th>
<th>Reflecting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writer</strong></td>
<td>When there is a desire to write most honestly</td>
<td>When the writer cares that the reader understands</td>
<td>When the writer wants to have a calculated presence</td>
<td>When you are the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>Concern for audience is usually low</td>
<td>Usually (but not always) audience is a major concern</td>
<td>Concern for audience is high</td>
<td>Concern for audience may be low or high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To discover</td>
<td>To inform and provide context</td>
<td>To prove</td>
<td>To gain control over a process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Relatively time-consuming</td>
<td>Usually time-consuming</td>
<td>Time involved is a function of subject and depth of inquiry</td>
<td>Time-consuming, and <em>timing</em> is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expertise</strong></td>
<td>Not necessarily required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Generally, the greater expertise, the better</td>
<td>You're already an expert on yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>Personal essays, sometimes research essays, journal writing, sketches, and early discovering drafts</td>
<td>All genres</td>
<td>Most academic genres</td>
<td>Journal writing, reflective letters, self-assessments, portfolios</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART TWO: INQUIRY PROJECTS

You’ll notice a pattern to each of the chapters in Part Two, a pattern that reflects several principles in the textbook:

- Writing in any genre involves a recursive process of writing. Each chapter takes students through the following (a few of these subheadings have been revised from those in the previous edition):
  
  “What Are You Going to Write About?”
  “Opening Up”
  “Narrowing Down”
  “Writing the Sketch”
  “Moving from Sketch to Draft”
  “Developing”
  “Drafting”
  “Workshopping”
  “Revising”

- Our motives for writing in a particular genre affect what and how we write.

- All writing projects begin with questions and are developed with inquiry-based methods (exploring, explaining, evaluating, and reflecting).

- The writing projects in this book share several qualities with academic writing, and each chapter discusses those overlaps and how students can make connections among different genres.

- Writers have different purposes for reading and therefore different strategies; in most of these chapters, the readings are examples of the form which students will compose themselves, so they are reading as writers. In the chapters on research-based essays and ethnographies, they will shift their purposes to include reading as inquiry.

- Research informs every kind of writing we do, so it is included in the writing activities of each chapter.

- Visual and audio texts as well as printed texts are used as models and objects of analysis.
• Writing and reading involve dialectical thinking, in addition to the other habits of mind of intellectual inquiry.

The repetition of these principles from chapter to chapter will help reinforce them for your students and lends an implicit structure to your course if you choose it. It can be helpful to return occasionally to these principles during class discussion, asking students how the essay they just wrote reflects (or doesn’t) what they’ve learned from the first three chapters of the book.

These chapters are designed for use in several types of classes: a one-semester (or quarter) first-year writing course, a two-semester (or quarter) sequence of courses, or advanced writing courses. Depending on your program’s requirements, you can choose any of the projects and be assured that the central principles of academic inquiry and rhetorically effective writing will be emphasized.
CHAPTER 3: WRITING A PERSONAL ESSAY

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

• Writers have several motives when writing a personal essay: to find out rather than to prove, to explore what they think about a question, and to explore the relationship between themselves and their subject.

• The personal essay is connected to academic writing: It allows you to explore your ideas and use all the habits of mind in academic inquiry; it gives you practice with dialectical thinking; it helps you to know yourself and your thinking better, which demands that you take responsibility for your ideas.

• The four forms of inquiry will be used as you read and respond to examples of the personal essay.

• You will learn how to generate ideas for your own personal essay, how to judge what will be a promising subject, how to write a sketch and develop it into a draft, how to workshop this kind of essay, how to gather more information, and how to revise the essay.

FEATURES OF THE PERSONAL ESSAY:

• Inquiry questions:
  o What does it mean to me?
  o What do I understand about this now that I didn’t then?

• Motives:
  o Self-discovery
  o Uses first person ("I")—the writer's relationship to his/her subject is central and shapes meaning

• Subject: Often focuses on a commonplace subject

• Structure:
  o Often uses narrative development
  o Emphasizes dialectical moves between then and now, showing and telling, memory/observation and reflection
  o Frequently has an implied thesis
• **Sources of Information:** Draws on memory and observation as sources of information for the essay

• **Language:**
  - General language of reflection
  - Specific detail of experience and observation, often sensory details

**GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. **Use personal experiences and observations to drive inquiry.**

2. **Apply the exploratory thinking of personal essays to academic writing.** Students should understand how writing a personal essay will help them write an academic essay.

3. **Identify the characteristics of personal essays in different forms.** Students should understand how to balance detail and reflection, engage in dialectical thinking about their own experiences, and illustrate the relationship between themselves and their subject. They should learn how to craft a scene and write dialogue, using showing detail rather than telling statements.

4. **Use invention strategies to discover and develop a personal essay topic.**

5. **Apply revision strategies that are effective for shaping narratives.**

**DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTERS**

**PREREADING ACTIVITIES**

1. List the personal essays you’ve written earlier, whether for a class assignment or for your own interest. Then, fastwrite in your journal about the experiences you had writing them: What did you learn? How did your audience respond? What was fun and pleasurable about writing them? Not so fun? How did they relate to the other writing you’ve done—did they help you become a better writer of an academic essay, for example? Share your writing with a small group and discuss the patterns you see in your common experiences.

2. This activity will help students think about the personal essay and what Ballenger says about it before they begin reading. They’ll most likely anticipate several things he says, which means they are more likely to remember them. This exercise would work well at the end of a class period before you assign Chapter 3.

   **Step One:** Make two columns in your journal and label the first one “academic writing” and the other “personal essay.” Then, in each column, list the features or qualities you associate with both types of writing. What kind of structure do they usually have? What role does “I” play in each? What kinds of subjects do they each seem to favor? Is the thesis explicit or implicit? What kinds of “evidence” are used?
**Step Two:** Skip a few lines in each column and begin listing 1) the forms of inquiry that each seems to emphasize (exploring, explaining, evaluating, reflecting); and 2) the habits of mind of intellectual inquiry they each demand (suspending judgment, beginning with questions rather than answers, tolerating ambiguity, taking responsibility for your ideas, and using dialectical thinking).

**Step Three:** As a whole class or in groups, discuss what you've written and finish the following sentence: “Writing a personal essay might help me write my academic essays because __________.” See how many reasons you can list.

3. This activity focuses on students' beliefs about and associations with personal essays. Some of them may have never written a personal essay or read one, so those students will have to work from their suppositions (of which they will have plenty). It's important to discuss what you mean by "personal," so students understand it's different from "private." This might be one of the most important conversations you should have about this essay before students begin working on it.

**Step One:** Brainstorm a list of beliefs about and associations you have with personal essays. What does “personal” mean? How is it different from “private”? Why do you think people read and write personal essays? What concerns do you have about them? What do you enjoy about them? List whatever thoughts and ideas come to mind.

**Step Two:** In small groups, discuss what you've written and make a list of the following:

- Definitions of “personal”
- Questions or concerns you have about writing personal essays
- Things you might enjoy about writing a personal essay and/or learn

**Step Three:** As a whole class, discuss your lists and come to some agreement about them.

4. Find examples of personal essays to bring to class and discuss: choose at least one that you believe is effective and strong and at least one that isn’t. Before class, list what makes the essays effective and ineffective. As a class, make a comprehensive list of the qualities that make personal essays interesting and effective and those that weaken them.

**The Writing Process**

In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or during class with your prompting—that will help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It's important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going to Write About?”
“Opening Up”
“Narrowing Down”
“Trying Out”
“Writing the Sketch”
“Moving from Sketch to Draft”
“Developing”
“Drafting”
“Workshopping”
“Revising”

The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they begin composing a draft, and that means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject than if they began with a sketch and an idea which they didn't take the time to explore before selecting it. These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students' tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

Each of these activities, all the way through to “Revising,” is recursive, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to complete the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then, do the same with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.

**SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS**

**Clustering or Mapping:** This sidebar explains how to cluster, and you might ask students to do it for this essay and all the others in the book, depending on how well this method works for them.

**More Than One Way to Tell a Story:** This sidebar challenges students to consider multiple ways of organizing their personal essays, using narrative structure that moves around in time and using logical structures that speak to those narrative moments.

**The Power of Narrative Thinking:** This sidebar explains the differences between narrative thinking—“looking for relationships”—and paradigmatic thinking—“categorical, conceptual thinking.” The power in narrative thinking is “that instead of stripping away context so that it’s easier to manage abstract ideas, [it] makes the evidence found in particular times and places central to understanding.” This contrast can help students differentiate when narrative thinking is most appropriate to a rhetorical context and to a writing purpose, particularly in different disciplines.
Writing Beyond the Classroom
This sidebar describes an instance of the personal essay being written for a large public audience, by everyday, nonacademic writers, on NPR’s This I Believe series.

Seeing the Form: Photo Essays
This sidebar introduces students to using the genre of photo essays for their personal essay assignment.

Guidelines: Revising Your Work
This sidebar is a quick reference for students, directing them to the relevant revision strategies for the personal essay in Chapter 14.

Assignment Design: Suggestions for Designing a Personal Essay Assignment

When teaching how to write the personal essay, one of the first things you’ll want to discuss is the difference between “personal” and “private.” Although the two may overlap, “personal” here means the writer’s particular perspective on and experience with the subject. If a writer is exploring a traumatic event in his/her life, then the subject is a “private” one, though we’d call the approach to the subject personal. Private subjects are those which the writer may not feel comfortable sharing with a larger audience, so it’s important to clarify what you expect and what the students can expect (they will, for example, be sharing their work with each other).

You might also discuss the range of subjects about which personal essayists have written as examples of the differences between personal and private, especially if students think personal essays have to be about painful or traumatic events. Doing so will emphasize that the personal essay is personal because of the writer’s angle on and thinking about the topic, not simply because the topic itself is personal or private.

Here are some guidelines you might use to help your students decide if their essay subjects are too private for them to be comfortable writing about for a university composition class:

1. Are you comfortable sharing this essay with your peers? How do you anticipate they will respond and why? How will you feel if they don’t respond the way you expect?
2. How well are you able to reflect on the experience or subject? If it’s difficult because it’s painful or a very recent event, you might write about it in your journal, but give it more time before you revise it and turn it in.
3. When you’re writing about a subject, if the memories and feelings become overwhelming, put the writing aside and consider talking to someone in the counseling center on campus who might help you sort through what you’re feeling and offer ways for you to feel less overwhelmed.
4. Think about how you’d like your instructor to respond to the essay: Upon what would you like him/her to focus? With what do you need the most help? Why? How do you feel about having this essay graded? Your instructor may evaluate the draft
based in part on how well it reflects the features of the personal essay—how will you feel if your instructor comments only on those features and not on the content of the draft?

5. How might writing about this subject help you learn how to write a personal essay? How does your draft reflect what you’ve learned about the personal essay in Chapter 3?

**Strategies for Responding to the Personal Essay**

Typically, students struggle in first drafts of personal essays with the following:

- **Covering too much time.** Instead of focusing on a particular moment, or a series of significant events around a central theme, students will start at the beginning of the “story” and march through each event in chronological order, not indicating which are more/less important to the purpose of the essay. Revision strategies in Chapter 14 that will help are Strategies 14.11, 14.17, and 14.18.

- **Writing a conclusion that seems like a “moral to the story” or “what I learned from this experience.”** It’s difficult to reveal the essay’s purpose in an indirect way, and few students have experience doing so. In addition, as Thomas Newkirk has illustrated in his book, *The Performance of Self in Student Writing*, students will come to closure too soon or assert a clichéd conclusion that reaffirms for them a cultural commonplace. Sometimes they don’t want to tolerate the dissonance and ambiguity of resisting easy closure. Sometimes they need, emotionally, to reassert a cultural commonplace. Revision strategies in Chapter 14 that will help are Strategies 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, and 14.16.

- **Not offering specific detail.** Students may not have much experience writing in a narrative style, so they will “tell” more than they will “show.” They may give quick summaries of events and use an academic tone to analyze them, often staying on the “mountain of reflection” too long. It can help to focus them on key scenes or ideas—ones they think are central to the essay—and have them “explode the moment” (Revision Strategy 14.11) or rewrite each scene using concrete details to illustrate what they are saying. It’s always helpful to give them examples, and the essays from Zazulak and Blanford do this well.

- **Choosing a too-familiar subject.** It’s easy and comfortable to choose a subject that’s very familiar, but some students will then find their draft boring and unchallenging. They also will not be engaging in inquiry because they have not started with a genuine question. If a student’s draft seems perfunctory, flat, and neatly tied together, it’s useful to ask what the student learned about the subject while writing. If the student didn’t learn anything, then he/she might choose a subject about which he/she has questions or feels ambiguous.

No matter what the subject of a student’s personal essay, the following questions can help you decide, in consultation with your students, how to respond:

- Tell me why you chose this subject for your essay. How does it reflect what we’ve learned about the personal essay and inquiry?
• What do you understand about this subject now that you didn’t before you wrote about it?

• What are the strengths of this draft, given the criteria we’ve established in class and those for the genre of personal essay? What are the weaknesses?

• What ideas do you have for revision? Why?

• How might I respond to this essay? On what aspects would you like me to focus?

When you receive a draft about an emotionally painful event, your first thought might be that the student wants you to play therapist, but research has shown that this is not usually the case (Payne, *Bodily Discourses*). Instead, students often want to communicate their story well and ask that you focus on the qualities of the writing and how it fulfills the assignment. If you feel uncomfortable evaluating such an essay, then share that with the student and discuss other options to continue writing about it (in a journal, for example). You can also suggest examples from other writers who have written about similar issues so the student has a range of approaches to use and also sees that such a subject has been written about effectively in the past. Always keep the names of campus counselors nearby and discuss with them any essay about which you have concerns. Campus counselors are often willing to give advice in these situations and help you decide when you need to refer the student to their services.

While most students like the personal essay, there are always a few who resist it or struggle to understand its purpose (which is also true for many other genres). As you teach this genre, it might help to understand the possible reasons why some students have questions about the personal essay or struggle to write it:

• The student’s family is very private and doesn’t believe in sharing experiences or feelings with strangers, and this essay seems to be an invitation to do so.

• Culturally the student has been raised to focus on being part of a group, not being an individual, and focusing on the self may feel threatening to his/her sense of cultural identity.

• Some students will associate “personal” with “private” and traumatic experiences, believing that the more painful the story, the better the grade they will receive. They don’t want to write about painful experiences (or believe they don’t have any that meet the standard), and so they become angry when it seems they don’t have options.

• Writing about one’s self—or from one’s own perspective—may seem like therapy. Often students misunderstand what “personal” means in the personal essay, linking it to cultural stereotypes about group therapy and criticisms of self-indulgent, myopic Americans.

• The personal essay demands that a writer take on a particular role—as all genres do—but this role is sometimes less familiar to students, seems counter to a writer’s role in academic writing, and demands a kind of reflection and analysis with which students may not be comfortable.

• Writing the personal essay seems both easy and hard: easy because the writer is writing about something with which he/she is relatively familiar, using narrative strategies that seem easier and more fun than expository ones, all of which suggests to students it isn’t as “rigorous” as more challenging writing (such as academic argument); hard because the essay demands the same intellectual work of expository writing, along with the ability to craft the argument in less direct ways, and some students fear they don’t know how to do either.

So how might you respond to these associations and beliefs? As mentioned above, one important way is to discuss what you mean by “personal” in the personal essay and how it is different from “private.” But you can also have students write about their associations with the essay and then discuss them, using the following prereading activities. You can point out the ways that this essay will challenge them as writers, acknowledging that they may suspect it will be easy, but in fact it will be quite difficult. Also emphasize the connections between academic and personal essays that Ballenger notes, as well as those offered by the students. The identity issues are more complicated, and you might think about how you will respond when a student from a culture other than the United States struggles to assert a self in the personal essay (see Fan Shen, "The Classroom and the Wider Culture: Identity as a Key to Learning in English Composition." College Composition and Communication 40 (1989) 4: 459–466).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENTS’ PERSONAL WRITING

DISCUSSING THE READINGS: SUMMARY AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

As Ballenger notes, the questions that follow each of the readings take up one of the four methods of inquiry: exploring, explaining, evaluating, and reflecting. If students respond to all four questions, they will have a richer and more complex understanding of the essays than if they answer only one question. However, you may not have time for students to answer all four, so consider assigning the reflective questions along with one other so that students both examine the text and reflect on their responses.
Laura Zazulak, “Every Morning for Five Years”

Summary

This short essay is deceptively simple in its narrative and subject: Zazulak describes seeing her developmentally disabled neighbor every morning for five years, raking leaves, and what happens the day after he commits suicide. The photo that accompanies the essay is integral to the essay’s meaning and provides an opportunity for students to examine how visual objects can work in a written text.

Additional Questions and Activities for “Every Morning”:

Questions for Students

1. After you’ve responded to the four questions under “Inquiring into the Essay,” compose a sketch around what you’ve discovered about the essay. Begin by rereading your responses and mark the lines that surprise you or raise more questions for you. Then, draft a sketch around what you’ve marked, returning to “Every Morning” as needed, using all four forms of inquiry to explore your ideas in more detail.

2. Using the book Taking Things Seriously, read at least three more essays. Then, using the principles about the personal essay discussed in Chapter 3, write an analysis of each of them. How do they reflect the “features of the form”? What do you notice about how they’re organized and crafted? What forms of inquiry seem the most dominant in the text?

Ginny Blanford, “The Dog That Made Us a Family”

Summary

As Ballenger notes in the introduction, Blanford’s essay is an example of an “end-weighted” structure, where the narrative and details build toward meaning rather than beginning with a thesis. Blanford’s story is about her adopted daughter, Liana, and the dog they adopted several years later, but the meaning of the essay centers around moments of loss that came together and made them all a family.

Additional Questions and Activities for “The Dog That Made Us a Family”:

Questions for Students

1. Look at the opening scene of this essay and think about it as a lead or introduction that sets up what you can expect the essay to discuss. What does the introduction tell you about her subject and her angle on it? Where is the central tension in the piece, the question that guides Blanford’s exploration? What kind of tone does it establish, and what relationship does it establish with you as a reader?

2. Take your fastwriting from Question 1 in the textbook and develop it into a sketch for a personal essay that is focused on what you discovered about yourself or about loss from
writing and reading about it. Then, develop this into an essay using the suggestions in Chapter 3.

3. Choose two of your favorite passages in this essay (of more than five sentences) and write a response to them: First, type them double-spaced and note in the margins what you admire about them. What do you want other readers to notice about these passages and why? Then, below the passages, describe what Blanford does in them that you find effective and why. What have you learned about your own writing from focusing on these passages?

**Seth Marlin, “Smoke of Empire”**

Student Essay

**Summary**

This is a new student essay for this edition, and it is written as a radio essay. Students can hear Marlin read the piece at bruceballenger.com. In it, military veteran Marlin describes the sight and smell of the “burn pit” located near his post in Iraq, and as Ballenger notes, the piece “a meditation on war, waste, and empire.” Full of sensory detail, the piece moves between narration and exposition, a then-narrator and a now-narrator, and weaves the language of soldiers, Iraqis, and military leaders throughout the piece.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Smoke of Empire”:

**Teaching Suggestions**

1. Have students listen to other radio essays that they or you find, and ask them to analyze the “features of the form” for this sub-genre of the personal essay. What do they have in common? How are they different from essays that are simply written?

2. Refer to the sidebar that describes the Personal Essay Inquiry Project and assign students the Prose+ essay. It guides students in writing a radio essay or podcast.

**Questions for Students**

3. How does Marlin make this subject relevant and engaging for an audience that has likely never been to Iraq or been deployed during war?

4. Use different color highlighters to identify the different “voices” in the text. That is, use one color for the voice of American soldiers, another for the voice of Iraqis, etc. What do you notice? What effect do those different voices and languages have on the overall purpose of the essay?

**Ways of Discussing All the Readings**

**Questions for Students**

1. Look at all the first lines and opening paragraphs. What do they have in common? What do these leads do in setting up the essay? Notice the tension in the first lines that pulls us in as
readers. Look over your own journal writing for the personal essay and mark sentences or phrases that share these qualities and might work as first lines.

2. Choose a favorite scene from one of the essays and rewrite it by removing all the concrete details. Make it as general as possible without changing the core meaning of the passage. In groups, compare the original passage to the ones you rewrote. What’s lost in removing the details? What’s gained? How easy/difficult was it to remove the details and yet retain the original meaning? (This activity can also be used as a revision strategy for the personal essay to help writers discover what to develop with more detail and what to cover more generally, given their purpose.)

3. Look at the ways the essays are organized: Create a rough outline that lists the key sections/events/ideas as they emerge in the essay. If the piece uses narrative (story qualities) as a method of development, what do you notice about how the narrative is constructed? Does the author put every event in chronological order? Why or why not? For each essay, describe the organizational structure in a sentence or two, and then explain how it is connected to the essay’s overall theme or thesis.

Additional Writing Activities

1. Generating Ideas: Additional Prompts

   Memory and Experience as Sources of Information

   This writing activity can be assigned at home, or you can guide students through it during class time.

   Listing:

   • places you’ve always wanted to visit or wanted to know more about
   • places that have changed how you see yourself, others, or the world
   • places where you experienced conflict or confusion
   • times you got lost
   • maps you remember
   • times when you wished you’d had a map

   Freewriting: Choose something from the lists you’ve generated and freewrite for seven minutes. Let your mind go and try to remember as much as possible, and describe as much as possible.

   Underlining: Reread what you’ve written and underline striking words or phrases and lines that surprised you, places where you said something unexpected. Freewrite for another seven minutes on what you underlined.

   Listing: Now build a list of questions about what you’ve written, questions you still have or that others might have about what you’re writing.
Listing: Then build a list of as many details as you can, beginning first by listing all the senses—sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell.

Observation Prompts

• Pick out an everyday object: a musical instrument, a tool, a piece of furniture, an article of clothing, or a book—something of everyday use. Observe it. Describe it in detail, maybe even draw it. Then, interpret it: What does the object say about the person who uses it? The person who made it? What did you already know about the object? What in your own background and experience influences what you do and don’t see? Why did you choose this object? What does the object teach us about the culture from which it comes?

• Go to a public place with your journal. It should be a place you go often but never really notice: a shopping mall, a supermarket, a McDonald’s, a bank. Sit there for ten minutes and brainstorm a list of details that describe the place. Allow your brainstorming to move from details to feelings, associations, and thoughts you have about the place.

• Then, look at your list and circle the details that go beyond the obvious, that say something unique or surprising about the place. If there aren’t any, brainstorm another list and look again. Now, write a paragraph description of the place that draws from the most surprising, interesting details/ideas you’ve discovered.

• Choose a family photograph or other picture that you find interesting (you might, for example, visit an art gallery in town). Spend five minutes freewriting your reaction to the image, staying somewhat focused on what you see and how you feel and think. Then, read your freewrite and pay attention to the words, lines, or passages that seem to reveal your dominant impression of the picture. Skip a few lines and write, in one word, the feeling or idea this picture communicates to you.

• Skip a few more lines and return to your initial freewrite. Make a list of the details in the freewrite that you think contribute to the one-word feeling or idea you wrote above. Spend a few minutes making as long a list as you can.

• Then, compose a paragraph from all this writing that explains to someone else how you interpret the picture.

• Choose a hidden space in the place where you live—under the bed, inside a closet, behind a bookshelf—and describe what you see there. Did seeking out a hidden space change how you see what’s there? Freewrite about how you see this space differently now. Brainstorm a list of all the associations you make with this space and the objects inside it. As you look back at your freewriting and listing, what surprises you? What new understanding or new questions do you now have?

• Make a list of the objects that are most important to you and explain the significance of each. If you were to produce a composite portrait of yourself, how would you arrange these
objects? Taken as a whole, what would they suggest to someone who doesn't know you? Now, choose a place to observe people—a bar, coffee house, airport, museum—and note all the objects a particular person carries. What interpretations can you make about this person? What can you tell about his/her values, social status, interests, and reasons for being in this place?

- Think of the rituals you perform everyday—taking a shower, brushing your teeth, getting prepped for a game or a date. Describe that ritual. Then, describe it from the perspective of someone who has never heard of this ritual before, who has no idea what you’re doing or why. You might, for example, consider yourself an anthropologist who has just stumbled onto a new culture and doesn’t know what to make of brushing teeth. Try to make your everyday ritual unfamiliar.

- Now, freewrite for five minutes on what you learned about the ritual from making it unfamiliar. Why is the ritual important? What would happen if you stopped doing it or changed it? What values does it reflect about you and/or our culture? (For example, not all cultures value having women shave their legs—what does leg shaving in our culture reflect about what is important in how a woman looks?)

- Listing:
  - Places you love to go
  - Places you avoid
  - Behaviors you love/avoid
  - Trends you find fascinating/disgusting
  - Businesses or gathering places that have just recently developed (such as coffee houses and Internet bars)
  - TV shows, movies, commercials you enjoy, hate, or find fascinating

After making a list of each of these prompts, choose one to freewrite on for ten minutes. Then, observe the place/behavior/show for thirty minutes and take as many notes as possible about what you see. Just focus on details and write them in the left-hand column of your notebook. Then, in the right-hand column, note all your thoughts, feelings, associations, and questions about the place. When you’re finished, circle the thoughts, questions, and the like that most interest you. What is your emerging interpretation of this place/behavior/show right now? Try to summarize it in a sentence or two.

2. Photographic Autobiography:

   **Step One:** Find a picture of yourself, preferably from the past, or use a camera and compose a self-portrait. The self-portrait shouldn't be a random shot of your face, but a photograph that is composed to say something about who you are. Choose an appropriate location or setting. Consider what you’ll be doing in the picture. Decide whether the picture will be a close-up or a long shot, including all or just part of you.
Step Two: Once you have a picture, set it before you and begin fastwriting, using the following prompt: “As I look at this picture, it makes me think about ______. And then I think about _____. And then…. And then…..”

Feel free to digress and tell a story about yourself, or about the moment captured in the photograph, or perhaps about that time in your life. If you’re writing about a self-portrait, explain to yourself what you notice in the photograph, and especially what it seems to be saying that you might not have expected when you took the picture.

Stop and look at the image whenever you feel the urge to inspire more writing.

Step Three: Skip a few lines in your journal. Take a critical stance for a moment and answer one of the following questions:

- What do I understand now about myself that I didn’t fully understand when this picture was taken?
- What does this self-portrait say about me that I didn’t expect it to say?

Writing Projects

1. Take your responses to any of the readings in this chapter and develop one or more of them into an essay.

2. Turn your written personal essay into a photo essay or radio/podcast essay. Then, reflect on the differences between the two mediums you used to convey the same subject. Annotate each draft and describe what you changed and why.

3. Choose one of the essays in this chapter that you particularly admire and do further research on it. List the questions you have, things you’d like to investigate more thoroughly. You might research the author, read other material by him/her, or investigate the more general ideas of the author’s. Then, compose a summary of what you’ve discovered and the qualities in this author’s work that qualify him/her as a personal essayist.

4. Choose a personal essayist you’d like to know better and read a collection of his/her essays. If you don’t have a list of essayists to choose from, ask your instructor, browse the bookstore, or type “personal essay” in Google and see what you discover. Present to the class what you’ve learned about the personal essay from studying your chosen writer: What strengths does he/she demonstrate? What distinguishes his/her essays from other essayists? What kind of subjects seem to be typical for him/her and why? What “theory” about essaying does this writer seem to have? (Some writers have essays about this very question.)
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

PERSONAL ESSAY: PRINT RESOURCES


PERSONAL ESSAY: WEB RESOURCES
Creative Nonfiction in Writing Courses from Purdue OWL

“What Is Creative Nonfiction?” by Lee Gutkind

Creative Nonfiction Tips from University of Vermont Writing Center

Writing Creative Nonfiction by Tilar J. Mazzeo (Colby College): a “Great Courses” guidebook with a lot of teaching ideas and writing activities.

COURSE HANDOUTS
On the following pages you’ll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
**Personal or Private Subject?**

These questions can help you decide whether the subject you’ve chosen is one which you are comfortable sharing with your classmates and your instructor.

- Are you comfortable sharing this essay with your peers? How do you anticipate they will respond and why? How will you feel if they don’t respond the way you expect?

- How well are you able to reflect on the experience or subject? If it’s difficult because it’s painful or a very recent event, you might write about it in your journal, but give it more time before you revise it and turn it in.

- When you’re writing about a subject, if the memories and feelings become overwhelming, put the writing aside and consider talking to someone in the counseling center on campus who might help you sort through what you’re feeling and offer ways for you to feel less overwhelmed.

- Think about how you’d like your instructor to respond to the essay: What would you like your instructor to comment on in this draft? Why? How do you feel about having this essay graded? Your instructor may evaluate the draft based in part on how well it reflects the features of the personal essay—how will you feel if he or she comments on those features only and not on the content of the draft?

- How might writing about this subject help you learn how to write a personal essay? How does your draft reflect what you’ve learned about the personal essay in Chapter 3?
GENERATING IDEAS: PERSONAL ESSAY

In your journal, spend at least 30 minutes responding to the following writing prompts, remembering to write whatever comes to mind without censoring yourself:

**Memory and Experience as Sources of Information**

**Listing:**

- places you’ve always wanted to visit or wanted to explore
- places that have changed how you see yourself, others, or the world
- places where you experienced conflict or confusion
- times you got lost
- maps you remember
- times when you wished you’d had a map

**Freewriting:** Choose something from the lists you’ve generated and freewrite for seven minutes. Let your mind go and try to remember and describe as much as possible.

**Underlining:** Reread what you’ve written and underline striking words, phrases, and lines that surprised you—places where you said something unexpected. Freewrite for another seven minutes on what you underlined.

**Listing:** Now, build a list of questions about what you’ve written—questions you still have or that others might have about what you’re writing.

**Listing:** Then, build a list of as many details as you can, beginning first by listing all the senses—sight, sound, taste, touch, smell.

**Observation as a Source of Information**

- Select an everyday object: a musical instrument, a tool, a piece of furniture, an article of clothing, or a book—something of everyday use. Observe it. Describe it in detail, maybe even draw it. Then, interpret it: What does the object say about the person who uses it? The person who made it? What did you already know about the object? What in your own background and experience influences what you do and don’t see? Why did you choose this object? What does the object teach us about the culture from which it comes?

- Visit a public place with your journal in hand. It should be some place you go often but never really notice: a shopping mall, a supermarket, a McDonald’s, a bank. Sit there for ten minutes and brainstorm a list of details that describe the place. Allow your brainstorming to move from details to feelings, associations, and thoughts you have about the place.
• Then, look at your list and circle the details that go beyond the obvious, that say something unique or surprising about the place. If there aren’t any, brainstorm another list and look again. Now, write a paragraph description of the place that draws from the most surprising, interesting details/ideas you’ve discovered.

• Choose a family photograph or other picture that you find interesting (you might, for example, visit an art gallery in town). Spend five minutes freewriting your reaction to the image, staying somewhat focused on what you see and how you feel and think. Then, read your freewrite and pay attention to the words, lines, or passages that reveal your dominant impression of the picture. Skip a few lines and write, in one word, the feeling or idea that this picture communicates to you.

• Skip a few more lines and return to your initial freewrite. Make a list of the details in the freewrite that you think contribute to the one-word feeling or idea you wrote above. Spend a few minutes making as long a list as you can.

• Then, compose a paragraph from all this writing that explains to someone else how you interpret the picture.

• Choose a hidden space in the place where you live—under the bed, inside a closet, behind a bookshelf—and describe what you see there. Did seeking out a hidden space change how you see what’s there? Freewrite about how you view this space differently now. Brainstorm a list of all the associations you make with this space and the objects inside it. As you look back at your freewriting and listing, what surprises you? What new understanding or new questions do you now have?

• Make a list of the objects that are most important to you and explain the significance of each. If you were to produce a composite portrait of yourself, how would you arrange these objects? Taken as a whole, what would they suggest to someone who doesn’t know you? Now, choose a place in which to observe people—a bar, coffee house, airport, museum—and note all the objects that a particular person carries with him/her. What interpretations can you make of this person? What can you tell about his/her values, social status, interests, and reasons for being in this place?

• Think of the rituals you perform everyday—taking a shower, brushing your teeth, getting prepped for a game or a date. Describe that ritual. Then, describe that same activity from the perspective of someone who has never heard of this ritual before, who has no idea what you’re doing or why. You might, for example, consider yourself an anthropologist who has just stumbled onto a new culture and doesn’t know what to make of brushing teeth. Try to make your everyday ritual unfamiliar.

• Now, freewrite for five minutes on what you learned about the ritual from making it unfamiliar. Why is the ritual important? What would happen if you stopped doing it or changed it? What values does it reflect about you and/or our culture? (For example, not all
cultures value having women shave their legs—what does leg shaving in our culture reflect about what is important in how a woman looks?)

Listing:

- Places you love to go
- Places you avoid
- Behaviors you love/avoid
- Trends you find fascinating/disturbing
- Businesses or gathering places that are modern developments, unknown to your parents’ generation (such as coffee houses and Internet bars)
- TV shows, movies, commercials you enjoy, hate, or find fascinating

After making a list of each of these prompts, choose one and freewrite for ten minutes. Then, observe the place/behavior/show for 30 minutes and take as many notes as possible about what you see. Focus first on details and write them in the left-hand column of your notebook. Then, in the right-hand column, note all your thoughts, feelings, associations, and questions about the place. When you’re done, circle the thoughts, questions, etc. that most interest you. What is your emerging interpretation of this place/behavior/show right now? Summarize it in a sentence or two.
REVISION ACTIVITIES

Revising for Structure: Collage or Segmented Essay Revision

Step One: Choose an essay you are working on for the portfolio. In your journal, make the following lists about your draft:

- Who are all the main characters? Number them in their order of importance in your essay (first the major characters—that is, crucial to the story—and then the minor ones).

- What are the recurring images in the draft (e.g., the metaphor of a quilt keeps coming up, the color red, etc.)?

- List all the themes you currently see in the draft. Does the essay seem to be about friendship? Independence? Coming to terms with new responsibilities, such as marriage or parenthood? What is your essay’s main point? List all the places where the narrative takes place. This could mean you start your scene in a bedroom, and then you’re in the mountains, and later you’re in another country.

- Briefly list the chronology of events in the essay (in linear form): What happened first? And then? And then? You might label this list “First, Second, Third,” and then, next to those labels, briefly describe the main idea you’re conveying with that event. Is it background for something else? Is it the climax of the story? The resolution?

Step Two: Write out what you see as the central tension in the essay. Remember that tension can mean two or more ideas that readers don’t expect to be connected, two or more ideas/events/themes that seem opposing or contradictory, questions that spur the essay, the writer’s desire to understand an event or emotion, a conflict between people or ideas, “what-happens-next” narrative tension, and so on. Tension makes the reader want to continue reading and lets us know what’s at stake in the subject for you and for us.

Step Three: Look over the lists you’ve just made and star the places where the tension is illustrated most strongly. It might be in a particular event you listed in the chronology, in a theme, or in one or more of the main characters.

Step Four: Keeping in mind your central tension, draw six or more boxes on a page in your journal. Based on the work you’ve done above, brainstorm segments of a draft, putting a different segment or idea in each box. Choose sections that best show the main idea/theme/tension in the essay. Experiment with different structures for a while, creating a separate page for each idea. Draw lines between/among the boxes to connect them. (For more ideas on how to segment, see the handout “Strategies for Segmenting Essays.”)

Step Five: Cut up your draft into sections—either paragraph-by-paragraph or scene-by-scene. Completely ignore the original structure of the draft. Choose one of the ideas you had in Step Three.
and rearrange the sections to reflect that. You may need to compose new sections or revise current ones.

• You might, for example, write all the scenes from the past in present tense (I see the lake shimmering in the moonlight. I walk up to the bridge), and then the scenes from the present in the past tense.

• You might change points of view, writing a scene first from your perspective and then from the perspective of another person involved in the story.

• You might need to expand the time of a particular scene because you realize now how important it is. Or, you may want to collapse time, making the scene briefer because it’s less important.

**Step Six:** Try at least two possible ways to segment the essay. When you’re done, respond to the following questions in your journal:

*When I first drafted this essay, I thought it was about __________. Now, I think it’s about __________. What do you see in the essay now that you didn’t when you started? How has the meaning of the essay changed as a result of segmenting it? What are its effects on your readers?*
STRATEGIES FOR SEGMENTING ESSAYS

Juxtaposition

This involves putting sections/ideas/scenes next to one another in such a way that they comment on each other.

Parallelism

Here, one creates a pattern by alternating or intertwining one continuous strand with another (past with present, story with historical background, etc.).

Patterning

The writer begins to organize by choosing an extra-literary design and arranging literary segments accordingly (using Tarot cards to organize the piece, a recipe, kinds of birds [as Terry Tempest Williams does in her book Refuge], directions for doing something, etc.). The design works not only to organize but also to highlight a theme and connect two seemingly unrelated things.

Accumulation

The author arranges a series of segments or scenes or episodes so that they add, enrich, or alter meaning with each addition, perhaps reinterpreting earlier segments in later ones, culminating in a final segment.

Journaling

This activity means actually writing in episodes or reconstructing the journal experience in drafts, using excerpts from journals that alternate with other sections, and bringing together disparate topics in the journal (as I did in my essays on quilting, writing, and language).
Revising for Structure: Working with Time

Time Expansion

For this exercise, choose a key scene or idea in your essay, one which you want to emphasize. Then, write up a scene in which you expand time; that is, you slow down time and describe the observation/idea/scene in as much detail as possible, emphasizing the senses and putting the readers in the moment. Develop this scene over several paragraphs. Use dialogue if it’s appropriate.

Time Contraction

Then, choose a moment in your draft where you feel you’ve lingered too long on something that isn’t very important to your overall purpose. Take an expanded scene and cut it in half, covering the same observation/idea/scene in half the space yet conveying the same (if not more) ideas. If you don’t have such a scene from your draft, do this exercise with the time expansion you’ve just finished (above).

Reflection

Then, in your journal, fastwrite for five minutes about what your essay gains and loses by expanding or contracting these observations/scenes/ideas. What changes? What new things were revealed in expanding or contracting? How do you perceive these observations/scenes/ideas differently after revising them? Where else might you try a time expansion or contraction in your draft?
IN-CLASS WORKSHOP

Most appropriate for the personal essay

1. Choose a paper on which to work (the author should be prepared to take notes).

2. Have each group member (including the author) discuss two things he or she liked, found interesting, or enjoyed about the essay.

3. Have each person in the group discuss one thing he or she found confusing, a specific place that didn’t work, or a suggestion for revision.

4. Have the students, as a group, make a list of questions (about six) after reading the essay.

5. Offer the students the following list of common problems with first drafts. The author should choose one aspect upon which to focus in the workshop. While the author can request group members' help in deciding what aspect is the most valuable, he/she should make the final decision.

Focus

As a group, make a list of at least five ideas, feelings, or impressions the reader might have after reading this essay. These ideas, feelings, or impressions should be something of value to which almost any reader can relate but not necessarily what most readers would automatically infer. They may not actually be part of the paper as it exists but they are things the story could say. Discuss each focus and brainstorm details and incidents that might help communicate it.

Details

Ask the author to select one paragraph. As a group, underline all the general details (small, soft, fast food, beautiful). Circle specific details (McDonald’s, smell of butter and onions in a frying pan, steady enough to guide a carpenter’s pencil along a square). Discuss the difference. Which kind of details do you like better? Why? Work as a group to add or change details to a couple of sentences of the author’s choice. Group members may want to ask the author questions about details in which they are interested (e.g., “What do you mean by the ‘smell of trout’?” “You said your friend was angry. How could you tell?”)

So What?

As a group, mark all the places in the paper where the author reflects (gives commentary on or thought about) on details, an incident, a story, or an idea. How often does it happen? If reflection exists, does it help you understand the essay’s meaning? If there is little or none, how would the author’s adding some change the paper? Find several places where reflection could be inserted and discuss what kinds of things the author might reflect on at this point. Identify any points where the reflection is ineffective and discuss why.
Time

Identify the time period the essay covers (ten minutes, three years). Does the essay include everything that happened during that time or just a few incidents? How does the author’s treatment of time affect your interest in his/her writing? As a group, identify one moment (or brief incident) that is most significant to the essay’s meaning (this may be included in the essay or may be something that the author did not include but has mentioned to you). Help the author brainstorm details, reasons for the importance of the moment, etc. (you will probably end up asking questions such as: How did you feel? What did it smell like? You don’t mention your teacher, was she there?). You may also want to discuss using flashbacks or other elements that play with time.
CHAPTER 4: WRITING A PROFILE

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

• A profile is an extended look at one person, and the subject is that person, not the writer.

• The profile is similar to an academic case study and can be used in several ways in academic writing: as part of a larger argument; as part of a larger project, such as an ethnography; and as a means of examining in detail one aspect of a culture, an idea, an event—anything that affects people’s lives.

• The primary sources of information are interview and observation.

FEATURES OF THE FORM

• Inquiry questions:
  - Does this one person’s story tell us anything about the perspective of others who belong to a group and about people in general?
  - What does this person’s story say about social situations, trends, or problems?

• Motives:
  - More than an objective picture of someone
  - Writer uses the portrait to say something.
  - In the service of ideas

• Subject matter:
  - Detailed look at one person
  - Person is both unique AND typical
  - Person is accessible, willing, and interesting to talk to

• Structure:
  - Begins by answering, “Why this person?”
  - Built by using anecdotes
  - Use of narrative as a method of development
Two options for point of view: first person, where the writer’s thoughts are integral to the profile; or third person, where the writer’s thoughts and reactions are withheld.

Use of showing and telling to reveal the subject, including dialogue and scenes.

Strong beginning, which is crucial for unknown subjects of a profile.

Great importance of scene and setting, which can reveal additional things about the subject and are thus important to crafting a profile.

Limitations on how much the writer can generalize from one example.

- **Sources:** Necessity of spending more time with one’s subject, thereby gaining an abundance of information and detail from which to write a rich and focused profile.
  - Interview
  - Observation
  - Research

- **Language:** Sensory details; exact and specific.

**GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. **Use a profile of a person as a way to focus on an idea, a personality trait, or a situation.** Students should understand how to craft a profile from an interview transcript: choose appropriate organization, connect details in the interview to larger themes, and make informed choices about their own presence in the text.

2. **Identify some of the academic applications of profiles.**

3. **Identify the characteristics of profiles in different forms.**

4. **Use invention strategies, including interviews, to discover and develop a profile of someone.** Students should understand how to interview and generate appropriate questions.

5. **Apply revision strategies that are effective for shaping profiles.**

**DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER**

**PREREADING ACTIVITIES**

1. In your journal, make a list of the people you find most interesting—whether they’re celebrities, sports figures, artists, family, friends, politicians, or strangers. Then, circle the names of people you already know something about from books, magazines, TV programs or documentaries, films, or other media.
Choose one of the names you circled and fastwrite for five minutes on what you learned about this person. What did you read/see about this person, and why were you interested? Write about everything you can remember about him/her, what you read, and/or what you viewed. Do this for at least one other person on your list, if not more.

Lastly, skip a few lines and reflect on what makes an effective profile of a person: given what you wrote above, come to some conclusions about the ways writers can compose a compelling look at one individual.

2. Find several examples of profiles in popular magazines or documentaries, such as Rolling Stone, People, Entertainment Weekly, The New Yorker, Harpers, The Atlantic, PBS’s Frontline, or A&E’s Biography. Choose two that you find the most interesting and well-written. Then, in a letter to your group members or instructor, explain why you chose these profiles, what specific features make them interesting and effective, and what questions do they raise about writing a profile yourself. What might be the most challenging part? How did these writers get their information? Choose at least two sections from each profile on which to focus as you discuss the essays.

3. Brainstorm all the associations you have with the word “profile”—write down anything that comes to mind, and don’t worry if you’ve never read one or written one. Think of all the meanings the word might have. Then, finish this sentence: “If I had to guess what a ‘profile’ essay is, I’d say it most likely is ______________.”

THE WRITING PROCESS
In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or during class with your prompting—that will help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It’s important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going to Write About?”

“Opening Up”

“Narrowing Down”

“Trying Out”

“Writing the Sketch”

“Moving from Sketch to Draft”

“Developing”

“Drafting”

“Workshopping”

“Revising”
The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they begin composing a draft, and that means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject than if they began without first taking the time to create a sketch and explore an idea. These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students’ tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

Each of these activities, all the way through to “Polishing the Draft,” has a recursive quality to it, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details, and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to complete the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then, do the same thing with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.

**SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS**

**Recording Interviews:** This sidebar offers tips to students recording interviews using a range of digital and print media, so you might review these tips during class time or even ask students to bring their recorders to class for a practice interview session with classmates.

**Using Audacity to Record and Edit Audio:** Here students will find detailed instructions for installing and using the program Audacity to record and then edit their interviews.

**Writing Beyond the Classroom**

**Digital Profiles:** This sidebar invites students to consider family genealogy as an everyday form of the profile, and it describes how to use digital recording software to interview and then craft a profile that can be sent to family members.

**Seeing the Form**

**Sun Boy by William Soule:** In this sidebar, students are asked to analyze a photograph from the 1880s of a Kiowa man, keeping in mind the nineteenth-century beliefs about Native Americans that often affected a photographer’s perspective. This activity is useful to emphasize the biases all writers have and how they might be reflected in the profiles students will read and write.

**Assignment Design: Suggestions for Designing a Profile Assignment**

As you develop your assignment criteria for the profile, consider whether you want students to interview friends and family members, who are accessible and easy to interview because the writer is already familiar with them. Familiarity and accessibility are often why students are eager to choose friends and family for this assignment. The disadvantages of choosing friends and family are that the writer already knows enough about the person that there aren’t many genuine questions to motivate the profile. Instead, the student gravitates toward an interview subject who presents few challenges. If you want students to have the option of friends and family, then set some parameters: For example, the interview subject must be someone you don’t know very well, or someone you think you may know but about whom you are skeptical; the
subject must represent a larger issue or theme (such as someone who served in one of the wars, or someone whose role in society is often ignored, etc.), and so on.

First drafts of profiles often focus too much on the relationship between the writer and the interview subject, or focus mostly on the writer’s feelings and judgments about the person rather than on the person him/herself. Or, students may rely too much on the interview and not offer much interpretation. One way of talking about these issues is to ask them to rewrite one of the profiles in Chapter 4 by 1) taking out everything except what the interview subject says, or 2) adding personal details and commentary from the writer about his/her feelings about the person. Then ask students to reflect on how the essays change as a result of what they notice.

In addition, you might consider requiring a cover letter with the profile in which students reflect on their writing process and what they’ve learned:

1. What does this draft reflect about what you’ve learned from writing a profile? What have you learned that isn’t reflected in the draft?
2. What was the most challenging part of this assignment? Why? How did you respond to that challenge?
3. As you composed this draft, how did you decide what to focus on, what method of development to use, and what role you would have in the draft? On what basis did you make those decisions?
4. If you had to write another profile, what would you do differently and why?

Interview Practice: One way of practicing interviewing is to have students interview each other and then present the material to the class. You might also ask students to bring in transcripts or notes from their first interview, share them with two other classmates, and begin speculating on what they’ve learned so far about their subject. What conclusions might they reach? What dominant impression do they have so far? What questions do they still have? If they had to repeat the interview, what would they do differently? Having students reflect on their interviews in the middle of the process gives you an opportunity to help them, and gives your students a chance to develop interesting angles on their subjects before they return for further interviewing.

Discussing the Readings: Summary and Teaching Activities

As Ballenger notes, the questions that follow each of the readings take up one of the four methods of inquiry: exploring, explaining, evaluating, and reflecting. If students respond to all the questions, they will have a richer and more complex understanding of the essays than if they answered only one. You may, however, not have time for students to answer all of them. In that case, think about assigning the reflective questions along with one other so that students both examine the text and reflect on their responses.
**BRUCE BALLenger, “MUSEUM MISSIONARY”**

**Summary**

This essay profiles the director of the Mt. Desert Oceanarium in Maine, David Mills, who founded the museum in 1972 after serving as an Episcopal priest. Ballenger weaves the language of religious ministry throughout the profile to emphasize one of Mills’ unique qualities: his passion for oceanography, which has a missionary tenor to it and inspired the creation of the oceanarium. The profile is rich with sensory detail, dialogue, small scenes, and reflection. Ballenger talks explicitly about his interview process in the profile, tying what he has learned about listening to what his subject, David Mills, learned about it.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Museum Missionary”:

**Questions for Students**

1. Using notecards, create a story board for this essay. Each notecard should have a different moment or scene or anecdote on it. Using colored notecards, write down the reflective, expository sentences in the piece. Then, number the cards in the order they appear in the essay.

   Now, arrange them in chronological order, as they likely happened.

   Finally, individually or in groups, explain what makes each version effective. That is, what is effective about structuring the profile in chronological order? In the way Ballenger has actually arranged it?

2. Choose one of the revision strategies in Chapter 14 and apply it to this essay. What do you notice?

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**IAN FRAZIER, “PASSENGERS”**

**Summary**

In this brief profile of Salvatore Siano, a retired bus driver from Montclair, New Jersey, Frazier uses dialogue and sensory details to show how Siano was affected by the tragedies of September 11. Frazier begins with the setting—Siano's bus and usual routes—then focuses on the morning of the tragedy. Siano's own details about the passengers he knew who died that day bring those individuals to life, as well.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Passengers”:

**Questions for Students**

1. Highlight the words Frazier uses to convey what is distinct and interesting about Siano. What adjectives does he use? Look for analogies, metaphors, sensory details, and symbolism. How might you apply similar strategies in your own profile?
2. Search for other creative nonfiction essays about September 11 that focus on an individual. Alone or in groups, read at least two other profiles that are connected to September 11 and compare them using the “features of the form” for the profile essay. Reflect on the ways each writer constructs their portrait, the role of writer in the essay, the use of details, and the movement between details and reflection, mountain and sea, individual and larger theme.

**Amelia Pang, “The Life of a Violin Prodigy from South Bronx”**

**Summary**

The title of this profile summarizes it well: Pang focuses on Jafari Sampson, a violinist from South Bronx, and the events of his life that brought him to playing violin in Grand Central Station, which is where the essay opens. Pang uses contrast and dissonance to create her profile of Sampson: a violinist playing near a construction crew at Grand Central Station; the silence Sampson hears amid the noise; the rarity of classical musicians coming from the South Bronx and of a student from South Bronx attending the renowned Berklee College of Music; a classical musician improvising on the masters. Pang also describes the influence of Sampson’s parents and his grandfather on his life and his future goals.

**Additional Questions and Activities for “The Life of a Violin Prodigy from South Bronx”:**

**Questions for Students**

1. Examine the way the profile is organized and structured. How does it open? How is the middle organized? What methods of development are used and why? How does it end? Compose a paragraph explaining the essay’s structure and its effect on the profile overall.

2. Based on the essay, create a list of questions that Pang must have asked to get her information about her profile subject. Put these questions on the left side of your page and fill the right side with the details from the article that must have been the answers. In addition, list on the left side the other research questions Pang must have used to learn what he could not have obtained from interviewing Jafari Sampson. Discuss these in groups. What have you learned about interviewing and/or writing up a profile from this activity?

3. The opening of this profile makes it seem as if Pang encountered Sampson in Grand Central Station, which may be one of the reasons she decided to interview him. To gather ideas for your own profile essay, consider going to a public place and observing people for a while. What stands out as unusual (like playing violin in a subway station)? What raises interesting questions for you and whom might you interview about those questions?
Micaela Fisher, “Number 6 Orchard”

Student Essay

Summary

This profile is a vividly written piece about the writer’s experience on the Number 6 bus going to Orchard St. She introduces each passenger like a character in a short story, giving revealing dialogue and behavior, and then eventually focuses on the bus driver himself, whom she interviews. He tells an engaging story that prompts the writer to say, “Even the most beautiful stories melt as soon as they are spoken, from thin air returning to thin air.”

Additional Questions and Activities for “Number 6 Orchard”:

Teaching Suggestions

1. Before discussing this essay in class, ask students to fastwrite for 3 minutes about what they remember from this essay. They should jot things down quickly, without much thinking. Then gather those responses on the board (or other visual media) and see what comes up most frequently. Now, return to the essay and look at the ways Fisher uses language, details, analogies, etc. to make what she says so memorable.

Questions for Students

2. Compare Fisher’s essay to Ian Frazier’s “Passengers.” How are they similar? Different? What features of the profile do they share?

3. Try to imagine Micaela riding the bus and taking notes. How might she have done that? How might she have gathered so many vivid details while talking to Cesar?

4. What role does the writer play in this piece? Compare it to the role Ballenger plays in “Museum Missionary.”

WAYS OF DISCUSSING ALL THE READINGS

Teaching Suggestions

1. The class should be split into three groups, each assigned one of these profiles. In groups, rewrite the profile by removing all the narrative details and background information, and recreate the conversation you believe the interviewer and interviewee had. Your speculations must be based on what is in the profile. What might a transcript of their interview look like? Share what you’ve written with the rest of the class. Then, as a whole class, discuss what is gained and lost when everything is removed except the interview itself.
Questions for Students

2. What role does the writer assume in each of these profiles? How would you describe the writer's relationship with his/her subject? What features of the text suggest that to you? What difference does it make to the meaning of the profile if the writer is explicitly present in the text or not?

3. In each of the profiles from Chapter 4, choose one or two paragraphs that you believe best captures the profile’s theme and purpose, and that uses concrete, specific, and showing detail to illustrate those. In groups, discuss the passages you've chosen. What can you conclude about effective profiles from this exercise?

Additional Writing Activities

1. Brainstorm a list of the people you know very well—people you consider very close to you. Then, make a list of people you've always wanted to get to know. As you review each list, circle the names of people you'd like to spend time getting to know better.

2. List the qualities you admire in people—the qualities you’d like to have. Then list all the people in your life who seem to have those qualities. Which one might you interview for this assignment?

3. Consider the field you are interested in pursuing and list the places you might go and people you might interview in order to learn more about what it means to work in that field. Consider "Learning About Work from Joe Cool" as an example of what you'll be pursuing. Use the profile as a way to understand the job or field from an individual's point of view, rather than simply from a textbook or company brochure's point of view.

Writing Projects

Teaching Suggestions

1. Have students write an essay that explores the connections between the profile essay and academic writing:
   - Begin by brainstorming all the connections you see before you do any more research.
   - Then choose one of the academic indices from a field which interests you —such as business, sociology, history, English, etc.—and search with the phrase “case study.” What comes up? If that doesn’t work, try “profile” or even the name of someone you know who interests you.
   - Choose two articles or more, read them, and take notes in your journal about the ways in which case studies/profiles are used in academic writing. How are they similar to and different from the profiles you read in this chapter? Are they the main focus of the essay? Why are they important in the writer's argument and/or research study?
2. Give students a mini ethnography assignment. In this sequence of assignments, students first identify a subculture they want to study, and then they focus on a profile subject within that subculture. These activities can be easily linked to Chapter 9, Writing an Ethnographic Essay, so that the profile is one part of the larger ethnography that is assigned later in the term.

- As a class, brainstorm a list of subcultures in the local area: skateboarders, football fans, knitters, skiers, backcountry campers, and so on.

- Each student then needs to choose a subculture that is interesting but unfamiliar. In their journals, students need to write about:
  - What they already know, believe, and suspect about this subculture: its values, its commonly held beliefs, its valued traditions, and its ways of speaking and behaving.
  - What they’d like to know more about.
  - Whom they might interview who would offer insight into the subculture.

- Interview this person, following the suggestions in Chapter 4, and compose a profile based on the guidelines and writing activities in Chapter 4.

Questions for Students

3. Using the suggestions in the sidebar “Writing Beyond the Classroom,” develop a digital profile of a family member that includes a historical context drawing on as many sources of information as possible—from interviews to genealogical research to primary documents like letters, artifacts, photographs, oral histories, and so on.

4. Based on your journal writing and reading, begin a sketch that explores the question, “Why learn to write a profile essay in my college writing class?” Use all four methods of inquiry to develop your ideas: 1) Explore by suspending judgment and playing the believing and doubting game; 2) explain by making a list of statements/conclusions about the role of the case study/profile in academic writing and the evidence you have; 3) evaluate the usefulness of writing a nonacademic profile for your growth as a writer, both within and beyond the university setting; and 4) reflect on how your attitudes and beliefs about the profile have changed as you’ve researched and written.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

“How to Write a Profile Story” from Journalism Education
COURSE HANDOUTS

On the following pages you'll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
**DRAFTING WORKSHOP FOR THE PROFILE ESSAY**

**Ten-Minute Description Fastwrite:** Describe your profile subject. You might make lists of details or of words that describe the person physically, specific personality traits, smells, events, or surroundings. Try to create a single sentence that describes the subject but *do not* try to make it perfect. Then, write another one-sentence description and yet another. Don’t stop writing even to think. Just describe.

**Five-Minute Dominant Impression Fastwrite:** Now skip a few lines and start writing about the dominant impression you have of the person. You may include some description, but this time you might also include things, people, places, or stories from your own life or the world around you of which that person is a reminder. You’re trying to capture where the person fits in the world, how the person speaks to your experience and the experiences of your readers.

**Five-Minute Fastdraw (to give your hand a break!):** Using crayons, draw a picture that you associate with your subject. It may be a portrait, an object that makes you think of the person, a story he/she told you, or even an abstract impression—whatever comes to mind. Don’t worry about your artistic talent or making your drawing look good. Just draw.

**Five-Minute Story Fastwrite:** Think of a story your profile subject told you. Brainstorm details and information that will help you tell the story better, but don’t necessarily tell the story itself. Make lists of details you could use to tell the story, write some dialogue (don’t worry about punctuation), and write a few different leads to that specific story.

**Ten-Minute Focus Web/List:** Create a list or web to help you explore possible focuses for your profile. Brainstorm each of the following categories:

1. **Questions** your profile might explore or try to answer.
2. **Problems and issues** your profile could address.
3. **Groups or types of people** that your profile could help readers understand better.

Don’t stop writing, even if all you can come up with are obvious or off-the-wall ideas. Try to keep a balance among the number of ideas in each category. See if you can fill up the entire page.

**Rereading:** Reread your profile essay and underline or mark ideas, words, descriptions, etc. that you find especially interesting or surprising.

**Additional Information:** Make a list of information you still need to get (questions you have, details you’d like to know, etc.). Write down how you will find that information.

**Card Activity:** This exercise will help get your writing started. Using notecards or cut-up pieces of paper, make a collection of all the information you have on your profile subject. Write each piece of information on a different card. Each card might contain something such as a direct quote, a physical description, a word or two that remind you of a story the person told, a general impression you got from your fastwrites, a surprising word you used in a fastwrite, an object you associate with...
the person, a question or issue you might want to explore, a possible focus, and so on. Place the cards in front of you (the more you have, the better) and try grouping them in interesting ways, not just all the descriptions in one pile and all the quotes in another. Look for connections or combinations that are surprising or spark your interest in some way. Play with your groupings, discarding any cards that don’t seem to fit or aren’t very interesting, and adding things you remember. Once you have an interesting group, try labeling it (this could be a great source for titles). Put groups in an order that stimulates you to begin writing, or try fastwriting on only one group to figure out what the pieces of information say to each other.
CHAPTER 5: WRITING A REVIEW

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- At the heart of a review—as a form or genre—is the act of evaluation based on criteria and evidence.
- Evaluation reflects a tension between “a desire to prove our point and our need or willingness to learn more about the subject”; suspending judgment becomes an important part of the inquiry process.
- When evaluating, feelings often come first and need to be balanced with reasons and evidence.
- Evaluation involves judgment, a set of criteria, and persuasive evidence.
- A review may be a common assignment in some classes (such as theater), but more likely the act of evaluating something will be a feature of many assignments, no matter what the discipline.

FEATURES OF THE FORM

- Inquiry questions:
  - How good is it?
  - What is its value?

- Motives:
  - Make a judgment about something one may or may not be familiar with
  - Use reasonable criteria and evidence
  - To convince others that the judgment is sensible

- Subject matter:
  - Could include anything: books, films, web pages, cars, apps, etc.
  - Choose something that is interesting to you and to someone else

- Structure:
  - Description. What does it look like? What are some other key characteristics?
- Back story. What is the background? What do readers need to know about if they don’t know as much as you do?

- Judgments. What do you think? Can be a series of assessments given over the course of the review.

- Reasons, evidence. What are the reasons behind your judgments? And what evidence do you have to support these reasons?

- Criteria. What is the basis for your reasons? Criteria may be stated explicitly or implied.

- Relevant comparisons. What category does it belong to? What else is it like, and why is it better or worse?

- Sources:
  - Experience
  - Research

- Language:
  - Writer’s voice is often strong, explicitly present.
  - Be careful of “insider” language.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

1. Use reasons and evidence to support a judgment about something’s value. Students should understand how to use evaluation as a form of inquiry for the review, including how to determine criteria, come to judgments, and bring evidence to bear.

2. Identify the criteria behind a judgment and determine their relevance.

3. Identify the characteristics of different forms of the review, including academic applications. Students should understand how this kind of evaluation is important for other writing projects that may be assigned.

4. Use invention and focusing strategies to discover and develop a review essay. Students will learn how feelings often lead to reasoned judgment, as well as the importance of suspending judgment at the beginning of an evaluation.

5. Apply revision strategies that are effective for shaping reviews.
Discussion Starters: How to Talk About the Chapter

Prereading Activities
1. Fastwrite for five minutes on everything you associate with the word review. What does it bring to mind? What kinds of reviews, if any, do you often read or hear? Skip a few lines and write for five more minutes on your feelings and concerns about writing a review. What do you perceive as your biggest challenge? What do you already know that you can draw on for this form of writing? Share this in groups.

2. Find at least three essays that you consider “reviews” and read them carefully. What qualities do they all have in common? If you had to describe the features of a review based on these three, what would those features be? What seems to make a review effective and engaging? In groups, share the qualities of a review you came up with and agree on a master list of features. Keep these in mind as you read Chapter 5 and see which ones come up.

3. What seem to be the purposes of reviews? Based on your speculations, why might you need to learn about reviewing and evaluating as part of your college coursework? How are they relevant to other kinds of academic writing?

The Writing Process
In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or during class with your prompting—that will help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It’s important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going to Write About?”

“Opening Up”

“Narrowing Down”

“Trying Out”

“Writing the Sketch”

“Moving from Sketch to Draft”

“Developing”

“Drafting”

“Workshopping”

“Revising”

The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they compose a draft, which means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject.
These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students’ tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

Each of these activities, all the way through to “Polishing the Draft,” have a recursive quality, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details, and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to complete the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then do the same thing with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.

**SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS**

**Collaborating on Criteria:** This in-class activity invites students to move from choosing a subject for their review to determining the criteria they will use to evaluate it. Students can do this by posting large pieces of newsprint on the classroom walls or by using notebook paper and passing it around to the whole class. Once each student has several ideas for criteria, you can begin discussing how to choose the most appropriate ones for the subject and the audience.

**Seeing the Form**

**Choosing the Best Picture:** Students are asked to choose the best of Dorothea Lange’s five photos (show on the next page). Lange’s “Migrant Mother” has become a symbol of the Depression. Students are asked to articulate their criteria for choosing the best picture. This exercise would be effective if done in small groups.

**ASSIGNMENT DESIGN: SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING A REVIEW ASSIGNMENT**

1. Have students brainstorm concerns and questions that they have about the review assignment.
   - What is most likely to go wrong as they approach this essay?
   - What might they struggle with the most and why?
   - What seems like it will be fun and interesting? Why?

   Then, in groups or as a whole class, discuss responses to these questions and generate a list of strategies for dealing with the challenges they anticipate. You might even have them return to Chapter 6 and pull out suggestions from Ballenger, or places where he addresses the concerns that students have raised.

2. In addition, you might consider requiring a *cover letter* with the review in which students reflect on their writing process and what they’ve learned:
   - What does this draft reflect about what you’ve learned from writing a review? What have you learned that *isn’t* reflected in the draft?
o What was the most challenging part of this assignment? Why? How did you respond to that challenge?

o As you composed this draft, how did you decide what criteria to use? Which method of development seemed to work best and why? On what basis did you make those decisions?

o Describe the feelings you initially had about the subject of your review and how they led you to specific reasons and evidence.

o If you had to write another review, what would you do differently and why?

DISCUSSING THE READINGS: SUMMARY AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

As Ballenger notes, the questions that follow each of the readings take up one of the four methods of inquiry: exploring, explaining, evaluating, and reflecting. If students respond to all of the questions, they will have a richer and more complex understanding of the essays than if they answered only one. However, you may not have time for students to answer all of them. In that case, think about assigning the reflective questions along with one other so that students are both examining the text and reflecting on their responses.

ROGER EBERT, “A CHRISTMAS STORY”

Film Review

Summary

As Ballenger’s introduction says, this movie review of a 1983 film, “A Christmas Story,” illustrates a writer using criteria to distinguish this film from all other holiday films. Ebert has a distinctive voice and brings in his own memories of wanting a Daisy Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas and several other poignant scenes in the movie. Both Ebert’s own experience and the movies serve as evidence for his overall claim that people watch the film over and over because “there is a real knowledge of human nature beneath the comedy.” He also claims that the film “records a world that no longer quite exists in America,” which also adds to its appeal and status as a classic.

Additional Questions and Activities for “A Christmas Story”:

1. Focus on the opening paragraph of the review. What did you expect the essay to be about after reading the title and the first paragraph? If leads are supposed to set the direction, tone, and purpose of an essay, how does Ebert accomplish those three things? Point to specific passages.

2. Analyze Ebert’s own presence in the review, as a writer and viewer. First, mark the words and phrases that are distinctively Ebert’s. Then, looking only at what you’ve highlighted, draw some conclusions about the way Ebert weaves his voice in this review. How does he make it distinctive? Why might he have chosen to be such a strong presence? How does
each instance of him asserting himself in the review connect to the overall point he is making about the movie? Finally, write a 250 analysis of Ebert’s use of voice and presence in this review, particularly what you have learned that you can apply in your own writing.

**CAROL E. HOLSTEAD, “THE BENEFITS OF NO-TECH NOTE TAKING”**

Review of a Method

**Summary**

In this essay, Holstead evaluates two methods of notetaking: longhand and on the computer. She wonders whether or not one is better than the other when it comes to student learning. The essay opens with a scene from her visual communication classroom of students gathered around a laptop watching a video during her lecture. Frustrated, she bans laptops and looks into the research. She finds that students who take notes longhand retain conceptual information better than those who use their computers.

Comparison of notes taken by hand versus on the computer

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “The Benefits of No-Tech Note Taking”:

1. Do a quick online search for studies that examine the effects of technology on learning. Choose one or two. What criteria do they use to evaluate the effects? Are those criteria the same or different from those Halstead uses?

2. What kinds of evidence does Holstead use to support her various claims?

3. Who has a stake in Holstead’s argument? How might each of those stakeholders respond? What does Holstead do in her essay to address the concerns of the various stakeholders?

**SETH SCHTESSEL, “GRAND THEFT AUTO TAKES ON NEW YORK”**

Video Game Review

**Summary**

As Ballenger’s headnote explains, this review of a popular video game draws on implicit criteria to argue that it is “good.” In some detail he demonstrates how effectively the game renders New York and draws players into the virtual world of “Liberty City” through a well-developed plot and series of characters. Students may not immediately see the parallels between this video game and a novel, but they have an opportunity to make connections between the criteria Schtessel uses to analyze this game and those used in their literature classes to analyze the qualities of a short story or novel.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Grand Theft Auto”:

1. Using your response to Question 1 under “Inquiring into the Essay,” develop an essay about your response to violent video games. Draw on research to explore your ideas further.
2. It may not be obvious, but this review uses criteria for evaluating the quality of a video game that is somewhat similar to the qualities you've likely been asked to use when analyzing a short story or a novel. To test the validity of this claim, find some literary analysis papers you've written for other courses; in your notebook, list the criteria (explicit or implicit) used in the analysis. Then compare those to the criteria Schtesel uses. What do you notice?

3. What other criteria might Schtesel have used to critique this video game? How would that have changed the essay?

4. Look up some of the other essays Schtesel has written and compare them to this one. What seems to characterize his writing style? What types of essays does he seem to write? If you find other reviews among the pieces he's written, what do you notice about the criteria he uses? Are they the same? Different? What do you make of that?

LAURA BURNS, “HOW TO NOT FEEL GOOD AND FEEL GOOD ABOUT IT: A REVIEW OF YOUNG ADULT”

Summary

This review, written by a student, focuses on the film Young Adult and argues that not only does the movie not end in redemption for the characters, but in fact is better because it doesn’t. The review nicely summarizes the movie and offers background on the actors, writer, and director. Evidence is drawn from the film itself. Burns’s final conclusion is that the movie is “an effective subversion of expectation that is the reason this memorable performance works. This isn’t a feel-good film, and thank goodness. If Cody and Reitman had tried, I think we might leave the theater feeling worse.”

Additional Questions and Activities for “How to Not Feel Good”:

1. Compare this review with another from this chapter. Look specifically at the criteria used for evaluation, the tone of the review, the structure and writing style, and the level/kind of detail used. What do you notice? What stands out?

2. Find several reviews of Young Adult and keep track of the criteria the writers use to evaluate the film. Do you notice consistent criteria? Do film critics assume a set of common features for these films? A set of criteria for determining how effective the film is?

3. After you’ve written your own review essay, remix it as Burns does into a web page.

WAYS OF DISCUSSING ALL THE READINGS

Questions for Students

1. Compare the leads to these three reviews. Describe how they each set up the essay, the central question to be considered, the stance the writer will probably take, the tone, and the key ideas which the essay will probably discuss.
2. In what ways does emotion enter into each of these reviews? Do they each balance reason and emotion? Do they all consider how emotion is used or evoked by the pieces they are reviewing?

3. What makes each of these essays persuasive (or not persuasive)? What do the writers do to convince us that their judgments are worth considering?

4. Where do the writers slip in background information about the object they are reviewing? What purposes does that background serve? Are the details simply to provide context and common ground? Do they connect to the review’s larger themes?

ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES

Teaching Suggestions

1. **Evaluation Across the Disciplines**: Prompt students to list examples of evaluative writing that they may be asked to do in different disciplines. Here are some examples:
   - Science: evaluate the methodology of an experiment
   - Business: evaluate a marketing strategy, a product, or a business plan
   - Philosophy: evaluate arguments
   - Literature: evaluate the effectiveness of a story or a character
   - Composition: evaluate the writing of your peers

   You can use this list to generate a discussion of how to apply the principles in Chapter 5 to the writing students are asked to do in other courses. For example, you might ask students to bring in assignment sheets from other courses and then have them discuss in groups what those assignments are asking of them, what type of inquiry strategies will be required, and more specifically, what principles of writing an evaluative essay will be expected.

2. **From Jury to Judgment**: This exercise comes after students have generated a lot of ideas for this essay, and it invites them to become experts on their subject before they begin making judgments about it. Students won’t be able to complete the activities in one sitting, so you might assign students to do them on their own by a certain date (before the sketch is due), or break them up: Do Step 1 in class, assign Step 2 for homework the next day, Step 3 for the following day, and Step 4 for a week later (students will need time to visit the sites).

   Start with a generating activity on your topic.

   **Step One**: Begin with a focused fastwrite that explores your initial feelings and experiences, if any, about your subject. In your notebook, use one of the following prompts to launch an exploration of your personal experiences with your topic. If the writing stalls, try another prompt to keep you going for five to seven minutes.
• Write about your first experience with your subject. This might be, for example, the first time you remember visiting the restaurant, or hearing the performer, or seeing the photographs. Focus on scenes, moments, situations, and people.

• Write about what you think might be important qualities of your subject. Ideally, this would be what the thing should be able to do well or what effects it should have on people who use it or see it.

• Write about how the thing makes you feel. Explore not just your initial good, bad, or mixed feelings about your subject but the place from where those feelings arise. Why do you feel anything at all about this thing?

• Compare the thing you’re evaluating with something else that’s similar.

**Step Two:** Research your subject on the Web, gathering as much relevant background information as you can.

• Search for information on product Web sites or Web pages devoted specifically to your subject.

• Search for existing reviews or other evaluations on your subject.

**Step Three:** If possible, interview people about what they think. You may do this formally by developing a survey, or informally by simply asking people what they like or dislike about the thing you’re evaluating. Also consider whether you might interview someone who’s an expert on your subject. For example, if you’re evaluating a Web site, ask people in the technical communications program what they think about it, or what criteria they might use if they were reviewing something similar.

**Step Four:** This may be the most important step of all: Experience your subject. Visit the coffeehouses, examine the website, listen to the music, attend the performance, read the book, view the painting, visit the building, look at the architecture, watch the movie. As you do this, gather your impressions and collect information. Take notes. Take pictures. Shoot video.

3. **Thinking about Criteria:** On the Companion Web site, you’ll find several exercises under “Visual Analysis” that invite students to 1) evaluate Web sites using particular criteria posted by various organizations, 2) analyze published reviews of movies, music, and video games, and 3) compare the criteria for evaluating movies posted by industry groups, as well as private groups such as church organizations and parent groups.

4. **Writing a Movie Review:** In general, this exercise helps students think about criteria for judging movies, using dialectical thinking and symphonic inquiry to generate well-researched, critically grounded criteria. This process is a good foundation for students when they need to develop additional evaluation criteria. Ask students to do Steps 1–4 in class.
and Step 5 at home. Then, the next day students can do Step 6 at home, depending on the option you choose (a presentation or a sketch).

**Step One:** What makes a movie good or bad? First, indulge in some creative thinking. Draw a line down the middle of a blank page in your journal, and on the left side spend thirty seconds brainstorming a list of your favorite movies, whether current or classic films.

**Step Two:** In the right column, jot down the name of the worst movie(s) you ever saw.

**Step Three:** Stand back from all the details and apply critical thinking to your lists. Do the films you like have anything in common? Are they a similar genre? Do they involve similar stories or themes? Similar directors or actors? Similar methods of storytelling? Similar periods of filmmaking? Might they have moved you in similar ways? Next, consider how the films you dislike differ from those you like. Are they a different genre, or do they involve different methods of storytelling, and so on? Share your lists and your thoughts about this in a small group.

**Step Four:** Follow up this conversation by focusing your discussion on our initial question: What makes a good movie? What criteria might you use to make such a judgment? In your group, generate a list of these on a piece of newsprint on the wall. Begin by narrowing the question, perhaps to generate a list of the ways to evaluate certain kinds of movies: Hollywood films, art films, or certain genres such as romantic comedies or action films. After twenty minutes, share these lists with the class.

**Step Five:** Out of class, search the web for what other people think about this question. Type the phrase “What makes a good movie” into the search window of Google and browse some of the documents it produces. You’ll find a range of things, from quirky Web logs and online essays from individuals, to articles by film experts. Print out any articles you find interesting, perhaps those that offer criteria you hadn’t considered or that challenge your views about judging movies.

**Step Six: Option 1:** Drawing on the insights about how to evaluate film which you developed from your writing, class discussion, and research, present a five-minute evaluation of your favorite—or least favorite—film to the rest of your class. Make sure this presentation includes all three of the features of evaluation mentioned in this chapter: judgment, criteria, and evidence.

**Step Six: Option 2:** Write a 400-word sketch that evaluates the qualities of a film you love or despise. Workshop these in class.

For whichever option selected, evaluate these presentations or sketches using the following criteria:

a. Did the writer or speaker’s judgment seem fair and reasonable?
b. Were the criteria for judgment clear and relevant to the film being judged and were they reasonably applied?

c. What was the most convincing evidence offered? What was the least convincing? Was the evaluation interesting? Did it help you not only see the movie differently, but also watching movies in general?

Questions for Students

5. **Online Product Reviews**: Find several product reviews online at a commercial site like Epinions.com or an online store like Amazon. Choose four product reviews (of the same product) to analyze using the “features of the form.” Reflect on how effectively the writers choose and apply criteria with evidence to support their claims. Finally, either 1) revise one of them to make it more effective, or 2) write your own online product review, using the principles you’ve learned in this chapter.

6. **Prompts for Generating Ideas**

   **Listing**
   - “Bad movies” you’ve seen
   - “Good movies” you’ve seen
   - Musical artists you like/dislike
   - Far-away places you’d like to visit/would never visit
   - Puzzling behaviors of individuals
   - General likes: Some of the things I really love are...
   - General dislikes: Some of the things I really hate are...
   - Local places in town you visit frequently and those you never visit

   **Fastwriting**
   - Choose any four items from the list above and fastwrite about them for ten minutes.
   - Review your fastwriting and look for places where you describe criteria for evaluation and where you use specific details or evidence. Begin another fastwrite on at least two of the items you chose in the question above, focusing on your criteria for making the judgment.
   - Then, for each possible subject you are considering from what you’ve written so far, make a list of things you need to know more about in order to make a better
judgment about it—to find out more about appropriate criteria to use, other things
to compare it to in the same category, judgments others have made, and so on.

7. Reviewing a Web site: The Web is full of opportunity for academic researchers, a promising
source of very useful information from a wide range of sources, all served up with stunning
convenience. But the Web is no place for researchers who lack skepticism about what they
find there. Students are rarely naïve about Internet research; they are generally able to
distinguish between sites that are clearly commercial and those with educational value, and
they often recognize sites with axes to grind. But this evaluation is rarely systematic. Since
evaluating Web sites for academic research is a common activity for student writers these
days, it's a good place to begin the practice of evaluative writing and thinking.

Evaluation always takes place in context. For the purposes of this exercise, consider that
your aim is to develop some Web evaluation criteria that might be applied by students
doing research for a research essay in a composition course such as yours.

Step One: In a small group, or on your own, brainstorm a list of possible criteria that
would be useful for evaluating Web sites for academic research.

Step Two: Examine your list. Look for ways to consolidate items into other criteria
and eliminate any that don't seem as important. Compose a revised list of five key
criteria that you believe would be useful to a researcher who is trying to decide
whether a particular Web site is a useful source of information for his/her paper.
Number them 1–5, and under each elaborate on the criteria in a short paragraph,
explaining and clarifying the idea so that someone else can understand and use your
list.

Step Three: Test your criteria and see how they work on the following Web site.
Suppose you were researching the controversy over binge drinking among
American college students. You searched the Web and came up with a site from
ConsumerFreedom.com.

Find ConsumerFreedom.com at http://consumerfreedom.com/

In a 200-word evaluation that uses the criteria you developed, explain your
judgment of the ConsumerFreedom site as a source of information for an essay.
Remember that whatever judgment you make need not be a simple thumbs-up or
thumbs-down. Also, consider situations that might make information from the site
more or less useful as a source of information.

Step Four: Revise your evaluation criteria and submit it with your 200-word essay.
Questions for Writing or Discussion

Spend some time in your notebook or in class discussing some of these questions:

1) How did you have to revise your criteria after you tested them on an actual Web site, or did they seem to work well?

2) Did you have difficulty arriving at judgments in this exercise? If so, why?

3) What are some of the characteristics of relevant and useful criteria—ideas that are fairly easy to apply in various situations and seem to help produce reliable judgments?

Writing Projects

1. This chapter briefly mentions the proliferation of online consumer product reviews as examples of a review essay in “real life.” For this project, your challenge will be to develop criteria for a different kind of review: criteria for effective teaching. You’ve likely looked at many of the online sites where students can leave feedback about their professors, many of which allow students to use whatever criteria they want. In small groups, research many of these sites and take notes about the kind of criteria being used, no matter how varied. Then, agree on a set of criteria you believe should be used to evaluate professors. Be sure to explain carefully why these criteria are better than the others you’ve seen students use. Then, write an essay that reviews the Web sites where students can leave feedback about their professors.

2. Small group project: restaurant reviews
   - Begin by brainstorming a list of criteria to evaluate restaurants in your community or on campus. Collaboratively come up with a tentative list.
   - Do some research on the Internet and find several examples of criteria used for reviewing restaurants. Compare them to your tentative criteria and determine your final list of criteria.
   - Arrange to visit at least three restaurants, review them, and collaboratively compose your reviews for each.

3. Small-group project: open choice
   - After you’ve completed the journal writing in this chapter under “Generating Ideas” and “Judging What You Have,” divide into small groups and compare your ideas for a review. Then decide on what you all might review together. Present your final reviews online or in a class publication so the whole class can read them.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

Visual Rhetoric: Analyzing Visual Documents, Purdue OWL: “This resource covers how to write a rhetorical analysis essay of primarily visual texts with a focus on demonstrating the author’s understanding of the rhetorical situation and design principles.”

How to Write About Film: The Movie Review, the Theoretical Essay, and the Critical Essay, University of Colorado—Denver Writing Center

COURSE HANDOUTS

On the following pages you'll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
GENERATING IDEAS: REVIEW ESSAY

In your journal, spend at least 30 minutes responding to the following writing prompts, remembering to write whatever comes to mind without censoring yourself:

Listing

- “Bad movies” you’ve seen
- “Good movies” you’ve seen
- Musical artists you like/dislike
- Far-away places you’d like to visit/would never visit
- Puzzling behaviors of individuals
- General likes: Some of the things I really love are...
- General dislikes: Some of the things I really hate are...
- Local places in town you visit frequently and those you never visit

Fastwriting

- Choose any four items from the list above and fastwrite about them for ten minutes.
- Review your fastwriting and look for places where you describe criteria for evaluation and where you use specific details or evidence. Begin another fastwrite on at least two of the items you chose in the question above, focusing on your criteria for making the judgment.
- Then, for each possible subject you are considering from what you’ve written so far, make a list of things you need to know more about in order to make a better judgment about it—to find out more about appropriate criteria to use, other things to compare it to in the same category, judgments others have made, and so on.
FROM JURY TO JUDGMENT

Start with a generating activity on your topic.

**Step One:** Begin with a focused fastwrite that explores your initial feelings and experiences, if any, about your subject. In your notebook, use one of the following prompts to launch an exploration of your personal experiences with your topic. If the writing stalls, try another prompt to keep you going for five to seven minutes.

- Write about your first experience with your subject. This might be, for example, the first time you remember visiting the restaurant, or hearing the performer, or seeing the photographs. Focus on scenes, moments, situations, and people.

- Write about what you think might be important qualities of your subject. Ideally, this would be what the thing should be able to do well or what effects it should have on people who use it or see it.

- Write about how the thing makes you feel. Explore not just your initial good, bad, or mixed feelings about your subject but the place from where those feelings arise. Why do you feel anything at all about this thing?

- Compare the thing you’re evaluating with something else that’s similar.

**Step Two:** Research your subject on the Web, gathering as much relevant background information as you can.

- Search for information on product Web sites or Web pages devoted specifically to your subject.

- Search for existing reviews or other evaluations on your subject.

**Step Three:** If possible, interview people about what they think. You may do this formally by developing a survey, or informally by simply asking people what they like or dislike about the thing you’re evaluating. Also consider whether you might interview someone who’s an expert on your subject. For example, if you’re evaluating a Web site, ask people in the technical communications program what they think about it, or what criteria they might use if they were reviewing something similar.

**Step Four:** This may be the most important step of all: Experience your subject. Visit the coffeehouses, examine the Web site, listen to the music, attend the performance, read the book.
REVIEWING A WEB SITE

The Web is full of opportunities for academic researchers; it is a promising source of really useful information from a wide range of sources, all served up with stunning convenience. But the Web is no place for researchers who lack skepticism about what they find there. Students are rarely naïve about Internet research; they are generally able to distinguish between sites that are clearly commercial and those with educational value, and they often recognize sites with axes to grind. But this evaluation is rarely systematic. Since evaluating Web sites for academic research is a common activity for student writers these days, it’s a good place to begin the practice of evaluative writing and thinking.

Evaluation always takes place in context. For the purposes of this exercise, consider that your aim is to develop some Web evaluation criteria that might be applied by students doing research for a research essay in a composition course such as yours.

Step One: In a small group, or individually, brainstorm a list of possible criteria useful for evaluating Web sites for academic research.

Step Two: Examine your list, looking for ways to consolidate items into other criteria and eliminating unimportant items. Compose a revised list of five key criteria helpful for a researcher who must decide whether a particular Web site is a useful source of information for his/her paper. Number them 1–5 and, under each, elaborate on the criteria in a short paragraph, explaining and clarifying the ideas so that another student researcher can understand and use your list.

Step Three: Use your criteria by seeing how they work on the following Web site. Suppose, as you were researching the current controversy over binge drinking among American college students, you searched the Web and found a site from ConsumerFreedom.com.

Find ConsumerFreedom.com at http://consumerfreedom.com/

In a 200-word evaluation using the criteria you developed, explain your evaluation of the ConsumerFreedom site as a source of information for an essay. Remember that your judgment should be more than simple thumbs-up or thumbs-down. Also, consider situations that might make information from the site more or less useful as a source of information.
Step Four: Revise your evaluation criteria and submit the revision along with your 200-word essay.

Questions for Writing or Discussion

In your notebook or in class, discuss these questions:

1) Did you revise your criteria after testing them on an actual Web site, or did they work well?

2) Did you have difficulty arriving at judgments in this exercise? If so, why?

3) What are some of the characteristics of relevant and useful criteria, ideas that are fairly easy to apply in various situations and produce reliable judgments?
**Talking it Through**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bruce</th>
<th>You</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To start with, why are you reviewing this? To whom might it matter and under what circumstances?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe it? What does it look like? What is the story behind it? Would you compare it to anything else I might know about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okay, so what do you most want me to know about, exactly?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surely, not everyone thinks this. What do people who disagree with you say? How would you respond to that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6: WRITING A PROPOSAL

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- A proposal involves writing to solve problems.
- We write proposals in order to learn more about something, to explore the existing problems and solutions, and/or to persuade others to act on our suggested solutions.
- A problem needs to be consequential. (It affects a number of people; the solution usually isn’t simple; the solutions may be numerous and generate disagreement.)
- The problem needs to be narrowed down so it is manageable.
- A proposal is a common academic form of writing.

FEATURES OF THE FORM

- **Inquiry questions:**
  - What is the problem?
  - What should be done?
- **Motives:**
  - To change a problem related to something that matters to you and others
  - A promise that you will learn something about the problem and possible solutions
- **Subject matter:**
  - Best plan of action for a problem of consequence
  - Could address large or small problems as long as others have a stake in solving them
  - Research proposals suggest a plan for studying a problem or other question
- **Structure:**
  - *Causes and effects.* Why does this problem need attention? Why will the proposed solution deal with it?
  - *Justifications.* What reasons and evidence support the claim that the solution(s) is(are) the best one(s)?
Evidence. Evidence from research and experience make a clear case for the problem and for the solutions.

Other perspectives. Who else has addressed this problem and how?

Visual rhetoric. How might you illustrate problems and/or solutions with pictures, tables, graphs, and/or headings and bulleted lists?

• Sources:
  o Experience
  o Research
    ▪ Reading
    ▪ Interviews

• Language:
  o Depends on the rhetorical situation.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Describe a problem of consequence, framing it narrowly enough to explore convincing solutions. Students should have a good sense of what makes a problem consequential. Possible emphasis on solutions, which means the audience generally agrees that the problem exists and is of consequence. Possible emphasis on the problem, which indicates that the audience doesn’t recognize or understand why and how the issue is a problem.

2. Identify the wide range of rhetorical situations that might call for a proposal argument. Students should understand the features of a research proposal.

3. Argue effectively for both the seriousness of the problem and the proposed solutions, using strong evidence. Students should understand how to analyze problems and come up with solutions that can be supported/justified with persuasive evidence. Use of perspectives offered from other experts and those who have said something about the subject. Frequent use of visuals if the goal is to persuade the audience to act (such as buy something, vote, etc.). Use of strong evidence to explain, support, and justify the solutions proposed.

4. Use appropriate invention strategies to discover and develop a proposal topic.

5. Apply revision strategies that are effective for a proposal.
DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

1. Find several ads in magazines or online that identify a problem and offer a solution, either explicitly ("this product will solve this problem for you") or implicitly ("you didn’t realize you had this problem, but this product will solve it for you"). Describe three of these ads, focusing on what the problem is and what solutions are proposed. Then, consider what makes these ads persuasive: How do they convince the viewer/reader that the problem is actually a problem of consequence? How do they justify their solution? What kinds of “evidence,” if any, do they offer?

2. When you think about the term proposal, what comes to mind? Make a quick brainstorm list or cluster around the word. Then, spend five minutes reflecting on your list: What do you notice about your associations? What purposes do proposals serve? Why write proposals? What key habits of mind are most important (exploring, explaining, evaluating, reflecting)?

3. Do a quick search on the Internet using the term proposal: What do you find? What types of companies or organizations seem to use proposals, and why?

4. In small groups, collect a number of research proposals written by other students at your university and/or by members of the faculty. Begin by interviewing faculty members who are teaching your other courses. Ask them to describe their expectations of a research proposal for an assignment in their class—what does the proposal need to include? Ask, as well, for examples of both the assignment and a student’s proposal. Then, with your group members, discuss the commonalities in what different faculty members representing different disciplines expect in a research proposal.

THE WRITING PROCESS

In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or during class with your prompting—that will help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It’s important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going to Write About?”

“Opening Up”

“Narrowing Down”

“Trying Out”

“Writing the Sketch”

“Moving from Sketch to Draft”

“Developing”
“Drafting”

“Workshopping”

“Revising”

The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they begin composing a draft, and that means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject. These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students' tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

All of these activities, all the way through to “Polishing the Draft,” have a recursive quality to them, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details, and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to do the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then do the same thing with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.

**Sidebar: Inquiring into the Details**

*Writing a Research Proposal:* This sidebar describes the purpose and features of a research proposal to which students can refer when writing their own.

*Evidence: A Case Study:* This sidebar prompts students to think about evidence in terms of audience: Evidence is persuasive when the audience finds it believable. The sidebar poses a problem and then lists several types of evidence a writer might use, only a few of which will be persuasive to the audience.

As a follow-up activity, ask students to brainstorm all the evidence they might bring to bear on their subject, possibly posting their subject and this list of possible evidence on a large piece of newsprint taped to the wall. Other class members can then add their ideas for evidence. As a final step, ask students to write down their audience—either in their notebook or on the newsprint (if that’s the activity you’re following)—and decide which kinds of evidence are most persuasive to that particular audience. This can be done individually, in pairs, or, if you’re using newsprint, by asking everyone in class to go to each newsprint and check the evidence that is most persuasive.

**Seeing the Form**

*A Problem in Pictures:* This sidebar demonstrates the power of photos to describe and demonstrate the nature of a problem, specifically the problem of too little space for bicycles on San Francisco’s commuter trains.

**Assignment Design: Suggestions for Designing a Proposal Assignment**

The assignment parameters suggested will define some limits for choosing a subject—making sure the subject is of local consequence. Students may gravitate toward problems that are
Regional, national, or global, and then have difficulty narrowing down the essay to a manageable
definition of the problem or discussion of the solutions.

Students may also struggle with how much to express their personal stance and presence in
the essay, so offer guidelines. Should they share their personal experience with the subject? Should
they stick to the information they've gathered and present it more formally, without expressing
their feelings about it? The sample proposals in this chapter present very different tones and ways
in which the writers present themselves in the text, so students can discuss the effectiveness of
each approach.

- Here are some other things to think about: Have students brainstorm concerns and
  questions they have about the proposal assignment.
- What is most likely to go wrong as they approach this essay?
- What might they struggle with the most? Why?
- What seems like it will be fun and interesting? Why?

Then, in groups or as a whole class, discuss responses to these questions and generate a list of
strategies for dealing with the challenges they anticipate. Have them return to Chapter 7 and pull
out suggestions from Ballenger or places where he addresses their concerns.

In addition, you might consider requiring a cover letter with the proposal where students reflect on
their writing process and what they've learned:

- What does this draft reflect about what you've learned from writing a proposal? What have
  you learned that isn't reflected in the draft?
- What was the most challenging part of this assignment and why? How did you respond to
  that challenge?
- Which method of development worked best and why? On what basis did you make those
decisions?
- What do you believe is your most persuasive point in the essay and why?
- If you had to write another proposal, what would you do differently and why?

**Discussing the Readings: Summary and Teaching Activities**

**Buzz Bissinger, “Why College Football Should Be Banned”**

**Summary**

Bissinger argues that college football should be banned because 1) it has no academic purpose; 2)
students and institutions are not the beneficiaries, the coaches are; 3) football programs often lose
a great deal of money and therefore 4) the financial costs of programs are a drain on university
budgets. He offers evidence from several football programs, includes budget numbers and coach salaries, as well as detailed descriptions of the consequences of football at various schools.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Why College Football Should Be Banned”

1. After responding to the first three questions under “Inquiring into the Essay,” develop a sketch around your ideas and revise it into a fuller proposal essay responding to Bissinger’s.

2. What makes this essay persuasive? What lessens its persuasiveness? What kinds of evidence does Bissinger use? Describe the audience he targets and what suggests that to you. How well does Bissinger match his purpose, his audience, his claims, and his evidence?

PREVENTING ALCOHOL-RELATED PROBLEMS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES—SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE NIAAA TASK FORCE ON COLLEGE DRINKING

**ROBERT F. SALTZ, PH.D.**

**Summary**

As Ballenger notes, this essay first establishes the significance of alcohol-related problems on campuses and then summarizes the Task Force’s recommendations. These proposals are categorized into tiers based on their likely effectiveness according to other studies.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Preventing Alcohol-Related Problems on College Campuses”

1. Fastwrite a response to this piece. Start with your gut reaction and then move to a closer analysis of it. Who seems to be the audience? What is at stake for the audience? How effectively does this essay address what is at stake and why the audience should pay attention?

1. Compare this essay to the previous one, “Why College Football Should Be Banned.” What makes each of them persuasive? What kinds of evidence do the writers use? Describe the target audience of each and why you believe that. How are these essays similar to and different from each other (aside from being in different forms)?

2. What “features of the form” does this essay reflect?

2. Write an essay in response to this summary of the Task Force’s report, addressing each of the writer’s points and presenting your own stance and/or additional suggestions.

JENNA APPLEMAN, “AVOIDABLE ACCIDENTS: HOW TO MAKE REALITY TV SAFER”

**Student Essay**

**Summary**

Appleman’s essay addresses a problem with reality TV, the relative safety of the participants in these programs. She shows several examples of participants who have been injured or, in one case,
who committed suicide, and lays out the costs to everyone involved when producers don’t create a safe environment. The end of the essay proposes a code of ethics and set of criteria for evaluating reality shows. Appleman is careful to qualify her arguments and not over-generalize.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Avoidable Accidents”:

1. Do some research on reality TV and find three different proposals that address some kind of problem with the programs. A few of them can be found on Appleman’s Works Cited page. On what points do the writers agree? Disagree?

2. Mark the words and phrases where Appleman’s voice or persona is strongest. How would the essay read if she had not asserted her persona in those places? What role does her voice/persona play in the overall argument and persuasiveness of her claims?

**ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES**

**Questions for Students**

1. **Workshop**: Read a draft of a classmate’s proposal essay and write two different letters to the writer:
   
   a. First, play the believing game: Tell the writer what you understand the essay to be saying, what the problem is, all the ways that the problem is actually something to take seriously, and all the ways that the solutions proposed make sense. What are the implications of these solutions?
   
   b. Then, play the doubting game: Question the problem described and the solutions offered, considering all the objections and concerns an audience might raise.

2. Find three published pieces that have the features of a proposal—for example, a letter to the editor, an article in a magazine, a comment on a listserv or blog. Do one of two things: Revise the texts to more clearly fit the expectations of a proposal essay or compose a research proposal based on one of the articles (that is, re-present the original proposal as a formal academic research proposal). What have you learned about proposal writing from doing this exercise?

**WRITING PROJECTS**

1. Explore the ways in which proposal writing will help you beyond your first-year composition course: What features of the proposal will help you in the writing you do for other classes or for situations outside the university? How is the proposal related to other academic forms of writing and inquiry? To answer these questions, research proposal writing on the Internet and find various sites that explain how to write proposals for various fields (such as engineering), for grants, for organizations, and so on. In addition, interview professors from various disciplines about the role that proposal writing—or
defining problems and arguing for solutions—plays in their field and in the courses students take.

Then, compose an argument for learning how to write proposals in college, covering the benefits and the limitations.

2. Small group activity: As a group, find several problems on campus that you find important to either solve or better understand. Choose one that seems the most interesting and viable to pursue. Use the suggestions in Chapter 6 to work on your proposal, dividing work up among group members, considering what kinds of research you need to do, and deciding how you will compose your proposal as a group.
Chapter 7: Writing an Argument

Overview: Goals and Principles to Emphasize

**Principles**

- The way our culture interprets argument influences our responses to it: In some cultures, argument and conflict are signs of commitment and caring; in others, such conflict is considered a threat to the larger community.

- To argue well, we must recognize the complexity of every issue and examine it from every angle, resisting our impulse to see only two sides.

- Argument is central to democracy and citizenship; it is integral to relationships; it is one process by which knowledge is created in academic disciplines.

- Understanding how arguments work can help you read arguments with more confidence and understanding.

- The most important motive for writing an argument is that you are passionate about a question or an issue.

**Features of the Form**

- **Inquiry questions:**
  - What is true?
  - What is the cause?
  - How should it be defined and classified?

- **Motives:**
  - To discover: To explore what we think
  - To persuade: To convince others to think as we do

- **Subject matter:**
  - Could include anything, but others must have a stake in the issue

- **Structure:**
  - Background on the issue, especially what people seem to agree on. What’s the controversy as most people understand it?
  - The inquiry question.
• Claims and supporting reasons and evidence.
• Acknowledgement of counterarguments and analysis of their significance.
• Closing that refines the claim, summarizes it, or returns to the beginning to affirm how the argument addresses the issue.

• **Sources:**
  - Experts on the topic
  - Experience
  - Observation
  - Research

• **Language:**
  - Appropriate to the expectations of the audience

**GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. **Understand the connection between inquiry and persuasion, and apply inquiry strategies for exploring and developing an argument topic.**

2. **Distinguish between causal, factual, and definitional arguments, and develop an essay that uses one of those three approaches to persuasion.**

3. **Identify the key elements of argument—reasons, claims, and evidence—and apply them in both reading and writing.**

4. **Develop a question that is focused enough to lead to a strong claim and convincing evidence.**

5. **Use audience analysis and logical methods to help guide revision of an argument.**

**DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER**

This chapter focuses on short, informal public arguments rather than formal ones, so students are encouraged to write for a general audience and retain their personal voice/style. Students begin with a genuine question, not a prior conclusion, and they must approach the writing as they've done in previous chapters—with a spirit of inquiry, suspension of judgment, and dialectical thinking. Beginning with questions is particularly important with this essay because students often have very rigid associations with the word argument. It's important that you spend time in class bringing students' beliefs about argument to their attention using the prereading activities below. Each of the sample essays in this chapter are from very different genres and demonstrate the range of argument strategies writers can employ when writing public arguments.
PREREADING ACTIVITIES

1. In your notebook, brainstorm anything that comes to mind when you hear the word *argument*: experiences, memories, words, phrases, events, TV programs, articles, and so on.

Then, review what you've written and look for commonalities. What associations stand out? What metaphors would you use to describe your associations with “argument”?

2. Find two articles on a subject that interests you, each offering a different perspective. In your notebook, after a *first reading* of the articles, jot down your immediate responses: Did the piece persuade you? Did it help you change your mind about the particular issue or topic? During your *second reading*, jot down the author's major points: How does the writer establish him/herself as an authority? How does he/she use evidence and information? In what ways does the author account for opposing viewpoints? Decide from this reading which of the two pieces you found most persuasive and why, and explain below, drawing on what you’ve written in your notebook.

3. **What Does It Mean to Argue?** *(from the first edition of the textbook)* Which two of the following statements best reflect your own ideas or beliefs about arguments?

   - The main purpose of engaging in an argument is to win.
   - Careful logic and reasoning always make an argument effective.
   - It’s essential to think carefully about how your audience feels or thinks about the issue.
   - Ignore your audience and just say what you believe to be true.
   - Discussing views that are contrary to your own weakens your argument.
   - It’s important to avoid the appearance of uncertainty by never changing your main point.
   - Arguing is a process of discovery.
   - Arguments are most effective when the writer or speaker is passionate about his/her position.
   - Everything's an argument: advertisements, short stories, research papers, reviews, personal essays, and so on.
   - The process of making an argument involves picking a side and finding support for your position.

Poll the class on their responses to these beliefs about argument.

   - Which are most/least widely shared? (Discuss why you believe certain of these beliefs are true. Are they true in all situations or only occasionally? What is the source of these beliefs about argument? Which seem most/least helpful as you consider writing an argument?)
**THE WRITING PROCESS**

In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or as class work with your prompting—to help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It’s important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going To Write About?”

“Opening Up”

“Narrowing Down”

“Trying Out”

“Writing the Sketch”

“Moving from Sketch to Draft”

“Developing”

“Drafting”

“Workshopping”

“Revising”

The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they begin composing a draft, which means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject than if they began with a sketch and an unexplored idea. These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students’ tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

Each of these activities, all the way through to “Polishing the Draft,” has a recursive quality, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details, and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to do the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then, do the same thing with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.

**USING THE WRITING ACTIVITIES**

**Exercise 7.1: Argument as Therapy**

This exercise prompts students to use a Rogerian approach when responding to a letter to the editor criticizing an art exhibit about war. It introduces the basic concepts behind Rogers’s theoretical approach to argument. Have students respond to this exercise as they are reading the chapter, then return to it during class. Have students share their responses and then reflect on what they’ve learned.
Exercise 7.2: Find the Fallacies

This exercise asks students to analyze the argument “The Language of War is Killing” using the ten logical fallacies discussed in this chapter. This exercise could be done in small groups during class or individually at home. To review the activity during class, have students tally on the whiteboard which of the fallacies they found. Then, as a whole class, review the examples everyone found and see how much agreement can be reached.

SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS

What Evidence Can Do: Students often see evidence as those supporting facts to be inserted below every claim; this sidebar suggests several other uses for evidence. The following two activities will help students use evidence in different ways:

1. Bring in at least three different published essays (or other students’ essays) that use evidence in multiple ways. Have students read only for the evidence, underlining it with a colored pen. Then, tell them to note in the margins, using a different colored pen, how the evidence is being used, drawing on the verbs listed in this sidebar. Next, ask them to perform the same exercise on their own drafts.
   - In what way do you use evidence compared to the published essays you analyzed?
   - What opportunities exist in your draft for using evidence in different ways?

2. Using a revision strategy, look only at the claims in your draft with which you disagree—that is, the arguments that criticize the claim you are making. Underline the evidence you use to refute those claims. If there is none, note where you might place evidence that refutes the assertions against which you are arguing.

Writing Beyond the Classroom

Public Arguments in the Digital Age: This sidebar describes seven different genres of public arguments: op-ed essays, editorials, blogs, photo essays, letters to the editor, YouTube, and PowerPoint.

Seeing the Form

The "Imagetext" as Argument: Ballenger highlights Robin Jensen’s term “imagetext” as a way to define taking a photo out of its original context and changing it or placing it in a new context so as to support another argument. In this case, Ballenger uses the example of the “pro-ana” movement’s use of Kate Moss’ images to promote anorexia as a lifestyle choice.

ASSIGNMENT DESIGN: SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING AN ARGUMENT ASSIGNMENT

If you use the suggestions listed in “Inquiry Project: Writing an Argument” to design your assignment, it might be helpful to emphasize that students need to have a question—not answers—to begin the project. The generating activities in the textbook and those listed below under “Additional Writing Activities” will keep students focused on asking genuine questions. Students
may also have questions about structuring the essay if they’ve been taught formal argument in high school: Should I present each side without offering my personal opinion? Should the essay reflect only my own opinion? Should I put my acknowledgement of counterarguments at the end of the essay? Where should the evidence go? Should I choose one of the methods of development listed in the textbook? You can avoid these questions by being explicit about your expectations.

Some teachers outlaw controversial subjects for this essay, such as gun control and abortion. Students generally don’t have a personal investment in or experience with these subjects (that they’re willing to share, anyway) and usually they’ve already made up their minds. At the same time, these thought-provoking areas can be fruitful subjects of inquiry if students want to figure out what they think about the issue.

Here are some activities to help students think about the purpose of the argument essay and reflect on what they’ve learned from it:

1. **Creating a Handout:** In this activity, students work in groups to design a handout, based on the material in Chapter 7, which identifies the learning goals for the assignment and creates several criteria for evaluation. If students do this before you give them the assignment handout and after they’ve read the chapter, they’ll more fully understand what is expected of them.

   In groups, create a handout for the class that describes:

   - the learning goals for writing an argument essay
   - the evaluation criteria that should be used and how they connect to the learning goals

2. In addition, you might consider requiring a cover letter to the essay where students reflect on their writing process and what they’ve learned:

   a) What did you struggle with the most in this draft? Why? How might we help you with that?
   b) What do you feel you did well in this draft? Why?
   c) What does this draft reflect about what you’ve learned about argument essays?
   d) What did you assume about your audience and why? What specific strategies did you use to appeal to your audience’s beliefs, values, and objections?
   e) How did you choose the evidence that would be most persuasive?
   f) What do you understand about this subject now, having researched and written about it, that you didn’t know when you started?
DISCUSSING THE READINGS: SUMMARY AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

DAVID LEONHARDT, “IS COLLEGE WORTH IT?”
Factual Argument

Summary
Leonhardt asks the question in his title and answers it with an emphatic “yes!” In supporting his claim that “college is a no-brainer,” he draws upon multiple sources of evidence that address the financial issues typically raised by those who believe college is not worth it.

Additional Questions and Activities for “Is College Worth It?”:

1. Refer to the section on ethos, pathos, and logos in Chapter 7. Describe how Leonhardt establishes common ground with the audience. Then, describe how he establishes (or undermines) his credibility, and the methods he uses to make his argument.

2. Analyze Leonhardt’s use of evidence: What kind of evidence does he use? What makes it persuasive? What would make his evidence more persuasive?


KHALID SHEIKH MOHAMMED, “THE LANGUAGE OF WAR IS KILLING”
Definitional Argument

Summary
As the headnote indicates, this piece is not an essay but a transcript of Mohammed’s testimony. It’s important to help students understand that verbal argument may not match our expectations when it is translated into print. Here, Mohammed claims that his cause is no different than that of George Washington, throwing off the invaders so one can have a free country and using war/killing as a means to that freedom.

Additional Questions and Activities for “The Language of War is Killing”:

1. Writers need to define the key terms of their arguments, and they have multiple strategies for doing so. They can refer to established, authoritative definitions (found in government documents, for example, or legal documents), to community-based definitions, or to authoritative dictionaries like the Oxford English Dictionary. After reading Mohammed’s piece, list the key terms. Then, make notes about the implicit and explicit definitions Mohammed offers. That is, find his definitions of those terms. Next, consult the Oxford English Dictionary (usually accessible through your university library Web site) and look up those key words. Lastly, look these terms up in other resources, like legal documents, historical documents, and so forth.
Then, based on this research, draft an essay about the key terms in Mohammed’s piece, one that addresses the major arguments he makes about war, terrorism, revolution, and the like.

2. Refer to the section on *ethos, pathos, and logos* in Chapter 7. Describe how Mohammed establishes common ground with the audience (the audience when Mohammed first spoke these words and the audience reading *Harper’s Magazine* where it was published). Then, describe how he establishes (or underlines) his credibility and the methods he uses to make his argument.

**KEVIN SABET, “COLORADO WILL SHOW WHY LEGALIZING MARIJUANA IS A MISTAKE”**

**Causal Argument**

**Summary**

As his title indicates, Sabet’s essay argues that legalizing marijuana is a mistake, and he cites several studies to support his claim. In addition, he speculates on what is likely to happen based on similar situations in the past.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Colorado Will Show”:

1. Outline Sabet’s essay, paragraph by paragraph, and highlight his main claims, reasons, and evidence. In small groups, compare your outlines and then discuss what is effective about his argument and what isn’t—and why. Draw on what you’ve learned in Chapter 7 as you analyze his argument closely.

2. Analyze Sabet’s use of evidence: What kind of evidence does he use? What makes it persuasive? What would make his evidence more persuasive?

3. Draft an essay that responds to Sabet’s and addresses the larger issue of the effects of legalizing marijuana.

**REBECCA THOMPSON, “SOCIAL NETWORKING SOCIAL GOOD?”**

**Summary**

Thompson’s essay explores the question in her title and draws on multiple sources of information as she gives reasons and evidence to her claim that social networking is, overall, a social good. She brings in examples from current events, her own life, court cases, and scholars studying the phenomenon of social networking, all of which enable her to point out the social good as well as concede the social wrongs.

**Additional Questions and Activities** for “Social Networking”:

1. Evaluate the use of evidence in this essay. What kinds of sources does she use? In what ways do they resonate or not with her intended audience?

2. Do a search on TED.com for social networking and listen to at least two different speakers discuss the value of and effects of social networking. Write an essay responding to those
talks as well as Thompson's. Where do you stand on this issue? Which evidence is most persuasive to you and why?

WAYS OF TALKING ABOUT ALL THE READINGS

Teaching Suggestions

1. Questions for Students: Form three small groups in your class, each assigned a different point on the rhetorical triangle, to review the essays in the chapter and explore how each achieves ethos, pathos, or logos (whichever your group has been assigned). Your goals are a better understanding of the meanings and purposes of these rhetorical terms, and of the strategies writers can use to invoke and balance them in their writing.

Questions for Students

2. In one of the essays, focus on the warrants that are either expressed or implied. The purpose of this exercise is to better understand what a warrant is and how it functions in a piece of writing. Refer to the material in this chapter on Toulmin argumentation.

3. Do further research on the elements of argument to deepen your understanding. For example, you might research the various strategies of argument: Toulmin, Rogerian argumentation, classical argument, and so on. How do they differ from one another? What do they share?

ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES

Questions for Students

1. Ten Common Logical Fallacies: Ballenger explains these ten fallacies clearly so students can easily figure out whether their argument (or their peers’) is getting tripped up by logic problems. These fallacies are most useful as revision strategies. Here are a couple of ways you might focus on this sidebar:

   • Have students collect examples of each fallacy from statements they've found in the newspaper, on the Internet, in books or articles, even from ads and other visual media. Divide students into groups charged with choosing the best examples of each fallacy and creating a handout for class use.

   • Ask students to tape debates, ads, pundits, news shows, and the like, that exhibit these fallacies, then present them to the class in small groups.

   • Focus a revision workshop on reading for fallacies: Students can read peers’ drafts and note fallacies in the margins, then the group can discuss how writers might revise/rethink their essays to correct the fallacies, which then become opportunities for clarifying ideas and thinking critically.
2. **Generating Ideas**

**Step One: Listing**

- Things that bug you or make you angry
- Political or social issues about which you feel strong disagreements or arguments you’ve had lately; make two columns on your paper; on the left, write down your perspective; on the right, the other side’s
- Things about which you want to know more
- Questions you have
- The last thing you read in the newspaper that made you feel some strong emotion, perhaps something that you wish would change about your own life, about life in your city, your state, the region, or in America generally

**Step Two: Freewriting**

- Choose one of the things from all these lists and freewrite for seven minutes.
- List the experiences you have had that illustrate your perspective on the subject. Make a list of all the questions readers might ask about this subject, especially readers who might disagree with you.
- Choose either an experience or a reader's question (from the lists you've just made) and freewrite on it for seven minutes.
- Script a dialogue between two people who disagree. Write rapidly without planning much.

**Step Three: Shaping**

- From the writing you’ve done so far, choose one subject that has potential for a good essay; for example, you haven’t figured out your perspective on the subject, you see a central tension evolving about the subject as you freewrite, and you are really interested in writing about it
- Freewrite on your subject for another seven minutes, then write a one-sentence statement about your position on the subject at this point. List the gaps in your knowledge of this topic.
- List the emotions related to this subject for you and your readers.
- List the events, memories, experiences, and people you associate with this topic.
- Circle the questions, emotions, events, and so on (the ones you’ve just listed), that seem the most interesting.
• Spend another ten minutes freewriting on one or more of the things you circled.

• List who your potential audience might be for this piece. (Who are you trying to persuade?)

• If you wrote a dialogue, rewrite it into a lead that nicely introduces an important aspect of the controversy.

• Compose two different leads that set very different tones and angles on the subject.

**Step Four: Responding**

• Choose two possible subjects for this essay, and write a letter to one of your classmates about each of these subjects, explaining:
  
  o why the subjects interest you
  
  o what your thinking is about them
  
  o what ideas you have for writing the essay
  
  o what questions you have about the subject

• Exchange your letter with your partner.

• Write a letter in response to what your partner has written.

• Then, tell the writer what you believe to be his/her central idea or question at this point (for each of the two possible subjects). Try to frame it in terms of what the focus is (the “what,” such as “salmon recovery in Idaho”) and the purpose (the “what about it?” such as “why we shouldn't breach dams to encourage salmon recovery?”).

• Give the writer your opinions on the subjects he/she has chosen. Which seems more engaging, interesting, provocative? Which seems more interesting to the writer? List the most important objections or concerns an audience might have about the position the writer wants to take.

• Return your response to your partner.

• Write back to your partner, responding to what he/she has said.

• As you look at the possible objections an audience might have, how would you respond?

• What do you still need to know more about?

• Where might you find more information on these subjects?
• Exchange your ideas again with your partner.
• Respond to what your partner has said.
• Add more questions or places where the writer might find more information.
• Return your response to the writer (you each should have your own letters again).
• Now, give your partner the two leads you have written.
• As you read your partner’s leads, think about which one seems to work the best, given the ideas you and your partner have discussed. Which one sets up the essay the writer is thinking about pursuing? If neither of them works, brainstorm together what kind of a lead might work better.

1. **Evidence**: Go through one of your peers’ drafts of the argument essay and highlight only the evidence used to support the writer’s claims. Then, in the margins, note what makes each piece of evidence persuasive (or not) and how it functions in the essay (see the text box, “What Evidence Can Do,” for a list of ways in which evidence can be used).

2. **Sketch workshop** (an alternative to what is outlined in the textbook)

   In groups of three:
   a. Read each other’s sketches.
      • Write a letter in response to what your group members have written.
      • Tell the writer what you believe to be his/her central idea or question at this point.
      • Tell the writer what your opinions are on the subjects he/she has chosen.
      • List the most important objections or concerns that an audience might have to the position the writer wants to take.
   b. Return your response to the writer.
   c. Write back to one of your group members, responding to what he/she has said.
   d. As a group, discuss the evidence and premises in your sketches: the quality of the evidence, the degree to which it is appropriate to your audience’s beliefs and values, and your argument.
   e. Either at the end of class or at home, respond in your notebook to the following questions:
      • What do you still need to know more about?
      • Where might you find more information on these subjects?
      • As you look at the possible objections an audience might have, how would you respond?
      • What evoked the strongest response among your group members: claims, reasons, evidence, premises, acknowledgements, or response?
• What does that answer tell you about how you need to revise?

3. **Analyzing Argument Drafts**
   a. Exchange drafts with a partner.
   b. Write out your analysis of the draft, paragraph by paragraph, noting the moves the writer is making and how the argument is structured.
      • What are the purposes of each paragraph? How does each paragraph work in the overall purpose of the essay, and the writer's main argument?
      • How would you describe the language the writer uses, especially in terms of metaphor, analogies, value-laden language, and sentence style? What kind of relationship does that language set up with the reader?
      • What gaps do you notice in the argument, in the structure, in the sentence style? Where might the writer revise and why?

4. **Revision Activity**
   a. Go through one of your peers' drafts of the argument essay.
   b. Highlight only the evidence used to support the writer’s claims.
   c. Then, in the margins, note what makes each piece of evidence persuasive (or not) and how it functions in the essay (see the text box, "What Evidence Can Do," for a list of ways in which evidence can be used).

5. **Revision Activity**
   a. Exchange drafts with a partner.
   b. Write out your analysis of the draft, paragraph by paragraph, noting the moves the writer is making and how the argument is structured.
   c. What are the purposes of each paragraph? How does each paragraph work in the overall purpose of the essay and the writer’s main argument?
   d. How would you describe the language the writer uses, especially in terms of metaphor, analogies, value-laden language, and sentence style? What kind of relationship does that language set up with the reader?
   e. What gaps do you notice in the argument, in the structure, in the sentence style? Where might the writer revise and why?

**WRITING PROJECTS**

1. Return to one of the essays you wrote earlier in the semester or any of the essays addressed in *The Curious Writer*. Using what you’ve learned about argument in Chapter 7, revise that essay into an informal argument by focusing on your overall claim; reasons; evidence; and ethos, pathos, and logos. Focus as well on the warrants and backing for your claims, reasons, and evidence. Then, write a reflective letter to your instructor that explains how this essay is different from the original draft and what you’ve learned about both types of essays from doing this project.
2. Find several advertisements in magazines, newspapers, and on the Internet. Analyze them in terms of argument: ethos, pathos, logos. Then, draft an essay in which you explore the differences between making a visual argument in an ad and making a written argument in an essay.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS**

**ARGUMENT: PRINT RESOURCES**


**ARGUMENT: WEB RESOURCES**
“Logic in Argumentative Writing” OWL at Purdue

“Organizing Your Argument Presentation” OWL at Purdue

**COURSE HANDOUTS**

On the following pages you’ll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
GENERATING IDEAS: ARGUMENT

In your journal, spend at least 30 minutes responding to the following writing prompts, remembering to write whatever comes to mind without censoring yourself:

Step One: Listing

- things that bug you or make you angry
- political or social issues about which you feel strongly
- disagreements or arguments you’ve had lately; make two columns on your paper; on the left, write down your perspective; on the right, the other side’s
- things about which you want to know more
- questions you’d like to ask
- the latest information you read in the newspaper that made you feel strongly about something (e.g., what you wish would change about your own life, about life in your city, your state, the region, or in America generally)
- questions that are at issue for a community (that you belong to or that you are an outsider to)—issues about which community members disagree

Step Two: Freewriting

- Choose one of the things from all these lists and freewrite for seven minutes.
- What experiences have you had with this that might illustrate your perspective on the subject? List them.
- Make a list of all the questions readers might ask about this subject, especially readers who might disagree with you.
- Choose either an experience or a reader’s question (from the lists you’ve just made) and freewrite on it for seven minutes.
- Script a dialogue between two people who disagree. Write fast without planning much.

Step Three: Shaping

- From your previous writing, choose one subject that has potential for a good essay; that is, you don’t have your perspective on the subject figured out, you see a central tension evolving about the subject as you freewrite, and/or you are really interested in writing about it.
• Freewrite on your subject for another seven minutes, and then write a one-sentence statement about your position on the subject at this point.

• List what you still need to know more about in order to write about this topic.

• List the emotions related to this subject for you and your readers.

• List the events, memories, experiences, and people you associate with this topic.

• Circle the questions, emotions, events, and so on (the ones you’ve just listed), that seem the most interesting.

• Spend another ten minutes freewriting about at least one of the things you circled.

• List whom your potential audience is for this piece (who are you trying to persuade?). If you wrote a dialogue, rewrite it into a lead that nicely introduces an important aspect of the controversy.

• Compose two different leads that set very different tones and angles on the subject.

**Step Four: Responding**

• Choose two possible subjects for this essay, and write a letter to one of your classmates about each of these subjects, explaining:
  
  o why the subjects interest you
  
  o what your thinking is about them
  
  o what ideas you have for writing the essay
  
  o what questions you have about the subject

• Exchange your letter with your partner.

• Write a letter in response to what your partner has written.

• Then, tell the writer what you see as his/her central idea or question at this point (for each of the two possible subjects). Frame it in terms of what the focus is (the “what,” as in “salmon recovery in Idaho”) and the purpose (the “what about it?” as in “why we shouldn’t breach dams to encourage salmon recovery?”).

• Tell the writer what your opinions are on the subjects he/she has chosen. Which seems more engaging, interesting, provocative? Which sparks the most interest in the writer?

• List the most important objections or concerns an audience might have to the writer’s chosen position.
• Return your response to your partner.

• Write back to your partner, responding to what he/she has said.

• As you look at the possible objections an audience might have, how would you respond?

• What subjects still lack information?

• Where might you find more information on these subjects?

• Exchange your response again with your partner.

• Respond to what your partner has said.

• Add more questions or offer additional places where the writer might find more information.

• Return your response to the writer (you each should have your own letters again).

• Now, give your partner the two leads you have written.

• As you read your partner’s leads, think about which one seems to work the best, given the ideas you and your partner have discussed. Which one sets up the essay the writer is thinking of pursuing? If neither of them works, brainstorm together what kind of a lead might work better.
ARGUMENT ESSAY: SKETCH WORKSHOP
(an alternative to what is outlined in the textbook)

In groups of three, complete the following activities:

1) Read each other's sketches.

2) Write a letter in response to what your group members have written:
   a) Tell the writer what you believe to be his/her central idea or question at this point. What is the claim and what are the reasons?
   b) Tell the writer what your opinions are on the subjects he/she has chosen.
   c) List the most important objections or concerns an audience might have to the writer's chosen position.

3) Return your response to the writer.

4) Write back to one of your group members, responding to what he/she has said.

5) As a group, discuss the evidence and premises in your sketches: the quality of the evidence and the degree to which it is appropriate to your audience's beliefs and values, as well as to your argument.

6) Either at the end of class or at home, respond in your notebook to the following questions:
   a) What information are you still lacking?
   b) Where might you find more information on these subjects?
   c) How would you respond to the possible objections an audience might have?
   d) What did your group members respond to the most often: claims, reasons, evidence, premises, acknowledgements, or response?
   e) What does that tell you about how you need to revise?
REVISING FOR PURPOSE, MEANING, INFORMATION, AND STRUCTURE: FOCUS ON ARGUMENT STRATEGIES

With your own draft, spend time reading it closely and answering the following questions. Doing so will give you ideas for revising.

Ethos, or Establishing Your Credibility/Authority

1. Put a star beside the places where you show your knowledge about the issue (i.e., where you speak in a confident voice, where you give evidence for your claims, etc.). Where might you need to offer more information for the reader? Where might the reader doubt your credibility?

2. Mark the places where you show “fairness” to other views, respecting opposing views and/or conceding to counterarguments. If you don’t find many or any, consider the effect on your readers: Will they trust you? Will they feel you have considered their possible views? Consider how you might show more respect and fairness to others’ views.

3. Mark the places where you build a bridge to your audience. Where do you ground your arguments in shared values and assumptions of your readers? This quality of ethos is clearly connected to pathos and logos, so examine this issue again.

Pathos, or Appealing to Beliefs and Emotions

1. Look for places where you have considered your readers’ questions, beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes toward your subject. Where do you need to ground your argument more in the values and beliefs that you and your audience share?

2. Consider how well you use concrete language, images, and details that create positive feelings (or negative feelings, if those are what you believe the audience needs).

3. Consider how well you use specific examples and illustrations that aren’t simply dry facts and statistics, but “real” examples that have emotional power and significance.

4. Consider how well you use narrative to evoke certain feelings about the subject—if you want your readers to sympathize with one group of people in your argument, how might you accomplish that in narrative?

5. Look closely at the metaphors, words, and analogies you use. Do they have the connotations you desire, those that reinforce your argument and evoke emotions that are consistent with your argument?
Logos, or Organizing Your Argument Logically

1. Consider your organization: How effective is it? You have many structures from which to choose:
   - unknown to known and vice versa
   - problem to solution
   - cause to effect or effect to cause
   - narrative
   - question to answer
   - simple to complex
   - general to specific or vice versa
   - comparison and contrast
   - least important argument to most important
   - classical argument structure
   - delayed thesis

2. Consider how well you lay out your arguments: Are your claims clearly stated and explained with reasons and/or evidence from personal experience, observations, interviews, facts and examples, summaries of research, and testimony of experts? If you primarily have to use reasons that aren’t supported with specific facts, consider how well you have explained those reasons and offered the necessary qualifications.

3. Choose two of your main claims and play the doubting game: Fastwrite in your journal for at least five minutes, doubting as much as you can about your claim, reasons, and evidence. Do this for at least two claims. Then, respond to the doubts you’ve raised. Which of those might need to be included in your essay and why?
**Workshop on Argument Essay**

For each of your peers’ essays, fill out this checklist. Then, at the end of each section, list suggestions you have for the writer on how to revise the essay to be more effective.

*Ethos, or Establishing Credibility/Authority*

How well does the writer establish his/her credibility?

How well does the writer demonstrate fairness to other views, dealing with and respecting the opposition?

How well does the writer build a bridge to his/her audience by grounding arguments in shared values and assumptions?
Suggestions for revision in terms of the above:

1)

2)

3)

Pathos, or Appealing to Beliefs and Emotions

How well has the writer considered the readers' questions, beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes toward the subject?

How well does the writer use concrete language, images, and details that are consistent with the writer's tone and purpose (that is, creating a negative or positive feeling in the reader)?
How well are the specific examples and illustrations conveyed? Do they have emotional power and significance, or are they simply dry numbers and statistics that, while important, don’t make the reader pay attention to them?

If the writer uses a narrative (that is, tells stories), how well does it evoke the feelings in the reader that the writer wants?

Look closely at the metaphors, words, and analogies the writer uses—do they have the connotations the writer wants, connotations that reinforce the argument?

Suggestions for revision in terms of the above:
Logos, or Organizing the Argument Logically

How effective is the organization of the draft?

How well does the writer clearly state and explain his/her arguments with reasons and/or evidence from personal experience, observations, interviews, facts and examples, summaries of research, and testimony of experts? If the writer doesn’t have concrete facts to support his/her argument, how effectively does he/she argue with other reasons and claims?

Suggestions for revision in terms of the above:
CHAPTER 8: WRITING AN ANALYTICAL ESSAY

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

• The analytical essay is similar to other forms of writing, such as the personal essay, an argument, and a review: “You begin with questions, explore possible answers, make judgments and interpretations, and offer evidence that supports, qualifies, or complicates your judgments.”

• The critical essay is often assigned in English classes, and may take the form of short response papers, formal critical analysis, or autobiographical criticism.

• We have personal reasons for writing about literature, including the feelings that are evoked when reading a text, the understanding we gain about ourselves and others, and the opportunity to learn about those who are different from us.

• Your interpretation of any text must be grounded in the specifics of that text.

FEATURES OF THE FORM

• Inquiry questions:
  o What might it mean?

• Motives:
  o To understand the meaning of something better when the meaning isn't obvious
  o To convince others of our interpretation

• Subject matter:
  o While analytical essays are a common assignment in English, focusing on literary texts, they also might explore film, art, popular culture, social behaviors, or any other subject matter whose meanings are unsettled.

• Structure:
  o Identifying specific features of the object being analyzed (e.g., characters in a story, elements of an image, etc.) that raise a question about meaning.
  o Exploring how those features are the tip of the iceberg of less apparent and larger themes or ideas.
  o Finding reasons, drawn from evidence in the object itself, to support this interpretation.
GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. **Apply the methods of analysis to subjects whose meanings aren’t apparent.** To help students understand how to analyze a literary text (fiction or nonfiction) and/or an image, then craft an essay around their interpretation.

2. **Use evidence from primary sources to argue effectively for a convincing interpretation.** To emphasize that interpretation of a text involves the reader's background as well as what has been said about the text already.

3. **Use appropriate invention strategies to discover a topic for an analytical essay.** To illustrate how analytical essays begin with questions and writers develop interpretations through dialectical thinking.

4. **Apply revision strategies that are effective for the analytical essay.**

DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER

This chapter offers students strategies for writing to interpret by drawing on the habits of inquiry they’ve learned so far in the textbook. While the other essays in the book draw on a writer’s experience, observation, interview, or evaluation of media, the source of information in this essay is a text. Or, more specifically, the writer’s questions emerge from his/her reading of a text, and the writer’s purpose is to use details that text as evidence for the interpretation that seems to answer the writer’s question.

While many students have written analytical essays in high school, they will encounter this genre again in their college courses and often need more experience interpreting textual ambiguities, understanding literary devices, and constructing an argument according to the purposes of an analytical essay. Before you begin discussing this chapter, spend time in class or assign as homework some of the following prereading activities. Like the argument and research essays, the analytical essay carries a lot of beliefs and assumptions that students need to articulate and examine before they can learn what may be new strategies to them.

**PREREADING ACTIVITIES**

1. You may have written many analytical essays in high school, usually about poetry, fiction, or drama. Fastwrite in your journal about your experiences writing analytical essays in the past. What topics did you select? What was expected in the essay? What seemed to be the
purpose of writing an analytical essay? What did you enjoy and/or struggle with the most? Why?

2. What reading strategies do you use when you read a short story, a novel, a poem, or a nonfiction essay/article? How are your strategies different if you are reading one of these texts for an assignment instead of reading it for pleasure at home? Why?

3. Based on what you've read so far in *The Curious Writer*, anticipate some of the key features of an analytical essay and the inquiry-based strategies you might be encouraged to use.

**THE WRITING PROCESS**

In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or during class with your prompting—that will help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It's important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going to Write About?”

“Opening Up”

“Narrowing Down”

“Trying Out”

“Writing the Sketch”

“Moving from Sketch to Draft”

“Developing”

“Drafting”

“Workshopping”

“Revising”

The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they begin composing a draft, and that means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject. These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students’ tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

All of these activities, all the way through to “Polishing the Draft,” have a recursive quality to them, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to do the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then do the same thing with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.
USING THE WRITING ACTIVITIES

Exercise 8.1: Interpreting an Image:

This exercise asks students to analyze a photograph by Lewis Hines, "Power House Mechanic Working on a Steam Pump," which was taken during a specific time in American history (the shift from agriculture to industry) and intended to serve as social commentary. The exercise prompts students to apply the “Five Methods of Analysis” to analyzing the image.

SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS

Five Methods of Analysis: This sidebar summarizes several methods of analysis student may use in their college courses: content analysis, rhetorical analysis, semiotic analysis, critical analysis, and genre analysis.

Common Literary Devices: In this sidebar, students are introduced to six different features of literature upon which they might focus while interpreting the text: plot and significant event, characters, setting, point of view, theme, and image. These devices are described clearly so that students with little experience in reading literature can understand them, and each offers a series of questions that students can ask of the story they are analyzing. It might be helpful to review these literary devices after the class has read one of the short stories in this chapter so you can illustrate each one using examples from the story. Then, students can respond to the questions in the sidebar as they generate ideas for their essays, possibly before they move to "Judging What You Have."

Seeing the Form

Brand as Visual Interpretation: Ballenger demonstrates the different meanings that a brand can have by showing the changes in the Boise State University logo over the past several years and why the university decided to change it.

ASSIGNMENT DESIGN: SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING AN ANALYTICAL ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

First, decide whether students will be required to respond to one of the texts in this chapter, to texts of their choice, or to others you have assigned that are not included in the textbook. Students can use the writing prompts under “The Writing Process” for any text they are interpreting. Then, you'll want to clarify how formal or informal you expect the essay to be: Will it be autobiographical criticism where the writer uses his/her experience, memories, and background as part of the dialectical conversation with the text? Will it be more formal, requiring an overview of what has been said about the work in the critical community, a clear thesis statement, and close readings of passages?

Students will probably struggle the most with the following:

- Resorting to summary: Instead of interpreting, they will mainly summarize the story/poem/essay/image, or the like, as they would in a book report, without fully understanding how to analyze or present their interpretation.
- Relying too much on their personal response to the text: If they've never been encouraged to take their personal, emotional responses to a text seriously as they analyze it, students may overemphasize their feelings at the expense of textual interpretations.

- Making generalized claims that are not substantiated with specific passages or details from the text: Students may assert claims that they assume the audience believes, as well, and so do not need evidence or further examination.

- Creating a grocery-list approach to organizing the essay: Students may write sections that analyze features of the piece or themes, but lack the coherence of an overall argument.

The strategies for writing an analytical essay outlined in Chapter 8 will help students work through some of these problems. In addition, you might emphasize the following:

- **How to frame a question:** Encourage students to pay attention to their resistances to texts, as well as to what resonates with them; help them distinguish interpretive questions from information questions (see the following Additional Writing Activities—Shaping the Question).

- **How to use details in the text to illustrate an interpretation**

- **How to construct an argument about a text using various methods of development:** Focus on that section under “The Writing Process” during revision, and prompt students to cut and paste their drafts into different organizational structures. Then they can examine how effective one structure is over another.

**DISCUSSING THE READINGS: SUMMARY AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

**BART BRINKMAN, „ON THE SHIELD THAT CAME BACK”**

Literary Analysis

**Summary**

Brinkman analyzes M. Scott Momaday's poem, “The Shield That Came Back,” using specific passages from the poem. His analysis connects those details to larger themes about Native Americans in the past and the present, focusing on the two main images of the shield and the fan. His primary claim is that “The poem (which is itself not unlike the fan in its imitation and transformation of the past) suggests that, rather than looking back to traditional ways to be saved, one must use traditional ways to look forward. This is the way that the modern American Indian can survive in the face of Western tradition and begin to draw that tradition into its own.”
**Additional Writing Activities** for "On ‘The Shield That Came Back’":

1. Look closely at the setting in this story. How does setting function in the story? Is it a character itself? Does it mainly reflect the emotional life of the characters? How does it connect with the plot?

2. Make a list in your notebook of all the questions this story raises for you, especially references that you need to further explore. Then, do some research on those questions and fastwrite in your journal about how this information changes your understanding of the story (for example, you might research the experience of Native Americans, especially the Pueblo).

3. What do you notice about your reading strategies while reading this story? Which strategies helped and which didn’t? What did you apply from Chapter 2: Reading as Inquiry to help you read this short story?

**ALEX SOOJUNG-KIM PANG, “WHAT DOES APPLE’S ‘MISUNDERSTOOD’ ADVERTISEMENT MEAN?”**

**Summary**

Pang’s essay analyzes both an Apple ad, “Misunderstood,” and the interpretations of several critics who disagree about its meaning and message. Pang provides a clear description of the ad and then, after summarizing the various views, explains how she came to her interpretation that “I see this kid and I don’t see an ordinary tech-absorbed slacker. I come away with the sense that there’s a backstory here, which makes me less willing to project my own anxieties about kids today with their damn smartphones onto it.”

**Additional Writing Activities** for “Apple’s ‘Misunderstood’ Advertisement”:

1. What do you notice about your reading strategies while reading this analysis? Which strategies helped and which didn’t? What did you apply from Chapter 2: Reading as Inquiry to help you read this short story?

2. Look at the evidence Pang uses to illustrate her interpretation. Is she looking at the same details of the ad as the critics she referring to? What other evidence does she use?

3. Use the strategies you learned in Chapter 7, Argument Essay, and analyze this essay. What are its main claims, reasons, evidence, warrants, backing? What kind of claim is it making?

**BRYAN BISHOP, “WHY WON’T YOU DIE?! THE ART OF THE JUMP SCARE”**

**Summary**

Bishop analyzes the history and use of the “jump scare” in horror movies, tracing its use in a variety of films. He examines what makes the technique work, when and why it became cliché’, and how
filmmakers are (or are not) adapting it in new ways now. His main question is, "How do these scares work, and what's behind the recent uptick in audience interest?"

**Additional Writing Activities** for “Our Zombies, Ourselves”:

1. If you've seen several films where the jump scare is used, choose three of them and analyze the use of the jump scare in the story. How does it work? How do you know? Use specific scenes and provide context from the work of other writers who have asked these same questions.

2. Do some research on why horror films are so popular, then analyze three films (or read several short stories/books) and analyze their significance and symbolism.

3. Look closely at each paragraph in this essay and describe what its purpose is overall in the essay. How does one paragraph connect to another? What methods of development does the writer use?

**Hailie Johnson-Waskow, “All About That Hate: A Critical Analysis of ‘All About That Bass’”**

**Student Essay**

**Summary**

In this essay, Johnson-Waskow analyzes Meghan Trainor's popular song, “All About That Bass,” the messages it purports to convey about body acceptance for women, and the messages it actually conveys. In particular, Johnson-Waskow uses specific verses and scenes from the music video to demonstrate that the song does not illustrate acceptance for all body types, that it assumes heterosexuality, and it reinforces the sexist belief that women must get their approval from men.

**Additional Writing Activities** for “‘All About That Bass’”:

1. Look closely at each paragraph in this essay and describe what its purpose is overall in the essay. How does one paragraph connect to another? What methods of development does the writer use?

2. Research images of women in the 1950s and respond to Johnson-Waskow’s interpretations of the music video and its setting in the 1950s. What does your research suggest? How do you interpret the meaning of that particular setting?

3. Look closely at the structure of this analytical essay: first, underline the main claim. Then, using a colored highlighter, mark all the evidence that is drawn from the song itself; use another color to mark the evidence that is from other critics (the larger conversation about the song). Finally, look at what is left: do the sentences around the evidence reveal a conscious structure, a sequencing of ideas? If so, what do you notice?

4. Do some further research on what others have said about this song. How do other critics interpret the song's message or significance? Try to gather several articles about the story.
and write a summary of what has already been said about it. What are the key points of agreement and disagreement in these various interpretations of the story?

WAYS OF TALKING ABOUT ALL THE READINGS

1. Compare the three readings in this chapter. What do they have in common? How are they different?

2. Often writers refer to or imply that they are responding to a larger conversation about their subject, and all of these writers do this in several places. Highlight the words and phrases that signal this larger conversation. Writers might refer to what other critics have been saying—for example, what the music world has been talking about, what listeners have been saying, and so on. Now, read the essays without those words and phrases. Reflect on the difference it makes to remove these gestures to a larger conversation. What is gained and lost? Why?

ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES

Questions for Students

1. Generating ideas for a personal response to literature (or, autobiographical literary criticism)

Listing (Respond to as many of these prompts as you want in your notebook)

- Poetry that has resonated for you in some way; poetry/poets that has/have had little impact on you. Make the same list for short stories, novels, plays, and films.

- Favorite reading memories

- Significant emotional events in your life that were shaped by particular stories, books, poems, and so on (before or after the event)

- Moments of understanding that occurred while reading literature (realizations about self, others, the world)

- The five most significant stories and/or writers in your life

- Your five most significant literature classes

- Writers whose works you have read: Make two columns. On the right, list all the women writers you’ve read in school; on the left, list all the male writers you’ve read. I’d suggest doing this for writers of color as well.

- Fictional/nonfictional characters that you admire: Make two more columns. On the left, list the female characters you want to emulate, find admirable, and view as genuine heroines; on the right, list the male characters you most want to emulate, and so forth.
Make two similar lists of the males and females whom you feel are the most negative characters you have ever encountered.

- Encounters you’ve had with writers—at readings, conferences, community events, TV interviews
- Essays you’ve written in literature classes in which you struggled to keep your personal responses out of the analysis—those in which you were “dying” to talk about what a profound impact they had on you
- Moments in which you disagreed with a professor’s interpretation of a piece of literature
- Conversations you’ve had with family or friends about a piece of literature or a film where you found yourself an outsider in the conversation, where your training in analysis seemed to distance you from their responses (which may or may not have been more personal or emotional than yours)

**Freewriting**

- Choose something from the list above. How did this piece of literature affect you? Why did it resonate? What do you notice about the pieces that had little effect on you compared to those that did? What kinds of stories, styles, themes, and the like seem to attract you more? Freewrite for seven minutes.

- Look at the lists you made above. Choose one and fastwrite on it for five minutes.

- Choose something from your lists and freewrite about the changes or realizations you’ve had for five minutes.

- Choose anything else from the lists above and freewrite for five minutes.

- Freewrite for seven minutes on why you think personal, autobiographical responses are not acceptable within traditional literary criticism. Why might professors not want you to make personal connections explicit? What seem to be the purposes of literary criticism?

- What do you notice about the lists you made above? How many female writers do you remember versus male? White authors versus authors of different ethnic backgrounds? What do these lists suggest to you about the role of gender and ethnicity in your English studies?

- Of the characters you wanted to be like, how many were male? Female? Freewrite about some of these characters and what you notice about them from your lists. Do they share common traits, values, experiences?
• Freewrite about your thoughts and feelings about using your personal experience in the interpretation of literature.

**Shaping**

• Choose a provocative subject from what you've written above, one you'd like to pursue in greater depth, and draft a one-page sketch. A sketch is an “almost draft”—that is, an exploration of a possible idea, one that is more composed than freewriting.

• Choose a piece of literature that resonates for you on an emotional, personal level (from what you've written above). Compose a scene of your first encounter with that text, capturing your emotions and responses. Then, at the end of the scene, finish this sentence: "*When I first read this, I thought ______. Now that I look back on the experience and those thoughts, I realize ______________.*"

• Choose an experience from the preceding where reading has significantly changed who you are, how you think/feel, and so on. Using details from the reading, craft at least two pages of a description of how and why you changed.

• Using the following fragments as prompts, begin a reflection on what you've learned about yourself and the role of literature in your life from doing all this journal writing:
  o "*What has surprised me the most after writing about literature and my personal responses to/experiences with it is ______________.*"
  o "*What makes me most uncomfortable about writing about my personal experiences with literature is ______________.*"
  o "*The limits I now see to analyzing literature using my emotional and personal responses are ______________.*"
  o "*What excites me the most about using my personal/emotional responses in analyzing literature is ______________.*"

**Shaping the Question:** Once you've completed the writing activities under “Generating Ideas” and “Judging What You Have,” post your focusing question on a piece of newsprint and tape the newsprint to the wall. Then, read your classmates’ questions and note the following:

• What does this question suggest that the writer will focus on in the story/poem/essay (what features, themes, characters, etc.)? Is the question too narrowly focused? Too broad? Just right? Why?

• Does this question lend itself to a report of facts and events in the story (an information-seeking question) rather than to an interpretation of those events and details (an interpretation-seeking question)?
• How might the writer revise this question to make it more effective for an analytical essay?

• Briefly respond to the question: How might you answer it? What might the writer be missing or ignoring that shouldn’t be ignored? What does it make you think about differently?

Now, based on the responses you received to your question, revise it.

2. Analyzing the Features of an Analytical Essay

To learn more about how writers craft analytical essays, find at least three analytical essays on a work of literature or nonfiction with which you are familiar (or even the work on which you’re focusing for this assignment). You need to carefully choose the ones on which you want to focus because many analytical articles published in academic journals use difficult literary theories that you will not be expected to use in your own essay. Choose articles that use a lot of examples from the work itself. Then, analyze the articles according to the “Features of the Form” described in Chapter 8 and anything else from the chapter that seems to apply. What have you learned about writing your own analytical essay from analyzing these?

WRITING PROJECTS

1. While you may write only analytical essays in your English classes, it’s possible you’ll use what you’ve learned here for papers in other classes. Play the believing game and brainstorm in small groups the other courses that might require the kinds of thinking and writing strategies you’ve used in writing an analytical essay. (Theater? Art? History? Sociology?)

Then, as a group, decide how to research the kind of writing expected in those courses/disciplines and compare them to the analytical essay. Your goals are to 1) gather examples of the writing assignments given, 2) interview professors, and 3) talk to students in these courses, then use these materials to help students in the next first-year writing class understand how/why an analytical essay is important to their other courses. The written product can take any form that seems appropriate to you.

2. Visit a local art gallery and choose a piece of art to interpret using the suggestions in Chapter 8 for analyzing a visual image.

3. If you’ve been assigned a novel to read in this class, work with your group to write a collection of analytical essays on the novel. That is, once you’ve all worked through the writing prompts in Chapter 8 for the novel, decide who wants to write about what, and then decide how each essay might be connected to each other to form a small collection. You might, for example, have a collection that focuses on images in the novel, characters, themes, historical contexts, and so on.
COURSE HANDOUTS

On the following pages you'll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
GENERATING IDEAS: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LITERARY CRITICISM

In your journal, spend at least 30 minutes responding to the following writing prompts, remembering to write whatever comes to mind without censoring yourself:

Listing (Respond to as many of these prompts as you want in your notebook)

• Poetry that has resonated for you in some way; poetry/poets that has/have had little impact on you. Make the same list for short stories, novels, plays, and films.

• Favorite reading memories

• Significant emotional events in your life that were shaped (before or after the event) by particular stories, books, poems, and the like

• Moments of understanding that occurred while reading literature (realizations about self, others, the world)

• The five most significant stories and/or writers in your life

• Your five most significant literature classes

• Writers whose works you have read. Make two columns: On the right, list all the women writers you’ve read in school; on the left, list all the male writers you’ve read. I’d suggest doing this for writers of color as well.

• Fictional/nonfictional characters that you admire. Make two more columns: On the left, list the female characters you emulate, find admirable, and view as genuine heroines; on the right, list the male characters you most emulate, and so on. Make two similar lists of the males and females whom you feel are the most negative characters you have ever encountered.

• Encounters you’ve had with writers—at readings, conferences, community events, TV interviews

• Essays you’ve written in literature classes in which you struggled to keep your personal responses out of the analysis, despite “dying” to talk about what a profound impact they had on you

• Moments in which you disagreed with a professor’s interpretation of a piece of literature

• Conversations you’ve had with family or friends about a piece of literature or a film where you found yourself an outsider in the conversation, where your training in analysis seemed to distance you from their responses (which may or may not have been more personal or emotional than yours)
Freewriting

- Choose something from the list above. How did this piece of literature affect you? Why did it resonate? What do you notice about the pieces that had little effect on you compared to those that did? What kinds of stories, styles, themes, and so forth attracted you more? Freewrite for seven minutes.

- Look at the lists above. Choose one and fastwrite on it for five minutes.

- Choose something from your lists and freewrite about the changes or realizations you’ve had for five minutes.

- Choose anything else from the lists above and freewrite for five minutes.

- Freewrite for seven minutes on why you think personal, autobiographical responses are not acceptable within traditional literary criticism. Why might professors not want you to make personal connections explicit? What are the purposes of literary criticism?

- What do you notice about the lists you made above? How many female writers do you remember versus how many male? Caucasian authors versus authors of different ethnic backgrounds? What do these lists suggest to you about the role of gender and ethnicity in your English studies?

- Of the characters you claimed that you wanted to be like, how many were male? Female? Freewrite about some of these characters and what you notice about them from your lists. Do they share common traits, values, experiences?

- Freewrite about your thoughts and feelings about using your personal experience in the interpretation of literature.

Shaping

- Choose a provocative subject from what you’ve written above, one you’d like to pursue in greater depth, and draft a one-page sketch. A sketch is an “almost draft”—that is, an exploration of a possible idea, one that is more formally composed than freewriting.

- Choose a piece of literature that resonates for you on an emotional, personal level (from what you’ve written above). Compose a scene of your first encounter with that text, capturing your emotions and responses. Then, at the end of the scene, finish this sentence: “When I first read this, I thought __________________. Now that I look back on the experience and those thoughts, I realize __________.”

- Choose an experience from those mentioned above in which reading has significantly changed who you are, how you think/feel, and so forth. Using details from the reading, craft at least two pages of a description of how and why you have changed.
Using the following incomplete sentences as prompts, begin a reflection on what you’ve learned about yourself and the role of literature in your life from your extensive journal writing:

- “What has surprised me the most after writing about literature and my personal responses to/experiences with it is ___________________.”
- “What makes me most uncomfortable about writing about my personal experiences with literature is ___________________.”
- “The limits I now see to analyzing literature using my emotional and personal responses are ___________________.”
- “What excites me the most about using my personal/emotional responses in analyzing literature is ___________________.”

**Shaping the Question:** Once you’ve completed the writing activities under “Generating Ideas” and “Judging What You Have,” post your focusing question on a piece of newsprint and tape the newsprint to the wall. Then, read your classmates’ questions and note the following:

- What does this question suggest that the writer will focus on in the story/poem/essay (what features, themes, characters, etc.)? Is the question too narrowly focused? Too broad? Just right? Why?
- Does this question lend itself to a report of facts and events in the story (an information-seeking question) rather than to an interpretation of those events and details (an interpretation-seeking question)?
- How might the writer revise this question to make it more effective for an analytical essay? Briefly respond to the question: How might you answer it? What might the writer be missing or ignoring? What does it make you think about differently?
- Now, based on the responses you received to your question, revise it.
CHAPTER 9: WRITING AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAY

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- Ethnography is a form of research that emphasizes close observation, interview, field notes, and collecting artifacts from the physical sites of a subculture.

- Its goal is to reveal “the web in which members of a group are enmeshed,” which is composed of the beliefs, behaviors, rules, language, and objects that constitute the subculture.

- Ethnographic research methods are appropriate when the research question focuses on people and/or depends on the larger social context; when the writer can best find answers to questions by being “in the field”; and when it is important for the writer to reflect on his/her own role in research and interpretation.

- Suspension of judgment and the use of dialectical thinking are central to ethnographic research.

FEATURES OF THE FORM

- Inquiry questions:
  - How do the people in a social group or culture see themselves and their world?

- Motives:
  - To observe, interview, and describe members of social groups.
    - What do they say and do?
    - What things do they value?
    - How do they see each other?
  - Practical purposes:
    - Discovering the best ways to understand and communicate with a particular audience.
    - Proposing policies that incorporate how affected people see the problems.
    - Improving products and services targeted to certain groups.
Or more academic purposes:

- Developing an informed understanding of cultural groups and theories that explain their beliefs and behaviors.

**Subject matter:**

- Subcultures of people who freely identify with a specific group.
- Can be studied in its local setting.

**Structure:**

- Story/narrative:
  - *A typical day:* What does it look like for group members?
  - *Collage:* a series of richly described scenes
  - *Narrative:* the story of your understanding of the culture from your research

**Sources:**

- Field observations
- Interviews
- Artifacts
- Images, recordings, video
- Research, including statistics and background information on the group

**Language:**

- Often openly subjective
- Writer’s often use first-person
- Use literary style: scenes, descriptions, dialogue, and the like.

**GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. **Understand the idea of culture as a web, and apply techniques of field research to describe it.** Ethnographic research focuses on groups of people who identify themselves as part of a specific group or culture. Research is gathered from the places and settings where the group members typically gather. Researchers need to spend a good deal of time observing closely and taking field notes.
2. Use appropriate features of an ethnographic essay in a project that interprets how a social group sees themselves and their world. Students will become conscious of—and reflect on—their role in the research and interpretation processes, which emphasize that knowledge is constructed within communities.

3. Use relevant methods of invention to identify a local culture to study. Ethnography focuses on a small number of people in a group to make tentative interpretations of the larger group.

4. Analyze and interpret qualitative information. Students will learn a handful of ethnographic research methods, such as taking field notes and observation, as well as interviewing subjects. They will learn how to analyze the artifacts, language, and behavior of a subculture. Students will learn research methods beyond library and Internet research. The researcher, who is a vital part of the research, must be aware of the subjective stance he/she brings to the subculture and must work hard to see the culture as the subjects see it.

5. Apply revision strategies that are effective for an ethnographic essay.

Discussion Starters: How to Talk about the Chapter

Prereading Activities
1. Make a list of all the subcultures to which you belong, groups that gather because they have something in common—a set of beliefs, an activity they all enjoy, a sense of common purpose, and so on. You probably belong to many. Then, choose two of those subcultures and fastwrite for seven minutes on each from the perspective of an outsider. What might an outsider’s first impressions be? What might an outsider not understand or misinterpret? Why?

2. When you hear the word culture, what comes to mind? The word subculture? How would you define them? Why?

3. Brainstorm a list of times when you’ve felt like an outsider to a group. Then choose one and fastwrite about why you felt that way, narrating the experience in detail.

The Writing Process
In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or during class with your prompting—that will help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It’s important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going to Write About?”

“Opening Up”

“Narrowing Down”

“Trying Out”
“Writing the Sketch”
“Moving from Sketch to Draft”
“Developing”
“Drafting”
“Workshopping”
“Revising”

The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they begin composing a draft, and that means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject. These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students’ tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

All of these activities, all the way through to “Polishing the Draft,” have a recursive quality to them, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details, and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to do the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then do the same thing with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.

SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS

Researching Trends and Subcultures on the Web: Students will find a list of sources on the web they can use for either finding ideas for an ethnographic essay or doing research on it.

Questions Ethnographers Ask: The questions listed here will be enormously helpful to students as they interpret their observations and interviews, so go over them before they begin the assignment and then spend some class time in the middle of the process having them fastwrite on each one and begin drawing some preliminary conclusions (or discover new areas to research).

Ethnography and Ethics: This sidebar addresses the ethical responsibility which researchers have toward human subjects, and it suggests guidelines for conducting ethnography.

Useful Library Databases for Ethnography: This sidebar lists a number of library databases where students can find published ethnographies. As Ballenger notes, students should consult these to find studies that have been done on the group they are studying.

Writing Beyond the Classroom

Commercial Ethnography: This sidebar highlights the way businesses are using ethnographic techniques to analyze consumer behavior, showing students how the inquiry strategies in this chapter can translate to their work life.
Seeing the Form

**German Cowboys:** This sidebar highlights the use of images in ethnographic research by describing how anthropologist Eric O’Connell studied a group of former East Germans where some of them have integrated the mythos of the American cowboy.

**Assignment Design: Suggestions for Designing an Ethnographic Essay Assignment**

Students can run into several problems with this assignment:

- They'll choose a subculture to which they already belong because it’s most convenient for them. This limits their ability to analyze the strands of the culture, to see certain features as significant in the way an outsider can.

- They’ll focus on simply describing what they see and hear without moving into reflecting on what it means, what it tells us about the subculture. Often students don’t quite know how to “see” a subculture, so they need time to understand how to do that. The activities and readings in this chapter will help them.

- They won't manage their time well for interviews and observations.

- They will choose a focus that is too broad.

Given these common problems, design your assignment to mitigate a few of them by following the suggestions in this chapter, as well as allowing enough time to complete the field research.

Once students have chosen a subculture to study with a manageable focus, assign them the following activities:

1) **Do the fastwriting prompts listed in the chapter.**

2) **Discuss, in small groups, what they’ve written.**

3) **Discuss whether this subculture will work for this essay by talking through/writing about the questions under “Judging What You Have.”**

4) **Draft their plan for addressing the ethical issues that may arise, using the sidebar “Ethnography and Ethics” for suggestions. At the very least, they should draft a permission letter for participants to sign.**

Midway through their research, have students bring to class all the field notes and interview notes they’ve gathered so they can share these with their small group and begin some initial interpreting (see activities under “Additional Writing Activities” that follow).
DISCUSSING THE READINGS: SUMMARY AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

ELIZABETH CHISERI-STRATER, “ANNA AS READER: INTIMACY AND RESPONSE”

Summary

In this excerpt from her longer ethnographic study, Chiseri-Strater analyzes the small-group discussion that Anna (her subject here) participates in. Chiseri-Strater interprets the discussion in part by drawing upon theories and research about gender and conversation. In writing up her analysis, she uses a large segment of the transcripted conversation as evidence for her conclusions.

Additional Questions and Activities for “Anna as Reader: Intimacy and Response”:

1. In your journal, brainstorm a list of all the artifacts of Latino culture that Cofer describes in this essay. Then, list all of the insider phrases and key behaviors that have specific meaning within this ethnic group. Now, group those artifacts, insider phrases, and behaviors according to the beliefs they reflect—the values of the group that are reflected in each of them. Create columns for each value or belief, or create large circles for each, and then insert which detail goes where. What have you learned from looking at the article in this way?

2. Using the strategies you’ve learned from the chapter “Writing an Argument,” analyze the essay as an argument. What is the claim? What are the reasons and evidence?

REBEKAH NATHAN, FROM MY FRESHMAN YEAR, “WORLDLINESS AND WORLDVIEW”

Summary

This excerpt from Nathan’s book, My Freshman Year, focuses on Nathan’s interviews and observations of international students attending the university where she is conducting her ethnography. She is in the guise of a student, trying to understand first-year student experiences as a participant-observer. She begins this section by describing the “single biggest complaint” that international students had about American students: ignorance of other cultures and of themselves as Americans. Nathan quotes transcripts from her interview to illustrate her conclusions, and she describes the questions that prompted these responses. In the end, she asserts that international students within the subculture of this particular American university articulated a “theory of the relationship among ignorance, intolerance, and ethnocentrism in this country, one that international eyes saw bordering on profound self-delusion.”
Additional Questions and Activities for “Worldliness and Worldview”:

1. Return to your response to Question 1 under “Inquiring into the Essay” and further research Nathan’s claims. Investigate your own beliefs about what she says, researching what you believe to be true. Examine your university’s course offerings and compare them to the claims of these international students. Suspend judgment while doing this research and look for information that expresses more than one view. Consider developing this material into an essay.

2. Consider conducting a similar type of ethnography with a smaller group within the university student culture.

3. Imagine how Nathan gathered all the information in this excerpt. Try to re-create her research process and write it as a narrative from her point of view. To whom did she talk? What did her subjects say? What did she observe? What did she read? What kinds of questions did she ask?

Kersti Harter, “Beyond ‘Gaydar’: How Gay Males Identify Other Gay Males, A Study with Four Boise, Idaho, Men”

Student Essay

Summary

The essay’s title and Ballenger’s introduction make the subject of this essay clear: how gay males identify other gay males. The ethnographic research for this project spanned a month and included interviews, observations, and library research. Harter uses scenes rich with dialogue and setting to contextualize the subculture and offer evidence for her conclusions. She also uses a structure that combines narrative and expository approaches: it is primarily organized by the kinds of cues gay men use to identify other gay men, but within each section Harter uses narrative.

Additional Writing Activities for “Beyond ‘Gaydar’”:

1. Using the strategies you’ve learned from the chapter “Writing an Argument,” analyze the essay as an argument. What is the claim? What are the reasons and evidence?

2. Look closely at the library research Harter brings into the essay: highlight all the places where the voices of other researchers appear. Then, note how each of those voices is used. Why did she bring scholar X in here? Scholar Y there? What purposes do those scholars play in her own analysis and conclusions?

Ways of Talking About All the Readings

1. What do these essays have in common that make them ethnographic?

2. Fastwrite for seven minutes on what you’ve learned about conducting research for and writing an ethnographic essay. How have these essays and the writing you’ve done in response to them helped you to understand ethnography better?
3. Look at the roles which each writer plays in the essay—how would you describe that role? How explicit is the presence of each in the text? How central are the writer's own beliefs, presuppositions, and background to the essay's overall themes?

**ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES**

**Questions for Students**

1. **Analyzing Artifacts**

   Bring to class at least three artifacts (or photographs) from the subculture you are studying. Either at home or during class, fastwrite in your journal on the following questions for *each* artifact:
   
   - How is it used in the subculture? Why?
   - If this object is also used by other subcultures, how is it used similarly or differently in this one?
   - Describe all the ways in which this object is significant to the members of the subculture, all the meanings it has, and/or the beliefs and values it conveys.
   - How is this artifact related to the other artifacts you've gathered?
   - Who uses it? Does this person(s) have status in the group?
   - What more might you need to know about the artifact to understand its significance to the group? What kind of research on its history, for example, might be helpful?
   - What associations do you have with this artifact? How does that affect your interpretation of it?

   After you've explored these questions, share with your small group what you've discovered and help each other more fully analyze the artifact and its significance to the group. In addition, discuss at least three possible avenues for research on the artifact.

2. **Practice with Field Notes**

   For the next class period, practice taking field notes. Choose a site—this could be a place where the people gather in the subculture you are studying, or somewhere on campus where people tend to gather (e.g., the student union, dorm lobby, library, quad, etc.), or somewhere off campus. Record field observations using the double-entry style. (Rather than drawing a line down the middle of the page, try using opposing pages for this.)

   On the left side of your notebook, record *specific* observations. If you can overhear a conversation, try to record dialogue. Use your descriptive powers: Describe *exactly* what people are doing and how they are doing it, describe the scene with as much detail as possible. Make lists of these details if this helps you get them down. Draw on all your senses.

On the Left Side

- Specific observations of how people in the group interact
- Specific observations of individuals and what exactly they’re doing
- Fragments of distinctive language, “insider phrases,” sayings, jargon
- Notes of overheard conversations or from interviews
- Specific descriptions of the place
- Rough sketches of the layout of the space
- Specific descriptions of objects used by the participants
- Specific observations of how group members come and go
- Specific observations of how group members respond to outsiders
- Specific observations of clothing, and other cosmetic features of group members
- Specific accounts of stories members tell each other


After ten or so minutes observing, shift to the right-hand side of the notebook. Write down what those details/observations/descriptions might say about why people gather there, what purposes the place serves, what particular groups the place attracts, what behaviors the place encourages. Record your conclusions about this “culture.”

On the Right Side

Reflect on whether you see any patterns in the data you collected on the opposing page.

- Are certain behaviors repeated by group members?
- Do group members use the space in a characteristic way?
- Is the language they use distinctive? In what situations do they use it?
- Do group members reproduce certain ways of interacting with each other?
- What are “typical” situations that recur?
- How do members learn from each other? How is knowledge passed along?
- What kinds of behaviors are most valued by the group? What kinds of knowledge?
• How do group members view outsiders?

• What motivates members to want to belong?


3. Checklist for the Ethnographic Essay—for Writers and Readers

• Does the essay include enough field observations (including rituals and language), interviews, artifacts, and library research? Do these sources of information just seem “stuck in” for the sake of the assignment, or are they used purposefully to make a larger point about the subculture?

• Does the writer analyze his/her observations and the subculture’s artifacts to demonstrate the values, beliefs, rituals, signs of being an insider/outsider, and other patterns that make this group a subculture? If the writer has simply described what he/she observed, how might you help the writer analyze the significance of the details? The essay needs to point to larger patterns in the subculture in order to work well, so help each other analyze how and why the details are significant.

• Where does the writer let us know what assumptions and associations he/she brought to the research? How does that affect his/her interpretations?

• How effective is the essay’s organizational structure? What does it tend to emphasize about the group? What are some other structures that might work well?

• Are the citations appropriate and in the right form?

4. Reflective Writing for Ethnography

Following are examples of desirable questions if you assign a reflective essay with the ethnography:

**Research Process**

• With what did you struggle as you were doing your research?

• How did you decide which observations were accurate or believable? In other words, how did you “test” your results to see how plausible they were (getting multiple interviews, reading about it, seeing patterns, etc.)?

• What surprised you about the processes of observing, interviewing, mapping, etc.? What did you learn about those processes?

• What four or five (or more) principles have you learned about research and research writing as a result of doing this project? (This is an important question.)
Writing Process: Composing the Text

• Tell me how you chose the organization of your essay. In what ways is the organization appropriate to the subject? Why did you choose to put ideas, scenes, and the like, in a specific order? What effect do you hope it will have?

• Tell me how you chose your narrative strategies (telling a story, immersing the reader in detail, using dialogue, showing) and/or expository strategies (telling, explaining, using outside sources, presenting an argument). How are those approaches connected to the subject and your purpose? In other words, why is a narrative approach necessary for your readers to understand your subject and your angle on that subject?

• What have you discovered as you have researched and drafted this essay? About writing? Research? The community? Yourself? How did your words and writing surprise you?

• What ideas do you have for revision? What would you like me to focus on as I respond?

WRITING PROJECTS

1. Work in groups on an ethnographic essay. Choose a subculture, complete all the writing activities in Chapter 9, and divide up the responsibilities among each group member.

2. Use ethnographic research to study the subculture of the field you want to enter (e.g., engineering, business, dentistry, fashion design, forestry, etc.). Pay particular attention to the kinds of writing done in this culture, the conventions used, the amount and kind of writing, and why it's important.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

TEACHING ETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAYS: PRINT RESOURCES


TEACHING ETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAYS: WEB RESOURCES
“Audio Ethnography: Listening to Cultures and Communities” by Catherine C. Braun

“How to Write an Ethnography,” University Writing Center, Appalachian State University

“Ethnographic Inquiry as Writing Pedagogy,” Suzanne Blum Malley and Amy Hawkins, Columbia College

“Writing an Ethnography,” Bethel College
“Tips for Writing Thick Descriptions for Ethnographies and Case Studies,” Vanderbilt University Writing Center

COURSE HANDOUTS

On the following pages you'll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
ETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAY ACTIVITY: ANALYZING ARTIFACTS

Analyzing Artifacts

Bring to class at least three artifacts (or photographs) from the subculture which you are studying. Either at home or during class, fastwrite in your journal on the following questions for each artifact:

- How is it used in the subculture? Why?
- If this object is also found in other subcultures, is it used in similar or in different ways?
- Describe the significance of this object to the members of the subculture. What are all the meanings it has and/or the beliefs and values it conveys?
- How is this artifact related to the other artifacts you’ve gathered?
- Who uses it? Does this person(s) have high or low status in the group?
- What information about the artifact is still needed in order to understand its significance to the group? What kind of research on its history, for example, might be helpful?
- What associations do you have with this artifact? How do they affect your interpretation of it?

After you’ve explored these questions, share with your small group what you’ve discovered and help each other to fully analyze the artifact and its significance to the group. In addition, discuss at least three possible avenues for research on the artifact.
ETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAY ACTIVITY: PRACTICE WITH FIELD NOTES

Practice with Field Notes

For the next class period, practice taking field notes. Choose a site “in the field”—this could be a gathering place for the people in the subculture which you are studying, or somewhere on campus where people tend to congregate socially (e.g., the student union, dorm lobby, library, quad, etc.), or some place off campus. Record your field observations using the double-entry style. (Rather than drawing a line down the middle of the page, try using opposing pages for this.)

On the left side of your notebook, record specific observations. If you overhear a conversation, record the dialogue. Use your descriptive powers: Describe exactly what people are doing and how they are doing it, and describe the scene with as much detail as possible. Make lists of these details, if helpful. Draw on all your senses.

On the Left Side

- Specific observations of how people in the group interact
- Specific observations of individuals and what exactly they’re doing
- Fragments of distinctive language, “insider phrases,” sayings, jargon
- Notes of overheard conversations or from interviews
- Specific descriptions of the place
- Rough sketches of the layout of the space
- Specific descriptions of objects used by the participants
- Specific observations of how group members come and go
- Specific observations of how group members respond to outsiders
- Specific observations of clothing, and other cosmetic features of group members
- Specific accounts of stories which members tell each other

After ten minutes observing, shift to the right-hand side of the notebook. Write down what those details/observations/descriptions tell you about why people gather there, what purposes the place serves, what particular groups the place attracts, and what behaviors the place encourages. Record your conclusions about this “culture.”

**On the Right Side**

Reflect on any patterns in the data you collected on the opposing page.

- Are certain behaviors repeated by group members?
- Do group members use the space in a characteristic way?
- Is the language they use distinctive? In what situations do they use it?
- Do group members reproduce certain ways of interacting with each other?
- What are “typical” situations that recur?
- How do members learn from each other? How is knowledge passed along?
- What kinds of behaviors are most valued by the group?
- What kinds of knowledge?
- How do group members view outsiders?
- What motivates members to want to belong?

ETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAY ACTIVITY: PRACTICE WITH FIELD NOTES

Practice with Field Notes

For the next class period, practice taking field notes. Choose a site “in the field”—this could be a gathering place for the people in the subculture which you are studying, or somewhere on campus where people tend to congregate socially (e.g., the student union, dorm lobby, library, quad, etc.), or some place off campus. Record your field observations using the double-entry style. (Rather than drawing a line down the middle of the page, try using opposing pages for this.)

On the left side of your notebook, record specific observations. If you overhear a conversation, record the dialogue. Use your descriptive powers: Describe exactly what people are doing and how they are doing it, and describe the scene with as much detail as possible. Make lists of these details, if helpful. Draw on all your senses.

On the Left Side

• Specific observations of how people in the group interact
• Specific observations of individuals and what exactly they’re doing
• Fragments of distinctive language, “insider phrases,” sayings, jargon
• Notes of overheard conversations or from interviews
• Specific descriptions of the place
• Rough sketches of the layout of the space
• Specific descriptions of objects used by the participants
• Specific observations of how group members come and go
• Specific observations of how group members respond to outsiders
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• Specific accounts of stories which members tell each other

After ten minutes observing, shift to the right-hand side of the notebook. Write down what those details/observations/descriptions tell you about why people gather there, what purposes the place serves, what particular groups the place attracts, and what behaviors the place encourages. Record your conclusions about this “culture.”

**On the Right Side**

Reflect on any patterns in the data you collected on the opposing page.

- Are certain behaviors repeated by group members?
- Do group members use the space in a characteristic way?
- Is the language they use distinctive? In what situations do they use it?
- Do group members reproduce certain ways of interacting with each other?
- What are “typical” situations that recur?
- How do members learn from each other? How is knowledge passed along?
- What kinds of behaviors are most valued by the group?
- What kinds of knowledge?
- How do group members view outsiders?
- What motivates members to want to belong?

FOR WRITERS AND READERS

- Does the essay include a sufficient number of field observations (including rituals and language), interviews, artifacts, and library research? Do these sources of information seem "stuck in" merely for the sake of the assignment, or are they used purposefully to make a larger point about the subculture?

- Does the writer analyze his/her observations and the subculture’s artifacts in order to demonstrate the values, beliefs, rituals, signs of being an insider/outsider, and/or patterns that make this group a culture? If the writer has simply described what he/she observed, how might you help the writer analyze the significance of the details? The essay should point to larger patterns in the culture, so help each other analyze how and why the details are significant.

- At what point in the essay does the writer let us know what assumptions and associations he/she brought to the research? How does that affect what he/she interprets?

- How effective is the essay’s organizational structure? What does that particular organization help the writer to emphasize about the group? What are some other structures that might work well?

- Are the citations appropriate and in the right form?
REFLECTIVE WRITING FOR ETHNOGRAPHY

When you submit a draft of your ethnographic essay, include an informal essay or letter to your instructor in which you reflect on the process of writing ethnography. Choose at least two questions from each of the sections that follow:

Research Process

- With what did you struggle as you were doing your research?
- How did you decide which observations were accurate or believable? In other words, how did you “test” your results to see how plausible they were (getting multiple interviews, reading about it, seeing patterns, etc.)?
- What surprised you about the processes of observing, interviewing, mapping, and the like? What did you learn about those processes?
- What four or five (or more) principles have you learned about research and research writing as a result of doing this project? (This is an important question.)

Writing Process: Composing the Text

- Tell me how you chose the organization of your essay. In what ways is the organization appropriate to the subject? Why did you choose to put ideas, scenes, and so forth in a specific order? What effect do you hope it will have?
- Tell me how you chose your narrative strategies (telling a story, immersing the reader in detail, using dialogue, showing) and/or your expository strategies (telling, explaining, using outside sources, presenting an argument). How are those approaches connected to the subject and your purpose? In other words, why is a narrative approach necessary for your readers to understand your subject and your angle on that subject?
- What have you discovered as you researched and drafted this essay? About writing? Research? The community? Yourself? How did your words and writing surprise you?
- What ideas do you have for revision? What would you like me to focus on as I respond?
PART THREE: INQUIRING DEEPER

As the subtitle to this section suggests, these chapters focus on strategies for extending and complicating inquiry projects. Throughout the textbook, research has been integral to every stage of the writing process, and Part Three offers skills students need in order to conduct research effectively, respond to what they find dialectically and critically, and use that research purposefully in their writing.

These chapters can be assigned as one unit so students focus on a specific research essay assignment; or, Chapter 11: Research Techniques and Chapter 12: Using and Citing Sources can be assigned early in the course to introduce research skills that will be used for every essay students will write. In what follows you’ll find specific suggestions for using these chapters within the context of the chapters in Parts One and Two.

CHAPTER 10: WRITING A RESEARCH ESSAY

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- The research essay integrates features of other essays in this book, building on what students learn about writing a proposal, an argument essay, a personal essay, a profile, and ethnography.
- The research essay begins with a question, not answers.
- The research essay is more fully documented than the other essays in the book and might require more scholarly sources; it will also be longer than other essays and will present different challenges.
- The research essay prepares students for academic assignments that require research: proposals, literature reviews, abstracts, term papers, and so on. All of these assignments require the ability to find information in the library, evaluate it, and use it purposefully when writing.

FEATURES OF THE FORM

- Inquiry questions:
  - What does the evidence suggest is true?
  - What is the relationship?
• **Motives:**
  - To find something out
  - To prove

• **Subject matter:**
  - Any topic is researchable if the researcher has a good question.

• **Structure:**
  - Research essays and research papers have different features, but have the following in common:
    - A review of what has already been said by others about the research question.
    - A proposed answer to the question based on appropriate evidence.
    - Citations that signal which ideas and information belong to the writer and which belong to sources.
    - Information from multiple sources, analyzed by the writer for its relevance to the research question and/or thesis.

• **Sources:**
  - Informal research essays:
    - Experience
    - Observation
    - Interview
    - Reading
  - Formal research papers:
    - Experience less likely to be used
    - What is viewed by the intended audience as valid evidence

• **Language:**
  - Depends on audience and purpose.
GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. **Apply what you've learned about writing shorter inquiry-based papers to an extended research project.** Students will become aware of their beliefs about research-based essays and understand how such preconceived ideas might either benefit or hinder their writing. Students will better understand the features of the research essay that apply to academic writing, as well as those that are similar to the critical essay, the argument essay, the profile, the personal essay, the ethnography, and the review.

2. **Identify different forms of researched writing and the purposes behind them.**

3. **Practice reading, analyzing, and writing with a limited number of sources on a single topic.** Students will successfully engage in dialectical note taking, using sources critically and purposefully, rather than simply reporting them. Students will learn to cite sources correctly (in conjunction with Chapter 12).

4. **Use invention techniques for discovering a researchable question.** Students will learn what constitutes a researchable question and how to refine a research question to narrow the topic focus and lead to a judgment.

5. **Use audience and purpose to make decisions about the structure of the work and the types of information to use in it.**

DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER

As with the argument essay, students always have assumptions about the research essay that can present obstacles: They may believe that their only job is to report what they find on a broad subject; that they should use only a formal, academic tone; that research essays are written only in college courses; and/or that their own perspective and voice are less important than those of their sources. Hopefully, immersing students in the inquiry-based approach to the other assignments in the textbook will allow them to anticipate some of the features of this one. Just to be sure, it’s useful to discuss again their beliefs about research writing before they read the chapter, and even prompt them to predict what they will use from the other essays they've written when they write a research essay. Also, emphasize during class discussion the section in this chapter entitled “Research Essays, Research Papers, and Research Reports” so that students understand the differences—as well as the similarities.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

2. Fastwrite for five minutes in the space below. Then, reflect on why you have those particular feelings and associations with it.
3. In what ways have you used research in the past, either for school or personal reasons? What makes research enjoyable?
4. Complete the “Beliefs About Reading for Research” survey (listed below under “Additional Writing Activities”).

5. Complete “An Atheist Goes to Church” (listed below under “Additional Writing Activities”).

THE WRITING PROCESS

In this section, students are offered a series of writing activities for their journals—or during class with your prompting—that will help them discover a rich and promising subject for this assignment. It’s important that students respond to each subsection:

“What Are You Going to Write About?”
“Opening Up”
“Narrowing Down”
“Trying Out”
“Writing the Sketch”
“Moving from Sketch to Draft”
“Developing”
“Drafting”
“Workshopping”
“Revising”

The activities that come before the sketch give students time to develop ideas before they begin composing a draft, which means they are more likely to find an intriguing and promising subject. These early fastwriting prompts also undermine students’ tendencies to write a draft the night before an essay is due.

With the research essay, you’ll need to allow three to five weeks for researching and writing, assigning Chapters 11 and 12 in the middle of this one, between “Judging What You Have” and “Writing the Sketch.”

All of the activities in this chapter are recursive, asking students to write and reflect, to compose and then pause to freewrite again, to dive into the details, and then step back to analyze. Once students have a sketch, ask them to do the sketch workshop and then respond to the prompts that help them compose a draft. Then do the same thing with a draft workshop, asking them to follow the guidelines in the book for the workshop and for the writing after the workshop.
SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS

Scheduling your time: This sidebar provides an example for planning ahead. You might ask students to create such a plan for themselves.

USING THE WRITING ACTIVITIES

In the 5th edition, the readings for this chapter have all been changed: they now focus on the inquiry question, “Why do people get tattoos?” and are designed to immerse students in the process of reading a range of sources as they explore the question. Ideally, students follow the prompts in Exercise 10.1 (described below), read all the pieces on tattoos, respond to the questions at the end of those readings, and then finish Exercise 10.1 with the flash research essay and group work. Students will then have practiced the habits of mind needed during the research process, and they can, ideally, apply those habits to their own research project.

However, the readings in this chapter can also be read selectively, depending on your own purposes.

Exercise 10.1: Flash Research on Tattoos

This exercise begins with the question, “Why do people get tattoos?” First, students write about their “First Thoughts” before they read several articles in the chapter about the question.

After each reading, students use the inquiry strategies—explore, explain, evaluate, and reflect—to respond to the article and to note what it adds to the research question. The prompts under “Evaluate” are particularly important: students have to consider how their thinking about the research question has changed and how each piece of research confirms or contradicts their own thoughts and/or the ideas in the other articles.

Next, they write a “flash research essay” (a 250-word argument that addresses the inquiry question) and then share it in groups to discuss several reflective questions on the process of inquiry. Later in the chapter students will read a sample research proposal on the question, “Why do people get tattoos?”

ASSIGNMENT DESIGN: SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING A RESEARCH ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Students will struggle the most with the following:

- Focusing the essay around a genuine question
- Suspending judgment during the research process
- Understanding how to use source information purposefully in the essay
- Engaging in dialectical thinking while they take notes and draft
- Avoiding “dump-and-drop” quotations
- Avoiding a simple report of the information they’ve found
In designing the assignment, then, you should emphasize the importance of the criteria listed under “Inquiry Project,” as well as others you believe are important. Then, allow several weeks for writing, researching, writing in the midst of researching, drafting, and revising. For example, schedule class periods where students bring in their research notes (along with their sources) and “write in the middle.” Students should refer to Chapter 11 for various research techniques, specifically those on notetaking. Have students get into pairs and verbally share what they’ve found so far, the questions it raises for them, their doubts and criticisms, and so on. In general, spend class time helping students with reading strategies for research and with making connections among the sources they find.

**DISCUSSING THE READINGS: SUMMARY AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

**DEREK J. ROBERTS, “SECRET INK: TATTOO’S PLACE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE” Journal Article**

**Summary**

This excerpt reviews several explanations for the increase in the number of people who are getting tattoos now, mostly among the middle class. Among the reasons researchers have given: tattoos are considered as “merely a fashion accessory”; tattoos are symbols of “one’s true identity in an ever changing world”; and the media have had a strong influence on the popularity of tattoos.

No questions follow this reading in the book.

**Additional Writing Activities** for “Secret Ink”:

1. Look up the original studies that Roberts summarizes here. After reading them, compare your understanding of the articles to Roberts’ summary. How well does he summarize? What does he not address? Why, do you think?

2. In your journal, brainstorm a list of questions this essay raises about tattoos. What else would you like to know? Then, finish this sentence: *If I were to write an essay on tattoos, I’d want to know more about ______________*. Then, consider whether these questions would lend themselves to an interesting research essay.

**MYRNA L. ARMSTRONG, ALDEN E. ROBERTS, JEROME R. KOCH, JANA C. SAUNDERS, DONNA C. OWEN, AND R. ROX ANDERSON, “MOTIVATION FOR CONTEMPORARY TATTOO REMOVAL” Journal article**

**Summary**

This excerpt focuses on data about tattoo removal in 1996 and then again in 2006. The authors note that in the earlier study, more men than women wanted their tattoos removed, whereas by 2006 the numbers were reversed. The authors discuss several reasons why women might face more challenges with tattoos than men.
No questions follow this reading in the book.

**Additional Writing Activities** for “Motivation for Contemporary Tattoo Removal”:

1. Which other disciplines study tattoos and/or gender? Do some research with your university library's online journals and databases using the search terms “tattoos,” “gender,” and/or other terms. Which other journals publish studies on this subject? Then, search the Internet more widely for publications on tattoos in the larger culture. What do you notice? What surprises you?

2. In your journal, brainstorm a list of questions this essay raises about tattoos. What else would you like to know? Then, finish this sentence: *If I were to write an essay on tattoos, I’d want to know more about________.* Then, consider whether these questions would lend themselves to an interesting research essay.

*Miliann Kang and Katherine Jones, “Why Do People Get Tattoos?”*

**Book**

**Summary**

The main argument of this book excerpt is, “While men and women both get tattoos, men are more likely to use tattoos to reinforce traditional notions of masculinity, whereas women often both defy and reproduce conventional standards of femininity.” Kang and Jones bring in evidence from history and culture to illustrate their claim.

No questions follow this reading in the book.

**Additional Writing Activities** for "Why Do People Get Tattoos?":

1. What other methods could these researchers have used to answer their research question? Speculate on what might give them the information they need—other kinds of research to use, credible people to interview, and so on.

2. Using the strategies you've learned from the chapter “Writing an Argument,” analyze the essay as an argument. What is the claim? What are the reasons and evidence?


**Journal Article**

**Summary**

As the title of this excerpt indicates, it summarizes the findings of a study that examined the “attitude, behaviors, and interpretations of college students” to tattoos. Some of the findings are consistent with other excerpts in this chapter.

No questions follow this reading in the book.
**Additional Writing Activities** for “Tattoos and Piercings: Attitudes, Behaviors, and Interpretations of College Students”:

1. In small groups, outline the essay and note the structure the writers use. What do you notice? What organizational pattern do they use? Why, do you think?

2. Using the strategies you've learned from the chapter “Writing an Argument,” analyze the essay as an argument. What is the claim? What are the reasons and evidence?

**Laura Burns, “The ‘Unreal Dream’: True Crime in the Justice System”**

**Summary**

In this research essay, Burns asks, “How does wrongful conviction occur, and why does it occur so frequently? And even more importantly, how can we prevent it?” She explores her question using 20 different sources, and the essay reflects her careful reading of them. She makes clear claims, offers clear reasons, and supports her claims with specific evidence. In the end, she argues that “It[’s] only through understanding the issues and mending the fissures in the criminal justice system that allow for them, that we can slow the rate of wrongful convictions in the United States."

**Additional Writing Activities** for “The ‘Unreal Dream’”:

1. Look closely at the sources Burns uses in this essay. Explain how and why each source is/isn’t credible to the intended audience. Are you persuaded by her evidence?

2. What “features of the form” of research essays does this one demonstrate?

3. Using the strategies you've learned from the chapter “Writing an Argument,” analyze the essay as an argument. What is the claim? What are the reasons and evidence?

4. This essay also has features of a proposal (Chapter 6)—what are they, and how effectively does the writer present her proposal?

5. In small groups, outline the essay and note the structure Burns uses. What do you notice? What organizational pattern does she use? Why, do you think? How might you apply this structure to an essay you are writing?

**Ways of Talking About All of the Readings**

1. Each of these essays has features in common with the other essays presented in *The Curious Writer*. Write an informal response explaining the similarities between these research essays and the qualities of at least two other types of essays in the textbook. Draw on specific passages to describe the differences you see.
2. Reflect on the reading strategies you used for each of these research essays, referring to Chapter 2. Which strategies were most helpful? Which were not? With what did you struggle as you read these? What is the difference between reading an informal research essay and an academic one?

3. Research the use of documentation in writing: Why do different genres have such different conventions and citation rules? Why is it acceptable for some writers not to document in the same rigorous way expected of academic writers (faculty and students)? What is the history behind documentation rules?

4. Using all the essays in this chapter on tattoos, as well as your responses to the discussion questions, draft an essay that focuses on what you find most surprising or interesting about the subject.

**ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES**

1. **An Atheist Goes to Church** (from the first edition)

   This exercise helps students reflect on their beliefs and associations with researching and writing from sources. Take students through the activity during class, before they reach Chapter 11, or have them complete Step One at home and the rest during class. Highlight the beliefs about research that you want to emphasize here, and discuss students' beliefs that are counterproductive.

   When you think of the academic research paper assignment, what immediately comes to mind? I often ask my students to think about this initially through metaphor. For example, a student once told me that his writing a research paper is “like an atheist going to church.” What do you think that metaphor implies about his beliefs and attitudes toward research writing?

   **Step One:** Build a few metaphors of your own. In your journal or notebook, finish one or more of the following sentences:

   *Writing a research paper is like ________.*

   *Doing research is like ________.*

   *Reading for a research paper is like ________.*

   **Step Two:** In small groups—or your full class—share metaphors by putting them on the board or sheets of newsprint, making sure everybody can see them.

   **Step Three:** Examine the gallery of research-writing metaphors, then on the board or the newsprint, build a list of the beliefs, assumptions, or attitudes implied by these metaphors. For example, that wonderful metaphor comparing an author's writing research to an
atheist’s going to church suggests that writers of research papers don’t have to believe in what they say, and, in fact, may say what they don’t believe.

**Discussion Questions**

- Where do these beliefs and attitudes originate?
- How helpful are they?
- Which beliefs do you suspect might be mistaken, and which do you believe are true?

1. **Beliefs About Reading for Research** (see the following Course Handouts)

   Bruce Ballenger

   The questions below focus on your beliefs and habits as a reader when working with published sources for a research paper assignment. This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes.

   1) When you’re reading articles, Web sites, or books for a research paper assignment, how important is note taking?
      - Extremely important
      - Very important
      - Somewhat important
      - Not important at all
      - I don’t know

   2) How often do you actually take notes as you’re reading for such an assignment?
      - Always
      - Sometimes
      - Rarely
      - Never

   3) Which of the following other reading behaviors do you typically use when reading for a research paper? Check all that apply.
      - Underlining
      - Highlighting
      - Rereading
      - Freewriting in a notebook
      - Using marginal symbols
      - Taking marginal notes
      - Drawing a concept map or outline
      - Other___________________
      - Reading and very little more

   4) Do you change your approach to reading sources for papers assigned in different classes or different disciplines?
      - Always
      - Sometimes
• Rarely
• Never
• I don’t know

2. Reflections on Reading (see Course Handouts for a reproducible copy)

Suppose you were asked to summarize the following passage:

In fact, *The Bell Curve* is extraordinarily one-dimensional. The book makes no attempt to survey the range of available data, and pays astonishingly little attention to the rich and informative history of this contentious subject. (One can only recall Santayana’s dictum, now a cliché of intellectual life: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”) Virtually all the analysis rests upon a single technique applied to a single set of data—all probably done in one computer run. (I do not agree that the authors have used the most appropriate technique—multiple regression—and the best source of information—the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth—though I shall expose a core fallacy in their procedure below. Still, claims as broad as those advanced in *The Bell Curve* simply cannot be adequately defended—that is, neither properly supported or denied—by such a restricted approach.) (371)


Remember that a summary is a short (usually two or three sentences) statement that represents your understanding of the author’s main ideas. As you read, what three questions will guide your reading and help you write the summary?

a.

b.

c.

3. The following is a list of statements about reading and academic research. Indicate your agreement or disagreement with the statements.

1. I consider myself to be a sophisticated reader.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

2. When reading for information, it’s important to read selectively.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
3. When I’m reading, I usually feel in control.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

4. One of my main purposes in reading sources for a research paper is to find support for what I believe.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

5. Another equally important purpose is to read sources that will challenge or complicate what I believe.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

6. I’m constantly looking for clues about the author’s credibility when I read.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

7. I generally try to stay away from sources I can’t understand.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

8. When reading a difficult passage, people often have trouble understanding what the author is trying to say. What do you do when you read something such as an academic article that you find challenging to follow? Check all that apply.
   - I usually give up on it.
   - I read and reread until I think I understand it.
   - I look up definitions of words I don’t understand.
   - I ask myself questions to pinpoint what I don’t understand.
   - I ask someone else to read the text and talk about it with him/her.
   - If possible, I apply my own experience and knowledge of the topic.
   - I do some writing in my notebook or journal.
o I look for certain clues in the text that indicate when an author is making a point or a claim.
o I pay attention to the type of article it is and focus on the important parts.
o I do lots of the reading activities, such as underlining and highlighting, mentioned in Question 3.
o None of the above.
o Other ________________________________

9. When reading sources for a research paper, how often do you feel that you should not criticize the opinions of authors because they’re experts on the topics?
o Always
o Sometimes
o Rarely
o Never

4. Finding the Focusing Question: (from the 3rd edition) Once you tentatively settle on a topic, you’re ready to do this in-class exercise. It should help you find questions that will help you focus your project.

   1st Each student will take a piece of paper or a large piece of newsprint and post it on the wall. (In a computer lab, students can use a word-processing program and move from station to station in the steps that follow).

   2nd Write your topic at the very top of the paper (for instance, “hybrid cars”).

   3rd Take a few minutes to briefly describe why you chose the topic.

   4th Spend five minutes to briefly list what you know about your topic, already (for instance, any surprising facts or statistics, the extent of the problem, important people or institutions involved, key schools of thought, common misconceptions, important trends, and controversies).

   5th Now spend fifteen or twenty minutes brainstorming a list of questions about your topic that you’d love to learn the answers to. Make the list as long as you can.

   6th Look around the room. You’ll see a gallery of topics and questions on the walls, questions other students have generated. For each topic posted on the wall, do two things: Check the one question on the list you find most interesting, and add a question you would like answered about that topic.

   7th Now you have long lists of questions about your topic. Is there one that you think might be researchable, using the criteria for such questions? Which questions seem to generate the most interest in the class? Do any of those interest you, too?
Pick one question from the list that could be your initial focusing question. Remember, you can change it later.

5. **Is It a Researchable Question?** (see Course Handouts for a reproducible copy)

   In your journal, after you've narrowed your possible research question, respond to the following prompts and determine whether your subject is researchable and appropriate for this assignment:
   
   - Does it raise a lot of very interesting questions?
   - Do I feel strongly about the subject matter? Do I already have some ideas about the topic that I'd like to explore?
   - Can I find authoritative information to answer my questions? Does the topic offer the possibility of interviews? An informal survey? Internet research?
   - Will it be an intellectual challenge? Will it force me to reflect on what I think?
   - Are a lot of people researching this topic or a similar one? Will I struggle to find sources in the library because other students are using them?
   - What do most people already know about my subject? What unique or surprising things do they probably not know? (Another way to phrase the latter question is, “When most people think about X, they think ________. What they don’t realize is ________.”)
   - In what ways will it benefit my readers (and me) to understand this issue/question in the way I propose? What will it “cost” them (me) if they don’t understand it?

6. **Questions for Workshop**

   - After reading the entire essay, pick out the focusing question and write it at the top of the first page.
   - Read the lead paragraphs: Describe how these paragraphs do or do not set up the essay's main question and thesis. Draw on your knowledge of effective leads as you evaluate its effectiveness.
   - What questions does this essay raise about the subjects that are not directly addressed in the essay itself? Should these questions be addressed?
   - How well does the writer integrate quotes and cite sources?
   - What three suggestions do you have for revision?

7. **Research as Conversation** (see Course Handouts for reproducible copies of the passages in this exercise)
PART I: A Conversation

Three Minutes: As a group, brainstorm a list of things you associate with the word conversation.

Now, imagine that you are having lunch with someone named Herb Goldberg. The conversation has drifted from the weather to politics. You notice that he seems a bit distracted, so you ask what’s on his mind. After staring at his French fries thoughtfully, he looks up and says:

“Our culture is saturated with successful male zombies, businessmen zombies, golf zombies, sports car zombies, playboy zombies, etc. They are playing by the rules of the male game plan. They have lost touch with, or are running away from, their feelings and awareness of themselves as people. They have confused their social masks for their essence and they are destroying themselves while fulfilling the traditional definitions of masculine-appropriate behavior.” (Goldberg 215)

Five Minutes: Fastwrite (on your own) a response to Goldberg’s comments. Remember your brainstorm about conversation and respond as if you were having a conversation over lunch.

Herb listens politely to what you say, but now feels a need to clarify what he has said. He interrupts and adds:

“The male’s inherent survival instincts have been stunted by the seemingly more powerful drive to maintain his masculine image. He would, for example, rather die in the battle than risk living in a different way and being called a “coward” or “not a man.” He would rather die at his desk prematurely than free himself from his compulsive patterns and pursuits.” (215)

Five Minutes: Now it’s your turn to add to the conversation. This time, discuss your response to Goldberg as a group and create a written group response to his comments.

Lunch is almost over, so, after listening to your response, Goldberg says, “I’ve got just one last thing to say about this.” He continues:

“The male . . . has yet to realize, acknowledge, and rebel against the distress and stifling aspects of many of the roles he plays—from good husband, to good daddy, to good provider, to good lover, etc. Because of the inner pressure to constantly affirm his dominance and masculinity, he continues to act as if he can stand up under, fulfill, and even enjoy all the expectations placed
on him no matter how contradictory and devitalizing they are. It's time to remove the disguises of privilege and reveal the male condition for what it really is. (219)

Five Minutes: As a group, write a final response to Goldberg's comments.

Discuss your experience responding to Herb Goldberg. What approach did you take (agree/disagree, add to his comments/try to lead the conversation in a new direction)? How can you imagine what other people might respond? How were your responses different because you were thinking of the exchange as a conversation? Look back at your list from the beginning. What elements of conversation do you see in your responses to Goldberg?

PART II: Research as Conversation

Kenneth Burke compares research to discussion in the following paragraph. As you read, think about your own experience with research. Burke explains:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending on the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (qtd. in Braun 572–3)

How is the preceding incident similar to research? How do you feel when you first enter the discussion dealing with your own research? How do you reach the point where you feel expert enough to join in the conversation? What qualifies anyone as a legitimate participant? Discuss your own research experience. In what ways is it like entering a room with an ongoing conversation? Are you comfortable enough with your subject to enter into the fray?

PART III: Getting into the Conversation

Brainstorm a list of five questions that people usually ask each other when they first meet. Next to that list, write down a list of questions that would lead you into a conversation on your subjects (in other words, the types of questions whose answers would give you a working knowledge of your subject). How are the two lists similar? Different?

Think of one of the best conversations you've had with someone. Briefly tell your group about the experience. What kind of subjects were you discussing? What made the discussion so good? As a group, relate your conversation experience to a good research experience.
Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

Works Cited


WRITING PROJECTS

1. Working in groups, brainstorm a list of questions you have about anything on your campus. What do you find curious or utterly inexplicable? On what topics do you desire more information? What additional information do others need? Then, develop a research project together that answers those questions and present it to your class.

2. Based on the fastwriting you’ve done for Question 1 under “Inquiring into the Essay” in Chapter 11, develop a research essay that follows one of the questions that emerged.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

TEACHING RESEARCH-BASED WRITING: PRINT RESOURCES


**TEACHING RESEARCH-BASED WRITING: WEB RESOURCES**

Council of Writing Program Administrators’ statement of Best Practices for Avoiding Plagiarism

Evaluating Evidence from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center

Checklist for Analyzing Research Material from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center

**COURSE HANDOUTS**

On the following pages you’ll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
BELIEFS ABOUT READING FOR RESEARCH

Bruce Ballenger

The following questions focus on your beliefs and habits as a reader when working with published sources for a research paper assignment. This survey should take no longer than five to ten minutes.

1) When you’re reading articles, Web sites, or books for a research paper assignment, how important is it to take notes?
   a) Extremely important
   b) Very important
   c) Somewhat important
   d) Not important at all
   e) I don’t know

2) How often do you take notes when reading for such an assignment?
   a) Always
   b) Sometimes
   c) Rarely
   d) Never

3) Which of the following other reading behaviors do you typically use when reading for a research paper? Check all that apply.
   a) Underlining
   b) Highlighting
   c) Rereading
   d) Freewriting in a notebook
   e) Using marginal symbols
   f) Using marginal notes
   g) Drawing a concept map or outline
   h) Other___________________
   i) Reading and not much else

4) Do you change your approach to reading sources for papers assigned in different classes or different disciplines?
   a) Always
   b) Sometimes
   c) Rarely
   d) Never
   e) I don’t know
5) Suppose you were asked to summarize the following passage:

In fact, *The Bell Curve* is extraordinarily one-dimensional. The book makes no attempt to survey the range of available data, and pays astonishingly little attention to the rich and informative history of this contentious subject. (One can only recall Santayana's dictum, now a cliché of intellectual life: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”) Virtually all the analysis rests upon a single technique applied to a single set of data—all probably done in one computer run. (I do not agree that the authors have used the most appropriate technique—multiple regression—and the best source of information—the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth—though I shall expose a core fallacy in their procedure below. Still, claims as broad as those advanced in *The Bell Curve* simply cannot be adequately defended—that is, neither properly supported or denied—by such a restricted approach. (371)


Remember that a summary is a short (usually two or three sentences) statement that represents your understanding of the author's main idea. As you read, what three questions will guide your reading and help you write the summary?

a.

b.

c.

6) The following is a list of statements about reading and academic research. Indicate your agreement or disagreement with the statements based on what seems true for you.

a) I consider myself a sophisticated reader.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don't know

b) When reading for information, it's important to read selectively.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don't know
c) When I’m reading, I usually feel in control.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

d) One of my main purposes in reading sources for a research paper is to find support for what I think.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

e) Another equally important purpose is to read sources that will challenge or complicate what I think.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

f) I’m constantly looking for clues about the author’s credibility when I read.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

g) I generally try to stay away from sources I can’t understand.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
   - I don’t know

7) When reading a difficult passage, people often have trouble understanding it. What do you do when you have to read something like an academic article that you find challenging to follow? Check all that apply.
   a) I usually give up on it.
   b) I read and reread until I think I understand it.
   c) I look up definitions of words I don’t understand.
   d) I ask myself questions to pinpoint what I don’t understand.
   e) I ask someone else to read the text and talk about it with him/her.
   f) If possible, I try to apply my own experience and knowledge of the topic.
   g) I do some writing in my notebook or journal.
h) I look for certain clues in the text that will help me know when an author is making a point or a claim.

i) I pay attention to the type of article it is and focus my attention on the important parts.

j) I do lots of the reading activities, such as underlining and highlighting, mentioned in Question 3.

k) None of the above.

l) Other ______________________________

8) When reading sources for a research paper, how often do you suppress your criticism of the opinions of authors because they're experts on the topics they're writing about?

   a) Always
   b) Sometimes
   c) Rarely
   d) Never
**Reading Academic Research Essays or Articles**

**Helpful Strategies as You Read**

- **Justification:** Pay particular attention to the justification for why this research question is worthy of study. Do you understand how it extends existing scholarship on the topic?

- **Thesis:** Imagine an artichoke. You have to work your way through the leaves to get to the heart, the best part. In a journal article, this is the main argument, thesis, finding, or claim. You will find this in a range of locations—sometimes it's stated in an "abstract" (if there is one), at the end of an introduction or the literature review, or even at the very end of the article.

- **Insider language:** You don’t have to understand all the jargon, just enough that you understand the research question and the conclusion.

- **Methods of research:** You’re probably not in a position to evaluate the methods used, but make an effort to identify and understand them.

- **Qualifications:** Carefully consider how the author qualifies his or her conclusions. This often mutes the significance of the finds and helps you understand how seriously to take them.

- **Oft-cited people:** When doing your own research, pay attention to names of people who are cited often. These are often people who have said the most in the ongoing conversation about the topic.

**Conventions that Academic Articles Often Share**

- **Read abstracts:** Journal articles in the social science and dissertations often include one-paragraph summaries of the investigator’s findings, usually written by the investigator. Start with the abstracts to get a sense of whether it’s worth your time to wade through the article.

- **Read conclusions.** The formally structured article in many disciplines has the following parts: abstract, introduction or literature review, methods, results or discussion, and conclusions. Skim the article to get a sense of the purpose of the study and then focus on the conclusions for more careful reading. There you should find the most important findings.

- **Go to the literature review.** For undergraduate research, sometimes the best part of any academic book or article isn’t the findings, the claim, or the theory but the literature review. This is the part that appears in or immediately after an introduction where the author updates the reader on the current “conversation” on the topic, including the prevailing findings, current theories, and important contributions to think about.

- **Mine the bibliography.** The author of a book or article may have done some of your research for you. Even if you can't use much from a particular source for your paper, the bibliography can be invaluable, directing you to some of the best sources on your topic. The sources in the literature review section (see the preceding bullet point) are usually the best out there on that topic.
Sample Assignment for Research Essay

For the past few weeks, we have focused on how to develop a research subject, how to use the library and the Internet to find information, and how to take notes on that material. As you may have already figured out, the essay you will write from this research will be less formal than what you have been used to: As an essay, it will necessarily be exploratory, formed around a set of questions that propel your search, and engaging for others to read. Here are some general guidelines for the essay:

- Choose a subject that interests you, that spurs your curiosity, not something about which you already know a lot or have already formed opinions (unless you are willing to be open to new information). Remember, it’s your curiosity that is at the center of this paper, not mine.

- Be sure the question(s) you’ve chosen is/are researchable: that is, the question
  - is not too big or too small
  - focuses on some aspect of the topic about which something has been said
  - interests you
  - potentially matters—it has something to do with how we live or might live, what we care about, or what might be important for people to know, such as research on the current issue of global warming
  - raises more questions—the answer to your focusing question(s) may not be simple

- Choose a wide variety of sources from the library, the Internet, interviews, surveys—whatever suits your subject and purpose. I expect a range of seven to ten sources, only half of which are allowed from the Internet (often you will find academic journal articles on the Web, and that’s fine—but be careful about nonacademic sources on the Web). In addition, for all Internet sources, I expect you to have written down your evaluation of the source’s credibility in your research notebook (from The Curious Writer). Essays showing that you were able to use different levels of searching in the library and on the Internet, not just stick to the safe sources such as books and popular magazines, will be considered stronger. In the final portfolio, when you submit the final draft of this piece, I will consider the credibility and substance of your sources, as well as your efforts in finding them, when I evaluate the essay.

- Avoid lists of quotes, lists of information: Shape your essay to reflect what you’ve found, what you find interesting, and what new questions you’ve discovered. Think about the sample research essays we’ve read and try to develop a casual, engaging voice that uses narrative, facts, questions, and visual details to draw readers in and share your excitement about the subject. Experiment with organization. Be creative.

- Use quotes purposefully and carefully. See The Curious Writer, Chapter 12.
Use good note-taking techniques that enable you to have a conversation with a source, not just jot down good quotes that fit your purpose. The essay should reflect this conversation and your ability to put the information from your sources into your own words, quoting when needed, and taking control of the information and the essay.

Use appropriate MLA documentation (See Chapter 12 in The Curious Writer). Remember, plagiarism, while often unintentional, is grounds for failure in any course at the university, so carefully cite your material, using signal phrases that indicate the differences between your words/ideas and those of your sources.

Most importantly, have fun with the essay and the research process. You have a lot of freedom here, and I want you to challenge yourself.

Every class activity is geared to helping you learn how to accomplish everything listed above, so, if you are keeping up with the homework, reading, writing activities, and class discussions, you should be in good shape.
Imagine that you are having lunch with someone named Herb Goldberg. The conversation has drifted from the weather to politics. You notice that he seems distracted, so you ask what’s on his mind. After staring at his French fries thoughtfully, he looks up and says:

“Our culture is saturated with successful male zombies, businessmen zombies, golf zombies, sports car zombies, playboy zombies, etc. They are playing by the rules of the male game plan. They have lost touch with, or are running away from, their feelings and awareness of themselves as people. They have confused their social masks for their essence and they are destroying themselves while fulfilling the traditional definitions of masculine-appropriate behavior.” (215)

Herb listens politely to what you say and then wants to clarify his remarks. He interrupts and adds:

“The male’s inherent survival instincts have been stunted by the seemingly more powerful drive to maintain his masculine image. He would, for example, rather die in the battle than risk living in a different way and being called a “coward” or “not a man.” He would rather die at his desk prematurely than free himself from his compulsive patterns and pursuits.” (215)

Lunch is almost over, so, after listening to your response, Goldberg says, “I’ve got just one last thing to say about this.” He explains:

“The male . . . has yet to realize, acknowledge, and rebel against the distress and stifling aspects of many of the roles he plays—from good husband, to good daddy, to good provider, to good lover, etc. Because of the inner pressure to constantly affirm his dominance and masculinity, he continues to act as if he can stand up under, fulfill, and even enjoy all the expectations placed on him no matter how contradictory and devitalizing they are. It’s time to remove the disguises of privilege and reveal the male condition for what it really is.” (219)

Kenneth Burke compares research to discussion in the following paragraph. As you read, think about your own experience with research so far.

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending on the quality of your ally’s assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.” (qtd. in Braun 572–3)
Works Cited


**Research Essay Activity: Is It A Researchable Question?**

In your journal, after you’ve narrowed your possible research question, respond to the following prompts and determine whether your subject is researchable and appropriate for this assignment:

- Does it raise a lot of really interesting questions for me?
- Do I feel strongly about it? Do I already have some ideas about the topic that I’d like to explore?
- Can I find authoritative information to answer my questions? Does the topic offer the possibility of interviews? An informal survey? Internet research?
- Will it be an intellectual challenge? Will it force me to reflect on what I think?
- Are a lot of people researching this topic or a similar one? Will I struggle to find sources in the library because other students have them?
- What do most people already know about my subject? What unique or surprising things do they probably not know? (Another way to phrase this, “When most people think about X, they think _________. What they don’t realize is __________.”)
- In what ways will it benefit my readers (and me) to understand this issue/question in the way I propose? What will it “cost” them (me) if they don’t understand it?
CHAPTER 11: RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

- How knowledge and information are organized by librarians for rapid retrieval
- How to choose the best search terms for searching online and in the library
- How to develop a working knowledge of your subject by using the library and the Internet, including the use of metasearch engines, as well as tools for searching the invisible web
- How to evaluate web sources
- How to conduct interviews and develop surveys
- How to utilize advanced search strategies for developing a deeper knowledge of your subject
- How to use inquiry-based note-taking methods, such as the dialogue journal and research log

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Identify the “research routines” you’ve typically used, and practice new ones appropriate to college-level research.
2. Refine and improve the effectiveness of search terms.
3. Apply research strategies for developing “working knowledge” and “focused knowledge” on your topic.
4. Use a method to analyze and evaluate research sources.
5. Understand and apply new note-taking strategies that will help you analyze sources while you’re researching. Reinforcement of the dialogic approach to note taking, thereby encouraging inquiry-based writing, mitigating plagiarism, and promoting a critical approach to information

DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

1. Describe previous methods you’ve used to find sources in the library. Where do you begin? What helps you find the best information? With what have you struggled in the past, wishing you knew more about it so you could find information more efficiently?
2. How do you usually evaluate the credibility of Web sources when you are doing research? How do you know that a site is credible and reliable? Brainstorm a list of questions to ask of a Web site when evaluating its credibility.
3. What is the most frustrating part of doing research in the library or on the Web? Brainstorm a list of things which might decrease your frustration.

This chapter can be used in multiple ways: It can be assigned with Chapter 10: Writing a Research Essay, after students have focused their research questions and are constructing a working knowledge of their subjects. Then, they can move into deeper searching before returning to Chapter 10 to draft their essays. You can also assign portions of this chapter as they become relevant to the essays you assign. This chapter can also be assigned with Chapter 9: Writing an Ethnographic Essay, or assigned with the section in Chapter 11 on interviewing and evaluating Web sources. Or, with the first essay of the course, have students read the sections in Chapter 11 to learn how the library is organized, how to search on the Internet, how to develop a working knowledge, and how to evaluate Web resources. Then, students will have some basic search knowledge for all their essays, and you can assign the sections on “Developing a Deeper Knowledge” with later essays.

Depending on how much experience students have with a university library, it can be helpful to tour the library before they read this chapter. However, students won’t find the information relevant unless they have a subject important enough to want to learn how to use the Library of Congress subject headings or to do Boolean searches.

As Ballenger notes, researchers now need electronic literacies in order to navigate the information available online. This chapter focuses on search tools, search engines, and search strategies, as well as methods for evaluating Web sources. Spend class time reviewing these strategies, especially if you have access to the Internet in the classroom. Under “Additional Writing Activities” you’ll find practice activities for evaluating Web sources.

Finally, you can use this chapter alongside Chapter 9, as well.

SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS

Google Tips and Tricks: This new sidebar lists strategies for searching Google.

The Working Bibliography: This sidebar presents two examples of entries in a working bibliography, to further encourage students to synthesize what they read, recast it in their own words, and develop a working knowledge of their subject. See also Appendix C, The Annotated Bibliography.

Types of Survey Questions: This sidebar offers a range of questions for surveys, categorized by type.

ADDITIONAL PRINT RESOURCES AND WEB LINKS

“Evaluating Print Sources” from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center
  http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/evaluating-print-sources/

Evaluating Web Resources
  http://www.widener.edu/about/campus_resources/wolfram_library/evaluate/
**ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES**

1. **Developing a Working Knowledge and Focused Knowledge**

   Once you have a tentative topic, do the following:

   a) Use the Library of Congress Authorities Web site to find the appropriate search terms and write them in your research notebook.

   b) Use Figure 11.7 in the chapter and create two sections in your research notebook: one for “working knowledge” and the other for “focused knowledge.” Then, as you go through the following steps, make notes in the appropriate section, using the questions found in Figure 11.7.

   c) Under “Working Knowledge,” respond to the following questions (found in Chapter 11):
      - What are some people currently thinking about the topic? What are the controversies, problems, questions, or theories?
      - Who are some of the individuals or groups that have a stake in the topic?
      - Is there a local angle? Are there people or organizations in the community who might have something to say? Are there local examples of the problem or solution?

   d) Go through the research sequence in Chapter 11 under “A Strategy for Developing Working Knowledge.” Keep notes on what you find.

   e) Under “Focused Knowledge” in your notebook, respond to the following questions found in Chapter 11:
      - Who are key people who have influenced the published conversation on your topic?
      - What has already been said about the topic? Up until now, what are the major themes of the conversation?
      - What is at stake for people? Why is the research question significant?

   f) Go through the research sequence in Chapter 11 under “A Strategy for Developing Focused Knowledge.” Keep notes in the appropriate section of your notebook.

2. **Evaluating Library and Web Sources**

   In this activity, you’ll review your research from your work above (Developing Working and Focused Knowledge) using the strategies for evaluating library and Web resources in Chapter 11.

   - Look at the dates of your sources. How recent are they? How recent do they need to be given your assignment and/or your subject?
• Make a quick list of the authors’ names whose material you’ve found. Then, look at the Works Cited pages of several articles and see how frequently those names appear. If an author is often cited, he or she is likely the most respected and/or authoritative person on the subject.

• How many primary and secondary sources did you find? Do you have more secondary sources than primary? If so, is that appropriate to the assignment, the subject matter, and/or the discipline?

• Review your web sources. What is the ratio of commercial sites to governmental and educational ones? Too many commercial sites can be problematic depending on your subject.

• How many authored Web sites do you have compared to sites without authors? If you have more unauthored sites, you’ll need to do more research and find material with an author’s name.

• Can you tell if the research you found online is also available in print? If so, it has likely undergone more scrutiny than material only published online (with a few exceptions).

• Does the material you found online document its claims?

• Have the Web sites been updated recently?

3. For your research-based essay, try out each of the note-taking strategies listed under “Writing in the Middle” in Chapter 11. Then, after you’ve turned your essay draft in, write a reflective letter to your instructor discussing your experience with each strategy: Which were most effective for you and why? Which were least effective and why? Which enabled you to figure out what you thought about the material? What might you do differently the next time you keep a research notebook?
CHAPTER 12: USING AND CITING SOURCES

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- Using sources in an essay involves controlling those sources and contributing to the conversation in which they are participating.

- Sources serve several purposes in an essay. They offer information that 1) provides a context and background, 2) offers answers to a question, 3) serves as evidence to a claim, 4) complicates an idea or thesis.

- When taking notes, writers must keep in mind how the information is relevant to the purpose of the essay and how the writer him/herself understands that information in his/her own words.

- Summarizing involves understanding the main idea of a passage or text and conveying it briefly in the writer’s own language.

- Paraphrasing involves a closer examination of a text or passage, relayed in the writer’s own language with more detail than a summary.

- Quoting should be used sparingly: to capture a distinctive way of saying something or to analyze or emphasize something an author said. It should also be followed by the author’s commentary on the quotation.

- We cite sources for various reasons: to show the credibility of our ideas and the basis for them, to help readers see where “part of the tree of knowledge in a discipline”—an idea—comes from, and to provide a context for what has already been said.

- Plagiarism takes many forms and is often accidental; it is preventable with effective note-taking strategies.

- Citation methods differ depending on the academic discipline.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. **Use sources effectively and control sources so they don't control you.** Students should see the connections between dialectical note taking (the dialogue journal) and using sources effectively and with integrity.

2. **Practice summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting and apply these to your own work.** Students should understand how to summarize, paraphrase, and quote, as well as when to do so in their essays.

3. **Understand and identify plagiarism to avoid it in your own work.**
4. **Cite sources using MLA and APA documentation styles.** Students should understand why they are required to cite sources, as well as how to do it (including how to read a documentation-style manual).

**Discussion Starters: How to Talk About the Chapter**

Most of your students will have learned summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and citing sources in other English courses, so they will have many beliefs about what those activities mean. While they may be able to offer definitions of each and explain how summary and paraphrase are different, they may not know when to use those strategies as they compose their essays. Discussions in this chapter should focus on the *purposes* for each of these conventions rather than on the distinctions among them. The primary goals in this chapter are to help students control sources by relying less on quotations and more on their own language for the ideas they have considered. The “Tips” sidebars are quite useful for students as they apply what they’ve learned in the chapter. Because research is a part of every writing assignment in the textbook, you might consider assigning this chapter relatively early in the term, not just at the time you assign a specific research-based essay. Doing so will also enable you to emphasize the importance of citations and using sources by repeatedly asking students to reflect on how and why they are doing so.

As with the other chapters, consider discussing student beliefs about using sources before they read Chapter 12. Then follow up the assigned reading with in-class activities that invite students to practice what they’ve learned with their own evolving drafts (see the following “Additional Writing Activities”).

**Prereading Activities**

1. What does “academic honesty” mean to you? What does “academic dishonesty” look like? What qualifies as plagiarism?
2. What is the difference between summarizing and paraphrasing a source? When might a writer use one or the other in an essay?
3. List all the things you’ve learned in the past about what to cite and how to cite sources.
4. List all the things you find confusing about citing sources, quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Then, choose one and do some research on it. Report what you’ve learned.
5. Why do you think you are required to cite sources in your papers? Why is it important to do, beyond the fact your instructor requires it?

**Sidebars: Inquiring into the Details**

**A Taxonomy of Copying:** This sidebar is new to this edition. It details four types of copying, which can help students when you are discussing plagiarism.

**The Common Knowledge Exception:** Students often find it confusing to figure out what is common knowledge and what is not, so this sidebar will help the class begin a conversation about that. It offers examples of common knowledge (i.e., “facts that are widely known and about which there is no controversy”) and then discusses claims that may not be considered common knowledge. The
sidebar lists questions to ask of a piece of information to discover whether it can be considered common knowledge and then offers the advice, \textit{when in doubt, cite it.}

\textbf{Citations That Go with the Flow:} As the title suggests, this sidebar lists strategies for integrating citations smoothly into the flow of sentences and paragraphs, minimizing the experience of citations as stones in the sidewalk around which we need to walk. You might refer to these suggestions during a revision session when students spend time simply considering how citations are placed and formatted.

Two sidebars list all the changes recently made to the MLA and APA Style Manuals.

\textbf{USING THE WRITING ACTIVITIES}

\textbf{Exercise 12.1: The Accidental Plagiarist}

Plagiarism is a sticky issue for students, one that paralyzes some and is ignored by others. Many students are confused by what constitutes academic dishonesty, so this exercise helps them look closely at some paraphrased passages and determine which are plagiarized and why. This is a good in-class activity, one that students begin as individuals and then discuss in small groups. Students learn more about summary and paraphrase in this exercise as well.

An effective follow-up to this exercise is to offer a special workshop day to focus on academic honesty: In pairs or groups of three, students share their drafts and provide the passages they used from which to paraphrase, quote, and/or summarize. Ask them to highlight the portions of their essay where they use sources. Then the partner/group discusses any portions that may be inadvertently plagiarized.

\textbf{ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES}

1. Give students a documented, researched essay, either a student text or a published one. Ask them to choose and read only one or two pages, along with the Works Cited page. Then, ask them to do the following:

   \textbf{Step One:} Underline the author’s name with one color of crayon. Then, on the Works Cited page, underline each source with a different color of crayon. This will help you remember which author is which color.

   \textbf{Step Two:} Work through the essay and underline each part of the essay according to who is speaking. For instance, a direct quotation from one source would be underlined in that source’s color. Any opinions that stem directly from the author, or signal phrases of the author’s choosing, are indicated with the author’s color. For paraphrasing, when the author is summarizing a source in his/her own words, two colors should be used: the source’s and the author’s.

   \textbf{Step Three:} Every part of the essay should be underlined with one color or another. What do you notice about the way the paper looks? Are there blocks of one color, or are they all woven together? What have you learned about integrating your voice and ideas with those of your sources? (For more information on this exercise, see http://www.boisestate.edu/wcenter/ww120.htm)
2. After you've workshopped an early draft of an essay that contains research, choose one of your peers' essays for this activity. It will help the writer visually see how well he/she has integrated his/her voice with the source material and provide ideas for revision.

Have a few different colored crayons or pens nearby.

Repeat Steps One, Two, and Three above.

3. Do some research on academic honesty and plagiarism. How is it defined? By whom? Why is it taken so seriously on college campuses? How do you know if you've plagiarized or been academically dishonest? Search the Internet and the library for at least five articles on these issues. Then, summarize what you've found, including the citations for the articles you've used, and bring it to share with your small group. Discuss what you each discovered, and present it to the class.

4. Questions to use during group workshop:
   • Look closely at the quotes the writer uses: How effectively does the writer comment on/analyze/emphasize the quote, connecting it to the essay or the paragraph's larger purpose? In what ways is this quote being used, and would it be more effective to paraphrase it?
   • Note all the places where the writer is using outside sources, whether quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing. Next to each outside source, write in the margins the purpose the information serves.
   • Focus solely on each citation in the essay and double-check the placement and format, including the format of the Works Cited page.
PART FOUR: RE-INQUIRING

CHAPTER 13: RE-GENRE: REPURPOSING YOUR WRITING FOR MULTIMEDIA GENRES

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- Re-genre is taking something you’ve written and repurposing it into another genre for a different audience and occasion.
- Re-genre is a deep revision strategy that changes how you understand your subject.
- Shifting genre and shifting audience enables helps you build your rhetorical muscle.
- Multimodal expression includes more than one of the five basic modes of communication: linguistic, audio, gestural, visual, and spatial.
- “Form” and “genre” are different; the former refers to the structure of a piece and the latter to the category of texts that have similar aims, audiences, structures, and so on.
- “Mode” is a way of communicating what we want to say.
- “Multimedia” and “multimodal” are different, though related: multimodal means using more than one mode of communication and emphasizes the process of designing a communication; multimedia refers to the technical skills involved in production and emphasizes the product of designing a text.
- This chapter reinforces an awareness of genre conventions that runs throughout the textbook.
- Eight multimodal genres are introduced: slide presentation, infographic, brochure, conference poster, photo essay, audio essay, web page, video public service announcement.

GOALS

1. Analyze the rhetorical implications of repurposing a writing assignment into a different genre.
2. Develop rhetorical goals for a revision of an essay and use them to choose an appropriate multimodal genre.
3. Understand and apply the conventions of a multimodal genre.

DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER

As with the other chapters in this book, prereading activities will focus your students on the ideas in the chapter before they encounter them.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

1. Before students read this chapter, ask them to fastwrite on the following:
a. First, list the types of projects you've done in the past that include more than simply a written text.

b. Choose at least one project from that list and fastwrite about it: describe the project, talk about the challenges you encountered, and explain what you learned as a result.

c. Choose another project on your list and fastwrite about it again using the questions in b. Fastwrite until you have written about at least three projects.

d. Finally, reflect on what you've written: what do you notice? What patterns do you see? Did you encounter similar challenges, learn similar things?

2. As a class, brainstorm all the projects (educational or otherwise) that students have done in the past that could be considered multi-genre or multimodal. Discuss the challenges they encountered; what they learned; what they noticed is different between a written text and, for example, a visual text; and what made the projects successful or not. During the conversation, highlight the ideas/skills that students already bring to this chapter.

**USING THE WRITING ACTIVITIES**

**Exercise 13.1: Re-Genre Pitch:** This activity prompts students to reflect on the piece they would like to re-genre, the rhetorical goals that seem most relevant, and then make a pitch for the multimodal genre that would be most appropriate for those goals/audience. You might assign this activity after students have read the chapter so they have an overview of some options.

**Exercise 13.2: Genre Analysis: Conventions and Best Practices:** This activity prompts students to find at least three examples of the genre they've chosen and then compare them based on purpose and audience, conventions, and rhetorical effectiveness. Then they choose the best example of the genre and make a case for it in a presentation to the class (or a small group). This, too, would work best after students have read the chapter and completed Exercise 13.1, but before they have started the work of re-genre.

**SIDEBARS: INQUIRING INTO THE DETAILS**

**Re-Genre and Re-Flect:** This sidebar encourages metacognition, reflecting on what a student is learning about writing when he/she revises an essay into another genre.

**Levels of Content:** This sidebar suggests using the four levels of content (Level One, Two, Three, Four) when deciding how much information to include when doing a re-genre. The level chosen depends on one's main purpose in communicating.

**Citing Multimodal Content:** As the title suggests, this sidebar discusses how to cite multimodal content.

**ASSIGNMENT DESIGN: SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING A RE-GENRE ASSIGNMENT**

As Ballenger explains in this chapter, re-genre is a deep revision strategy, so the assignment should include at least the following requirements:

1. Choose an assignment from earlier in the semester
2. Revise it into at least one other mode of communication
3. Choose the genre based on audience and purpose and be able to explain why you chose it.

4. Reflect on how the shift in audience and purpose changes the original essay: how do the genre conventions change? What effect does the re-genre have on what you understand about the subject compared to the original draft?

**Writing Projects**

1. Place students in groups of three and assign each group a difference mode of communication to research. Their purpose is to collect good examples of the mode assigned, analyze those examples to highlight the conventions used, and present all of this to the class along with a list of tips for composing in that mode.

2. Students could do something similar to 1, but instead each group chooses a subject and then finds examples of each mode of communication being used to communicate something about that subject. For example, if the group chooses Facebook use among teens as their subject, then they would research it and find examples that use each of the modes of communication. Their goal is to compare the genres and the conventions used, but also to analyze the relationship between the subject matter and the mode of communication.

**Additional Resources: Reading and Web Links**

*NCTE Position Statement on Multimodal Literacies*


CHAPTER 14: REVISION STRATEGIES

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

- Revision means re-seeing a draft; not simply editing it, but reconceiving it and experimenting with new possibilities.
- Writers need to learn how to “divorce the draft” before they can begin re-envisioning it.
- Photography is much like writing and can illustrate how the kind of work that revision can do for ideas is similar to what different photographic strategies can do for photography.
- Writers use specific revision strategies depending on the kind of problem they see in their draft:
  - Problems of purpose
  - Problems with meaning
  - Problems with information
  - Problems with structure
  - Problems of clarity and style

GOALS

- For students to experience what it means to re-envision a draft, to take a different angle on a subject, to experiment with different approaches and take risks when they revise
- For students to learn at least eight different strategies for divorcing the draft and being prepared to revise
- To help students connect particular problems in a draft with concrete revision strategies that they can use for almost any writing they have to do
- For students to see revision as a natural and integral part of their writing process, not a separate stage—one that echoes the recursive, exploratory approach to writing emphasized throughout the textbook

DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER

As with the other chapters in this book, prereading activities will focus your students on the ideas in the chapter before they encounter them. They will help students bring to the surface their beliefs about revision that may limit how they approach that part of the process. Many students say that they don’t know where to begin when they revise other than fixing grammar mistakes, so Chapter 14 presents over two dozen specific exercises which students can use for any essay.
PREREADING ACTIVITIES

1. In your notebook, make a quick list of all the essays that you can remember revising—that is, doing more than editing on the sentence level. What do you notice about your list? Fastwrite for five minutes about your experiences with revision in the past. Then, in the space that follows, respond to the following seed sentences:

   a. For me, revision has been like ____________ (think of as many metaphors and similes as you can).

   b. The three biggest reasons I like/dislike revision are ____________.

   c. In order to learn to revise better, I need to ____________.

2. When writers revise their drafts, what kinds of problems do you think they usually have that prompt them to revise? What kinds of writers revise? Why?

3. As you think about your typical writing process—which strategies are effective for you and which strategies are not—what do you hope you’ll learn about revision that will help you write more effectively overall? In other words, what do you hope this chapter will teach you?

ASSIGNMENT DESIGN: SUGGESTIONS FOR USING REVISION STRATEGIES

Before students are introduced to the twenty-six revision strategies in this chapter, Ballenger spends time addressing the purposes and reasons for revising, as well as ways to understand what revision means. Instead of jumping directly to specific revision strategies, it’s important to spend time with your students talking about their experiences with and beliefs about revision. Many of them will associate revision with editing, and yet editing is only one of many approaches to revising. Students need to understand that returning to the fastwriting and brainstorming work they did to start their essays will help them throughout the writing process, especially after they have a first draft. Here are some key concepts to emphasize at this point:

- Writers revise throughout the writing process, some re-seeing their ideas and the structure of their drafts as they compose it; others wait until a first draft is finished before trying to step outside it to gain a new perspective.

- A crucial part of revising is being able to “divorce the draft”—to set it aside for a while, let go of some of your emotional attachment to it, and come back to it with fresh eyes.

Chapter 14 offers several strategies for divorcing the draft, strategies that run throughout the textbook chapters as well as the revision exercises in Chapter 14.

- Revision involves experimentation. It takes a willingness to dismantle a draft, cut it up and rearrange it, even begin again with a more specific idea than the one with which you began.

- Revision is like taking several photographs of one object, but from different angles, perspectives, and lighting, enabling you to see the object in ways you never might have
between paragraphs, and then the phrases which writers use to signal that relationship. This sidebar explores or argues leads, and these types will be similar to what is found in this sidebar.

Assign the chapter at the end of the term: This chapter can also be assigned in total toward the end of the term, especially if you have designated the last couple of weeks in the course for revision work to prepare for the final portfolio. Assign students to bring in a draft during each class period to workshop, along with at least two revision strategies from this chapter that they’ve completed to produce their revision.

Do a few revisions in class to demonstrate: If many students have not revised in the ways encouraged in Chapter 14, they may resist the activities unless you do a few in class first, and then assign them at various points. Suggesting that students consult only this revision chapter as they prepare final drafts will not ensure that they use any of the strategies nor learn the generative and inquiry-based nature of revision.

Sidebars: Inquiring into the Details
Types of Leads: This sidebar is referred to in Revision Strategy 14.17: Multiple Leads, and it helps writers whose drafts have problems with structure. Here students will find eight different kinds of leads that are often used in nonfiction prose, types with which they can experiment in their own essays to craft their beginnings more consciously. As you discuss each type, you might have examples ready from the textbook readings, from other texts you provide, or texts the students find as they try to understand what each example might look like.

In addition to using this sidebar as part of a revision strategy, students can refer to it as they read some of the essays in the textbook, as a reading strategy, in a sense. Before you begin talking about leads, ask students to look closely at the openings of three or four of the published essays in the textbook, either from the same chapter/genre or from different ones. Then ask them to talk or write about the way the leads work in setting up the essay. From there, they can generate ideas for types of leads, and these types will be similar to what is found in this sidebar.

Explore or Argue?: This sidebar helps students see the association between motives for writing and particular genres.

Transition Flags: In this sidebar, you’ll find six different categories of relationships that often exist between paragraphs, and then the phrases which writers use to signal that relationship. This sidebar
is referred to in Revision Strategy 14.19: Untangling Paragraphs. In order to find the appropriate transition flag, students will need to think about how two paragraphs (or more) are related to each other, something which Revision Strategy 14.21: The Frankenstein Draft covers. In that strategy, the writer cuts up his/her draft by paragraphs, chooses a central paragraph and then sorts the others according to how well they relate to the core. Once they've weeded out paragraphs that don't belong, writers rearrange the remaining paragraphs, ignoring for the moment the need for transitions. You might consider pointing students to the sidebar on transition flags next and ask them to use the language there to describe the relationship among all the paragraphs that they've rearranged. Then they can more easily choose the phrases that are appropriate.

**Using the Writing Activities**

**Problems of Purpose**
The strategies presented in this section help students clarify their purpose for a particular draft. As with all the revision activities in this chapter, they can be assigned to the whole class, assigned to particular students who have a problem with focus and purpose, and/or assigned at the end of every essay before students turn in a final draft (or at the end of the term before they turn in the portfolio). Have students do some in class and some outside of class in their journals.

**Revision Strategy 14.1: Dialogue with Dave** prompts students to articulate their primary motive for writing the essay by writing a dialogue about it with Dave (fictional character).

**Revision Strategy 14.2: What Do You Want to Know About What You Learned?**
engages students in thinking about the questions they still have, or discovering a new purpose based on answering “What do I understand about this topic now that I didn't understand before I started writing about it?”

**Revision Strategy 14.3: Finding the Focusing Question** can be done as a whole class or in groups, and it helps writers find their focusing question. Ballenger also offers several criteria for deciding which of the questions generated during this activity might be a good focus for the next draft. The activity also prompts students to find the kind of question they are asking—which connects to their motive and to a genre.

**Revision Strategy 14.4: What's the Relationship?** focuses on a particular kind of purpose which essays often have, that of exploring a relationship between two or more things. It helps students identify the relationship which their essay may explore and then revise it to bring greater clarity to that relationship.

**Problems with Meaning**
These activities help students discover and/or articulate their central idea and then refine it. The first four are most appropriate for early drafts and sketches, and the last one focuses on stating the thesis specifically and clearly. Consider talking with students about the various words and phrases which teachers use to describe this concept of the central idea so that everyone in class “speaks the same language” and can easily move from one instructor's way of discussing it to another's (see the sidebar “Terms to Describe Dominant Meaning”).

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Revision Strategy 14.5: Harvest Meanings from the Draft offers three strategies for discovering the emerging thesis in a draft, ways of rereading a sketch or early draft for clues about the writer’s presentation. This activity is useful either in class or at home; it can also be done in pairs when students turn in a sketch, so that a reader is looking for clues in the sketch.

Revision Strategy 14.6: “Looping Toward a Thesis” is a good exercise for students’ journals, at home or during class. As Ballenger explains, the writing prompts move them back and forth between their ideas and what they think about them, generating and judging, between specifics and generalities. This activity is helpful when the writer hasn’t quite pinned down a thesis, especially in longer drafts where many sources must be are analyzed into an overall thesis.

Revision Strategy 14.7: Reclaiming Your Topic, as Ballenger notes, is a version of 14.6, but is focused for research-based essays.

Revision Strategy 14.8: The Believing Game works well in helping students move away from a simplistic, possibly dualistic perspective on an idea. Students are asked to play the believing and the doubting game with their subject and then refine the thesis to reflect their deeper understanding of what began as an either/or stance.

Methods for Refining Your Thesis

Revision Strategy 14.9: Questions as Knives prompts students to “cut a broad thesis down to size” by restating it several times, using the why, where, when, who, and what questions each time. Have students do this in class, and then share their resulting thesis with a small group. For a genre such as the personal essay where the thesis may be more implicit than explicit, this revision strategy is still very useful because it forces the writer to articulate the main idea of the essay and revise it to “show” that thesis rather than state it clearly.

Revision Strategy 14.10: Qualifying Your Claim prompts students to “rigorously examine” their claims by considering 1) what needs to be qualified and 2) what objections others might make. Both activities lead to a more specific, more persuasive, more thoughtful claim, and are appropriate for most of the assignments in the book.

Problems with Information

These four strategies help students whose focus may have changed, possibly reducing the importance of the information and details that were appropriate for the earlier draft.

Revision Strategy 14.11: Explode a Moment is most appropriate for essays with narrative structure. Students are asked to find the most significant moment(s) in the draft and slow down the scene by focusing on details. Writers use this strategy to emphasize certain parts of a narrative; it is an incredibly effective technique for students whose essays seem to treat every moment equally and briefly, or for students who can’t figure out which moments are most significant to the draft’s overall point. Before you ask students to do this exercise, talk about some examples of slowing down a moment, possibly from the readings in the textbook in Chapter 4.
Revision Strategy 14.12: Beyond Examples helps students do more than simply add examples to illustrate a point or provide evidence. It details five different strategies for providing more information—and deciding where that information is needed—offering a way of reading a draft to look for gaps and generate ideas for revision.

Revision Strategy 14.13: Research the Conversation focuses on gathering more research on a subject as part of the revision process for any essay.

Revision Strategy 14.14: Backing Up Your Assumptions builds on the discussion in Chapter 7 about warrants and prompts students to consider the warrants behind their claims. After listing all the assumptions they have made, students are asked to consider those that might need more evidence or backing in order to be persuasive.

Problems with Structure
All of these revision strategies are useful with any essay which students write, and several of them are worth assigning for every essay to emphasize certain principles of writing. While the first strategy outlines a structure for students to use, the others work not by imposing a structure, but by asking students to discover a structure that is most effective based on what they are trying to say. These strategies, then, balance the need for students to learn particular academic structures with the need for students to build a structure around the ideas that emerge as they discover what they have to say. New to this section is a description of two basic structures—narrative, which is organized around experience, and logic, which is organized around reason and logic. Combining these two structures can result in an ethnographic essay, organized around both experience and reason.

Revision Strategy 14.15: Beginnings, Middles, Ends, and the Work They Do prompts students to look at the beginning, middle, and end of their drafts and then analyze how they work, how they function, what purpose they serve. The diagram in the chapter lists what each section should do, and students are asked to revise based on how well their draft reflects those purposes.

Revision Strategy 14.16: Reorganizing Around Thesis and Support emphasizes a thesis-support structure common for academic writing, illustrating for students what that kind of structure looks like and then asking them to revise their essays accordingly, either to sharpen the existing thesis-support structure or to reorganize the draft based on this structure. One way to help students learn when such a structure is necessary for an essay is to ask them to revise an informally structured draft into this more formal approach and then reflect on how the draft and its meaning have changed as a result—and why. You might ask students to do this with a published essay as well, such as the essays in Chapter 3 or 4.

Revision Strategy 14.17: Multiple Leads hones in on the beginnings of essays—leads—and asks students to begin revising their draft by composing four different openings and then discussing with a small group which one is most effective and why. This activity can be done with every essay which the students write, sometimes between a sketch and a workshop draft, or sometimes in class right after a workshop. Using this activity for every draft emphasizes how
beginnings (leads) work, focuses students’ attention on crafting them carefully, and helps them internalize the principles about leads that will guide their writing in the future.

**Revision Strategy 14.18: The Frankenstein Draft** is adapted from Peter Elbow’s cut-and-paste exercise, where students cut up a draft, choose a central paragraph, and cull the rest of the paragraphs based on their relevance to the central one. It’s best done during class time (most students will not do it at home, thinking it’s too much like kindergarten, but will happily do it during class). This is another great strategy to assign for every essay that students write, most likely after a workshop, because it makes them reflect on the choices they’ve made in the composing and on the purposes of each paragraph. An alternative approach is to bring to class a published essay that you have cut apart and ask the students in small groups to reassemble it based on clues in the paragraphs. Then discuss how they knew how to reassemble it, what the central paragraph was, and the clues the writer left to show the relationship between paragraphs and the purpose of each. Then do this revision strategy with their drafts.

**Revision Strategy 14.19: Reverse Outline** asks students to compose an informal outline of their essay in order to examine more closely the way the essay is organized and what other ways might be more effective.

**Problems of Clarity and Style**

These strategies begin by illustrating a particular principle of style and then asking students to reread their draft focusing only on that issue. Most appropriate when a draft is nearly final, these activities can be done at home, but may work best during class time when you can offer more illustrations of the principles in each and put students in pairs to help each other understand it and apply it to their writing.

**Solving Problems of Clarity**

**Revision Strategy 14.20: The Three Most Important Sentences** is new to this chapter, and asks students to focus on 1) the very first sentence of the draft, 2) the very last line of the first paragraph, and 3) the very last line of the essay. Ballenger explains the importance of these three sentences, then presents questions students can ask of each that will lead them to revise.

**Revision Strategy 14.21: Untangling Paragraphs** asks students to examine the paragraphs of a draft closely in terms of length, integrity or coherence, and organization and emphasis. The activity begins by using a published essay to illustrate how paragraphs should be linked together and crafted.

**Revision Strategy 14.22: Cutting Clutter** shows students how to cut the clutter of unnecessary words in their sentences, identifying the most common words and phrases that should be on the chopping block.

**Revision Strategy 14.23: The Actor and the Action Next Door** illustrates the stylistic principle that the subjects of sentences are like actors and should be relatively close to the actions they perform.
**Improving Style**

**Revision Strategy 14.24: Actors and Actions** focuses on revising for strong verbs and visible actors rather than passive voice and weak verbs.

**Revision Strategy 14.25: Smoothing the Choppiness** illustrates how sentences create rhythms and then offers a strategy for students to consider the rhythm of their own sentences.

**Revision Strategy 14.26: Fresh Ways to Say Things** asks students to pay attention to clichés and worn-out expressions in their writing.

**Additional Writing Activities**

1. Chapter 14 explains five categories of revision: problems of purpose, meaning, information, structure, and clarity and style. As a writer, however, you won’t necessarily remember these categories—you’ll just sense you have something in the draft that doesn’t work. So, to remember the general idea of each category, create a list of questions or responses you might have for/to your draft that corresponds to each category. In other words, how will you know what kinds of problems your draft has?

2. Return to one of the drafts you’ve written for class, reread it, and sketch out a revision plan based on the problems you and your workshop group have identified. In a letter to your instructor, describe the revision strategies from Chapter 14 that you believe will help you the most, given the problems in this draft.

3. Read a peer’s draft and note, at the end of it, all of the revision strategies from Chapter 14 you think would be most helpful to him or her.

4. **Believing and Doubting** (from the Fourth Edition):

   **Step One:** 5 min: **Play the “Believing Game”**

   Give the author, performer, text, or performance the benefit of the doubt. Suspend criticism.

   1. What seems true or truthful about what is said, shown, or argued?
   2. How does it confirm your own experiences or observations of the same things?
   3. What did you like or agree with?
   4. Where is it strongest, most compelling, most persuasive?
   5. How does it satisfy your criteria for being good, useful, convincing, or moving?

   **Step Two:** 5 min: **Play the “Doubting Game”**

   Adopt a critical stance. Look for holes, weaknesses, omissions, problems.

   1. What seems unbelievable or untrue?
   2. What does it fail to consider or consider inadequately?
   3. Where is the evidence missing or insufficient, or where do the elements not work together effectively?
4. How does it fail to meet your criteria for good in this category of thing?
5. Where is it the least compelling or persuasive? Why?

3) **Step Three:** 2 min: Summarize

1. Construct a sentence (a thesis) that expresses both your subject’s strengths and weaknesses.

   Although ___ succeeds (or fails) in ___, it mostly ___.

2. Example:

   Although reality television presents viewers with an often interesting glimpse into how ordinary people handle their fifteen minutes of celebrity, it mostly exaggerates life by creating drama where there often is none.

5. **Revising for Structure: Collage or Segmented Essay Revision**

   **Step One:** Choose an essay you are working on for the portfolio. In your journal, make the following lists about your draft:

   - Who are all the main characters? Number them in their order of importance in your essay (who is a major character—that is, crucial to the story—and who is minor?).
   - What are the recurring images in the draft (e.g., the metaphor of a quilt keeps coming up, the color red, etc.)
   - List all the themes you currently see in the draft. Does the essay seem to be about friendship? Independence? Coming to terms with new responsibilities, such as marriage or parenthood? What is your essay’s main point? List all the places where the narrative takes place. This could mean you start in a bedroom and then you’re in the mountains, and later you’re in another country.
   - Briefly list the chronology of events in the essay (in linear form): What happened first? And then? And then? You might label this list “First, Second, Third,” and then, next to those labels, briefly describe the main idea you’re conveying with that event. Is it background for something else? Is it the climax of the story? The resolution?

   **Step Two:** Write out what you see as the central tension in the essay. Remember that tension can mean two or more ideas that readers don’t expect to be connected, two ideas/events/themes which seem opposing or contradictory, questions that spur the essay, the writer’s desire to figure out an event or emotion, a conflict between people or ideas, “what-happens-next” narrative tension, and so on. Tension makes the reader want to read on and lets us know what’s at stake in the subject for you and for us.
**Step Three:** Look over the lists you’ve just made and star the places where the tension is illustrated most strongly. It might be in a particular event you listed in the chronology, in a theme, or in one or more of the main characters.

**Step Four:** Keeping in mind your central tension, draw six or more boxes on a page in your journal. Based on the work you’ve done above, brainstorm segments of a draft, putting a different segment or idea in each box. Choose things that best show the main idea/theme/tension in the essay. Experiment with different structures for a while, creating a separate page for each idea. Draw lines between/among the boxes to connect them. (For more ideas on how to segment, see the handout “Strategies for Segmenting Essays.”)

**Step Five:** Cut your draft into sections—either paragraph-by-paragraph or scene-by-scene. You need to completely forget the original structure of the draft. Choose one of the ideas you had in #3 and rearrange the sections to reflect that. You may need to compose new sections or revise current ones.

You might, for example, write all the scenes from the past in present tense (“I see the lake shimmering in the moonlight. I walk up to the bridge.”), and then the scenes from the present in the past tense.

You might change points of view, writing a scene first from your perspective and then from the perspective of another person involved in the story.

You might need to expand the time of a particular scene because you realize now how important it is. Or, you may want to collapse time, making the scene briefer because it’s less important.

**Step Six:** Try at least two possible ways to segment the essay. When you’re finished, respond to the following questions in your journal:

*When I first drafted this essay, I thought it was about ____. Now, I think it’s about ____. What do you see in the essay now that you didn’t when you started? How has the meaning of the essay changed as a result of segmenting it? What are its effects on your readers?*

5. **Strategies for Segmenting Essays**

**Juxtaposition**

- putting sections/ideas/scenes next to one another so they comment on each other

**Parallelism**

- alternating or intertwining one continuous strand with another (past with present, story with historical background, etc.)
Patterning

- choosing an extra-literary design and arranging literary segments accordingly (using Tarot cards to organize the piece, a recipe, kinds of birds [as Terry Tempest Williams does in her book *Refuge*], directions for doing something, etc.). The design works not only to organize but also to highlight a theme and connect two seemingly unrelated things.

Accumulation

- arranging a series of segments or scenes or episodes so that they add, enrich, or alter meaning with each addition, perhaps reinterpreting earlier segments in later ones, up to a final segment

Journaling

- actually writing in episodes or reconstructing the journal experience in drafts—using excerpts from journals that alternate with other sections, and bringing together disparate topics in the journal (as in the essays on quilting, writing, and language)

6. Revising for Structure: Working with Time

Time Expansion

For this exercise, choose a key scene or idea in your essay, one which you want to emphasize. Then, write up a scene where you expand time—that is, slow down time and describe the observation/idea/scene in as much detail as possible, emphasizing the senses and putting us in the moment. Develop this scene over several paragraphs. Use dialogue if it’s appropriate.

Time Contraction

Then, choose a moment in your draft where you feel you’ve lingered too long on something that isn’t very important to your overall purpose. Take an expanded scene and cut it in half, covering the same observation/idea/scene in half the space yet conveying the same (if not more) ideas. If you don’t have such a scene from your draft, do this exercise with the time expansion you’ve just finished (above).

Reflection

Then, in your journal, fastwrite for five minutes about what your essay gains and loses by expanding or contracting these observations/scenes/ideas. What changes? What new things were revealed in expanding or contracting? How do you perceive these observations/scenes/ideas differently after revising them? Where else might you try a time expansion or contraction in your draft?
7. Revising for Purpose, Meaning, Information, and Structure: Focus on Argument Strategies

With your own draft, spend time reading it closely and answering the following questions. Doing so will give you ideas for revising.

**Ethos, or Establishing Your Credibility/Authority**

- Put a star beside the places where you show your knowledge about the issue (i.e., where you speak in a confident voice, where you give evidence for your claims, etc.). Where might you need to offer more information for the reader? Where might the reader doubt your credibility?

- Mark the places where you show “fairness” to other views, respecting opposing views and/or conceding to counterarguments. If you don’t find many, or any, consider the effect on your readers: Will they trust you? Will they feel you have considered their possible views? Consider how you might show more respect and fairness to others’ views.

- Mark the places where you build a bridge to your audience. Where do you ground your arguments in shared values and assumptions of your readers? This quality of *ethos* is clearly connected to *pathos* and *logos*, so you’ll need to look at this issue again.

**Pathos, or Appealing to Beliefs and Emotions**

- Look for places where you have considered your readers’ questions, beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes toward your subject. Where do you need to ground your argument more in the values and beliefs which you and your audience share?

- Consider how well you use concrete language, images, and details to create positive feelings (or negative feelings, if that is what you believe the audience needs to feel).

- Consider how well you use specific examples and illustrations that aren’t simply dry facts and statistics, but “real” examples that have emotional power and significance.

- Consider how well you use narrative to evoke certain feelings about the subject—if you want your readers to sympathize with one group of people in your argument, how might you accomplish that in narrative?

- Look closely at the metaphors, words, and analogies you use—do they have the connotations you desire, those that reinforce your argument and evoke emotions that are consistent with your argument?

**Logos, or Organizing Your Argument Logically**

- Consider your organization: How effective is it? You have many structures from which to choose:
• unknown to known and vice versa
• problem to solution
• cause to effect or effect to cause
• narrative
• question to answer
• simple to complex
• general to specific or vice versa
• comparison contrast
• least important argument to most important
• classical argument structure
• delayed thesis

• Consider how well you lay out your arguments: Are your claims clearly stated and explained with reasons and/or evidence from personal experience, observations, interviews, facts and examples, summaries of research, and testimony of experts? If you primarily have to use reasons that aren’t supported with specific “facts,” consider how well you have explained those reasons and offered the necessary qualifications.

• Choose two of your main claims and play the doubting game: Fastwrite in your journal for at least five minutes, doubting as much as you can about your claim, reasons, and evidence. Do this for at least two claims. Then, respond to the doubts you’ve raised. Which of those might need to be in your essay and why?

8. Work with Beginnings and Endings

Probably you’ve been talking to students throughout the course about what makes an effective beginning and ending to an essay depending on the genre and the expectations of the audience. The following activities invite students to consider what leads and endings do—their purposes and strategies—and then to consider the various types of leads and endings they might use in their own essays as they revise. You can use these activities at any point in the course.

Beginning an Essay

Group Work on Leads

Each group will have at least two different leads from published essays. Read through them and then answer the following. You will present your answers to the class using the transparency.
• Describe the tone and circle the words that convey it.

• What relationship is being set up with the reader? How can you tell?

• What do you expect to be the essay's topic? What central question will the essay answer?

• If you had to describe this lead as a particular strategy or technique, what would it be?

**Individual Work with Drafts:** Now you'll apply what you've learned to your own writing.

• What relationship do you want to set up with your reader? Why?

• What tone do you want to convey?

• What do readers need to know before they read the rest of the essay? For example, do they need background information, setting, a reason to be interested, or something else?

• What central question are you exploring?

• Now, compose three different leads that reflect your answers to the above questions.

• Share these with your partner, discussing which ones seem most effective and why.

**Ending an Essay**

**Step One:** Find at least three published essays that you admire (or choose at least three from *The Curious Writer*). Reread the endings of each. Take notes on why the endings work and how. (Are some endings more appropriate to certain genres of nonfiction? What do you expect endings to do, and how do you know when they've failed to do that?)

**Group Work on Endings:**

**Step Two:** Talk in your groups about what you've found and look for patterns. What common moves do endings seem to make? What common purposes do they seem to serve? If leads create expectations, what do endings do?

**Step Three:** Create categories for the types of endings writers might choose, similar to the categories found under “Inquiring into the Details”). Be prepared to share examples in class.

**Step Four:** Make a list of the questions writers should ask themselves and of their essay as they try to create an effective ending.
Individual Work with Drafts:

**Step Five:** Choose an essay to revise, and rewrite the ending in three different ways using the categories and examples we discussed in these steps.

**COURSE HANDOUTS**

On the following pages you'll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
BEGINNING AN ESSAY

Group Work on Leads

Each group will have at least two different leads from published essays. Read through them and then answer the following. You will present your answers to the class using the transparency.

- Describe the tone and circle the words that convey it.
- What relationship is being set up with the reader? How can you tell?
- What do you expect to be the essay's topic? What central question will the essay answer?
- If you had to describe this lead as a particular strategy or technique, what would it be?

Individual Work with Drafts: Now you'll apply what you've learned to your own writing.

- What relationship do you want to set up with your reader? Why?
- What tone do you want to convey?
- What do readers need to know before they read the rest of the essay? For example, do they need background information, setting, a reason to be interested, etc.?
- What central question are you exploring?
- Now, compose three different leads that reflect your answers to the above questions.
- Share these with your partner, discussing which ones seem most effective and why.

ENDING AN ESSAY

Step One: Find at least three published essays that you admire (or choose at least three from The Curious Writer). Reread the endings of each. Take notes on why the endings work and how. (Are some endings more appropriate to certain genres of nonfiction? What do you expect endings to do, and how do you know when they've failed to do that?)

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Step Two: Talk in your groups about what you've found and look for patterns. What common moves do endings seem to make? What common purposes do they seem to serve? If leads create expectations, what do endings do?
**Step Three:** Create categories for the types of endings writers might choose, similar to the categories found under “Inquiring into the Details”). Be prepared to share examples in class.

**Step Four:** Make a list of the questions writers should ask themselves and of their essay as they try to create an effective ending.

**Individual Work with Drafts:**

**Step Five:** Choose an essay to revise, and rewrite the ending in three different ways using the categories and examples we discussed in these steps.
APPENDIX A: THE WRITER’S WORKSHOP

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES

• Peer review enables writers to experience being read by others, encountering a “real” audience, and hearing responses to their words.

• Workshops can help writers “divorce the draft” and then see new potential in their essays.

• Responding to other people’s drafts helps the students practice using the language for writing that they are learning in class; it shows the writers options they may not have considered. Writers will also get practical revision suggestions.

• There are many models for workshopping: full-class workshops, small-group workshops, and one-on-one peer review.

• Writers and readers have different responsibilities and roles during workshops, and they need to be conscious of those roles in order to be effective responders.

• There are many methods for responding during group workshop, depending on the stage of the draft and what the writer needs:
  o No-response workshop
  o Initial-response workshop
  o Narrative-of-thought workshop
  o Instructive-lines workshop
  o Purpose workshop
  o Graphing-reader-interest workshop
  o Sum-of-the-parts workshop
  o Thesis workshop
  o Editing workshop
  o Reflection on the workshop itself

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Understand the purpose of peer review. Better understanding of the multiple benefits of workshops and of seeking response to drafts.
2. **Select peer-review strategies that are most likely to address problems in a draft.**
   Experience with a variety of peer-review formats designed for particular purposes, as well as greater knowledge of strategies for workshopping.

3. **Recognize typical problems with group work and solutions that will address them.**
   Increased understanding of the roles assumed in workshops and more effective problem-solving through conflicts. Deeper understanding of how workshop groups function, including strategies for changing those groups that do not function well.

**DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER**

Your students will undoubtedly have varied experiences with peer review, so you’ll need to spend class time talking about those experiences, as well as students’ fears and concerns. The prereading activities below can help you begin those conversations before students read the first section of the chapter (before “Methods of Responding”).

**PREREADING ACTIVITIES**

1. Describe your best/worst workshop experiences. As you write, explain what factors contributed to a good workshop experience; do the same for your poor one. Then, note three of the most important qualities you desire for your workshop group in this class.

2. When you hear the words *workshop,* *peer review,* or *peer-response group,* what comes to mind? What anxieties do workshops raise for you? What do you find enjoyable about workshops? Why?

3. What kind of role do you usually play in a workshop group? Listener? Initiator? Opinion giver? Encourager? (To name a few.) Explain this role and how you believe it helps the group dynamic.

4. **Workshopaphobia**
   
   **Step One:** In your journal, fastwrite for three minutes in response to these questions: How do you feel about yourself as a writer? How do you feel about your writing?
   - What are your biggest fears about sharing your writing with others?
   - Imagine, for a moment, the worst thing that could happen.
   - Imagine the best thing.
   
   **Step Two:** Finish this exercise by completing the simile:
   
   *Sharing my writing with others is like_____.*
Step Three: Discuss these entries in small groups or with the entire class. Then, generate a list of qualities of a really good workshop group, one which you believe would be the most satisfying for you.

5. Workshopping for the First Time

The first time you do group workshops in class, have students read “The Writer’s and Reader’s Responsibilities” in Appendix A, and then spend time in class discussing 1) the purposes and benefits of peer review, 2) the responsibilities of writers and readers, and 3) what can go wrong during a workshop and what strategies can help change the experience.

Students can better synthesize this portion of the chapter if they create, in groups, a handout for peer workshops that lists the following:

- Writer’s responsibilities (in the students’ own words)
- Reader’s responsibilities
- General guidelines and rules for responding
- Kinds of problems and the strategies the group will use to respond to them

Then, choose particular response formats for each essay you assign, depending on what seems most useful. Alternatively, ask students to choose the response format that is most appropriate for their draft.

Using the Writing Activities

The workshop formats listed begin with the least directive kind of response and progress to more directive. You and/or your students can choose response formats that are appropriate to the stage of the draft and what the writer most needs.

Students, however, will continue to need guidance and suggestions for how to respond to each other’s work—learning how to select a focus; how to phrase comments as questions that invite the writer to revise (rather than judgments or commands); and how to tell what is and isn’t effective given the audience, purpose, rhetorical context, and genre expectations.

It is also important to ask students to reflect on each workshop (the last two pages of the chapter) so they can sort through all the responses, decide which is most important, and plan for revision.

Additional Writing Activities

1. Group Problem Solving

This activity (from the 4th edition) will be necessary once groups run into problems. When the group identifies problems, have members do this exercise. Students will take more responsibility for their roles in groups if regular self-evaluation and problem solving occur.
Step One: Choose a facilitator and a recorder. The facilitator times each step, directs questions to each participant, and makes sure everyone participates. The recorder takes notes on newsprint.

1. Discuss the patterns of problems identified by group members. Do writers seem dissatisfied? Do readers feel like they're performing poorly?
2. What is behind these problems? Brainstorm a list.
3. What might be done to change the way the group operates? You must come up with at least one concrete idea that you agree to try.

Step Two: At the next workshop session, set aside five minutes at the end to discuss whether the change improved the group's performance. Is there something else you should try?

2. Finding a Role: Refer students to the types of roles that people tend to play in groups before they begin their first workshop:

   Roles That Help Groups Get Things Done
   
   **Initiators:** "Here’s how we might proceed with this."
   **Information seekers:** "What do we need to know to help the writer?"
   **Information givers:** "This seems to be an important example."
   **Opinion seekers:** "What do you think, Al?"
   **Opinion givers:** "I think this works."
   **Clarifiers:** "We all seem to be saying that the lead doesn’t deliver, right?"
   **Elaborators:** "I agree with Tom, and would add . . . ."
   **Summarizers:** "I think we’ve discussed the thesis problem enough. Should we move on to the evidence?"

   Roles That Help Maintain Group Harmony
   
   **Encouragers:** "I love that idea, Jen."
   **Expressivists:** "My silence isn’t because I’m not moved by the essay, but I’m still trying to figure out why. Is that why you’re quiet, Leah?"
   **Harmonizers:** "I think we disagree about this, but that’s okay. Let’s move on to discussing this next page."
   **Compromisers:** "Maybe both Richard and Joseph are right, particularly if we look at it this way . . . ."
   **Gatekeepers:** "Jon, we haven’t heard anything from you yet."

3. Group Self-Evaluation

   This exercise appeared in the first edition of the textbook, and it is useful to have students use it after each workshop so they can continually reflect on what is working well and what needs to be improved.
Check the box that applies.

a) Overall, how effectively did your group work together today?
   - Poorly
   - Adequately
   - Well
   - Extremely well

b) How would you evaluate the participation of group members?
   - Participation was limited to a few people.
   - Participation was adequate, although more people could have been actively participating.
   - Participation was good; only a few people were inactive.
   - Participation was excellent; everyone was involved.

c) How would you rate your own performance today?
   - Poor
   - Fair
   - Good
   - Excellent

d) If you shared a draft in the workshop today, were you satisfied with the responses? Were they helpful?
   - Very unsatisfied
   - Unsatisfied
   - Somewhat satisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Very satisfied
   - Not sure

e) What one thing could your group change—or could you do—that would improve how the group works together? (Answer briefly.)

4. In-Class Workshop

   (This is most appropriate for the personal essay.)

   a) Choose a paper on which to work. (The author should be prepared to take notes.)
b) Have each group member (including the author) discuss two things he or she liked, found interesting, or enjoyed about the essay.

c) Have each person in the group discuss one thing he/she found confusing, a specific place that didn't work, or a suggestion for revision.

d) As a group, make a list of questions (about six) after reading the essay.

Use the following list of common problems with first drafts, and have the author choose one aspect upon which to focus in the workshop. While the author can request group members’ help in deciding what aspect is the most valuable, he/she should make the final decision.

**Focus**

As a group, make a list of at least five ideas, feelings, or impressions the reader might have after reading this essay. These ideas, feelings, or impressions should be something of value to which almost any reader can relate but not necessarily what most readers would automatically infer. They may not actually be part of the paper as it exists but they are things the story *could* say. Discuss each focus and brainstorm details and incidents that might help communicate it.

**Details**

Ask the author to select one paragraph. As a group, underline all the general details (small, soft, fast food, beautiful). Circle specific details (McDonald’s, smell of butter and onions in a frying pan, steady enough to guide a carpenter’s pencil along a square). Discuss the differences. Which kind of details do you like better? Why? Work as a group to add or change details to a couple of sentences of the author's choice. Group members may want to ask the author questions about details in which they are interested (e.g., “What do you mean by the ‘smell of trout’?” “You said your friend was angry. How could you tell?”)

**So What?**

As a group, mark all the places in the paper where the author reflects (gives commentary on or thought about) on details, an incident, a story, or an idea. How often does it happen? If reflection exists, does it help you understand the essay's meaning? If there is little or none, how would the author’s adding some change the paper? Find several places where reflection could be inserted and discuss what kind of things the author might reflect on at this point. Identify any points where the reflection is ineffective and discuss why.
Time

Identify the time period which the essay covers (ten minutes, three years). Does the essay include everything that happened during that time or just a few incidents? How does the author’s treatment of time affect your interest in his/her writing? As a group, identify one moment (or brief incident) that is most significant to the essay’s meaning (this may be included in the essay or may be something that the author did not include but has mentioned to you). Help the author brainstorm details, reasons for the importance of the moment, etc. (You will probably end up asking questions such as: How did you feel? What did it smell like? You don’t mention your teacher, was she there?) You may also want to discuss using flashbacks or other elements that play with time.

5. Guiding Your Readers’ Responses

After you’ve read Appendix A in The Curious Writer, you’ll have a good sense of the very different types of workshops possible in this class. In addition, you’ll know which kinds of responses are most helpful for particular stages in your writing process. For this activity, choose which workshop format/kinds of responses you think are most appropriate for the draft you’re workshopping.*

1. First, write a letter to your readers which answers the following questions:
   a. With what did you struggle the most in this draft?
   b. What do you believe works well in this draft? Why?
   c. What have you learned about writing this kind of essay from drafting this one?
   d. How do you want us to respond to your draft? (See Step Two below.)

   You might leave notes on the draft itself so we know where you are struggling and need help (or places where you know the draft isn’t working, but you just didn’t have time to revise it yet).

2. When you answer this last question (d), choose the two kinds of responses from Chapter 14 (or Sharing and Responding) that you think will help you most. How would you like us to respond? Which of those approaches seems most appropriate for where you are in your writing?

   *For instructors: you might also refer students to some of Peter Elbow’s types of responses found in Sharing and Responding (McGraw/Hill), where he describes the workshop process and outlines eleven different kinds of responses that group members might use.

4. Drafting Workshop for the Profile Essay

   **Ten-Minute-Description Fastwrite:** Describe your profile subject (e.g., make lists of details or of words that describe the person physically, specific personality traits, smells,
events, or surroundings). Try to create a single sentence that describes the subject but do not try to make it perfect. Then, write another one-sentence description and yet another. Don’t stop writing even to think. Just describe.

**Five-Minute-Dominant-Impression Fastwrite:** Now skip a few lines and write about the dominant impression you have of the person. You may include some description, but this time you might also include things, people, places, or stories from your own life or the world around you that remind you of the person. You’re trying to capture where the person fits in the world, as well as how the person speaks to your experience and the experiences of your readers.

**Five-Minute Fastdraw** (to give your hand a break!): Using the crayons provided, draw a picture that you associate with your subject. It may be a portrait, an object that makes you think of the person, a story that he/she told you, or even an abstract impression—whatever comes to mind. Don’t worry about your possible perceived lack of artistic talent or making your drawing look good. Just draw.

**Five-Minute-Story Fastwrite:** Think of a story your profile subject told you. Brainstorm details and information that will help you tell the story better, but don’t necessarily tell the story itself. Make lists of details you could use to tell the story, write some dialogue (don’t worry about punctuation), and write a few different leads to that specific story.

**Ten-Minute-Focus Web/List:** Create a list or web to help you explore possible focuses for your profile. Brainstorm each of the following categories: 1) Questions your profile might explore or try to answer, 2) Problems and issues your profile could address, and 3) Groups or types of people that your profile could help readers understand better. Don’t stop writing, even if all you can come up with are obvious or off-the-wall ideas. Try to keep a balance among the number of ideas in each category. See if you can fill up the entire page.

**Reread:** Check your writing again, underlining or marking ideas, words, descriptions, and so forth, that you find especially interesting or surprising.

**Additional Info:** Make a list of information you still need to obtain (additional questions you have, details you’d like to know, etc.). Write down how you plan to find it.

5. **Card Activity**

This is an exercise to jumpstart your writing. Using notecards or cut-up pieces of paper, make a collection of all the information you have on your profile subject. Write each piece of information on a different card. Each card might contain a direct quote, a physical description, a word or two that reminds you of a story the person told, a general impression you got from your fastwrites, a surprising word you used in a fastwrite, an object you associate with the person, a question or issue you might want to explore, a possible focus, or the like. Place the cards out in front of you (the more you have the better). Try grouping them in interesting ways, not just all the descriptions in one pile and all the quotes in another. Look for connections or combinations that are surprising or spark your interest in
some way. Play with your groupings, discard any cards that don’t seem to fit or aren’t very interesting, and add things you belatedly remember. Once you have an interesting group, try labeling it (this is an excellent source for titles). Put the groups in an order in which you might like to write about them. Try fastwriting on a selected group to figure out what the pieces of information say to each other.

6. **Workshop on Argument Essay**

For each of your peers’ essays, fill out this checklist. Then, at the end of each section, list suggestions you have for the writer on how to revise his/her essay to be more effective.

**Ethos, or establishing credibility/authority**

1. How well does the writer establish his/her credibility?

2. How well does the writer demonstrate fairness to other views, dealing with and respecting the opposition?

3. How well does the writer build a bridge to his/her audience by grounding arguments in shared values and assumptions?

**Pathos, or appealing to beliefs and emotions**

1. How well has the writer considered readers’ questions, beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes toward the subject?

2. How well does the writer use concrete language, images, and details that are consistent with the writer’s tone and purpose (that is, creating a negative or positive feeling for the reader)?

3. How well are the specific examples and illustrations conveyed? Do they have emotional power and significance, or are they simply dry numbers and statistics that, while important, don’t encourage the reader to pay attention to them?

4. If the writer uses a narrative (that is, tells stories), how well does it evoke the feelings in the reader that the writer wants?

5. Look closely at the metaphors, words, and analogies which the writer uses. Do they have the connotations the writer wants, connotations that reinforce his or her argument?

**Logos, or organizing the argument logically**

1. How effective is the organization of the draft?

2. How well does the writer clearly state and explain his/her arguments with reasons and/or evidence from personal experience, observations, interviews, facts and examples, summaries of research, and testimony of experts? If the writer doesn’t
have concrete facts to support his/her argument, how effectively does he/she argue with other reasons and claims?

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS**

**WRITING WORKSHOPS: PRINT RESOURCES**


**WRITING WORKSHOPS: WEB RESOURCES**
“*Writing Groups*” from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center

Includes the following materials:

- [Writing Group Starter Kit](#)
- [Activities for Writing Groups](#)
- [Reacting to Other People’s Responses to Your Writing](#)
- [Responding to Other People’s Writing](#)
- [Course-Based Writing Groups](#)
- [Writing Exercises](#)

“*13 Ways of Looking at Responding to Student Writing*” by Doug Hesse, University of Denver
 COURSE HANDOUTS

On the following pages you'll find materials to use as handouts. Many of the “Additional Writing Activities” from each chapter have been reproduced here as handouts for you to photocopy for students.
GUIDING YOUR READERS’ RESPONSES

After you’ve read Appendix A in *The Curious Writer*, you’ll have a good sense of the very different types of workshops you might have in this class. In addition, you’ll have some idea of which kinds of responses are most helpful for particular stages in your writing process. For this activity, choose which workshop format/kinds of responses you think are most appropriate for the draft you’re workshopping.

1. First, write a letter to your readers answering these questions:
   - What did you struggle with the most in this draft?
   - What do you believe works well in this draft? Why?
   - What have you learned about writing this kind of essay from drafting this one?
   - How would you like us to respond to your draft? (see Step Two below)

   You might leave notes on the draft itself so we know where you are struggling and need help (or places where you know the draft isn’t working, but you just didn’t have time to revise it yet).

2. When you answer this last question (d), choose the two kinds of responses from Appendix A that you think will help you most. How would you like for us to respond? Which of those approaches seems most appropriate for where you have progressed in your writing?
APPENDIX B: THE WRITING PORTFOLIO

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES
1. Inquiry and reflection are the heart of a writing portfolio.
2. Portfolios emphasize “evaluation-free” writing that allows for exploration and inquiry—the process of writing and thinking—and the craft of writing—the product—which is evaluated.
3. There are two categories of portfolios that instructors may assign: unevaluated (journals or working portfolios; learning portfolio) and evaluated (midterm portfolio; final portfolio, limited choice; final portfolio, open choice).
4. There are multiple ways of organizing a portfolio: by chronological order, by assignment, by subjects or themes, by stage of process
5. Writers reflect on their learning and what their portfolio demonstrates about what they’ve learned as writers in a course.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Understand what a portfolio is and what its purposes are.
2. Understand the types of portfolios instructors may assign (unevaluated and evaluated) and for what purposes.
3. Recognize the ways of organizing a portfolio based on the purpose for which it is being assigned (evaluation; midterm assessment; reflection, etc.).
4. Reflect on the work being included in the portfolio and the learning and/or skills it demonstrates.

DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER
As with the other chapters in this book, prereading activities will focus your students on the ideas in the chapter before they encounter them. They will help students bring to the surface their beliefs about evaluation and portfolios (if they have encountered them previously) that may limit how they approach that part of the process. Appendix B can be assigned early in the course so students understand how their writing will be evaluated, how the generative writing they produce may fit into their portfolio, what kind of portfolio is being assigned and why.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES
1. Have students freewrite on their previous experiences with writing assignments and evaluation. In previous classes, what kind of writing did they do? Which assignments were/were not graded? Why? What were the benefits and drawbacks of evaluating writing in that way—for them as learners?
2. If students have already read Chapters 1 and 2, ask them to work in groups and generate an approach to evaluating the work of the course that emphasizes inquiry—both process and product.
3. Have students brainstorm their associations with the word *portfolio* and list their hopes and fears. Discuss as a whole class.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS**

“Portfolios in Writing Classes: Instructor Goals v. Program Assessment” from The Writing Campus

Rebecca More Howard’s bibliography for portfolios (research and teaching)

*UNEVALUATED PORTFOLIOS*

“The Learning Portfolio: Reflective Practice for Improving Student Learning” by John Zubizarreta of Columbia College (great resources for faculty interested in assigning learning portfolios)

“Learning Portfolio” at Columbia College (guidelines for faculty—excellent discussion of the purposes of learning portfolios)

**TRIAD E WORKING FOLDER** by Amanda Marquez, Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi

*EVALUATED PORTFOLIOS*

Washington State University’s “Junior Writing Portfolio” (example of an institutionally-required writing portfolio used to assess students’ “readiness to write in the major”)

“First-Year Writing Portfolio Guidelines 2013–2014” from Spellman College

Experiments in Visual Writing (ENG 101), “Final Portfolio with Reflection Essay” assignment guidelines, Emory University

Example of mid-term and final portfolio requirements from Rowan University, Department of Writing Arts
APPENDIX C: THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES TO EMPHASIZE

PRINCIPLES
1. Introduce four types of annotated bibliographies: those that indicate content and coverage; those that describe thesis and argument; those that offer evaluations; and those that combine these three functions.
2. Annotated bibliographies are different from Works Cited pages.
3. Annotated bibliographies are used by researchers to select materials most relevant to their research question and/or to prepare for a literature review or research proposal.
4. Writing an annotated bibliography involves choosing a subject, gathering materials, and reading strategically. Writers should clarify the length and specific content required.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Understand why one would write an annotated bibliography.
2. Describe the four types of annotated bibliographies and their purposes.
3. Compose an annotated bibliography with a specific purpose.

DISCUSSION STARTERS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CHAPTER

As with the other chapters in this book, prereading activities will focus your students on the ideas in the chapter before they encounter them. They will help students bring to the surface their beliefs about annotated bibliographies, works cited pages, and literature views that may limit how they approach this assignment. It is likely that very few students will have written an annotated bibliography before, although they may have read them during their research on a subject.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES
1. As a class, brainstorm associations with the word bibliography and represent it visually for everyone to see. What patterns emerge? Are there common associations with the word? What do they suggest about our assumptions about bibliographies? Then, brainstorm associations with the term annotated bibliography and see how many students are familiar with them. You might also look for patterns in these associations and then connect them to the key ideas you want to emphasize in this Appendix.
2. Ask students to list all their experiences with writing Works Cited pages, bibliographies, and/or annotated bibliographies. What was most challenging? What purposes did they serve for the student as a researcher? Connect this discussion to the purposes of writing annotated bibliographies.
ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to workshop drafts of their annotated bibliographies using specific questions that are based on the criteria you will be using to evaluate them. Here are a few examples:
   a) Indicative Bibliography
      i) Does the author use the appropriate citation style?
      ii) Does the author list the main ideas in the source and avoid evaluating or commenting on the source's argument?
      iii) Note areas that are confusing, terms and phrases that may be too vague or in need of clarification and/or detail.
      iv) Check the word count and paragraph lengths. Are they consistent with the assigned requirements?
   b) Informative Bibliography
      i) Does the author use the appropriate citation style?
      ii) Does the author summarize the argument and conclusions for each source without going into too much detail? Does the author avoid evaluating the effectiveness of that argument?
      iii) Note areas that are confusing, terms and phrases that may be too vague and in need of clarification and/or detail.
      iv) Check the word count and paragraph lengths. Are they consistent with the assigned requirements?
   b) Evaluative Bibliography
      i) Does the author use the appropriate citation style?
      ii) Does the author summarize the argument and conclusions for each source? Does the author evaluate the effectiveness of that argument using clear criteria?
      iii) Note areas that are confusing, terms and phrases that may be too vague and in need of clarification and/or detail.
      iv) Check the word count and paragraph lengths. Are they consistent with the assigned requirements?
   b) Combination of Types
      i) Does the author use the appropriate citation style?
      ii) Does the author summarize the argument and conclusions for each source without going into too much detail? Does the author evaluate the effectiveness of that argument?
      iii) Note areas that are confusing, plus terms and phrases that may be too vague and in need of clarification and/or detail.
      iv) Check the word count and paragraph lengths. Are they consistent with the assigned requirements?

2. When assigning an annotated bibliography, connect it to Chapters 2, 10, 11, and 12. After students have taken notes on their sources, you might devote a class period to drafting annotations based on those notes. In addition, if you assign Chapter 7, ask students to apply what they’ve learned about writing an argument to analyzing the argument of their sources.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: READING AND WEB LINKS

“Annotated Bibliographies” from the Purdue Online Writing Lab

“Annotated Bibliography Example” from the Purdue Online Writing Lab

“Create an Annotated Bibliography” from Writing Commons (includes short videos, a discussion of audience, writing prompts, and some examples)

“Comparing the Annotated Bibliography to the Literature Review” from the University of North Alabama Center for Writing Excellence