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# STUDENT

## Writing Handbook

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1st Edition



SACRAMENTO  
STATE

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# Table of Contents

## Part I: About the Campus Writing Programs at Sacramento State

Campus Writing Programs Flow Chart.....	2
University Writing Rubric.....	3
Preparatory Writing Courses.....	6
College Composition Courses.....	7
Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR).....	9
Writing Intensive Courses.....	11
The Learning Skills Center.....	12
The University Writing Center.....	14
The Library.....	15

## Part II: University Writing, Reading, and Researching Processes

### An Overview of University Writing

What is “Academic” Writing?.....	18
Multilingual Students and College Writing.....	23
The Rhetorical Situation.....	28
Responses to Rhetorical Situations: Genres.....	31
Writing Critical Analyses and Academic Arguments.....	34
Advice for College Writing Processes.....	36
Understanding College Writing Assignments.....	37
Strategies for Finding Topics.....	39
Drafting and Revising.....	42
Editing and Proofreading Techniques.....	45
Strategies for Timed Writing.....	47
Peer Response.....	49
Writing in Groups.....	52
Writing Portfolios.....	56
Visual Rhetoric (Graphs, Charts, Web Sites, and More).....	58

## Advice for College Reading Processes

College Reading is Critical Reading..... 67

Reading Difficult College Texts ..... 70

College Reading Purposes ..... 77

## Advice for College Researching Processes

College Research as Inquiry ..... 79

Finding a Research Question ..... 81

Locating Sources (Books, Databases, Surveys, Interviews,  
and More) ..... 84

Evaluating Sources..... 94

Integrating Sources ..... 96

Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism..... 103

## Part III: Writing across the Curriculum at Sacramento State

Writing and Researching in the Natural Sciences  
and Mathematics ..... 106

Writing and Researching in the Social Sciences ..... 118

Writing and Researching in the Arts and Humanities ..... 137

Writing and Researching in Business and Professional  
Communications..... 152

## Documentation Styles

CSE..... 169

APA..... 173

MLA..... 176

Other Citation Styles ..... 180

# Preface

## Your Writing Career at Sacramento State University

As you progress in your career at Sacramento State, you're going to grow significantly as a writer and a thinker. In every department, your instructors are going to use writing as a tool for learning and critical thinking. You'll read challenging and interesting texts and write about your responses to what you're reading. You'll conduct research to find out what others have said and thought about the issue and ideas you're exploring in your classes, and you'll do some of your own original research as well to join in the conversation. You'll use writing to evaluate the research you've read and communicate the original research you've done. Remember that writing at the university is about much more than just grammar and mechanics. The most important purposes of writing in college are to communicate your ideas to readers, think critically about the content of your classes, and develop the ability to write to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.

Sacramento State offers you a sequence of classes that will give you writing-intensive experiences at each stage in your university career. At the first-year level, there are a variety of composition courses available that will introduce you to college-level writing and writing as a process, with opportunities to revise and get feedback from your peers and your teacher. At the sophomore level, English 20 will help you make the transition from General Education to writing, reading, and researching in your major. At the junior level, you'll take a course designated Writing Intensive. This course will have a small class size, frequent writing, and plenty of opportunities to get feedback on your writing. If you need a little more practice with college writing before you take the Writing Intensive course, you can elect to take English 109W, a junior-level writing course, rather than taking the WPIJ (Writing Placement Junior Level). Academic departments at Sacramento State use writing assignments to help students learn the content of the major and the kinds of writing that professionals in the major do, and many majors have a capstone course that asks you to write a substantial culminating essay or report. No matter what you major in, when you graduate from Sacramento State you can expect to do a lot of writing on the job, so remember that the writing you do at Sacramento State will help prepare you for life after college.

We have high expectations for your writing and quality of thinking at Sacramento State, but we also provide a lot of support to help you grow as a writer. The Learning Skills Center offers writing classes and tutoring for students who need some extra help. The University Writing Center, located in 128 Calaveras Hall, offers free one-on-one help for writing for students in any course. Don't forget that your instructors are also a great resource for help with your writing. Don't be shy about dropping by their office hours or making appointments with them to get help with your writing for their classes. We hope that this handbook will also be a helpful resource to you throughout your writing career at Sacramento State.

**Faculty Senate Writing and Reading Subcommittee**

# About the Campus Writing Programs at Sacramento State University

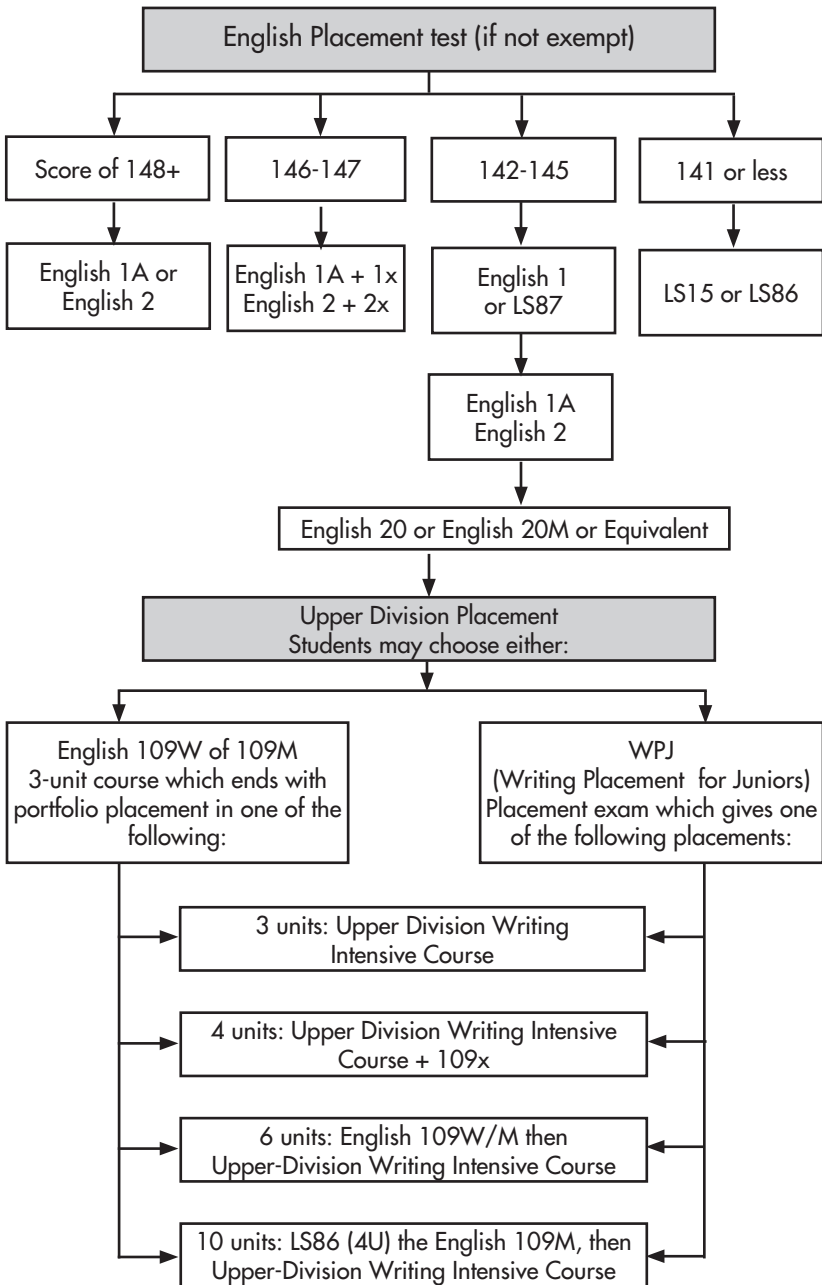
In this first section of the student writing handbook, you'll get an overview of the programs and resources on campus that are designed to help you with the reading, writing, and researching you'll do in college. These resources include

- the Learning Skills Center
- English Composition courses like ENGL1, ENGL1A, and ENGL20
- the University Writing Center
- Writing Intensive courses
- the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement
- the Library

To help you get a sense of how Sacramento State has sequenced writing courses, the next page includes a flow chart of the entire program.



# Campus Writing Programs Flow Chart



# Sacramento State University Writing Rubric

The following rubric was created by the Faculty Senate Subcommittee for Writing and Reading. It is meant as a useful guide but not an absolute standard for the university: writing criteria will vary from instructor to instructor and discipline to discipline.

## An “A” paper: A paper in this category

- Addresses the assignment thoughtfully and analytically, setting a challenging task
- Does not demonstrate a need for more revision.
- Displays awareness of and purpose in communicating to an audience.
- Establishes a clearly focused controlling idea.
- Demonstrates coherent and rhetorically sophisticated organization; makes effective connections between ideas.
- Provides clear generalizations with specific detail and compelling support and analysis.
- Cites relevant sources and evaluates their validity, effectively integrating them into the text when appropriate.
- Displays evidence of careful editing with superior control of grammar and mechanics appropriate to the assignment.

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*Guideline for multilingual writers: Grammatical errors are rare and do not interfere with overall effectiveness of paper; occasional imprecision in word choice and usage may occur.*

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## A “B” paper: A paper in this category

- Addresses the assignment clearly and analytically, setting a meaningful task.
- Does not demonstrate a need for significantly more revision.
- Addresses audience needs and expectations.
- Establishes a clearly focused controlling idea.
- Demonstrates clear and coherent organization.
- Provides clear generalizations and effective support and analysis.
- Cites relevant sources, effectively integrating them into the text when appropriate.
- Displays evidence of careful editing with consistent control of grammar and mechanics appropriate to the assignment and the discipline.



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*Guideline for multilingual writers: Some grammatical errors may occur throughout the paper but do not interfere with overall effectiveness; occasional inappropriate word choice or incorrect usage may occur.*

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### **A “C” paper: A paper in this category**

Addresses the assignment with some analysis.

- Demonstrates some need for further revision.
- Addresses most audience needs and expectations.
- Establishes a controlling idea.
- Demonstrates adequate organization.
- Provides support for and some analysis of generalizations.
- Cites appropriate sources, adequately integrating them into text.
- Displays evidence of editing with adequate control of grammar and mechanics appropriate to the assignment. Errors do not slow the reader, impede understanding, or seriously undermine the authority of the writer.

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*Guideline for multilingual writers: Grammatical errors, inappropriate word choice, or incorrect usage may occur throughout the paper but rarely interfere with effective communication.*

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### **A “D” paper has some of the following qualities: A paper in this category**

- Does not address the assignment adequately.
- Demonstrates a need for significantly more revision.
- Does not show sufficient audience awareness.
- Strays from the controlling idea, or the idea is unclear.
- Displays random or confusing organization.
- Lacks generalizations, or gives generalizations but does not provide support or analysis.
- Does not cite sources or does not cite and/or integrate sources appropriately.
- Needs significant editing for grammar and mechanics; errors impede understanding.

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*Guideline for multilingual writers: Serious and frequent errors in grammar, word choice, or usage seriously hinder communication.*

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**An “F” paper has many or all of the qualities listed under a “D” paper.**

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*Guidelines for Evaluating the Writing of Multilingual Writers: The writing of multilingual students should be held to native speaker standards for content and addressing the assignment. However, because certain types of errors persist in multilingual writing even at an advanced level, some accommodation for multilingual features is appropriate.*

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# Preparatory Writing Courses

## The following preparatory writing classes are offered through the Learning Skills Center:

**LS 15: College Language Skills** - LS 15 students read essays as well as a full-length book, popular journalism, and academic writing. They write expository essays and respond to assigned readings. Students summarize and respond to the views of others, establish a position, and develop their ideas fully. They revise and edit their papers effectively. Students create a portfolio of coursework and take in-class written exams.

**LS 86: College Language Skills for Multilingual Students** - LS 86 is the course equivalent to LS 15 for multilingual students. In addition to the activities in LS 15, students review key features of academic English and receive intensive practice in editing their writing. Students create a portfolio of coursework and take in-class written exams.

**LS87: Basic Writing Skills for Multilingual Students** – LS 87 is the course equivalent to English 1 for multilingual students. Students read multiple texts related to current issues and write argumentative essays in response. They continue to review key features of academic English and receive intensive practice in editing their writing. Students create a portfolio of coursework and take in-class written exams.

## The following preparatory writing class is offered through the English Department:

**ENGL1: Basic Writing Skills** – Prepares students for the challenging thinking, reading, and writing required in academic discourse. Uses writing as a means for discovery and reflection as well as reading as a source for ideas, discussion, and writing. Concentrates on developing expository essays that communicate clearly, provide adequate levels of detail, maintain overall coherence and focus, and demonstrate awareness of audience and purpose. **Writing requirement:** a minimum of 3,500 words. **Note:** May be taken for workload credit toward establishing full-time enrollment status, but is not applicable to the baccalaureate degree. **Prerequisite:** EPT score of 142-148, or successful completion LS 015. Graded Credit/No Credit. Units: 3.

# College Composition Courses

The English Department offers a number of writing courses for Sacramento State University students. While most students understand that writing is a common and critical part of their educational experience, it is important to note a bit about what we require and why. Students enter the university already having a variety of writing skills and strategies. It is our mission to build upon these to prepare students for the complex reading, thinking, and writing tasks that will await them in their university classes and beyond. Toward that end, our writing classes focus on several key elements: critical reading strategies that enable students to not only take in new information but also to question and use it in their writing; writing process strategies that give students numerous techniques for working with their writing from the beginning generation of ideas through their revision and polishing for final submission; and discourse awareness—the ability to recognize that different types of writing are required in different settings—which enables students to decipher and produce the kind of writing that would best fit any given situation.

We recognize that writing is a skill which must be practiced frequently to allow for improvement. Thus, in addition to the writing that you will do in your general education and major courses, the English Department offers first-year and sophomore writing courses. Our first-year courses (English 1, 1A, and 2) introduce students to academic writing in general—the kinds of reading, writing, and thinking habits and strategies which will serve you throughout your university writing experiences. Our sophomore course (English 20/20M) builds upon these more general skills to introduce a variety of reading, writing, thinking, and research habits and strategies from different disciplines—giving you a clearer sense of how thinking and writing are tailored to a specific environment. It is our hope that these courses will provide you with the foundation you need to be successful in all of your classes as well as specific instruction that will be relevant at the different stages of your educational journey.

## The following composition courses are offered through the English Department:

**ENGL1: Basic Writing Skills** – Prepares students for the challenging thinking, reading, and writing required in academic discourse. Uses writing as a means for discovery and reflection as well as reading as a source for ideas, discussion, and writing. Concentrates on developing expository essays that communicate clearly, provide adequate levels of detail, maintain overall coherence and focus, and demonstrate awareness of audience and purpose. **Writing requirement:** a minimum of 3,500 words. **Note:** May be taken for workload credit toward establishing full-time enrollment status, but is not applicable to the baccalaureate degree. **Prerequisite:** EPT score of 142-148, or successful completion LS 015. Graded Credit/No Credit. Units: 3.

**ENGL1A. College Composition.** An intensive writing course that provides students with practice in the kinds of challenging thinking, reading, and writing required in academic discourse. Concentrates on prewriting, drafting, and rewriting processes that address a variety of rhetorical and academic tasks. Special attention given to

effective development and support of ideas. **Writing requirement:** a minimum of 5,000 words. **Prerequisite:** EPT score of 148 or above, or credit in ENGL 001. Units: 3.

**ENGL2. College Composition for Multilingual Students.** Intensive writing for multilingual students that provides practice in the kinds of challenging thinking, reading, and writing required in academic discourse. Concentrates on prewriting, drafting, and rewriting processes that address a variety of rhetorical and academic tasks. Special attention given to effective development and support of ideas. **Writing requirement:** a minimum of 5,000 words. **Prerequisite:** EPT score of 148+ or above, or credit in LS 87; EDT score of 2-3. Graded: Graded Student. Units: 3.

**ENGL20. College Composition II.** Advanced writing that builds upon the critical thinking, reading, and writing processes introduced in ENGL 1A and ENGL 2. Emphasizes rhetorical awareness by exploring reading and writing within diverse academic contexts with a focus on the situational nature of the standards, values, habits, conventions, and products of composition. Students will research and analyze different disciplinary genres, purposes, and audiences with the goals of understanding how to appropriately shape their writing for different readers and demonstrating this understanding through various written products. **Note:** Writing requirement: a minimum of 5,000 words. **Prerequisite:** Completion of ENGL 1A or ENGL 2 or equivalent with a C- or better; sophomore standing (must have completed 30 units prior to registration). Graded: Graded Student. Units: 3.

**ENGL20M. College Composition II for Multilingual Students.** Advanced writing for multilingual students that builds upon the critical thinking, reading, and writing processes introduced in ENGL 1A and ENGL 2. Emphasizes rhetorical awareness by exploring reading and writing within diverse academic contexts with a focus on the situational nature of the standards, values, habits, conventions, and products of composition. Students will research and analyze different disciplinary genres, purposes, and audiences with the goals of understanding how to appropriately shape their writing for different readers and demonstrating this understanding through various written products. **Note:** Writing requirement: a minimum of 5,000 words. **Prerequisite:** Completion of ENGL 1A or ENGL 2 or equivalent with a C- or better; sophomore standing (must have completed 30 units prior to registration). Graded: Graded Student. Units: 3.

# Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)

All CSU students must satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). Beginning in July 2009, the Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE) will no longer be used to meet the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) at Sacramento State. Instead, students will meet the GWAR using a new, two-step process. First, students will have a choice in how to get their GWAR Placement: they may take a course, or they may challenge the course by taking a timed essay placement examination. Second, students will complete the upper-division coursework required by their GWAR Placement.

## Step One (60 to 74 units)

In order to complete the first step and receive a GWAR Placement, students will select one of the following options during their first semester of junior standing:

**Either – Take English 109W/M.** Students whose first language is not English, or students who received an English Diagnostic Test (EDT) score of 4 or higher, should choose English 109M. Students whose first language is not English who received an EDT score of 3 or lower should choose LS 86. Other students should choose English 109W. In this course, students will prepare a Writing Portfolio from which they'll receive a placement into upper-division Writing-Intensive coursework.

**Or – Challenge the course by taking the Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ) timed essay.** In this two-hour test, students will write two essays from which they'll receive a placement into Writing-Intensive coursework. Students will take this exam only once. WPJ registration will be online at [http://www.csus.edu/testing/testing\\_services.stm#wpe](http://www.csus.edu/testing/testing_services.stm#wpe).

From whichever of these two options they select, students will receive a placement into their upper-division Writing-Intensive General Education coursework. GWAR Placement will now be a prerequisite for enrolling in a General Education Writing-Intensive course.

## Step Two

The second step to meeting the GWAR requires all students to complete the course work required by their GWAR Placement; this includes completion of the upper-division General Education (GE) Writing-Intensive course with a C- or higher. Placements range from 3 units to more than 6 units of coursework and may require students to complete prerequisites prior to enrolling in the Writing-Intensive course or to take a tutorial course concurrently with the Writing-Intensive course.

**A 3 unit placement** means that the writer is ready to move straight into the upper-division GE Writing-Intensive course: take the Writing-Intensive course.

**A 4 unit placement** means that the writer needs a little assistance in order to succeed in the GE Writing-Intensive course, so is required concurrently to enroll in a 1-unit Credit/No Credit writing tutorial: take English 109X and the Writing-Intensive course together in the same semester.

**A 6 unit placement** means that the writer needs additional assistance in order to succeed in the upper-division GE Writing-Intensive course, so is required to take a specified 3-unit prerequisite to that course: take English 109W/M. Take the upper-division Writing-Intensive course as directed in a subsequent semester.

**A 10 unit placement** means that the writer needs a lot of additional assistance in order to succeed in the GE Writing-Intensive course, so is required to take several prerequisites to that course: take LS86; then take ENGL109W/M as directed in a subsequent semester; then take the upper-division Writing-Intensive course as directed in a subsequent semester.

## Writing Intensive Courses



Most courses at Sacramento State University incorporate writing, whether it's a lab report, reading response journals, an essay exam, a research paper, in-class writing, etc. But some courses are focused on writing and designed so that you'll write extensively and get a lot of feedback on your writing as you draft and revise. These courses, which are limited to thirty students, are labeled Writing Intensive. The

Writing Intensive requirement ensures that all students, regardless of their major, get a writing-rich experience in their junior year.

All students at Sacramento State take a Writing Intensive (WI) course as a graduation requirement. Some departments require that you take the WI course in your major, and some departments allow you to take the WI course outside your major. A 109W/109M portfolio placement into the WI class or a WPI placement into the WI class is a prerequisite for WI courses. We highly recommend that you take a WI class in your junior year, rather than putting it off until your senior year, since the writing practice and feedback you get in a WI class will help prepare you for writing in your major.

Here are the main features of a WI class:

- No more than 30 students
- Frequent response on your writing and instructors actively helping you with your writing
- 5,000 words spread out over the semester in both formal and informal writing assignments and activities
- Significant drafting and revision of the formal writing assignments

For more information about the Writing Intensive requirement, see the Sacramento State University catalogue.



# The Learning Skills Center

The writing program in the Learning Skills Center is part of a sequence of classes offered to prepare students for college level writing courses offered in the English Department and the General Education writing requirements. Learning Skills composition classes:



- Integrate expository reading writing.
- Challenge students to understand and explain the arguments of others in the texts they read and to construct their own arguments in response.
- Develop students' skills in reading critically and writing analytically.
- Give students practice in developing and organizing ideas, drafting and revising academic essays, and editing and proofreading their texts.
- Enable students to develop their academic identity and become familiar with the expectations of the university.

**Learning Skills Center**  
**Lassen Hall 2200**  
**916-278-6725**  
**916-278-7888 fax**  
**[www.csus.edu/learningskills](http://www.csus.edu/learningskills)**

## Description of Classes

**LS 15: College Language Skills** - LS 15 students read essays as well as a full-length book, popular journalism, and academic writing. They write expository essays and respond to assigned readings. Students summarize and respond to the views of others, establish a position, and develop their ideas fully. They revise and edit their papers effectively. Students create a portfolio of coursework and take in-class written exams.

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## **Tutorial Classes: LS 5, LS 6A, LS 6B**

**LS 5: Reading and Vocabulary Development** – a developmental reading class for students scoring below college level on reading tests

**LS 6A: Oral Skills Development** – a multilingual class to assist students to improve oral communication skills

**LS 6B: Writing for Proficiency** – a multilingual class to assist students with the WWPJ.

## **Reading Classes:**

**LS 60: Reading Speed and Efficiency** – a class for college-level readers to improve efficiency as well as speed (includes practice in reading lab)

**LS 60M: Reading Speed and Efficiency for Multilingual Students** – a class for multilingual college-level readers to improve efficiency as well as speed (includes practice in reading lab)

**Grammar Class: LS 85: Grammar for Multilingual Writers** – a class covering the major systems of English grammar for editing purposes

# The University Writing Center



There is a unique place on campus that is an integral part of writing at Sacramento State University: the University Writing Center (UWC). Located in 128 Calaveras Hall, the UWC is open five days a week for students to come in and talk about their work-in-progress with another student. The student-tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who have taken a course in writing center theory and practice.

They're familiar with ways of responding to academic writing that will help a writer to find strategies for approaching assignments in any discipline. The UWC tutors also offer guidance for preparing for timed writing tests such as the WPI and for writing scholarship and graduate school application letters. The UWC is open to all registered students at Sacramento State University.

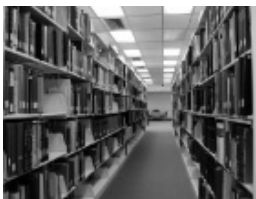
There are no assignments, grades or evaluations given in the UWC; rather, the tutors provide supportive, non-judgmental feedback to writing-in-progress and suggestions for ways to get started on any kind of writing assignment. Tutors are used to working with students in all academic disciplines, with multilingual writers, and with graduate as well as undergraduate writers. It is appropriate to come to the UWC if you are at the beginning of an assignment and are unsure how to get started, if you have already started a draft and want some feedback to help you focus and develop your ideas, or if you have a completed paper and intend to make further revisions. To get the most out of a tutoring session, it is essential to bring the assignment with you and any of texts that are connected to the assignment. It is also useful to bring the course syllabus, which will give the tutor a picture of how this particular assignment fits into the course you are taking.

You do not need to be referred to the UWC by an instructor, although often instructors recommend to their students that they come to the UWC. All attendance at the UWC is on a voluntary basis. Appointments are available throughout the semester, but the UWC does fill up quickly and you may not always be able to get an immediate appointment. To make an appointment, come to CLV 128 or call 278-6356.

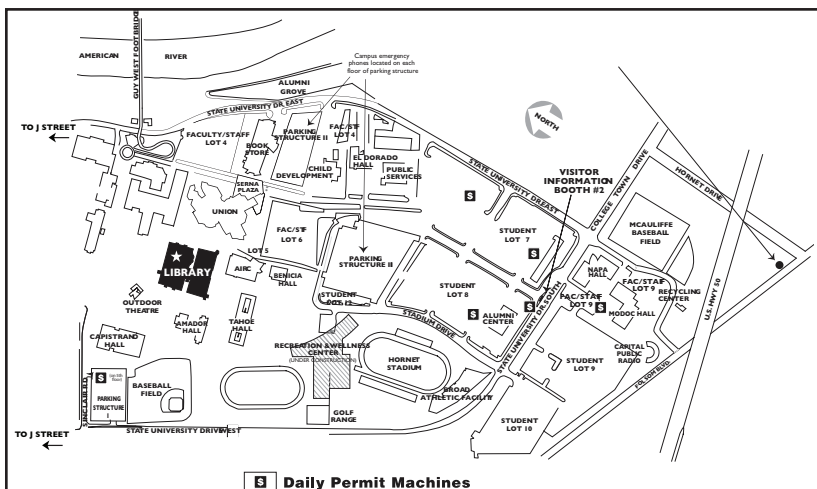
Once you have an appointment time, you can continue to meet with the same tutor at that same time for the rest of the semester if you want. All students can schedule up to an hour a week of tutoring. The UWC usually opens for appointments the second week of the semester and tutoring begins the first day of the third week of classes. Usual hours are M-TR 10:00-6:00. We also offer evening hours at the library, in LIB3501A. Check the UWC website at [www.csus.edu/writingcenter](http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter) for updated evening hours at the library.

Further information about the University Writing Center can be found on the UWC webpage: <http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter>. If you are interested in becoming a UWC tutor, contact Professor Dan Melzer, UWC Coordinator, at [melzer@csus.edu](mailto:melzer@csus.edu).

# The Library



The University Library at Sacramento State, located in the heart of the campus, has 6 floors and 2 wings, housing over 1.3 million volumes.



Although a library this size can be intimidating at first, it's important for you to learn to use both its physical and online resources, since doing so will help you succeed at Sacramento State. Below you'll find a checklist for new students that will help you get to know your library.

## Library Checklist For New Students

### Things To Do Before Classes Start

**Register for a SacLink Account:** Go to the Library Computer Lab or any other campus lab to establish your SacLink account. You'll need a SacLink account to access the library databases from off campus. Your SacLink is also required for to access "My Sac State" pages.

**Get a OneCard:** Your OneCard is your campus photo ID, Library Card, public transport pass, phone card, and a debit card for printing in the labs and the Library. Get your card at the OneCard Center in the Brighton Hall Annex. Once you've gotten your OneCard, bring it to the Library check-out desk to register as a borrower.

**Find out When the Library is Open:** Regular Hours for Fall & Spring Semesters: Mon.-Thu. 7:15AM-11:00PM; Fri. 7:15AM-7:00PM; Sat. 9:00AM-5:00PM; Sun. 11:00AM-11:00PM. For updated hours information, call 278-6926 or visit <http://library.csus.edu/hours/>

## Things To Do In The Library and The Library's Website

**Take a Library Tour:** Take a self-guided Library tour by asking for the Check-Point Tour Guide at the check-out desk, or take an online virtual tour. The self-guided Check-Point Tour should take 30-45 minutes. You can also take a Guided Tour, which is offered during the second and third weeks of the fall semester. Look for the tour schedule on the Library's website. Some professors require a proof of a Library tour for their classes, so be sure to get a tour verification slip. Watch the 3-part video tour on the Library Channel <http://db.lib.csus.edu/LibraryChannel/>

**Find a quiet place to study:** The entire 4th floor is reserved for "Silent Study."

**Check out books with your OneCard:** You can check out up to 50 books for a period of 3 weeks. You can renew them online using your "My Library Account" if you create a password. You can also place holds on items that are currently checked out by others. The PIN should be something you can easily remember. For complete instructions, go to: <https://eureka.lib.csus.edu/patroninfo~S35>.

**Ask a Librarian for Research Help:** Librarians can be your best allies when it comes to getting through your first year at Sacramento State. Find your personal reference librarian (<http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=45>)! You can also call the Reference Desk, (916) 278-5673, or chat with a librarian online if you need some research help: <http://library.csus.edu/services/askLibrarianLive/>.

**Find Course Readings in the Reserve Book Room (RBR):** (separate entrance off the breezeway). Faculty put materials they want everyone in their class to read "On Reserve." The RBR loan period is often 2 hours or 1 day instead of the regular 3 weeks.

**Use our Printers:** The campus credits 300 free laser copies on your OneCard each semester for use in the Library and in the Campus Labs. PrintSmart default is back-to-back duplex copies, so be sure to reset the printing preferences if you want single-sided copies.

**Borrow Something from Another Library:** If you can't locate the book or journal article you need in our collection, the Interlibrary Service team will track it down in another library. Create an Iliad account for this service at <https://illiad.csus.edu/illiad/logon.html>

**Apply for a job in the Library:** We are one of the largest employer of students on campus, and there's no commute! Apply online: <http://digital.lib.csus.edu/studentEmployment/>

**Find the comfortable chairs:** There are lounge chairs in small groupings scattered throughout the Library. Look in the first floor lobby, on the mezzanine at the top of the escalator and in the alcoves near the exterior windows on floors 2 NORTH, 3 NORTH, and 4 NORTH.

**Enjoy the Art:** The University Library Gallery has shows throughout the year. There are student projects and professional art mounted on other floors as well. Topical Library Exhibits are usually located in the area between the wings on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors.

# An Overview of University Writing

The single most important thing to have for your future writing is confidence.

— *Aaro Lautmo, Sacramento State freshman*

In my opinion, your work in any field of study is only as good as your ability to communicate the work to others; usually this will be through writing.

— *Professor Brad Baker, Chemistry Department*

## What is “Academic” Writing?

A good starting place for exploring the question, “What is academic writing?” is to look at the Sacramento State “Advisory Standards for Writing.” This is a university-wide writing rubric that talks about writing standards at Sacramento State. A rubric is a tool that teachers use to make their evaluation criteria clear to students. Rubrics provide a description of the qualities of papers (or other kinds of performances) at different levels, often from “A” to “F”. Here’s the standard for an “A” paper, according to the rubric:

### An “A” paper: A paper in this category

- Addresses the assignment thoughtfully and analytically, setting a challenging task
- Does not demonstrate a need for more revision.
- Displays awareness of and purpose in communicating to an audience.
- Establishes a clearly focused controlling idea.
- Demonstrates coherent and rhetorically sophisticated organization; makes effective connections between ideas.
- Provides clear generalizations with specific detail and compelling support and analysis.
- Cites relevant sources and evaluates their validity, effectively integrating them into the text when appropriate.
- Displays evidence of careful editing with superior control of grammar and mechanics appropriate to the assignment.

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*Guideline for multilingual writers: Grammatical errors are rare and do not interfere with overall effectiveness of paper; occasional imprecision in word choice and usage may occur.*

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In academic writing, it’s important to explore a thoughtful, original question or make arguments that challenge readers to think deeply about your topic. Because academic writing requires complex thinking, it also requires extensive

revising. Constructing a complex argument or analysis means writing with a sense of purpose and audience. At Sacramento State you'll write for a variety of purposes, from summarizing to informing to arguing to exploring. You'll also write for a variety of audiences. Sometimes you'll write for an audience outside of the classroom—for example, if you're participating in a service learning project or presenting a report to engineering companies. Sometimes you'll write to your peers—for example, if you give your classmates feedback in a peer response workshop or write an essay for the Sacramento State undergraduate writing journal, *Writing the University*. Sometimes you'll write to a hypothetical audience—for example, if you're practicing writing a business memo to an imagined company or a research report in the style of a specific scientific journal. Most often you'll write primarily to the teacher as your audience, but usually the teacher is acting as a representative of her academic field, or "discipline." In other words, the teacher won't be evaluating your writing based on some random set of criteria, but instead they will respond to whether or not you're successful at writing like a sociologist, a historian, an engineer, etc. At Sacramento State, expectations for writing can vary significantly from one academic field to another, and even from one teacher to another in the same field. The language of science can be very different from the language of the arts and humanities, and the voice and tone you're asked to take on in your writing assignments for one teacher might be very different from the voice and tone you're asked to take on in another teacher's writing assignments, even if both teachers are in the same department.

The ways that writing expectations can differ in various disciplines can be seen in two different writing rubrics used in two different departments at Sacramento State. The first rubric is used to assess scientific research reports in the Geology department, and the second rubric is used to assess research papers in the English Department:



# Geology Department Scientific Report Writing Rubric

## Introduction (thesis) ..... [1-5]

5. The point of the essay is clearly stated in the introduction
3. The point of the essay is only indirectly stated in the introduction.
2. The point of the essay can only be inferred after reading much of the essay.
1. The point of the essay is unclear.

## Introduction (justification) ..... [1-5]

5. Introduction clearly states importance of subject and provokes interest of reader.
3. Introduction states importance of subject.
2. Introduction mentions importance of subject.
1. Lacks any mention of why the reader should be interested.

## Organization ..... [1-5]

5. Well organized and easy to follow.
3. Sufficiently well organized to follow the flow.
2. Not well organized.
1. Unorganized and difficult to follow.

## Clarity ..... [1-5]

5. Conveys author's ideas clearly.
3. Communicates author's ideas, but with difficulty.
1. Author's ideas are unclear.

## Voice and Audience (scientific style) ..... [1-5]

5. Uses clear, scientific prose. No "creative writing."
3. Some "creative" writing and reference to personal feelings.
1. Frequent use of personal references, poor writing style.

## Research and References ... ..... [1-5]

5. Uses appropriate sources, properly used and cited.
3. Insufficient technical sources, citations insufficient or improperly used.
1. Very inappropriate sources, lack of citation bordering on plagiarism.

## Format ..... [1-5]

5. Meets all page and format requirements, uses appropriate headings.
3. Does not meet all requirements, needs more and better section headings.
1. Format requirements ignored, inappropriate formatting.

## Grammar, Spelling, Sentence Structure ..... [1-5]

5. Free of spelling, grammar and structural problems.
3. Minor errors in grammar, spelling or structure.
1. Grammar and sentence structure problems make essay difficult to read.

## English Department Research Writing Rubric

	4	3	2	
<b>Purpose and Audience</b>	The paper thoroughly fulfills the purpose and is wholly appropriate for the intended audience of the assignment.	The paper adequately fulfills the purpose and is generally appropriate for the intended audience of the assignment.	The paper partially fulfills the purpose and may not always be appropriate for the intended audience of the assignment.	The paper fails to fulfill the purpose and may be inappropriate for the intended audience of the assignment.
<b>Organization and Coherence</b>	The paper is well organized, unified, and coherent throughout.	The paper is adequately organized and generally unified and coherent.	The paper shows limited organization and may not be unified or coherent.	The paper is poorly organized and lacks unity and coherence.
<b>Analysis and Support</b>	The paper thoroughly analyzes the text(s) and fully develops the topic with comprehensive supporting details.	The paper adequately analyzes the text(s) and adequately develops the topic with supporting details.	The paper shows limited analysis and development and limited supporting details.	The paper shows little or no analysis or development of the topic and supporting evidence, if present, is inadequate.
<b>Integration of Texts</b>	The paper thoroughly integrates primary, and when appropriate, secondary texts.	The paper adequately integrates primary, and when appropriate, secondary texts.	The paper only partially integrates primary, and when appropriate, secondary texts.	The paper fails to integrate texts.
<b>Grammar, Mechanics, and Syntax</b>	The paper shows a comprehensive command of vocabulary, syntax, and grammar and contains appropriate and effective sentence structures. There is accuracy in mechanics and, when appropriate, citations.	The paper demonstrates an adequate command of vocabulary, syntax, and grammar and contains satisfactory sentence structures. Errors in mechanics and/or citations do not interfere with comprehension.	The paper shows limited command of vocabulary, syntax, and grammar and may contain flawed or ineffective sentence structures. There are errors in mechanics and/or citations that may interfere with communication.	The paper shows inadequate command of vocabulary, syntax, and grammar and contains ineffective sentence structures. There are frequent errors in mechanics and/or citations that interfere with comprehension.

Both the Geology Department and the English Department value well developed and organized writing, but the “conventions” of writing for each department are different. “Conventions” are values and expectations for the writing of an academic field that are shared by a community. The Geology department is looking for clear, concise, “scientific” writing that doesn’t have any personal references. Scientific papers have a specific format with sections and headings. The English Department is more focused on analyzing and integrating texts, and this requires that students focus heavily on their own personal arguments and analysis.

Comparing the Sacramento State University writing rubric and these two rubrics from the Geology and English Departments, you can get a sense that teachers at Sacramento State have some expectations for writing that they all share, like...

- thoughtful analysis and argument
- extensive revision
- awareness of purpose and audience
- compelling support and analysis of ideas

...and expectations for writing that will be different for each academic field and even each teacher, like...

- writing style
- research methods
- types of evidence that are persuasive
- forms of writing

Part III of this handbook discusses the differences in ways of thinking and writing in different academic fields like the natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts and humanities, and business. In Part II, we’ll focus more on strategies for academic writing that can be useful in any class or any discipline.

# Multilingual Students and College Writing

By Professor Dana Ferris, English Department

## What is a “multilingual writer”?



A multilingual writer is someone who spoke a language other than English at home as a child. This may be an international student or someone who came to the U.S. as a child, a teenager or young adult. The student may even have been born here and always gone to school in the U.S. What makes a student “multilingual” is that s/he speaks and perhaps read/writes languages other than English and that English was not the first language/he learned.

Multilingual (ML) writers have many strengths and also face some challenges in college.

Because they understand two (or more) languages and cultures, they bring valuable background knowledge and experience that can help their own learning processes and enrich the knowledge of their classmates and teachers. On the other hand, because ML writers had a later start in learning English and in many cases have had fewer opportunities to read and write English, some aspects of college-level reading and writing can be more difficult for them and for other students. In the sections below, we will outline some of the possible challenges and ways to meet them successfully.

### Possible Challenge 1: Different Approaches or Styles of Writing

ML students who have learned to read and write in another language may be affected by **contrastive or intercultural rhetoric**. This simply means that the language they were familiar with has ways of organizing and presenting information in writing that are different from typical American college-level writing. For example, in American essays, readers expect the writer to clearly communicate his/her opinion, purpose, or main point near the beginning of the essay. However, in some other languages, the author’s opinion is not stated until the very end of the essay—and sometimes, it is not given at all. This can make the focus of the paper appear unclear to an American reader.

It is important to understand that English is considered a “writer-responsible language.” That means that it is the writer’s job to think about the knowledge and expectations of his/her audience (the readers) and to communicate in ways that make sense and are clear to that audience. Unlike other languages and cultures, in American English it is not believed to be the reader’s job to struggle with the writing until it is understood. If writing is unclear to the audience, it is considered the writer’s fault, not the reader’s, and the writer will be judged negatively.

With this in mind, it is important for ML writers to be aware of what Americans in college and professional settings expect writing to be like. Though there are differences depending upon the subject matter and situation, there are several things that American readers (professors and professionals) generally expect in college-level writing:

- They expect that student writers will address the assigned topic. It is not acceptable to ignore a professor's or supervisor's instructions and just write about whatever the student wants to say.
- They expect the writer's purpose for the paper to be clearly communicated. They want to know what the paper is about (the subject/topic) and why the author wrote it (the purpose or main idea of the paper). They expect a direct, "straight-line" approach to organizing ideas in a paper. In writing, this translates to the typical essay structure of "introduction, body, and conclusion," or the typical paragraph structure of "topic sentence, support, and summary statement." If these typical "pieces" of a paragraph or essay are missing or out-of-order, the American reader might find the paper frustrating or confusing.
- They expect that all of the ideas and information in the paper will relate directly to the main purpose of the paper. They do not expect a lot of extra details, descriptive words or phrases, or stories, even if they might make the paper more interesting or fun to read. There may be exceptions, such as in English/creative writing courses, but this will hold true for most other types of classes.
- They expect that writers will support their ideas and opinions with evidence, such as ideas from an assigned textbook, statistics or other data, quotations from experts, and so forth. Making strong statements based only on a student's personal experience or cultural beliefs will not be convincing or effective to an American reader in a college or professional setting.

Here's an example. Imagine that a student is writing a paper about mothers of young children who work outside the home. It would not be appropriate to argue that "Everyone knows that women should stay home with their children" (a cultural value) or "My mother worked and we never got home-cooked meals, so mothers should not work" (limited personal experience). In contrast, quotations from psychologists or child development specialists or statistics about the children of working mothers would be more convincing.

## **Strategies for Different Styles or Approaches**

If a student comes from a language or cultural background that has a different approach to writing than the "typical" American style outlined above, there is nothing wrong with that style, and the student should not be expected to change the way s/he writes in that other language or to change his/her opinion about "the best ways" of writing. However, it is important for ML writers to understand the expectations of the American college audience and to adapt to them. In writing classes, they should pay attention to understanding the assigned writing task, identifying and communicating a clear purpose, organizing ideas in ways

that will be effective for the readers, not including information that is “off-topic,” and supporting ideas with the types of evidence that will convince their readers. Outside of writing classes, this information can also be obtained by looking at writing textbooks or handbooks and especially at model student or expert papers in different subjects that show successful examples of college-level writing in American English.

## Possible Challenge #2: Language Issues

Depending upon when they started learning, reading, and writing English, ML writers may still have language gaps even when they get to college—even if they were born and educated in the U.S.! These problems are of two general types: (1) lack of English language knowledge that leads to written errors; and (2) inadequate knowledge of English vocabulary and sentence structure that limits their ability to write effectively and clearly.

**Language Errors in Writing.** ML writers may make errors in their writing that are different from those made by native English speakers (NES). For example, many ML learners of English have difficulty with verbs (tenses and forms/endings), with nouns (missing or incorrect articles, missing or incorrect plural endings), with word choice or word form (using the wrong word or using the wrong form of a word, such as “beauty” instead of “beautiful”), and with sentence structure (wrong word order, missing words, unnecessary words). In addition, they may make the errors that NES also make, such as problems with spelling, with punctuation (commas, apostrophes, etc.), with subject-verb agreement, or with inappropriate word choice (using “conversational” language instead of “formal” language).

Not all ML writers make all of these types of errors, and some make very few, if any. But ML writers who struggle with written language errors need to understand that it takes a long time to learn a second language and especially to write in a second language, and that the English language itself is very complicated—it has a large vocabulary and very complicated set of grammar (sentence structure) rules. So ML writers should not feel bad about themselves even if they still make errors at the college level.

However, American college-level audiences expect writing to be well edited and virtually error-free. Thus, ML writers who struggle with language errors must take steps to improve the accuracy of their writing and to learn to self-edit their work effectively. They may need extra writing or grammar classes designed for ML students, extra materials such as grammar/editing handbooks or web sites, one-on-one tutoring, or a reliable friend who is a good writer to help proofread their papers before turning them in. Different students will benefit from different types of help, but it is important to take this issue seriously and do whatever is needed to make progress.

**Limited Vocabulary and Sentence Structure Knowledge.** Another challenge in writing is using the right words and sentence structures. ML writers may particularly struggle with this because they have less experience than NES writers in reading/writing English. Limited vocabulary knowledge may cause several different problems in writing. First, it may cause the writing to sound too simple. Even if the paper does not have “errors,” if the writer uses the same

words over and over, it is not interesting to read and it does not make the writer seem intelligent and convincing. The same is true for sentence structures. There is a variety of ways to put sentences together in English, and if the same sentence patterns are used over and over, it can be boring to read.

Second, a great deal of college writing involves using the words or ideas of other authors (in a textbook or an article, for example), and professors expect students to paraphrase or “use their own words” rather than copying words, phrases, and sentences from a published text. But if students have a limited English vocabulary, it can be hard for them to find their “own” or other words to restate what they have read. As a result, they may be accused of plagiarism (using another author’s words as their own), which may have serious consequences—or they may simply write ineffectively or inaccurately about what they have read.

There are two different ways to approach the limited vocabulary/grammar knowledge problem. The first is to read as much as possible in English—newspapers, magazine and journal articles, or whatever else is interesting and enjoyable. Reading is a natural and easy way to be exposed to different words and sentence patterns. The more one reads, the more one learns about the language, and the more tools are available for writing. Second, ML writers might consider studying English academic vocabulary in a systematic way. A good place to start is the Academic Word List, a research-based list of 660 words found most frequently in college English textbooks. This list can be found at [www.lextutor.ca](http://www.lextutor.ca), a free and easy-to-use online vocabulary source. Students might try studying and reviewing those words and trying to use them in their own writing. There are also reading and vocabulary textbooks for English learners that are based on the Academic Word List. Try googling “textbooks” and “Academic Word List” for some ideas.

## **A Final Word for ML Writers: The Importance of Reading**

Even though this is a handbook about writing, we all know that reading and writing are connected, and this is especially true in college-level work. Almost every paper or writing assignment students will experience will require some kind of reading. While free self-selected reading for pleasure, as suggested above, is a great way to build knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar, there are academic reading skills that are important as well. These include strategies such as previewing a text (looking over a reading assignment to get a general sense of it before reading it carefully), **highlighting and taking notes, creating outlines or charts of important information, analyzing unfamiliar vocabulary, and using reading in one’s own writing.**

Taking steps to improve academic reading skills may be important for all college writers, but it is especially necessary for ML writers. Reading too slowly and not understanding what has been read are huge problems that not only will affect writing tasks but learning course material and being successful in classes and in professional settings later. If necessary, ML writers should consider taking English classes or reading tutorials or working with a tutor to improve their college reading skills and strategies.

## **Finding Assistance**

Though there are many challenges for ML college writers, there are also resources to help them. At Sac State, these include the Learning Skills Center, which has classes and small group tutorials on reading, writing, grammar, and oral skills, the ML writing program in the English department (English 2, 2X, 20M, and 109M), and the University Writing Center, which includes specialized materials and tutors trained to work with ML students. Many, many ML students have already been successful at Sac State, and there are many programs and professionals ready and eager to help them!



# The Rhetorical Situation

We've discussed some definitions for "academic writing" at Sacramento State, and we talked about how writing conventions differ in different fields. Now let's focus on the primary features of any college writing situation—what writing teachers call "the rhetorical situation." There are many factors you'll want to consider when you face rhetorical situations in college, including your purpose for writing, the audience you're writing to, the persona you take on in your writing, the type of text you're writing (the "genre"), and the broader social context of the situation.

You might have heard the media or politicians refer to "rhetoric" as something negative ("The President's speech was full of empty rhetoric"), but writing teachers define rhetoric in a different way than just a derogatory term for empty verbiage. Here's how some well known "rhetoricians" have defined rhetoric:

**Aristotle:** "Rhetoric is the art of discovering the available means of persuasion."

**Wayne Booth:** "The entire range of resources that human beings share for producing effects on one another: effects ethical (including everything about character), practical (including political), emotional (including aesthetic) and intellectual (including every academic field)."

**Kenneth Burke:** "The use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents."

**George Kennedy:** "Rhetoric, in the most general sense, is the energy inherent in emotion and thought, transmitted through a system of signs, including language, to others to influence their decisions or actions."

**Ross Winterowd:** "Rhetoric is the study of honest, effective communication."

**Sally Miller Gearhart:** "The creation or co-creation of an atmosphere in which people or things, if and only if they have the internal basis for change, may change themselves."

At the heart of all of these definitions of rhetoric is someone trying to effectively communicate something to someone else. The need to communicate effectively will be an important part of all your college classes, whether you're asked to communicate in words, images, sounds, or numbers. In that sense, rhetoric is fundamental to everything you do in your classes at Sacramento State.

Writing teachers say that rhetoric is always "situated." This means that every time you write in college, you write for a specific situation—for a specific purpose and audience, in a specific type of text, in a specific academic field and for a specific class. This situation shapes what you say and how you say it. Writing teachers call this "the rhetorical situation." Rhetorical situations are complex, and they include a variety of factors, including the writer's purpose for writing, the persona the writer takes on in her writing, the audience for the writing, the type of text, and wider contexts like the social backgrounds and personal beliefs of the writer and audience. Let's take a look at the primary aspects of any rhetorical situation.

## Purpose

A writer's purpose could include the goals the writer has for her writing, the purpose that's set out for the writer in a teacher's assignment, and the influence of factors like the audience the writer is addressing or the type of writing. In college writing, your purposes for writing are always complex, and they might include your career goals, your desire to get an "A," your goal of improving as a writer, the purpose defined in the assignment, the goals of the class, the context of the academic field, etc. Your writing assignments at Sacramento State are likely to have multiple purposes for both you as the writer and for the reader.

## Audience

In college you'll most often be writing to teachers as your primary audience, but teachers can play a variety of roles when they read and respond to your writing. Sometimes teachers will play the role of "interested reader" and read your writing just to find out what you're thinking or to get to know you better as a writer and a thinker. At other times teachers play the role of representatives of their academic field and they'll respond to you as a biologist, an anthropologist, a literary critic, etc. Sometimes teachers play the role of "examiner," testing you to see what you've learned about the subject. Teachers might also role-play hypothetical audiences when they respond to your writing. For example, a teacher might ask you to pretend to write a memo to the Board of Directors of a company or a letter to a Senator. You may even be asked to address wider audiences outside of the class—for example, you might be asked to write a letter to the editor of *The State Hornet*, or to help create a newsletter for a non-profit organization for a service learning project. Your audience will affect your purpose for writing, the persona you take on, and the way you develop and organize your text.

## Persona

A writer's persona is the way she presents herself in her writing. Persona can include the voice, stance, tone, and style a writer takes on in her writing. Persona includes a writer's word choice, the attitude she takes toward her subject and the reader, and her level of formality. The persona you take on in your writing will depend on your purpose for writing, the subject you're writing about, the audience you're writing to, the type of text you're writing, and the context for writing. Since much of the writing you do at Sacramento State will be academic types of texts for audiences of scholars in the academic field, it will be common for you to take on a more formal persona in your college writing than you would in emails to friends or discussions at the dinner table with your family. But not all academic writing is formal. Sometimes teachers will ask you to write personal narrative essays or electronic discussion board posts to your peers or informal, in-class writing. There's no single persona you'll take on in all of your college writing—each rhetorical situation will demand a different voice and style.

## Text

Many teachers used to think of texts as just the printed word, but more recently teachers have expanded the way they define texts. A text could mean a research paper or a lab report, but it could also mean a Web site or a blog or a PowerPoint presentation or a brochure. Because communicating in college

means more than just the written word, teachers have coined the term “academic discourse” to describe college communication. “Discourse” can include communicating with photos or graphs or Web sites or podcasts.

There are some types of texts and writing assignments you’ll encounter in classes in all different academic fields—for example, short-answer exams or reader response journals or book reviews. Other types of texts and assignments are more common in a specific academic field—for example, lab reports in the natural sciences or company profiles in business. Each academic field is its own community, with its own discourse—this is what writing teachers call “discourse communities.” “Discourse” includes all kinds of ways of communicating—written texts, visual texts, speeches, electronic texts, etc. Each discourse community has its own common kinds of texts. Texts like the lab report, which have purposes, audiences, and forms that have evolved over time as a common response to a recurring rhetorical situation, are called “genres.” The ability to recognize and understand the genre of what you’re writing is crucial in college, and we’ll be looking more closely at the concept of genre in the next section.

## **Context**

The context of a rhetorical situation includes all the broader social, cultural, and historical factors that can influence writing. This could include the writer’s context, like her history as a writer, the experiences she’s had in class and with the teacher, her level of success and confidence with previous writing assignments in class or in college in general, her cultural background, etc. Context could include aspects of audience like your audience’s economic class, their level of expertise with your subject, their ethnic background, their personal beliefs, etc. Context could also be related to the type of text you’re writing—for example, in a timed essay test factors like how long you have to write and how broad or narrow the questions are will have a major effect on what you say and how you say it.

## Responses to Rhetorical Situations: Genres

You might have heard the term “genre” before—for example, movie genres such as horror or thriller or romantic comedy, or music genres like hip hop, country, or jazz. In these examples, “genre” is a term that’s used to classify a certain type of movie or song, with a certain audience and a certain form and a certain style. Academic writing also has genres. For example, the case study or the lab report or the scholarly book review. These genres are typical kinds of responses to rhetorical situations—responses that for the most part share the same audience, purpose, form, and style.

Genre is a complicated concept, so it might help to start with a simple example: a grocery list. Think of getting groceries as a rhetorical situation. Your purpose is to make sure you get all the food that you’ve run out of. Your audience is yourself—you just need something you can use as a reminder for yourself, and it doesn’t need to be anything formal or written with an engaging style. The rhetorical situation is one that occurs again and again—every time you run out of groceries. The “grocery list” is a genre that’s grown out of this repeated rhetorical situation. Everyone writing a grocery list has the same basic purpose and audience, and most everyone uses the same type of “text”: a list of groceries on a sheet of paper or notecard. The context of the grocery list can affect the way it’s organized. Since I shop at the same grocery store every time, I try to organize my list by the order of the aisles I visit. And when I’m broke, my grocery list is a lot shorter. The genre of the grocery list has evolved over time as a useful response to a repeated rhetorical situation, but it’s also still evolving. Instead of using a piece of paper or notecard, you might now save your grocery list in a PDA or even record what groceries you need using a voice recorder in your cell phone. A genre, then, is a typical response to a recurring rhetorical situation that has evolved over time—and continues to evolve. A genre (like the grocery list) has similar purposes, audiences, and conventions each time it occurs. As you can see with the grocery list example, a genre is more than just a format—it’s a way of getting something done.

At Sacramento State, you’re going to encounter a wide variety of genres, some of which are connected to specific academic fields (such as the lab report in the sciences or the breaching experiment in the social sciences), and some of which are common in almost any field (such as the book review or the abstract). Since we’re going to focus on the ways that genres differ in different academic fields in Part III, let’s take a look at a genre that’s common across the curriculum: the scholarly book review. The following assignment from Professor Peter Detwiler’s land use public policy class is an example of the genre of the scholarly book review:

Unlike the “book reports” you wrote as an undergraduate, a book review is a specialized form of the essay. The sociologist Oscar Handlin said that a good essay is a product of experience joined to scholarly thought. It draws together information and illuminates its meaning. Because that’s a tall order, here are my suggestions on how to write an effective book review.

**Read it.** Your first step in writing a book review is to read the book. If you bought the book and plan to keep it, write marginal notes to yourself. If it's not your own copy, then scribble your notes on a writing tablet or on your laptop computer. The goal is to engage the unseen author in dialogue by reacting immediately to interesting or controversial arguments. Jot down your reactions so you can go back and review them later. Even a simple "Ah-ha!" written in the margin will remind you of the startling epiphany that seemed so important at the time. When you disagree, write down a phrase that will allow you to come back to that point. Marking the relevant passages allows you to chase a theme through several chapters. You can return to them and discover how the author used the concept in different settings.

**Organize your thoughts.** Start by re-reading "Memo B – Recommendations For Successful Paper Writing," reminding yourself of the need for a title page, an effective title, a consistent theme, a strong opening and closing, and using the paragraph as the unit of composition. Now that you know what you're looking for, open the book and scan your own marginal notes. Look for the themes that impressed you. Make lists of what you liked and what annoyed you. What features stand out now that you've read the whole book? Did the author deliver on the promises made in the introduction? Did the final chapter pull the threads together into a cohesive fabric?

**Identify the main argument.** The first question to ask yourself (and the first point that I'll look for when I read your book review) is: "What is the author trying to make me [the reader] understand?" Find the answer to that question and you are well on your way to writing an effective book review.

**Author's justification.** Explain how the author justifies the book's main argument. In your book review give examples of the evidence that the author uses: accumulated observations, survey research, controlled experiments, logical arguments, appeals to emotion, persuasive anecdotes. Using specific examples to illustrate your explanation shows me that you've read and really understood the book!

**Wider context.** Demonstrate your understanding of the author's main argument by placing it in a wider context. How did historical, political, economic, and social events influence the author's views? How does the author's main argument relate to:

- Major themes in this course.
- Other books or articles that you have read?
- Your own observations and personal experiences?

**What do you think?** Having described and understood the author's argument, now I want to know your views. Do you agree or disagree with the author's argument? What counter arguments or contradictory evidence did the author ignore? What faults do you find in the author's

arguments? How different would the author's argument be if the book were written today? In other words, how have more recent historical, political, economic, and social events changed the context?

As the example from Professor Detwiler illustrates, scholarly book reviews typically have the purpose of briefly summarizing the content of a book and evaluating a book's strengths and weaknesses. The audience is usually other scholars who are interested in the subject area of the book being reviewed but haven't read it yet. The audience might be using the reviewer's judgments to decide if they want to read the book or not, so part of the context for the writer is the responsibility of helping other scholars make this decision. In a book review the writer takes on a persona of authority, since they've read the book closely and carefully in order to make fair judgments. The rhetorical situation for the scholarly book review evolved over time: as more and more academic books were being published each year, scholars needed a way to find out about new books and new ideas in their field without having to read every book published. Academic journals began including book reviews as a way to meet this need. For the book review, genre was a social action, arising out of a specific rhetorical situation and meeting the social needs of communities of scholars. Like all genres, the book review continues to evolve. For example, as more and more "books" are published online in the form of Web sites, the genre of the book review will need to change to adapt to this new medium.

# Writing Critical Analyses and Academic Arguments

By Mark Stoner, Communication Studies

Excerpted from *Making Sense of Messages: A Critical Apprenticeship in Rhetorical Criticism* by Stoner, M. and Perkins, S. (2005) Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Most of you will not make your living writing formal criticism for academic journals. However, if you work in any occupation in which communication is a central function of your job or any part of your life as a citizen, you will need to do critical analysis in some form or another. Whether in an academic class, a job, or a volunteer position, you may need to report your findings in writing to others. You may be asked to produce some kind of product, or written document, reporting your analysis of a court decision, a politician's position paper or speech, a competitor's advertisements, a proposal, an editorial, a sermon, or a community activist's impromptu speech. Consider in the next few paragraphs how those products might differ for different audiences and purposes.



The product of criticism might be a rigorous academic essay intended for a wide audience of colleagues. In that case, you would have to review all relevant literature and research they may have been done on your topic of study; you would have to explain your methods as precisely as possible, argue your case carefully, provide lots of support for your conclusions, and precisely document your uses of other people's ideas. These are very important activities, but they are practiced by only a few thousand faculty and graduate students, in any given year, in the fashion just described.

Perhaps you'll write movie, theatre, or music reviews for an alternative press publication, or an organization's newsletter, or a school paper. If you write movie reviews for the *Hornet*, the students read them because you know your audience's interests and tastes, and you provide the students with a needed opinion and some guidance on how to spend a rare evening free of responsibilities of studying.

Others of you may report your analyses of all sorts to a narrow professional audience. You may work for a philanthropic foundation or state agency that must analyze proposals requesting grant monies. You may go on to clerk for a law firm or judge, and much of your job would be analysis of opinions and briefs that are substantial attempts to persuade an audience. You may work for a television network reviewing treatments for new programs or reviewing internal reports on operations.

The level of rigor you apply to the analysis will depend on the purpose of your criticism and your audience. So, too, the way you write up your findings will depend on your purpose and audience. But no matter what your purpose or audience, certain issues must be considered when writing an analysis or argument. *In every case, the presentation of insights from the analysis must be cogent, well organized, well proven, precise in language use, and thoughtfully shaped for the intended audience. You need to understand the rhetorical situation you face and attempt to respond to it fittingly.*

Understanding your rhetorical situation means you must know who composes your audience. Critical analysis may be done for many reasons and many different sorts of audiences. You must adapt your message to the audience you are addressing. Are you writing for other critics? Professional colleagues? General readers? Beyond identifying your audience, it is important that you identify the purpose of your critical writing. Of course different purposes require different approaches, but an underlying requirement of all good criticism is that it makes an argument (Brockriede 1974, 165). Prior to writing you have attempted to take a distant or impartial stance—you observed from a balcony, and as a result you have gained some insight—you've done your critical work. To preserve that work and convey your insights powerfully to your audience, you must argue your case, usually in writing. Wayne Brockriede posits the following five conditions must be met of criticism is to be useful:

*By "argument" I mean the process whereby a person reasons [his or her] way from one idea to the choice of another idea. The concept of argument implies five generic characteristics: (1) an inferential leap from existing beliefs to the adoption of a new belief or the reinforcement of an old one; (2) a perceived rationale to justify that leap; (3) a choice among two or more competing claims; (4) a regulation of uncertainty in relation to the selected claim—since someone has made an inferential leap, certainty can be neither zero nor total; and (5) a willingness to risk a confrontation of that claim with one's peers. (1974, 166)*



## Advice for College Writing Processes

"Students need to understand that writing is a process that involves more than one draft; even very talented writers don't only write one draft."

— **Professor Laura Basini**, Music Department

"I think some good advice to other students about writing in their classes...is to not procrastinate and do the paper the night before it's due, because no matter how good you think it is, your professor will know whether or not you put much time and effort in to it."

— **Laura Flores**, Sacramento State student

"I expect all writing students to deal meaningfully with the largest writing issues - purpose, logic and development, before concerning themselves with the smaller issues -sentence styling and surface error."

— **Professor Shelley Blanton Stroud**, English Department

# Understanding College Writing Assignments

The first step of a college writing process is understanding the writing assignment your teacher gives you. Typically your teachers at Sac State will give you a writing assignment as a handout or as part of their syllabus. The key to getting started on the right track with a college writing process is knowing what to focus on when your teacher gives you an assignment. Here are some strategies for understanding college writing assignments:

## **Look for key verbs like “define,” “argue,” “compare,” “summarize,” etc.**

Most of the writing assignments you'll get at Sacramento State have key verbs that reveal the kinds of thinking strategies that are required for the genre of the assignment. For example, verbs like “summarize,” “describe,” “argue,” etc. Sometimes your teachers will explain what they mean by these key verbs in the assignment, and sometimes they won't. If they don't explain the key verbs, don't be afraid to ask your teachers, “What do you mean by ‘synthesize’?” or “What do you mean by ‘describe’?”

Thinking strategies like “argue” or “explain” or “describe” will require different approaches for each class you take. For example, “describe” in an art history class might mean using descriptive imagery to paint a verbal picture of a work of art, but “describe” in a business class might mean using charts and graphs to describe the way the economy of a country works. Try to think of the key verbs in a writing assignment in relation to what you've been doing in class and the academic field of the class.

## **Think about the genre of the writing assignment and try to find examples of this kind of genre to use as models.**

Earlier in this part of the handbook we defined “genre” as a common writing situation that has similar purposes, audiences, and conventions each time it occurs. Many of your college writing assignments will be recognizable genres that are common to the academic field of study of the class. For example, in natural science classes you might be asked to write genres like lab reports or experimental reports and in social science classes you might be asked to write genres like case studies or breaching papers (where you breach a social norm and then write about it). If your teacher doesn't provide examples you can use as models, it wouldn't take much research to find your own examples. For example, in the book review assignment above, you could go to the library and find a history journal that includes a book review section. Reading a few of these examples would give you a sense of the style, tone, organization, and content of history book reviews. Looking at examples of the genre you're writing in can also help you generate ideas and find a topic.

## **Think about the intended audience.**

Sometimes teachers will create a real or hypothetical audience for a writing assignment. If an audience isn't specified in the writing assignment, you might ask the professor questions about the intended audience. Looking at models of the

genre you're writing in can help again here, since a specific genre will usually have a specific type of intended audience.

### **Ask your peers and your instructor questions about the writing assignment.**

Writers rarely work alone: writing always has a social context, and most writers seek help at some point in the writing process. One way to get help if you're having trouble understanding one of your instructor's writing assignments is to talk with your peers in class. It's also important not to be shy about asking your teacher questions. Some students won't ask their teacher questions if they're having trouble understanding an assignment because they don't want to look "dumb". But most teachers at Sacramento State are happy when students ask them questions. Teachers are glad to know that students are thinking carefully about their writing assignments, and they also want to know if their writing assignments are confusing so they can revise them and make them clearer.

### **Take your writing assignment to the University Writing Center.**

Rather than struggling to understand a writing assignment and getting off track right from the start, make an appointment to see a tutor at the University Writing Center in CLV 128. Tutors have a lot of experience working with writing assignments from instructors in different departments, so don't be shy about visiting the Writing Center.

## Strategies for Finding Topics



The initial steps in a writing process, when you're trying to discover a topic, are what writing teachers call "invention." Invention can occur in your head as you're thinking about an assignment or as you read and find ideas for topics or on paper when you brainstorm. Invention isn't always the first step in writing processes—you might find yourself using some of the invention techniques we're going to

discuss after you've already written a rough draft, if you decide to change topics or completely revise a section of your paper. Sometimes teachers at Sacramento State will give you a topic, which means you might not have an extensive invention process. But most often in college writing you'll have some choice of topic, and it will be important that you find a topic that's interesting to you and to your audience—whether you are composing a paper or speech or SacCT blog entry. When you do have some freedom of choice, consider using some of the following strategies for finding a topic:

### **Create an authority and interest list.**

You'll be more engaged with a writing assignment if you can find a topic that you're an authority on or that you want to know more about. Without putting any pressure on yourself, come up with a list of 20-30 things that you're an authority on or have personal experience with. These could be hobbies, areas of expertise, academic areas, places you've lived, etc. Then come up with a list of 20-30 things you aren't familiar with but would like to know more about. After you've made these lists, brainstorm topics related to your lists. For example, if "WNBA basketball" was on your list authority list, one topic for a sociology class research paper could be "gender roles and the WNBA."

### **Use freewriting to generate topics.**

"Freewriting" is a good technique for letting ideas flow and not getting blocked before you even begin. Think about the writing assignment, and just start writing whatever comes to mind. Don't worry about grammar or organization or whether the ideas would make good topics or not...just write, write, write. Keep your pen moving, and don't make any value judgments about what you're writing. Turn off your innercritic and just let your mind wander. Oftentimes by taking the pressure off yourself and using writing to explore your thoughts, you can eventually come up with a good topic.

### **Try talking about your subject and recording while you talk.**

A lot of our students have a tough time writing down their thoughts, but when they talk about their topic the words flow out of them. We sometimes tell these students to try recording their thoughts on their subject, using a tape recorder or

their computer's voice recorder or even the voice recorder on their cell phone. If you happen to come up with a phrase or even entire sentences you like, you can always transcribe what you've said.

## **Surf the Internet to brainstorm topics.**

Let's say you know you want to write an essay about global warming for an environmental science class, but you're not sure how to narrow your topic down to one aspect of global warming. You could search for "global warming" using an Internet search engine and browse whatever Web sites come up. Most Web sites also have links to other related Web sites. Five or ten minutes of browsing can lead you to plenty of related topics and different aspects of your subject—and you just might hit on an aspect of your subject that you never even considered.

## **Read and research to generate ideas for a topic.**

All writing is "intertextual," which means new texts are always in conversation with texts that have already been written about a topic. Experienced college writers draw on their reading experiences to generate ideas for topics. For example, let's say you're writing a research paper on cloning in a biology class, and you need to find an aspect of cloning to write about. In addition to the class readings, you could find magazine, newspaper, or academic journal articles about cloning, or skim through some books about cloning. Finding out what other writers have said about your topic can help you generate ideas and even help you figure out what topics not to write about. Some topics (like arguments for or against the death penalty) have been written about so often that they might be less appealing to your audience and more difficult for you to find something interesting to add to the conversation.

## **Visit your teacher during office hours to discuss topic ideas.**

Most teachers at Sacramento State like it when students visit them during their office hours to get some feedback on ideas for paper topics. Your teachers can help you get headed in the right direction early in the process, which saves them time later when they respond to your final draft. And teachers are impressed when students care enough about their writing to get help early in the process.

## **Visit the University Writing Center.**

The University Writing Center, located in Calaveras 128, is not just a place to go to get help when you already have a complete draft of a paper. Writing Center tutors can help you brainstorm topics for assignments, and they can give you feedback on topic ideas you're considering. It's helpful to bring your writing assignment with you when you visit the writing center, so the tutor can get a clear sense of the assignment.

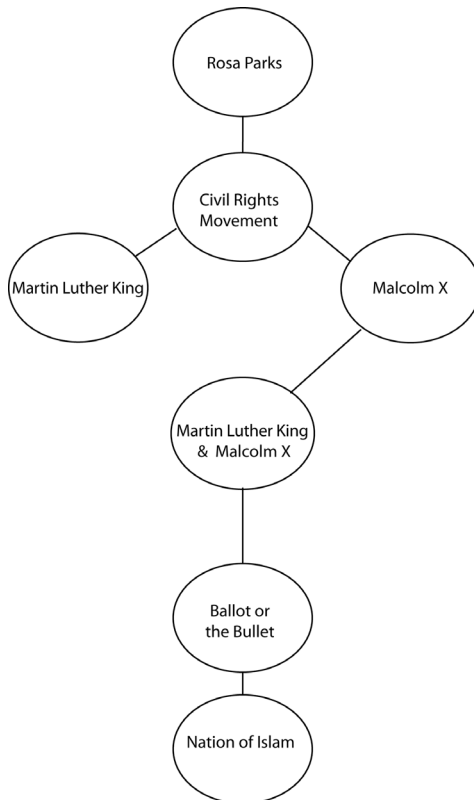
## **Narrow broad topics.**

It's not bad to begin with a broad topic, but narrowing a topic down to a manageable size will help you focus your research and your writing. For example, the topic "negative campaigning" would be far too broad for a five-page research

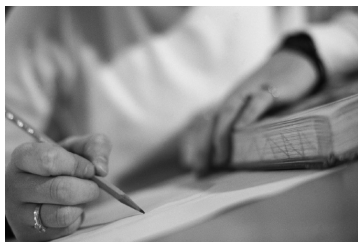
report in a political science class. You could write an entire book on negative campaigning, and you could spend years in the library collecting articles and books on such a broad topic. Some ways to narrow this topic could be by focusing on a location (negative campaigning in Ohio), a group (negative campaigning by Republicans or Democrats), a time period (negative campaigning in the 2008 election), or a type (negative campaigning using television ads). Even these topics would probably be too broad for a five-page paper, so you could continue narrowing the sub-topics you've come up with (for example, negative campaigning by Republicans in Ohio during the 2008 election).

## Use clustering to generate or narrow a topic

Clustering involves writing down your main topic and branching off from that topic to create related topics or sub-topics in a kind of tree with many branches. For example, on your computer screen or a blank sheet of paper, you might write down "Civil Rights Movement" as a possible topic in an ethnic studies class. Then you would brainstorm sub-topics like "Malcolm X," "Martin Luther King," "Rosa Parks," etc. Then you would choose some of the sub-topics and create more topics. If you choose "Malcolm X," you might write down sub-topics like "Nation of Islam," "The Ballot or the Bullet speech," "relationship between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King," etc. Here's an example:



# Drafting and Revising



The “believing game” is a term invented by the writing teacher Peter Elbow that can help you write and rewrite your first drafts. Elbow tells writers not to be too critical of their writing in early drafts, and not to worry about editing for grammar and mechanics until the very last draft. He tells writers to play the “believing game” when they write rough drafts. Playing the believing game means writing whatever

comes to mind and not being critical of your writing in early drafts, but just believing in your words and letting them flow. Some college writers feel they need to get every sentence exactly right before they move on to the next sentence, but usually this makes it more difficult for them to get their ideas out. Only after you’ve done some drafting (and hopefully gotten some feedback) is it time to revise with a more critical eye. Elbow calls this critical approach that you need for revising your writing the “doubting game.” Playing the doubting game means looking for places in your writing where you need to develop your ideas, consider different perspectives on your topic, make your thoughts clearer to your readers, etc. Remember that rough drafts are exploratory. All writers write lousy first drafts, because first drafts are just practice runs where writers can take risks, explore ideas, and play with language and structure. Focus on generating ideas in rough drafts. Play the believing game and save the doubting game for later drafts.

## Strategies for Drafting College Writing

### **Write down what you already know about a topic and what questions you have about a topic before you begin drafting.**

Before you begin to research a topic and write a draft, write down everything you already know about the topic. Create a list of things you know or believe about your topic, and a list of questions you have about the topic. This list can help guide your research and your drafting.

### **Write a discovery draft.**

A “discovery draft” is a kind of focused freewriting where you write a rough draft of an entire essay or a big chunk of an essay in one sitting without worrying about organization, spelling, grammar, etc. The key is not to put any pressure on yourself—to just play the believing game and let any ideas that you have out. You can use parts of this discovery draft when you start your formal drafting process, or you can choose the strongest section of the discovery draft and write another discovery draft using that section as a starting point.

### **Try the “talk and transcribe” technique.**

Sometimes it’s easier to talk about your topic to get your ideas out than it is to write about your topic. In the talk and transcribe technique, you record your voice on a tape recorder or computer and draft by talking. For example, you might talk about why you feel the way you do about a topic, or pretend you’re explaining a concept to your audience. You can then play back what you said and transcribe anything that might be useful.

### **Don’t edit in early drafts.**

Sometimes when you write for school you forget that no one is going to see that first draft but you. Think of your first draft like the first exploration of a place you’ve never been: it’s “exploratory.” Trying to get every sentence perfect or every idea complete and organized on the first draft makes the writing process much more difficult. Let your ideas and sentences flow on early drafts, and save revising and editing for later in the writing process. After all, why bother editing sentences and paragraphs that you might delete later on? You might even change your entire topic or argument once you’ve begun drafting.

### **Start with what you’re most interested in or confident about writing.**

There’s no rule that says when you write your first draft you need to start with the introductory paragraphs and then write in logical order from there. Let’s say you’re writing a critical analysis of the poetry of Adrienne Rich for a literature class, and you’re most confident about writing about her poem “Diving into the Wreck.” You might write this section first, and then go back and write other sections of the paper.

## **Strategies for Revising College Writing**

### **Remember the differences between revising and editing and proofreading.**

Because writing in college is complex and no one ever writes a perfect first draft, it’s a mistake to think that revising means just editing sentences or looking for typos (proofreading). Revising requires rethinking larger issues than just sentences and words. When you revise, don’t be afraid to change the focus of your topic, question your theoretical perspective, move paragraphs, delete and add examples, etc.

### **Give yourself time to look at what you’ve written with a fresh eye.**

When an instructor gives you a writing assignment, it’s a good idea to get an early start and give yourself enough time to put down your rough draft for a day or two and then come back with a fresh eye. Every writer has a hard time getting some distance from what he or she has written, and if you give yourself some time between drafts, you’ll have a more “objective” eye as a reader of your own writing. When you go back to your essay after you’ve put it down for a while, try to play the role of your audience and think about what they would want to know more about or what they might be confused by.



## **Get feedback from the instructor.**

Sacramento State teachers often have a hard time getting students to visit them during their office hours. Students are often shy, intimidated, or worried that the teacher will think they aren't smart enough to complete the assignment. But most teachers actually appreciate students who visit them during their office hours to get some feedback on a draft of a writing assignment. Seeking out feedback shows teachers that you're putting a lot of effort into their assignments and trying to do a good job.

## **Get feedback from peers.**

Some teachers ask students to get into pairs or small groups and give each other feedback on their essays. Peer response is common in composition classes like ENGL1A and ENGL20. However, many of your college teachers are not familiar with peer response, and they'll leave it up to you to form groups outside of class if you want responses from your peers. If you can find two or three peers in your class who are willing to share drafts, you can get some valuable feedback. You might feel your peers won't provide as valuable feedback as your teachers, but feedback from an outside reader is always helpful, even if you just have peers point out places where they were confused or wanted to know more.

## **Get feedback from the University Writing Center.**

Bringing a draft of your essay to the University Writing Center in CLV 128, along with any written instructions that the teacher has given you, can be one of the best ways to improve as a writer. And don't just visit the Writing Center when you're struggling with a writing assignment. Even when things are going well, writers need feedback.

## **Some Questions for Revision**

What you focus on when you revise will depend on the writing assignment, the class, and the teacher. But there are some general questions you can ask yourself as you revise college writing that will apply to many of your writing assignments:

- Is the purpose of the writing clear to your readers?
- Are your assertions supported by enough evidence to persuade readers?
- Have you considered different points of view on the topic?
- Is the writing organized in a way that readers will be able to follow your ideas without becoming lost or confused?
- Is the style and tone appropriate for the rhetorical situation (the purpose, audience, and genre)?
- Does the opening capture readers' interest and offer enough information about the topic?
- Does the closing synthesize the points of the essay without being redundant or mechanical?

# Editing and Proofreading Techniques

Revising means making big changes to the content of your essay: changing the topic, changing the organization, adding and deleting paragraphs, adding more information and ideas from researching, etc. Editing means focusing on sentence-level issues: making your sentences clearer, working on grammar and mechanics, considering word choice, etc. Once your essay is edited, it's time to proofread. Proofreading means checking for typos, misspellings, grammar errors, etc. Editing and proofreading are the final stages of a writing process for a number of reasons. If you try to edit and proofread as you draft, you'll have a more difficult time getting your ideas on the page. You might get so caught up in getting the sentences perfect that you'll lose your train of thought or get bogged down in details. Another reason to save editing and proofreading for the final stage of the writing process is that it's a waste of time to edit and proofread sentences or paragraphs that might not even be there in the final draft.

Even though experienced writers save editing and proofreading for last, it's still an important part of the process. Your teachers at Sacramento State will have high expectations for the content of your essays and for the way you communicate that content. Part of this communication is making sure that your readers can understand your sentences. It's also important to edit and proofread carefully in order to gain the trust of your readers. After all, would you trust the information in a newspaper article or the arguments of the author of a book if what you were reading was riddled with typos and grammatical errors? Of course, if you're multilingual, your sentence-level "errors" may actually just be part of your writing "accent," just as we have an accent when we talk. As we discussed earlier, the English language is diverse, and it's only getting more diverse as more speakers and writers of English are multilingual rather than monolingual, with different accents and vocabularies and writing styles that are influenced by their cultural backgrounds and the languages they speak. Some teachers will focus on the content of your writing and won't be put off by your writing accent, and some teachers will want you to write in the "accent" of edited American English. The purpose, audience, genre, and context of the writing assignment will also play a role in how much focus the teacher will put on grammar and other sentence-level features of writing. Regardless of the writing situation, it's important to give yourself time to carefully edit and proofread your paper, and to make use of strategies that experienced college writers use to edit and proofread their papers.

## Strategies for Editing and Proofreading College Writing

By Cynthia Linville, English Department Instructor

- Know what your own areas of weakness and patterns of error are and create a personalized checklist. This should cover both rhetorical problems (weak introduction, poor organization) and grammatical problems (pronoun reference, comma errors).

- Plan time for editing each project or assignment. Leave at least ¼ of your planned time to edit.
- Allow time to pass before you begin editing. Usually at least 24 hours is needed to see the work with “fresh eyes.”
- Edit on hard-copy rather than on screen. We tend to miss more errors when we edit on screen. Try taking your manuscript outdoors, to the couch, or to a coffee shop to change your mindset from “writer” to “editor.”
- Begin by reading what you’ve written out loud. Listen for places that you stumble – these are usually areas that need to be rewritten.
- Scan for repetitive words, phrases, sentences, and ideas.
- Look at the beginning of each sentence to ensure you vary your sentence structure. Does every sentence start the same way? Are all your sentences short and choppy, or are they all more than two lines long?
- Read through your essay looking for one error-pattern at a time.
- Read through from back to front if you have trouble “seeing” sentence problems.
- Choose a classmate or friend to help you edit. Ask this person to read your work aloud to you once or twice, and take notes on a blank piece of paper while you listen.

Editing is an important part of writing processes, but don’t be frustrated if you struggle with errors in your college writing career. Teachers at Sacramento State have high expectations for your writing, and they expect essays that are carefully edited and proofread. This is understandable—after all, if you want to get your message across to your readers, they need to be able to understand your ideas and your sentences. But don’t get too frustrated if you find yourself making more sentence-level errors in college than you did in high school. Sometimes errors are a sign of growth. In college you’re going to experience new genres, the new languages of different academic fields, and challenging and complex writing assignments. This means you’re going to struggle and make mistakes as you learn these new genres and expand your writing style. Don’t get frustrated by these errors—keep practicing, keep reading, and keep working on improving your editing skills.

### **Grammar Resources for Edited Academic English (EAP)**

Purdue University Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Paradigm Online Writing Assistant: <http://www.powa.org/>

Guide to Grammar and Style: <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/writing/>

Capitol College Guide to Grammar and Writing: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

## Strategies for Timed Writing

The writing processes we've been discussing are for ideal college writing situations, where you have plenty of time to analyze the assignment, think about a topic, draft and revise, get feedback during the process, and carefully edit a final draft. But often in college the writing situation won't be this ideal. If you're taking an in-class essay exam or the Writing Placement for Juniors (WVJ), you won't have time to engage in the kind of writing processes we've been discussing in this section. In some disciplines, such as journalism, writers have a strict deadline and don't have much time between writing and turning in a final draft. Since timed writing limits the amount of revising a writer can engage in and doesn't give writers the chance to get feedback from readers, why do some teachers at Sacramento State assign timed writing? Some teachers ask you to write in-class essays so they can get a better sense of your writing style and your strengths as a writer and what you need to improve on. It's also common for college teachers to give timed essay exams if they teach in large classes, since the writing will be less extensive and it won't be overwhelming for them to respond to and grade their students' essays. Unfortunately, timed writing tests like the EPT or the WVJ or the essay portion of the SAT give the public the impression that a brief, timed writing can measure how well a student can think and write. If you don't do well on timed tests, or if you were a successful writer in your high school classes but didn't do well on the SAT or EPT, don't feel bad. Researchers who study writing processes have shown that timed essay tests don't really measure how well a student can write or think critically about a topic, since there's not enough time to think deeply about the topic, plan and draft, and extensively revise and edit. Writing is a social and intertextual process, and timed exams also deny writers the chance to get feedback and seek out models of the genre they're writing in. Timed writing can also be difficult for ESL students, and students who are still learning English have a disadvantage in timed writing situations. But even if you get nervous when you have to take a timed essay exam or you know that you write much better when you have time to revise and get feedback, the reality is that throughout your career at Sacramento State you'll have to do some timed writing. When you do get a timed essay test, there are some strategies you can use so you'll be well prepared and confident.

### Advice for Timed Writing

#### **Prepare ahead by studying possible writing topics and writing practice essays.**

You'll be much more confident and much less nervous going into a timed writing situation if you're well prepared. Give yourself time to study your notes and class readings well before the day of a timed essay exam. Write some practice essays ahead of time to get a feel for how long you'll have to write and what you might say. Sometimes your teacher will give you questions ahead of time, and sometimes you'll just have to practice by making an educated guess about what you think the essay exam might cover.

## **Carefully read and reread the question and underline key words.**

When you read the timed exam question or questions, don't panic. Take a deep breath and give yourself time to read and reread the question to make sure you have an understanding of what the teacher is asking you. Look for key verbs that point to the kind of thinking strategies the question is asking for, like "summarize," "define," "evaluate," "argue," etc.

## **Tap into class lectures and discussions.**

In timed essay exams, teachers will often ask you to respond to questions that were raised in lectures or class discussions. Try to recall what the teacher discussed in her lectures or what the class talked about in class discussions.

## **Do some brainstorming and planning**

It's worthwhile to devote some time to invention and rough drafting before you start writing a more organized response. You could use some of the strategies discussed in this chapter, like making lists or clustering or creating a rough outline. You won't have time to engage in an extensive drafting and revising process, but you might have time to write a quick rough draft, or on a separate sheet of paper write a "no pressure" draft of a section of the essay that you're stuck on.

## **Don't approach the drafting of a piece of timed writing with the same approach you use for other kinds of writing assignments.**

If you're writing a research paper that you have two months to write, there's plenty of time to develop complex arguments, support your ideas to the fullest, and write in a sophisticated style. In a timed essay exam, you'll need to simplify things a bit. Depending on how much time you have, you may need to find a simple way to organize your ideas or strategies for supporting your arguments more concisely than you would in a ten-page research paper. You might also simplify your writing style. Usually teachers are focused on the content of your essays in a timed exam, and they're not looking for a sophisticated writing style.

## **Don't worry about surface errors while you're writing, but save some time for a final edit.**

In timed writing situations, you can't let yourself get bogged down in getting word choice perfect and each sentence grammatically correct. Don't edit as you go, but save five minutes or so to look over what you've written and do a final edit. Most teachers don't have the same expectations for grammatical correctness in timed essays that they would in an essay you had weeks to write, revise, and edit.

## Peer Response



In peer response, students get into pairs or small groups and give each other feedback on a draft of an essay. This is a common activity in composition courses like ENGL1A and ENGL20, and it's likely that some of your teachers in other academic fields will also ask you to respond to drafts of your peers' writing. Teachers who use peer response know that what you can learn from your peers can be just as helpful as what you can learn from your teacher.

Teachers feel that peer response has other benefits as well:

- Peer response gives you feedback early in the writing process.
- Peer response provides you with a real, live audience for your writing.
- Peer response gives you the chance to ask direct questions to readers.
- Peer response lets you see how other students are responding to the writing assignment.
- Peer response helps you become a better evaluator of your writing by learning how to evaluate your peers' writing.
- Peer response discourages you from waiting until the last minute to write.
- Peer response helps create a classroom community of writers.

### Advice for Responding to your Peers' Writing

**Try to balance praise and constructive criticism.** Sometimes in peer response students are trying not to hurt someone's feelings, so they only say nice things about an essay. It's good for the writer to hear what's working in an essay, but in order to give the writer ideas for what and how to revise, you also need to offer constructive criticism and let the writer know where you were confused. At the same time, you don't want to just "tear apart" the writer. Give "constructive" criticism. You also want to let writers know what's working and how they can build on what's working to make the essay better.

**Don't comment on grammar and mechanics in rough drafts.** Experienced writers save editing and proofreading for the final stage of writing processes, and unless your teacher has a special peer editing workshop for final drafts, it's best not to comment on grammar and mechanics in peer response. There's no sense in editing a sentence or paragraph that may not even end up in the final draft. Don't play the role of the grammar police in peer response.

**Ask the writer what she needs help with before you read and respond.** Sometimes writers will have specific questions they'd like their peer readers to address: questions like, "Does the introduction draw you in?" or "Do I have

enough evidence in paragraph #3?" Before you begin discussing a peer's essay or writing your response, ask the writer if she has specific questions she'd like you to address.

## Strategies for Reading and Responding to your Peers' Writing

### By Professor Cherryl Smith, English Department

1. **Holistic Reading and Responding.** On your first reading (or hearing) of a draft, read to get a general impression, to find out what the main focus seems to be, and to listen for the main points the writer is making. On this first reading, you will not be expected to formulate a detailed response, so simply give your full attention to the text. This form of reading is critical to all the other forms; it is the foundation for your ability to be a helpful responder. From a holistic reading you can provide the kind of first response that writers need: to know that someone is really listening and taking in what they have written.

Once you have finished reading, make a list for the writer that completes the following phrases:

1. So far, I understand you focus to be . . . .
2. Some main points I noticed were . . . .
3. Some lines or phrases that most caught my attention were . . . .

2. **Narrative Reading and Responding.** Another way of reading is to pay attention to your own process of reading the text. You cannot know with certainty exactly what the writer intended to say, but you are an authority on your own reading. The idea is to focus on what happens to you and in you as you read, to chronicle the story of what goes through your mind. The story of your own reading is not a summary or an analysis, it is a narrative of the thoughts, ideas, feelings you had at specific points as you read or heard the draft.

After this reading, use these phrases to begin the responses you provide the writer:

1. Here is a place where I felt I understood the focus of the essay . . . .
2. Here is a place where I wanted to know more . . . .
3. At this point I expected the text to say . . . .
4. I got especially interested at the point that . . . .
5. At this point I had a question . . . .
6. The evidence that was most convincing is . . . .
7. I was not sure of the connection to the rest of the essay in the part where . . . .
8. At this point I thought some other evidence might be . . . .
9. Here I thought of something that contradicted the text . . . .

3. **Analytic Reading and Responding.** You are probably more familiar with analytical readings of drafts than with any of the other kinds of readings. Here, you are reading to see how the writer seems to be building his or her argument, interpreting the evidence, and seems to be accomplishing his or her goals for the essay.

Since the essay is not yet finished, writers can use readers analytical readings to help them think about what more they may want to add to the essay, how they may want to restructure specific sections, and so on. Use these phrases to guide the response once you have read analytically:

1. The goals for the draft seem to be . . . .
  2. These goals are accomplished in these ways . . . .
  3. The main points seem to be . . . .
  4. The evidence for these points are . . . .
4. **Collaborative Reading and Responding.** In Collaborative Reading, the reader and writer discuss the content, structure, and style of the draft, devise plans for revising, and come up with possible supporting evidence or further ideas. In this kind of reading, the reader acts like a collaborator or co-author of the draft, going beyond a description of his or her reading or of the text and actually brainstorming with the writer about places in the draft that may need elaboration or more focus. Of course, the writer of the draft is the “first author” in the collaboration; the writer benefits by the opportunity for several collaborations to draw upon as he or she determines how to revise.

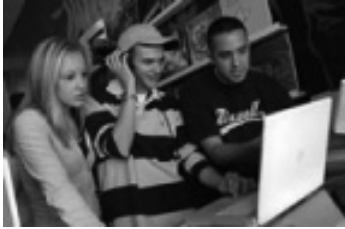
During a collaborative reading use the following questions to focus your response for all of the essays in this book. There are additional questions below that we have designed for the particular essays you will write.

1. Are there sections that seem incomplete?
2. What further evidence that could be added?
3. What could be added for clarification?
4. What might be a good title for the draft?



# So You Have to Write in a Group

By Professor Virginia Kidd, Communication Studies



What is your first response when you are assigned to write a group paper? Horror slowly infiltrating your bloodstream? Or a delighted feeling that now you have partners who will help you shape ideas, catch any mistakes, and produce a better quality paper? Despite research that continues to find that groups can produce stronger work than individuals, many students find the group process challenging. Here are some

quick suggestions that can make the group writing process better:

## 1. Take time to get to know one another.

Ideally, go to lunch or out for coffee and just talk together. All groups start with something called “primary tension.” You may see it as shyness in yourself and aloofness in others. It’s not; it’s a natural group process that comes from not really know what is expected or how your group mates will judge you. Casual chatting help break the ice.

In *Think Out of the Box*, Mike Vance and Diane Deacon describe a system used by the Disney studios called “the powwow” that goes beyond unstructured conversation. The process involves three parts.

- **A skills inventory.** Each group member will describe his or her strengths in terms of the group process. These could be writing, research, time for interviews, computer skills, etc. This way the team discovers their resources.
- **An interest inventory.** At this point, you veer off the project itself and get to know one another. Each person shares interests. These often form unexpected links that help you talk together at later times.
- **Thoughts about the project.** This is not a discussion. Just go around the group and take in each person’s initial reactions. Everyone else practices listening.

As Vance and Deacon say, this process “gives everyone an opportunity to jump in and get involved. . . . The practice of open communication is established” (161).

## 2. Identify each person’s preferred communication media and times.

Everyone records everyone else’s phone numbers and email addresses and the best times to reach them. More than that, however, find out what works for each person. Who checks email several times a day? Who does not have email

access off campus? Who carries a cell phone at all times? Who hates phones? Who prefers text messages? Who is on campus on the same days? Make notes of these **for each person**. Don't just send a group email if you know one person won't get it; at least give those persons a call alerting them to check their email.

### **3. Set up a meeting process.**

Even though you think you will remember everything the group decided, chances are someone will not. Designate someone to take notes and write these up for the group. Share them as soon as possible; don't wait for the next meeting. "Minutes" of the meeting—or notes—help jog members' memories of due dates. Create a list of what is to occur at the next meeting, or an agenda. This can be done by the group at the end of a meeting, or a person can be designated to create a list

### **4. Working together, determine clear, operational goals.**

Goals must be very specific: not "to make an A" or "do a good job," but actions that you can identify clearly, such as, "We will create a ten-page paper with seven references from sources published in the last five years; the paper will detail the history of prohibition in the northern California wine country with sections on how prohibition affected area finances, employment, and crime." As you continue your discussion, you may decide to narrow you can measure.

### **5. Set interim deadlines.**

Don't just identify a due date for your paper. Use your due date as a destination, and mark the spots along the route you must reach by a particular date. If you want to be in San Francisco by ten, for example, when must you reach Vacaville? Fairfield? Berkeley? Determine:

- When initial research or idea development must be completed.
- How and when it will be shared (posted online? copies for everyone? shared verbally at a meeting?)
- When a preliminary outline is due.
- When first drafts are due.
- How feedback on the drafts will be shared.
- When additional drafts are due.
- When the final paper must be proofread.
- When the final paper must be turned in.

Mark all of these on a timeline and be sure each group member has a copy. You can—but don't have to—designate someone to send reminders to everyone when each due date nears.

### **6. Create an encouraging social climate.**

People want their ideas to be heard, and they often view the rejection of an idea as rejection of themselves. Develop your listening skills, not just speaking ability. One way to show that you heard a person's comment is to state it in your

own words. You can begin with, “Let me be sure I understand this” or “So you’re saying—.” Also show that you recognize one another as individuals. Simply asking about events in a person’s life such as moving, a new job, or weekend travel can make links.

The most common communication error is the assumption that people understand something because you told them. A myriad of blocks can prevent a message from being understood as you understand it, ranging from simple issues of noise to confusions brought about by different assumptions of different cultures. Be patient with people. Whenever possible, have summaries at the end of sections of your meeting, just to clarify.

## **7. Appreciate differences of opinion.**

A group that agrees on all issues is a bad group. To catch potential errors and to spur ideas, a group needs differences of opinion. Don’t hide from conflict. Just focus it on the issues, not the people in the group. Multiple opinions about issues lead to stronger decisions.

## **8. Deal with social loafers.**

And now, those pesky problems—slugs, social loafers, hitchhikers, couch potatoes—they have many names, but none is positive. These are the group members who promise to have a draft by Friday, and on Friday they are on a quick trip to northern Montana. They turn in nothing, and it’s your grade that will suffer. Unproductive group members is one of the most frequent problems student groups encounter. As individuals, you have no power to make the slug do his or her work. As a group, however, you do have power. The group as a whole sets “norms,” or behaviors that it will or will not accept. These are set very early in a group’s history. State clearly that all are to have work done according to the time line the group has established. Then, the first time someone does not come through, call them on it. (In the case of real emergencies—car accidents, family crises, deaths, etc.—the group can be more supportive.)

Confronting a peer is not easy. Our natural tendency is to forgive a few times, recognizing that everyone has bad days and small emergencies. Don’t do it! The first time you say missing a deadline is okay, you set up many more late deadlines. What makes this so hard is that you are not the instructor; you are fellow classmates. Keep the goals clearly in mind; you need everyone’s effort. Speak to the professor; if you have the option of removing someone from your group, do so; do not put his or her name on the finished work.

## **9. Some special tips.**

- Don’t refer to “next Friday” or “this Friday.” Inevitably at least one person will have a different definition for “next” than you do. Use the date. Likewise, don’t get confused about time. Meetings can occur at 8:00 a.m. and p.m. Be clear.
- Date all drafts. Don’t wind up rewriting something that is already rewritten.

- Double check whether others can open your attachments before you rely on them.
- Keep back-up copies of work in different places. Emailing a copy to yourself is one way to save a copy.
- Disabled members of your group may have special needs (such as the font size or typeface you use). Encourage them to explain these so you all can learn about them and can provide information in a format that is useful to them.
- If your group is making an oral report, check visual aid technology before you use it. Be sure you have needed cords and links so a Mac or a PC will work on the available video projector, know how to adjust the overhead projector, find out if the room has DVD, CD, or video tape capabilities.
- Explore computer tools such as Track Changes in Microsoft Word.

## 10. Learn more about groups.

Online, take a look at “Group Work and Collaborative Writing” by Brain Connery and John L. Vohs of UC Davis, available at <<http://dhc.ucdavis.edu/vohs/index.html>>. The library has multiple books on both writing and group work, and courses in both are offered on the CSUS campus.

Both writing and working with others in groups are part of the future in these days of complex issues involving multiple perspectives and instant transmission of written material. Learning how to write collaboratively with others is a valuable skill for the present and the future.

### Works Cited

Vance, Mike and Diane Deacon. *Think Out of the Box*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 1997.

# Writing Portfolios

## What is a writing portfolio?

A writing portfolio is a collection of your work, often including rough and final drafts and a reflective cover letter. Many teachers ask students to prepare a portfolio of their work rather than just collect and grade individual essays, and classes like ENGL1 and ENGL109W have portfolio requirements. Each teacher will have different guidelines for what goes into a writing portfolio, but most teachers will ask for final drafts of the essays you've written for the course, a rough draft or multiple rough drafts of the essays, and a cover letter in which you discuss your writing processes and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the portfolio. Some teachers ask students to choose two or three of their best essays in the portfolio, rather than including all of their essays, and reflect in their process memo about why they chose those particular essays. Portfolios can be assembled in a folder, binder, or online as electronic portfolios.

## Why do teachers use portfolio evaluation?

Portfolio evaluation has a number of advantages for teachers and students. Portfolios give students time to fully engage in writing processes and revise their writing throughout the entire semester. Students can take more chances and experiment more in their writing, knowing that they have time to revise before they're given a final grade. Portfolios reward students for the effort they put into revision, since the teacher can observe students' writing processes by looking at the drafts included in the portfolio. Portfolios reward a student for growing as a writer, since teachers evaluate the students' entire body of work. Portfolios also encourage students to reflect on their own writing processes and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses as writers. Teachers like portfolios for all these reasons, but also because students pay more attention to teachers' comments if they know they can revise the essay based on the comments before they get their final grade.

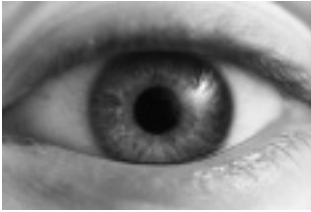
## What is a cover letter?

Most portfolios include some kind of "cover letter" or "process memo" or "reflection letter." The cover letter usually has two audiences: the writer and the reader. The writer is doing some self-reflection and self-evaluation, and the writer is also giving clues to the reader about what to look for in the portfolio and how best to evaluate it. Here are some questions you can ask yourself about your portfolio when you're preparing the cover letter:

- What does my portfolio reveal about my strengths and weaknesses as a writer?
- What aspects of writing do I still need to practice and improve upon for my future college writing?
- What new things did I learn about writing this semester?

- What kinds of writing processes did I engage in for each essay?
- In what ways did my essays change from the first draft to the final draft?
- How did the rhetorical situation and genre affect my writing processes in each essay?
- What does the reader need to know about my writing processes and my writing history to evaluate the portfolio?
- What does my reader need to know about the final products to evaluate the portfolio?

# Visual Rhetoric (Graphs, Charts, Web Sites, and More)



In college writing, communicating effectively often means writing texts, but it also means using visuals like graphs, charts, photos, graphic design elements, etc. Communicating effectively using visuals means being skilled at “visual rhetoric.” There’s even an entire field of study for “digital rhetoric,” and in a digital environment the use of visuals like image or video files is common. This section of the

handbook will provide you with some strategies for effective visual rhetoric. We’ll start thinking about visual design by using the Sacramento State Geography Department home page as an example:

Sac State  
Geography  
April 2, 2009

Program Description
Scheduled Classes
Faculty
Geography Club
Jobs/Internships
Jack Mrowka Scholarship
Paleoecology Lab
Remembrances
My Sac State
SacCT
Sac State Home

Dr. Robin Dattel  
Chair

Laura Summers  
Secretary

email: [summers@csus.edu](mailto:summers@csus.edu)  
phone: 916-275-6109  
fax: 916-273-7554

Department of Geography  
4000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA  
95819-6003

Welcome to Sac State

## Geography

The Department of Geography at Sac State provides a course of study and field work for students to explore Earth's varied natural and cultural landscapes. Geography explores a wide range of topics, including climate, landforms, water resources, plants and animals, economies, urban planning, politics, population, globalization, immigration, natural hazards, among others.

Sac State Department of Geography offers an undergraduate degree (B.A.) in Geography, and a Pre-Planning Certificate is offered in cooperation with other departments of the University. Students have access to two up-to-date computer labs to support Geographic Information Systems, cartography, and remote sensing work, and a Paleoecology Lab to research climate and environmental change. Computer Lab software includes the latest versions ESRI's ARCGIS, ARC VIEW, with several of the recent extensions, and ERDAS remote sensing programs. Internships, principally with public agencies, provide excellent "real-world" training opportunities for interested geography majors. Sac State geography students have started careers in a wide range of professional environments, such as GIS applications, school and college teachers, urban and transportation planners, conservationists, and governmental and non-governmental agencies.

mouse-over to paste

### Announcements

- Congratulations to **Katrina Smith** for receiving the Fall 2008 Jack Mrowka Memorial Scholarship!  
See previous recipients

### Job/Internships

- [Sacramento](#), Housing Intern
- [Sacramento](#), Walk Sacramento
- [Sacramento](#), Sacramento State Aquatic Center
- [Sacramento](#), Student Internship Search Engine

[GO TO FULL LIST](#)

If you would like to post or remove a job or internship position email [gervais@csus.edu](mailto:gervais@csus.edu)

Sacramento State Geography Department home page: <http://www.csus.edu/geog/>

## Some General Visual Design Principles

- **Consider your rhetorical situation.** It helps to think about rhetorical factors like purpose, audience, genre, and voice whenever you're designing a visual. For example, the Geography Department Web site uses images that are appealing to their primary audience, students. They rely on conventions of the genre of the Web site, like a navigation bar on the left side of the page, text boxes to highlight information, an Arial font that's easy to read on the screen, etc. The site does an effective job of making the Geography Department feel like a dynamic, student-friendly place.

Whether you're composing a Web site, a brochure, a poster, or a PowerPoint presentation, consistency helps your audience. If you're consistent in your layout, colors, and fonts, it will be easier for readers to make transitions from one Web page or PowerPoint slide to the next, and readers will know where to find information.

- **Understand how to use color, contrast, and emphasis.** Whether you're creating a pie chart or a full color newsletter, think carefully about how you're using color, contrast, and emphasis. When you're considering colors to use in your visuals, think about issues like being consistent with your use of colors, using color combinations that will make your text clear to your readers (including visually impaired readers), and using colors that work well together. Colors can be used effectively for emphasis, but it's also easy to overwhelm your audience if there are too many different colors in your Web site or brochure or graph. If you visit their home page at [www.csus.edu/geog/](http://www.csus.edu/geog/) you'll see that the Geography Department uses different shades of green for emphasis, with a mix of white font against a green background and black font against a white background. The shade of green furthers the association between the Geography Department and the outdoors, which is emphasized in the images.
- **Create visually appealing organization and formatting.**  
The way you organize your visuals is key to effective visual rhetoric. Think about things like balance, the use of margins and white space, the placement of images, and the use of columns or text boxes. The Geography Department uses images sparingly and leaves plenty of white space. Although there's a lot of text and links, both the text and links are well organized and separated by different shades of green bars and boxes.

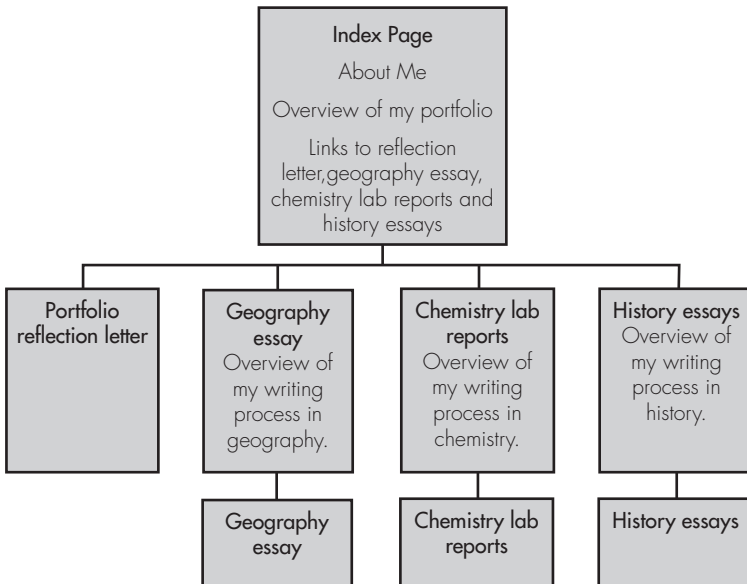
## Strategies for Creating Effective Web Sites

- **Find models of the kind of site you're creating.**  
Just as you might look for examples of the type of print text genre you're writing in, if your teachers ask you to create a Web site, it would be helpful to find models. For example, if your political science teacher asks



you to go to Blogger.com and create a political blog, you could find models of political blogs simply by typing the phrase “political blogs” in an Internet search engine. By searching for models you can also get an idea of what kinds of Web writing isn’t effective for the genre of Web writing you’ve been assigned.

- **Think about the rhetorical situation for your site.** Just like print-based assignments, writing for the Web is always done in the context of a rhetorical situation. Creating a professional online résumé for a business class will present a much different rhetorical situation than creating a personal Web site for a freshman seminar class. It’s also important to keep in mind that writing published on the Web could have wider and sometimes unintended audiences. Remember that eventually almost everything published on the Internet finds its way into a search engine.
- **Create a map of your site before you begin to construct it.** For experienced Web writers, an initial stage in the writing process often involves creating a map of their Web site before they begin to build it. One of the most important aspects of creating Web sites is deciding how many pages to include, how the pages will be linked, and what information will be included on each page. Let’s say that you’ve been asked to create an electronic portfolio of your college writing. You might begin sketching out a plan for the structure of your Web site by drawing a map of your site like this:



- Creating a map of your Web site can help you get a sense of how easy it will be for readers to navigate, how many links you might include in a header or sidebar on your index page, and whether or not you may be trying to cram too much information and too many links on each

**page.** Just like if you sketched out an outline for a print essay, you don't need to be wedded to your map as you begin to create your Web site. As you create your Web site you'll probably think of new pages to add and you'll probably discover different ways to organize your site.

- **Create a unified and consistent look.** Being consistent and using the same organization, frames, and colors on each page can help the reader stay focused and organized, and it makes your site easier to navigate. It's also helpful to have a navigation bar on the top or side of each page. If you include the most important links on each page in a navigation bar, readers won't get lost as they move further and further away from the index page. A recurring navigation bar also helps separate content from navigation, which makes your site easier for readers to browse.
- **Use Web writing styles like headings and text chunking.** The writing style of your Web site will depend on your purpose and audience, but there are stylistic conventions that are associated with writing for the screen. Most of these conventions have to do with the rhetorical situation for reading and writing online. Most Web surfers are reading for information rather than reading for pleasure, so Web writers try to make their sites easy to navigate and skim. For example, most Web writers use headings for major sections of their site, and they usually emphasize these headings by increasing font size, changing font style, and/or changing the color of the font. Instead of writing in print essay style, with long series of paragraphs with an indent signaling a new paragraph, Web writers often chunk paragraphs in blocks with a space between blocks. The use of frames and boxes to organize and emphasize information and links is another convention of Web writing. Since it's easier to read single-spaced text than double-spaced text on the screen, most Web writing is single-spaced. Another convention of Web writing is the use of short pages with links, rather than long pages that readers need to scroll through.
- **Make sure your site is easy to download.** When you're writing for the Web, it's tempting to fill up your site with pictures and clip-art. But keep in mind that the more pictures and clip-art you include on your site, the more slowly the site will download for visitors. A Web site that's cluttered with photos or clip-art can overwhelm readers.
- **Make your site accessible to readers with disabilities.** Keep in mind that some Web surfers who visit your site may be hearing impaired or visually impaired. If you've included images on your site, include a description of the images. If you're using more than one color, make sure the colors provide a strong contrast for readers who are color-blind. If your site has sound, be sure to include captions. For more on how to make your Web site accessible, visit the accessibility guidelines at the Web Accessibility Initiative site: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/>.

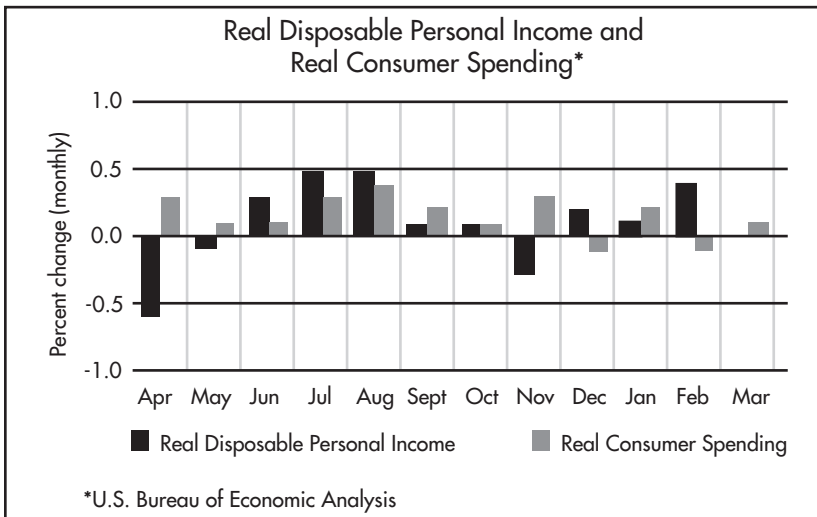
# Integrating Visuals

At different points in your career at Sacramento State, it's likely that you'll be asked to write in genres that include visuals like charts, tables, photos, etc. These visuals are often fundamental to the way certain genres and academic fields make meaning: for example, in the sciences, reporting data is critical for sharing knowledge, and charts and graphs are common visual tools for making the quantitative results of data clear to readers.

## Common Types of Visuals

Following is a brief overview of common types of visuals you might integrate into your college writing:

**Bar graphs.** Use bar graphs to make quick, easy comparisons. Bar graphs can help highlight differences between groups or sets of data. For example, with a relatively quick scan of the bar graph below, readers can make comparisons between disposable income and consumer spending:



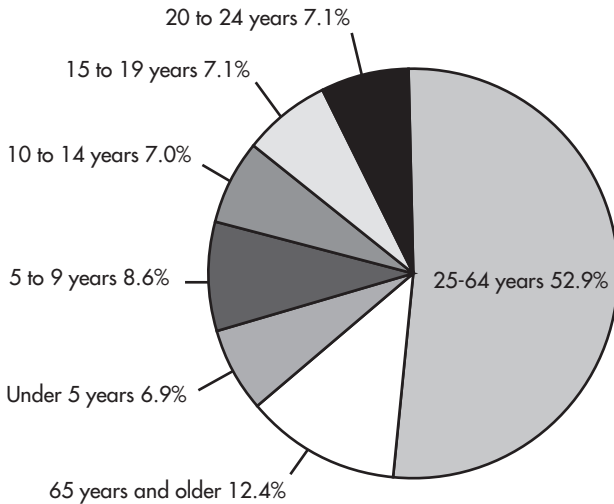
**Tables:** Use tables when you want to emphasize numerical information. Tables can relate complex data more easily and clearly than bar graphs. Consider the amount of numerical information and the number of categories that are contained in the table below:

**Table 1**  
**Current Account Deficits and GDP Growth since 1980**

Years in which the CA deficit shrank as share of GDP				Years in which the CA deficit grew up to 0.5 % of GDP				Years in which the CA deficit grew > 0.5 % of GDP			
Year	CA/GDP	Change in CA/GDP	Real GDP Growth	Year	CA/GDP	Change in CA/GDP	Real GDP Growth	Year	CA/GDP	Change in CA/GDP	Real GDP Growth
1980	0.1%	0.1%	-0.2	1982	-0.2%	-0.3%	-1.9	1983	-1.1%	-0.9%	4.5
1981	0.2%	0.1%	2.5	1985	-2.8%	-0.4%	4.1	1984	-2.4%	-1.3%	7.2
1988	-2.4%	1.0%	4.1	1986	-3.3%	-0.5%	3.5	1998	-2.4%	-0.8%	4.2
1989	-1.8%	0.6%	3.5	1987	-3.4%	-0.1%	3.4	1999	-3.2%	-0.8%	4.5
1990	-1.4%	0.5%	1.9	1992	-0.8%	-0.2%	3.3	2000	-4.2%	-1.0%	3.7
1991	-0.6%	0.7%	-0.2	1993	-1.3%	-0.5%	2.7	2002	-4.5%	-0.7%	1.6
1995	-1.5%	0.2%	2.5	1994	-1.7%	-0.4%	4.0	2004	-5.7%	-0.9%	3.9
2001	-3.8%	0.4%	0.8	1996	-1.6%	-0.1%	3.7	2005	-6.4%	-0.7%	3.2
				1997	-1.7%	-0.1%	4.5				
				2003	-4.8%	-0.3%	2.5				
<b>Average growth:</b>			<b>1.9</b>	<b>Average growth:</b>			<b>3.0</b>	<b>Average growth:</b>			<b>4.1</b>

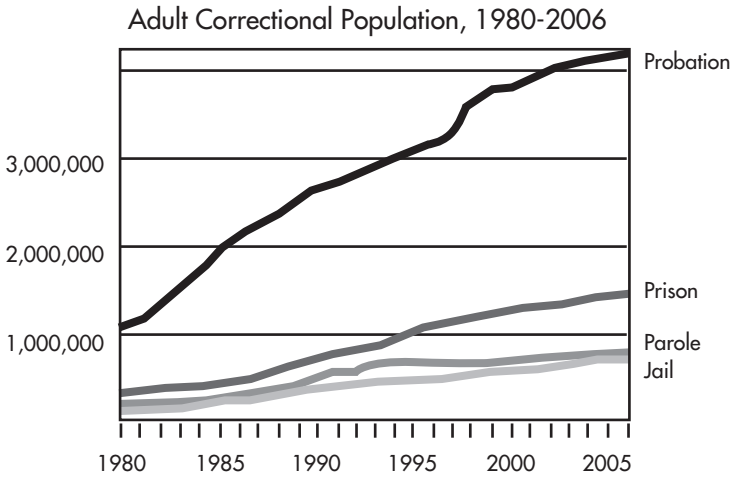
Source: Council of Economic Advisers, *Economic Report of the President*, February 2007, Tables B-1, B-4, B-103, B-106.

**Pie charts:** Pie charts can be used to show parts in relation to a whole. A pie chart can become overwhelming if it has too many parts, so consider how accessible your chart is to your readers. Pie charts focus on static data and they don't show changes over time. The following pie chart shows age group by population in the U.S.:



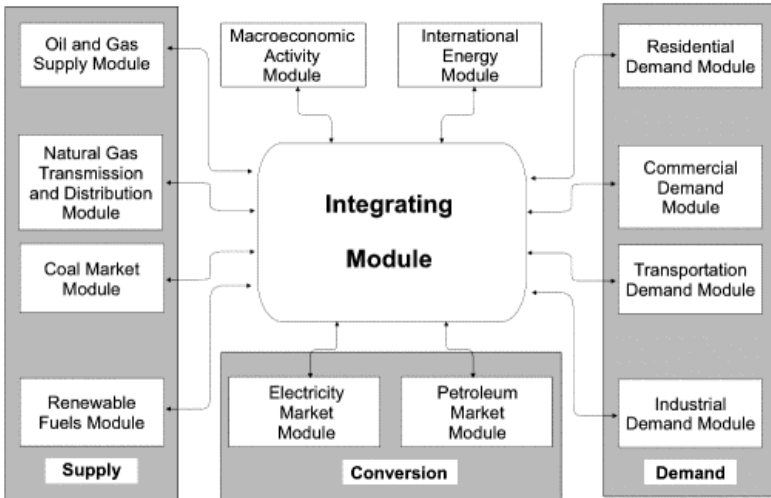
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Line graphs:** Line graphs show changes over time. Line graphs allow you to include different variables and make comparisons between variables. The following line graph traces four variables over twenty-five years:



Source: U.S. Department of Justice

**Diagrams:** Diagrams are used to make relationships and hierarchies clear. The diagram below is for a national energy modeling system, and it's used to show the relationship between energy supply, demand, and conversion:



Source: U.S. Department of Energy

**Photos:** Often photos are used to give readers a strong visual sense of what writers are describing in the text. Sometimes photos are used to personalize a text (for example, when someone adds pictures of themselves or their school to their blog), and sometimes photos are used for dramatic effect (for example, when a newspaper shows photos of charred land and homes after a big fire). The photo of the Capitol Building on the Center for California Studies Web site reinforces the idea that the Center is focused on public policy and works closely with legislators:

## Advice for Integrating Visuals

- **Refer to visuals in print before they appear.** To prepare your readers for the visual, make sure you mention the visual in the body of your paper before it appears. For example, you wouldn't want your readers to wrangle with a complicated graph without first prepping them by introducing the information in the graph and discussing the graph's purpose to give your readers some context.
- **Connect visuals to the text.** In addition to introducing visuals, explain their significance for the rest of the text. Make a connection between your ideas and arguments and the visuals you use. For example, if you've included a pie chart that provides support for an argument that Americans spend too much of their budget on entertainment, refer to the chart as evidence when you make your argument, and don't just "drop" it in and force your readers to make the connection themselves.
- **Use visuals to enhance content and not just take up space.** If you're a little short on page length, you might be tempted to include visuals to take up a little extra space. But beware—readers know when a writer is using visuals as an effective part of their argument, and when writers are just adding extra visuals to take up space. Just like you don't want to add meaningless words just to meet a page requirement, you don't want to add images just to take up more space.

- **Match the purpose and tone of your visuals to the purpose and tone of your paper.** In the formal genre of the lab report, it wouldn't be appropriate to include cartoon clip art. A complex graph might be excellent evidence for an economics class report on the history of interest rates, but a complex graph in a PowerPoint presentation aimed at classmates might confuse or frustrate your audience. Think about aspects of the rhetorical situation like purpose and audience and persona when you integrate visuals.

# Advice for College Reading Processes



Reading in high school always seemed to be driven by study questions and test preparation. Reading in college has been more of an independent learning experience where you're trying to expand your mind as much as learn for a test. The texts themselves have been more challenging, and I have to read through them a couple of times.

— *Laura Ceideburg, a first-year student at Sacramento State*

Writing and reading are related. People who read a lot have a much easier time getting better at writing. In order to write a particular kind of text, it helps if the writer has read that kind of text. In order to take on a particular style of language, the writer needs to have read that language, to have heard it in her mind, so that she can hear it again in order to compose it.

— *National Council of Teachers of English<sup>1</sup>*

## College Reading is Critical Reading

Most of your college reading assignments will ask you to do much more than to absorb what you're reading like a sponge, memorizing "facts" and information squeeze them back out of your mind later on a test. Most reading assignments at Sacramento State ask you to thoughtfully and carefully engage with and examine the text, questioning the author's assumptions, examining and evaluating the kinds of evidence the author uses, and thinking about whether you agree with the author's arguments. This kind of close, active, and thoughtful reading is called "critical reading." Here are some features of critical reading:

### **Critical reading means being an active reader and not a passive reader.**

Critical readers are not sponges, absorbing and memorizing information from the text. Critical readers are active readers: they look for the main points an author is making, question the author's assumptions, and annotate the text as they read.

### **Critical reading means interacting with the text.**

Critical readers read with a pen or pencil in hand. They underline key points, write responses or questions in the margins, and take notes about the text in their own words. Later in this section we'll look at some strategies for interacting with texts.



## **Critical reading means questioning assumptions and claims.**

One myth that some readers believe is that if it's written in a book or an article, it must be true. But in college you're going to discover that even scientists disagree about what is "true" and what isn't. Every college text you read will be from the point of view of an author or authors, and all authors have political and cultural perspectives and assumptions, even when they're trying to be "objective." Most of your college teachers will expect you to challenge assumptions that you disagree with. Being a critical reader doesn't mean that you have to criticize every author you read and challenge every point an author makes. It's good to read with an open mind and try to understand where authors are coming from and what evidence they're using to prove their point. But in college you also need to have the confidence to think for yourself and draw your own conclusions about what you're reading.

## **Critical reading means evaluating evidence.**

In your college reading, pay careful attention to the evidence authors use to support their claims. Most of your college teachers will ask you to respond to, evaluate, and analyze the assigned texts, and this means deciding whether the evidence authors use is persuasive. Is the evidence from reliable sources? Does the evidence appear to be too biased to be persuasive? Is there enough evidence? These are the kinds of questions you want to ask yourself as you read in your college classes.

## **Critical reading means thinking about where you agree and where you disagree with the author.**

Every text is a kind of argument. Even a textbook that appears to just summarize important events in American history is making the argument that some events are more important than others. In college most teachers will expect you to not only understand an author's argument but also to think about where you agree and where you disagree with the author. Keep in mind that most academic arguments aren't "all or nothing." In other words, most of your college teachers will expect you to consider a variety of points of view on an issue, and not think in a simple "either/or" way. Your college teachers will most often want you to carefully consider what other scholars have said on a topic and not just argue from your own experiences.

## **Critical reading means considering the rhetorical situation and genre of the text.**

Earlier in this part of the handbook we talked about how every college writing assignment presents a new rhetorical situation and a new genre. Keep this idea of the rhetorical situation and genre in mind as you read college texts. Ask yourself questions like: What is the author's purpose? What is the author's personal background? What is the author's political and cultural perspective? What type of genre is this text? How are the ideas organized? What is the author's style and tone? Who is the author's intended audience? How does the text relate to previous reading assignments or classroom discussions?

**Critical reading means talking with other readers about the text.**

Most of your college teachers will devote class time to discussing the assigned readings. College teachers know that critical readers don't read in a vacuum. Critical readers want to know what other readers think about a text. Critical reading is like a conversation between the author, the reader, and the community of scholars who have decided to join in the conversation. In college, this community of scholars will include your teacher, your classmates, the authors of the class readings, and the authors you discover in your own research. Think of going to college as joining a conversation that was started before you arrived and will continue after you've graduated. The texts you're assigned are always in conversation with other texts from other scholars who've written about the topic. You're attending college not just to sit back and listen to the conversation like a passive observer, but to join in and add your voice to the discussion.

# Reading Difficult College Texts



Many of the texts you read at Sacramento State will be difficult for you, and you're not being a "bad" reader if you struggle with a lot of your college reading. Sacramento State professors are not trying to torture you by making you read texts that challenge you. Just as college professors give you challenging writing assignments so that you'll grow as a writer and expand your abilities, college professors give you challenging reading assignments so that you'll grow as a reader and expand your knowledge. Each discipline has its own theories

and key terms, and to learn these theories and terms you'll need to work with readings that present you with unfamiliar ideas and language that you're not used to.

College reading is critical reading, and critical reading is active reading. Successful college readers annotate the text as they read, underlining key terms and concepts, and write questions and responses in the margins. Successful college readers aren't afraid to reread when they're struggling to understand a difficult text: they know that just as revising is important for college-level writing, rereading is important for college-level reading. Active reading is a skill that requires practice, and you'll need a set of strategies for active reading that you can use throughout your college career. What follows are some active reading strategies that should help you read challenging college texts.

## Active Reading Strategies

- **Read with a pen or pencil in hand and annotate the text as you read and reread.** In high school you might have been in a situation where you weren't allowed to mark on your textbooks because you had to turn them in at the end of the semester so they could be reused. At Sacramento State, this rule doesn't apply. You need to be comfortable writing in the books you purchase for your classes. For starters, it's a good idea to underline key words and concepts so you can review them later. Sometimes it's difficult to tell what to underline, and some students underline almost the entire text because they aren't sure what the most important ideas are. When you're annotating the main ideas and key concepts, keep these tips in mind:
  - If you're reading a difficult text, read through the text once without annotating, and then read it a second time and annotate it. If you save annotating for rereading, you'll have a better sense of what to underline.
  - Pay close attention to the introductory paragraph or paragraphs. In most American academic writing, the main idea or ideas of the text (the central points the author is trying to make) are usually laid out in the opening paragraphs.

- Keep in mind that in most American academic texts, each paragraph has a central focus. Typically, authors make a point and then develop that point with supporting evidence. If you underline every bit of supporting evidence, you won't be able to tell what the main focus of the paragraph is.
- Keep an eye out for annotating that the text already does for you. For example, in textbooks it's common for key terms to be in text boxes or in bold font.
- Here's an example of an annotated academic text:

What does she mean by "high" and "low" culture

Although zoos were popular and proliferating institutions in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, historians have paid little attention to them. Perhaps zoos have been ignored because they were, and remain still, hybrid institutions, and as such they fall between the categories of analysis that historians often use. In addition, their stated goals of recreation, education, the advancement of science, and conservation have often conflicted. Zoos occupy a middle ground between science and showmanship, high culture and low, remote forests and the cement cityscape, and wild animals and urban people. Furthermore, although zoos have always attracted diverse audiences, they are middle-class institutions. This may explain why historians of recreation and of popular culture, who have focused on parks, for example, as arenas of working class rebellion, have overlooked zoos. Zoos also may have been passed over by historians because of the lowly status of their animal inmates.

four reasons why zoos have been ignored by scholars

Historians of science may have dismissed zoos as too entertaining, connected to neither museum-based zoology nor laboratory science, or simply unscientific "places of spectacle and dilettante scientific interest." To be sure, unlike European zoos, the first American zoos had few ties to university zoology departments. The director of the National Zoo, when he visited the Amsterdam Zoo in 1929, commented—without irony—that "It was interesting to find

The study of dead specimens in museums contributed far more to the advancement of scientific knowledge around the turn of the century than did observations of zoo animals. But amateur interest in science bears examination both in itself and in its relationship to professional science. This study has benefited from recent work that focuses on how popular culture is made and used, that looks at issues of scientific practice and the history of natural history, and that seeks to understand cultural representations of nature.

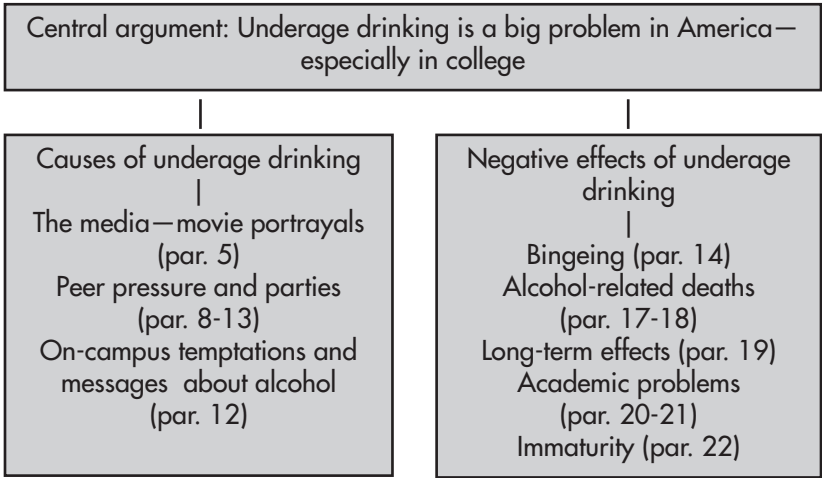
This sentence was confusing

I think I agree with this view . . . most zoos still have the animals behind bars like a prison!

The few scholars who have looked at zoos in their historical context have tended to focus on individual institutions and to emphasize the power relations implicit in the human gaze at caged animals, interpreting it as symbolic of imperial power over colonial subjects. Other writers have looked at zoo animals as stand-ins for humans, comparing zoos to prisons, for example, or analyzing the ways zoo visitors anthropomorphize animals. While zoos do express human power over the natural world, and until relatively recently they depended on colonial commerce to supply exotic animals, the process of collecting and exhibiting wildlife has been more complex than a display of dominance. Collecting, for example, has a history as a scientific endeavor, which zoos used in their attempts to raise their cultural status. It seems likely too that zoo audiences, particularly in countries without colonial empires, have seen zoo animals as more than surrogate colonials, and that the meaning of animals—elephants and eagles, for example—changes in different national contexts, and over time.<sup>2</sup>

What does she mean by “surrogate colonials”?

- **Create your own “text map” as you read.** A “text map” or “concept map” is a kind of note taking that helps you see the skeleton of an author’s argument. College texts can be dense and complex, and it’s easy to get lost in details as you read. A text map will help make sure you don’t lose sight of the main ideas and organization of the author’s argument. In a text map, you chart out the author’s main points as you read. Here’s an example text for an essay about underage drinking, with references to paragraphs (par.) in the essay:



- **Use a double-entry journal when you read.** A double-entry journal is a kind of reading log. When you know that you’re going to need to understand the main ideas of a text and respond to the ideas, a double-entry journal is a useful tool to record your thoughts as you read and keep your mind active and engaged. On a notebook or on the computer, make a journal with a line down the center. On one side of the line, record the author’s main ideas, important supporting details, and key terms. On the other side of the line, write your questions and responses.

Here’s an example of the beginning of a double-entry journal for an article about molecular technology in a chemistry journal:

<p>Author discusses two paradigm changes in biology: systems biology and preventative medicine</p> <p>Key term: “time-variant”</p> <p>Author argues that biologists and technologists should work together to make advances.</p>	<p>What does the phrase “paradigm change” mean?</p> <p>Time-variant = four-dimensional</p> <p>In what ways do biologists and technologists approach molecular biology differently?</p>
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- **Make predictions as you read.** When you're driving your car, you're constantly thinking about what's ahead of you. You're watching for red lights and other cars turning into your lane, and you're thinking about where you need to turn and which lane you need to be in. Active readers are like good drivers, in the sense that they're always thinking about what's coming up next in the text and making predictions about the "road" ahead. Making predictions keeps your mind alert and focused and helps you anticipate what you're going to be reading. Let's look at an example of predicting. Let's say you're taking an education course, and you're reading a book about school desegregation. Here's the opening line of the introduction:

**The changes wrought by school desegregation since the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision have been at times dramatic, uneven, and subject to reversal.<sup>3</sup>**

An active reader would begin to make some predictions about the "road ahead" as soon as they read this opening sentence. You can predict that the next section of the reading is going to talk about the changes brought on by school desegregation. Since this is an academic book for a college-level audience, most likely the author will give many specific examples of these changes. The author will probably focus on how these examples of changes were "dramatic, uneven, and subject to reversal," since that's the emphasis in the opening sentence. Let's take a look at the next sentence of the introduction:

**As illustration, consider two school districts in the formerly segregated South.**

The transition "as illustration" should catch our attention as we're making predictions. Phrases like "as illustrated by" or "for example" signal to readers that some specific support for an author's claims are coming up next. Our original predictions were correct, and now we can predict that the author is going to devote some well-developed paragraphs to the two example school districts in the South. As you're making predictions, look for other key transition verbs like "on the other hand," "contrary to," "in addition to," etc.

- **Think about the pattern of "organization" of the text you're reading.** In addition to having some common genres, academic writing has some common patterns of organization. These patterns of organization are strategies that authors use to make arguments and organize their ideas. Here are some basic organizational patterns that are common in academic writing:
  - **Thesis and support:** A claim followed by evidence.
  - **Point and counterpoint:** Arguments and counterarguments with rebuttals.
  - **Synthesis:** An exploration of what different arguments or approaches have in common.

- **Compare and contrast:** An exploration of the similarities and differences among two or more arguments or approaches.
- **Cause and effect:** An examination of the causes of a problem and the effects that are the result of the problem.
- **Problem and solution:** The presentation of a problem and an argument for a solution or solutions to the problem, which often involves evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of other proposed solutions.

**As you read college texts and make predictions, keep these basic patterns of organization in mind.** Academic writing is complex, and often authors will use a variety of these patterns, or create a different type of organization to fit the needs of the rhetorical situation. But knowing some basic patterns of organization for academic writing can help you understand what an author's purpose is and make predictions about what to expect as you read.

- **When you're having difficulty understanding a text, reread.** Earlier we discussed how the college writing processes is "recursive," meaning that you write and rewrite at all stages of the process. The same is true of college reading processes. Needing to reread a college text is not a sign that you're being a bad reader: just the opposite. Successful college readers are rereaders. When you struggle with a challenging college text, you can expect to reread. This might mean rereading a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire chapter. You'll also do a lot of rereading at Sacramento State in order to prepare for a test or write an essay. This is where good annotating skills can really help. When it comes time to review a textbook chapter for a test or reread parts of a book to find passages you want to include in an essay, your life will be a lot easier if you kept a double-entry journal or carefully annotated the text.

**Even though rereading is an important part of college reading processes, it's also a good idea not to get bogged down in any one sentence or phrase as you read.** A common feature of American academic writing is repetition. In order to get their points across clearly to their audience, often academic authors will explain a key term or a complicated theory in more than one way. For example, an author might explain a theory and then give three examples of how that theory applies to specific situations. If you don't understand the author's definition of the theory the first time you read it, and then you reread again and still don't understand, instead of spending an hour struggling with one passage of the text, keep reading. Maybe after you read about how the theory is applied in specific situations, you'll begin to understand it. Then you can go back and read the definition again, but with a better understanding. When you come across concepts or terms that you just can't understand, even after you've used the strategies mentioned here, be sure to make a note in the text. Then you can look up these terms or get some help from other readers (your peers or your teacher or the University Writing Center).



- **Talk about the text with other readers.** Most college teachers feel that knowledge in their field is “socially constructed.” This means that people don’t read and write and think in a vacuum, but in conversation with others. Knowledge is constructed through conversation about texts. Your teacher and each of your peers in class will have a different interpretation of and response to the assigned texts. Talking about texts with your peers and teacher in class discussion and outside of class will help you think more deeply and critically about what you’ve read, and also help you think through parts of the text that confused you. If you’re really struggling with a challenging text, it’s a good idea to seek out help from your peers, your instructor, or a tutor at the University Writing Center.
- **Match your reading speed with your reading purpose.** There’s no connection between successful college readers and fast college readers. As a matter of fact, the most successful college readers are actually slow readers. Most college texts are too difficult to breeze through like a speed reader. Using active reading techniques like annotating and predicting means reading more slowly and carefully. Have you ever had the experience where you’ve read an entire page but since your mind was wandering while you were reading you actually didn’t take in a word? If you’re using active reading techniques, you can avoid this problem of your mind wandering, but you’re going to have to read at a slower pace. This means that you need to give yourself plenty of time to complete your college reading assignments. Don’t wait until the night before class to read that assigned article or chapter.

**When you read a popular magazine like Sports Illustrated or People, you can probably read the articles pretty quickly.** Usually the ideas discussed in these magazines aren’t that complicated, and there’s not a lot of need for the authors to provide examples to support their claims or to discuss what other writers have said about their topic. We’re not arguing that these magazines are inferior to what you’re going to read at Sacramento State, but just that they have a different purpose than college texts. Don’t use the same reading speed for college texts that you use for these kinds of popular magazines. And think about how your purpose for reading will affect your reading speed. If you need to read a brief article to prepare for a classroom discussion, you won’t need to take as much time in your reading then you would if you needed to read a chapter of a difficult academic book and write a three-page summary and response paper about the chapter. We’ll look more closely at purposes for college reading in the next section.

# College Reading Purposes

Just as every writing assignment you get at Sacramento State will present you with a purpose or purposes as a writer, every reading assignment will present you with a purpose or purposes as a reader. There are countless purposes for college writing, and countless purposes for college reading. But even though you're going to be challenged to read for a variety of purposes at Sacramento State, there are a few basic reading purposes that you'll encounter again and again in your reading assignments. These purposes include summarizing, comparing, synthesizing, evaluating, analyzing, and responding. Most of your reading and writing assignments will require some combination of these reading purposes. We'll look at some examples of assignments that ask for these reading purposes, but first let's define each purpose:

**Summarizing:** Describing the most important points of a text. This might mean describing the author's purpose and thesis, central arguments, key terms, important concepts, and key examples and evidence.

**Comparing:** Pointing out the similarities and differences between two or more texts. This might mean showing how the authors' arguments are similar and different, how the authors support their arguments using similar or different types of evidence, how authors' concepts and theories are similar and different, or how the authors' research methods are similar or different.

**Evaluating:** Making judgments about a text. This might mean judging the effectiveness of an author's argument or approach, evaluating an author's research methods, or considering whether an author's evidence is reliable and persuasive.

**Analyzing:** Closely examining parts of a text to think critically about the author's argument. This might mean looking closely at the author's language, examining the logic of the author's argument, and looking critically at the reliability of the author's sources.

**Responding:** Giving your own opinion about the ideas presented in a text. This might mean agreeing or disagreeing with the author's thesis or central arguments, connecting the author's points to class discussions or other texts, or connecting the author's ideas to your own experiences.

Let's take a look at some reading and writing assignments from Sacramento State professors to get a better sense of what some of these reading purposes will look like in actual college assignments. First we'll look at an assignment from Cynthia Linville, a teacher in the English Department. In this assignment Professor Linville asks students to analyze an academic journal in their major:

Flip through the journal noticing the graphic design and layout. Examine the table of contents in the front. What do you notice about the titles of the articles included? Chose an article that catches your interest and photocopy it for further analysis. As you read the article, take detailed notes about the following:

**Bibliographic info** (journal title, volume, issue, year)

**Organization** (Are there subheadings, charts, tables?)

**Vocabulary** (How many words are unfamiliar to you?)

**Sentence length and complexity**

**Content** (Can you understand the main message of the article?)

In this assignment you can see how “analysis” involves looking closely and critically at parts of a text and thinking about their significance for the entire text.

Sometimes your teachers will ask you to analyze text in order to give your own personal response to them. Here’s an assignment from Professor Laura Basini of the Music Department that focuses on personal response. In this case, students are “reading” a film:

After watching the film *Wild Women Don’t Have the Blues* in class, write a 2-3 page response focusing on the issue outlined below. Take detailed notes as you watch, and write down information that is pertinent to the question.

- In your opinion, did Blues music help to empower women or to portray them in a detrimental light?

In your consideration of this issue, you might consider the following:

- In what ways did the early history of Blues music make life better for female singers? In what ways were their lives still a struggle?
- To what extent did race relations define the reception of female Blues singers? What particular challenges did early Blues singers face on account of their race?

In your paper, be sure to focus your writing around the issue - do not merely describe the film.

As this assignment makes clear, responding means giving your opinion, and not just summarizing what you’ve read.

Many of your reading assignments at Sacramento State will require you to draw on multiple purposes. For example, you might have to summarize a chapter and respond to it, or evaluate a computer program by comparing it to other programs. The important thing is that you consider your purpose for reading before you begin and adapt your active reading strategies to your purposes.

# Advice for College Researching Processes



When writing research papers in high school you gather information on a topic and report back the facts. In college it seems like they want to know more of why something happened not what actually did happen. They look more into analyzing something than just stating facts.

— **Keri Elias**, a student at Sacramento State

After my first English 1A essay, I realized that college professors were not looking to read a bunch of other people's quotes. My professor wanted to know what I had to say and simply wanted me to use quotes as support to my own thoughts and arguments.

— **Vanessa Cothran**, a student at Sacramento State

If you are really trying to do "research" for your paper, and not just splicing together facts, figures, and quotes in order to finish the assignment, you will find that you are slowly becoming an expert on the subject you are researching. Genuine research will enable you to have the tools that you will need to write confidently on your topic.

— **Jason Schilling**, a tutor at the University Writing Center

## College Research as Inquiry

College research usually begins with a question. Should the United States devote money to exploring Mars? What role does gender play in communication among college students? What larger cultural trends influenced the abstract art movement in the 1960s? Usually these questions are "open-ended." That means that there isn't a "correct" answer. Inquiry involves exploring an open-ended question and making the best argument you can after considering what others have said about the question or conducting your own research on the topic. When your teachers at Sacramento State give you some freedom in choosing research questions, try to find questions for inquiry that you genuinely want to explore. The best kind of inquiry happens when the researcher is curious: when she is exploring topics that connect to her experiences or goals, or when she is asking questions that she really wants to know the answer to.

Let's take a look at some example research assignments from Sacramento State professors so you can get a sense of what I mean by "inquiry." Here are excerpts from research assignments in Sacramento State classes in sociology, anthropology, and geography:

### **From a research project in Professor Todd Migliaccio's Sport in Global Perspectives course:**

You will work in groups of 2 (or 3 where necessary) to complete an original research project using content analysis – the collection and analysis of some form of communication (magazines, TV shows, newspapers, books, movies, websites, etc.). To complete this assignment you will need to do the following:

- Carefully examine the example of content analysis provided in your reader
- Develop a research question(s) related to sport that can be addressed using content analysis – if you can also develop specific hypotheses that is fine also

### **From a research project in Dr. Wendy Nelson's North American Prehistory course:**

This project involves conducting research on a topic that is of special interest to you. You may choose to address an issue currently being debated (e.g., peopling of the continent, extinction of large mammals, archaeological ethics), a question relating to a geographical area (e.g., cannibalism in the Southwest, the use of fire as a land management tool in California, the construction of earthworks in the east and/or Midwest, etc.), or a specific topic (e.g., environmental reconstruction, dating techniques, volcanism and settlement patterns, mDNA and population movements, etc.). Your choice of a project is generally open, but needs to be approved by me (by November 5th). The project should involve a significant amount of library research, and result in a well thought out, well written 7-10 page paper.

### **From a research project in Professor Jim Wanket's Geography Landforms course:**

The term project for this course involves the analysis of an important and/or interesting debate within the field of geomorphology. Here are some examples of acceptable topics:

- The origin of rock glaciers
- The timing of Sierra Nevada uplift
- The formation of regional karst
- The sequence of glaciation in the Rocky Mountains
- Evidence of paleofloods in California

Note that each of these topics permit an exploration of many lines of evidence, including those that are apparently contradictory. The most interesting papers (and therefore the ones likely to receive the best marks) will be those that cover subjects that are not yet fully resolved by geomorphologists.

In each of the research projects above, the focus is on exploring a debatable topic, not reporting "facts" or regurgitating what someone else has said. Finding out what other scholars have said on the subject is part of inquiry in each of the research projects, but the goal is to engage in a conversation with those other scholars, and not just summarize or parrot their point of view.

## Finding a Research Question

For some of your research assignments at Sacramento State, teachers will choose a topic or give you a list of topics to choose from. But most of your teachers want you to learn how to formulate your own research questions and find topics that are interesting to you and that you're passionate about writing about. When you're given a research assignment and you have the freedom to choose your own research question to explore, consider the following strategies:

- **Use freewriting to generate research questions.**

Sometimes when students get a research paper assignment they panic. They feel so overwhelmed by the idea of writing a lengthy paper, and so nervous about trying to find a good topic, they freeze up. Instead of putting pressure on yourself to find a perfect topic off the top of your head, do some freewriting. Just start brainstorming and writing questions without worrying about whether they would make good topics or not. You can also try writing down some opinions you have on the topic and then turning them into research questions. For example, for a psychology paper about gender and education, you might jot down the opinion, "Because women mature faster than men, they have a better chance of success their first semester of college." You can turn this opinion into a series of research questions you could explore: Does gender and maturity level play a role in college success during the first semester? Do men and women mature at different rates? Are there differences in maturity levels between the men and the women I know in college, and if there are, how did that affect their success the first semester?

- **Draw on class readings, lectures, and discussions to come up with research questions.**

Even if your teachers asks you to come up with an "original" topic for a research project, that doesn't mean they expect you to discover a research question all on your own. When college teachers ask you to come up with an interesting and original research question, it usually means they want you to add something of your own to what's already been said about a topic. Think about the ways that a research paper assignment might connect to the readings you've done in class or the material presented in a lecture. Have there been any interesting questions raised in class discussion? Has the teacher asked any open-ended questions for class discussion or debate?

- **Talk with the teacher and your peers about research questions.**

Teachers at Sacramento State appreciate it when you visit them during their office hours with questions. Keep this in mind if you get stuck when you're trying to find a good research question. Sometimes talking to the teacher or talking to a classmate about some possible research questions or general topics can help you think about which topics and questions your audience might find interesting. Talking to the teacher

can be especially helpful if you want to get an idea of which research questions are original and which have already been asked over and over again by experts. Another resource is the University Writing Center.

- **Talk with a reference librarian.** The reference librarians at Sacramento State are experts in helping students find and narrow topics. Librarians will be familiar with the resources available on your topic, so they can be especially helpful when it comes to avoiding topics that have no resources or narrowing topics down to a manageable scope for research. You can also go to reference librarians for help later in the researching process, when you begin searching for outside sources.
- **Start doing some research to help you find research questions.** This advice may sound backwards to you at first. Some students might say that you should have a research question in mind before you start doing some research. But remember that research isn't a simple three-step process: choose a thesis, conduct research, and then write a paper. Sometimes you might start with a general area you want to focus on but not a specific question, and then see what others have said about your topic to consider what you can add to the conversation. Let's go back to the psychology paper on gender and education. Let's say you knew you wanted to write about gender and dating in college, but you weren't sure about a research question. You might find a few books and articles about dating in college and skim them to see what interests you. Let's say that one of the articles you find claims that college women are more likely than college men to be looking for a life-long partner when they date. This article makes you think about your own friends in college, and you can think of a few of your male friends who are looking for life-long partners. This makes you wonder if the article is valid or not. You might then decide to conduct interviews with your friends and a survey of your class to explore the question, "Are there gender differences in dating and commitment among college students?" If you're having trouble coming up with an interesting research question, don't panic—just read.
- **Avoid research questions that just repeat what's already been said on your topic.** If one of the major goals of college research is to create new knowledge about a topic, it makes sense that you'd want to avoid research questions that have already been explored so thoroughly by other researchers that it's hard to say anything new. It's difficult to come up with new and interesting research questions on topics like "the death penalty" or "euthanasia." Sometimes you can take a topic that seems overdone but find a new angle by relating the topic to a personal experience or by doing some of your own research through interviews or surveys to add something new to the conversation. In general, though, you should avoid just picking a generic topic that doesn't really interest you just because it seems like it would be easy to find information. In addition to finding a question that you really want to explore, keep your readers in mind when you choose a topic. It's going to be more difficult to get the attention of your readers if your research question focuses on a topic that's been overdone.

- **Avoid research questions that aren't debatable.** Research questions like, "Does eating fast food have a negative effect on your health?" or "Is there a relationship between poverty and crime?" are not debatable enough for most kinds of college research. It's been well accepted by researchers that eating fast food has a negative effect on your health, and criminologists agree there's a connection between poverty and crime. But sometimes you can write an effective research paper by taking a closer look at a topic that's not really debatable and making a point that researchers have missed. Let's take the example of fast food having a negative effect on your health. It's been accepted by researchers that fast food has a negative effect on your health, but very few researchers have argued that eating fast food regularly for just a short period of time can put you at a serious health risk. Morgan Spurlock, a filmmaker, came up with an interesting and original research question: What would happen to a person if he ate only McDonald's food for a month? Spurlock conducted an experiment by eating at McDonald's every day for a month, and the results were surprising. Spurlock gained twenty-four pounds, had near liver failure, and also suffered from mood swings and depression. He filmed this experiment in the documentary Super Size Me, and one of the reasons the movie was so popular was because the results of his experiment were surprising. Everyone knew that a fast food diet was unhealthy, but researchers and the general public were shocked by how bad the health effects were in just a month of eating fast food.
- **Avoid research questions that are too broad for the assignment.** It's fine to start out with a broad research question. Starting with a broad question can keep your options open as you begin to research and write. But be careful about writing a research paper on a question that is so broad an entire book can be written about the subject. Let's go back to the example psychology assignment. If you tried to explore the research question, "How are college men and women different psychologically?" you wouldn't even know where to begin because the question is so broad. Not to mention you could spend years of your life researching and writing about all the different aspects of this topic. You might narrow this broad question down to, "How do gender differences in college affect educational success?" This would help you narrow your search for information, but it's still such a broad topic you could easily write a 500 page book on it, and the teacher is only asking for 5-7 pages. So you could narrow the topic down further—for example, by focusing on the question, "How do gender differences affect class participation in college?" You can narrow broad topics by thinking of an aspect of the topic that connects to your experience or interests. You can also narrow a broad topic by focusing on a specific time period, a certain group of people, a geographic location, or a specific theory or approach.



# Locating Sources



College-level research is complex, and locating sources takes time and effort. In this section of the handbook we'll discuss strategies for finding sources and talk about the differences between scholarly and non-scholarly sources. In college research, you need to learn how to recognize "scholarly sources" and understand how scholarly sources are different from non-scholarly sources.

## Scholarly Sources vs. Non-Scholarly Sources: What are the Differences?

Most of your research assignments at Sacramento State will require you to find scholarly sources. These are sources written by an expert in the field, and they're typically published by academic presses—publishers connected to a university or a professional organization. Non-scholarly sources are usually published by presses that aren't connected to a university, and they're aimed at a wider audience than just experts or students studying the subject to become experts. Here's a table that shows some differences between scholarly and non-scholarly sources:

Scholarly Source	Non-Scholarly Source
Written by an expert/scholar in the field.	Written by a non-expert or by an expert writing to a non-expert audience.
Always reviewed by peers (other experts in the field) before being published.	Sometimes but not always reviewed by peers.
Published by an academic press or the press of a professional organization.	Published by a press that is not associated with a university.
Audience for the text is experts or students studying the subject in-depth.	Audience for the text is non-experts.
All sources are cited in a reference page.	Sources are not always referenced.

# An Overview of Types of College Research Sources

Throughout your college career, you'll rely on sources like books, periodicals, and Web sites for your research projects. The following section provides an overview of each of these kinds of sources:

## Books

Most of the books that are useful for college research are scholarly books published by academic presses (like Princeton University Press or Columbia University Press) or books published by professional organizations (like the National Council for the Social Sciences or the National Education Association). These books are typically written for academic audiences. They explore a topic in depth and from different points of view, and they use multiple sources written by experts on the topic to support their arguments. Sometimes scholarly books are collections of essays from a variety of authors that have an editor who combines the essays into one book. Edited books that collect literary or artistic works are called anthologies. Whether you rely on scholarly books, non-scholarly books, or a mix will depend on the rhetorical situation of the research assignment: the purpose, audience, and genre. Whatever type of books you use, a good starting point for searching for a book is a "subject" or "keyword" search in Eureka at the library. Keep in mind that most books have a bibliography that lists sources the author used, and this list can help lead you to other books and articles that might be useful. If there's a book you need for your research that the Sacramento State Library doesn't own, you can use interlibrary loan. Interlibrary loan is a way to order books from other libraries through Sacramento State, and you can order books right from the library Web site at [library.csus.edu](http://library.csus.edu).

## Searching for Books: Getting Started with Eureka

EUREKA is the online catalog for books at the Sacramento State Library.

Whenever you need to find a book, EUREKA is the tool to use.

From the Books search screen, EUREKA can be searched by:

**KEYWORD**

**TITLE**

**AUTHOR**

**SUBJECT**

Each search method has its advantages. If you know the TITLE or AUTHOR, then searching those categories makes the most sense and you can get your information fast! However, when you just have a topic or an idea, but don't know a specific author or title, begin by searching via KEYWORD.

## Keyword Searching

Keyword searching is the easiest searching to do. Simply type in the words you want to look for and the system will find them anywhere in the record. It is also stupid searching! It's stupid because it does not care about the context of the words, nor where they appear in the record. If I do a KEYWORD search for Snakes in EUREKA, the first book has nothing to do with the subject. It comes up because the word Snakes appears the table of contents—"Snakes and diggers: the origins of new ethnic identities."

As a result, I might want to narrow my results by 1) searching for a specific type of snake (i.e., rattlesnakes), 2) including the term reptile, or 3) searching for snakes and a specific region (i.e., snakes AND Africa).

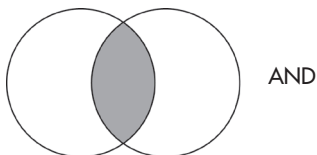
## Subject Searching

Subject searching uses Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). The headings are part of what is called a controlled vocabulary. Think of it as a uniform way of describing what a book is primarily about. All of the books at the Sacramento State Library have subject headings. Because SUBJECT HEADINGS get at the content of the book, rather than looking for the word, it can be a successful searching method.

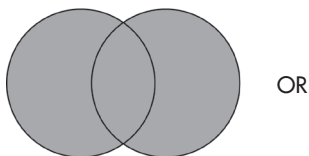
## Improving Your Search Results With Boolean Operators

Boolean Operators are terms that limit or expand your search. The following table demonstrates Boolean operators in action.

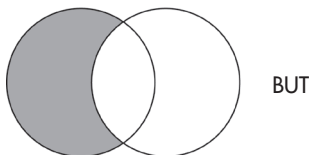
AND	Limits search by added word or phrase	ex: family and divorce
OR	Expands search by searching for both words or phrases	ex: nutrition or diet
NOT	Limits search by excluding second word or phrase	ex: family and not divorce



AND



OR



BUT

## I Found The Books I Need. Now What?

Once you've found the books you need, simply take them to the Circulation desk, the place where you check out materials. Sac State students may check books out with their OneCard for a period of 3 weeks. If you need that book longer, you can renew your books online anytime.

## Reference Books

Reference books are different from scholarly books that make arguments about an issue or report on the results of a research project. Reference books are not meant to be read from cover-to-cover, but to be used as a resource for getting information about a specific subject. You've probably used reference books like encyclopedias to get an overview of a subject or dictionaries to get a definition of a word or handbooks to figure out how to cite sources in a specific citation style. When you're doing college-level research, you usually will be expected to use the most reliable kinds of each of these reference books. For example, you'd want to consult The Encyclopedia Britannica before you'd look at an online encyclopedia found by searching Yahoo! and you'd want to get a definition of a word from The Oxford English Dictionary or Merriam-Webster rather than dictionary.com. You might not realize that every academic field (art, anthropology, chemistry, etc.) has their own specialized encyclopedias and dictionaries. One other type of reference that will be helpful to you in college is the book-length bibliography. These are lists of books and articles on a specific subject. Usually book-length bibliographies are annotated, which means that there is a summary of each source. The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing, for example, has a list of important articles and books on the teaching of writing and a summary of the main points of each source listed. You can view the Bedford Bibliography online at <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/bb/> if you want to see an example of a book-length annotated bibliography.

## Periodicals

A periodical is anything published over time and at regular intervals (each week, each month, etc.). This includes scholarly journals like The American Journal of Psychiatry or Modern Fiction Studies, popular magazines like Newsweek and Wired, and newspapers like The San Francisco Chronicle or USA Today. Some academic fields have professional journals that aimed at professionals in a field rather than scholars. Fields like engineering and business have many journals that are published by professional organizations and aimed at working professionals. The kinds of periodicals you use as references (scholarly journals, popular magazines, newspapers, or a mix) will depend on the purpose, audience, and genre of the research writing assignment. You can search for periodicals by using the "Journal Title" search in Eureka. To find articles by keyword or subject, you'll need to search the periodical databases available at the "database and article searching" link from the library home page. Articles in scholarly journals always include a reference page that lists the sources the author cited, and these can be a great resource for finding more information about your topic. Keep in mind that if you need an article from a journal your library doesn't own, most college libraries allow you to order articles from periodicals as well as books using interlibrary loan.

## Electronic Sources

Did you know that you can sometimes get the full text of articles and newspaper reports right from your library's electronic databases? Did you know that entire books are now becoming available online? Do you know that Google has a special search engine focused on academic resources called Google Scholar? Computer searching through the Internet and electronic databases gives you easy access to a lot of information. Sometimes there's so much access to so much information it can be overwhelming. Here are some different categories of electronic sources:

- **Web sites.** One of the best things about the World Wide Web is that almost anyone can create a site and publish it online. But this is also the aspect of the Web that makes it tricky to search when you're writing college-level papers. Some Web sites are more reliable than others. For example, if you were writing a research paper arguing against electronic voting machines, you wouldn't want to use "Bob's Ant-Voting Machine" Web site for information, since there is no way to tell if Bob is a reliable source of information. You also wouldn't want to use the Web site for Diebold, a company that makes the electronic voting machines (unless you're trying to show their point of view). Diebold's Web site address is [www.diebold.com](http://www.diebold.com), so they have a ".com" domain. Websites with .com domains are commercial, and because they're trying to sell something, they're less reliable sources of information than Web sites that are not for profit. These not-for-profit domains are .edu for education Web sites, .gov for government Web sites, and .org for non-profit organization Web sites. These three types of Web sites are from non-commercial organizations, so the information they post is usually more reliable, but you still need to be a careful and critical thinker when you visit these not-for-profit domains. For example, a .org Web site may just present information from studies that benefit the mission of the organization, and a .gov website might present information in a way that favors the policies of the current government.

Another kind of Web site that is becoming more and more popular is a "blog" (short for Web log). Blogs are similar to personal journals, except the writer posts the entries online. Sometimes Blogs allow readers to post in conversation threads as well. Blogs often include pictures or video files. There's a lot of variety in the kinds of blogs you'll find on the Internet. Some are personal diaries about the blogger's day-to-day life, some are written by experts on a specific topic, some are connected to political groups. It's unusual to cite a blog in college research, only because they are less reliable than other kinds of sources like scholarly books or academic journals (which are peer reviewed), but it's possible that you'd want to cite a blog in your research. For example, if you were doing a paper on how political groups get their message out or a study of a specific subculture that uses blogs to communicate.

## Academic Research Web Sites

The Web sites below are good starting points for doing college-level research on Internet. These sites all focus on academic research.

The Internet Public Library: <http://www.ipl.org>

The Librarian's Index to the Internet: <http://lii.org>

The Virtual Library: <http://vlib.org>

Academic Net: <http://academicinfo.net>

Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.com>

Infomine: Scholarly Internet Resources Collection:  
<http://infomine.ucr.edu/>

- **Electronic Databases.** Electronic databases are indexes for collections of journals and newspapers. You can search these databases by author, subject, or keyword. Usually these journals are print-based, but sometimes you can get the full text of the article online. When a database has a full text of an article available, it's usually in one of two kinds of formats: HTML or PDF. The HTML format provides the text of the article with just a click of the mouse. The PDF format is a scanned image of the article that you can download. Some of these electronic databases are very broad, and cover academic journals in many different academic fields. Some databases are just for specific academic fields of study, like electrical engineering or chemistry. Below are some of the major general academic databases:

**FirstSearch:** FirstSearch gives you access to more than 10 million articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Some of the articles are available in full-text.

**EBSCOhost Academic Search:** EBSCOhost is a database of books, periodicals, and newspapers. Some of the articles are available in full-text.

**InfoTrac: Expanded Academic:** InfoTrac includes over 20 million articles from nearly 6,000 sources. You can limit your search to just peer-reviewed, academic articles. You can also limit your search to just full-text documents.

**LexisNexis: Academic:** LexisNexis is focused on news, business, and legal articles. Most of the information is full-text. This is an especially useful database for searching newspapers.

**WorldCat:** WorldCat is the world's largest network of library collections. WorldCat searches thousands of libraries for books and periodicals.

An easy way to find articles on a given topic is to use the Sacramento State Library's databases. The databases allow you to find citations to journal articles that may be full-text online or located physically in print at the Sacramento State Library.

The Library subscribes to approximately 150 databases which allow you to search for journal articles online 24/7. That means you can type in a topic into a general database and it will bring up citations to journal articles based on those terms. Usually there is an abstract of the article.

There are 2 types of databases available at the Sacramento State Library:

1. General Multidisciplinary databases
2. Specific Subject databases.

**General Multidisciplinary Databases:** General, multi-subject databases are the best places to begin searching for journal articles. They have articles on every topic. They usually have some full-text content and allow you to limit searches to scholarly/peer-reviewed sources. Examples of general, multidisciplinary databases include such as Academic Search Elite (EBSCO) and LexusNexus Academic. There are often specialized databases provided by the same vendors so once you learn how to search in one EBSCO database you can search in 20 others with the same search screens.

**Specific Subject Databases:** Subject specific databases contain articles that are specific to a discipline or area of study. If you know the database you want to use, scroll through the list of databases and click on the name of the database to select it. If you want to look at a list of databases that will be more relevant to a specific subject or discipline, go to the "Specific Subjects" drop-down menu and select a relevant subject or discipline.

- **Electronic Books.** Some books are available online as "e-books." These might be books that are also available in print, but some e-books are only published online. The Sacramento State Library has access to some of these e-books, and some of them are available to anyone. Often you can only get limited access to an e-book. For example, you might not be able to print something from the e-book, or you might only get to view it for a limited time. Here are three of the best Web sites to visit for free e-books:

Google Books: <http://books.google.com>

Project Gutenberg: [http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page)

The Internet Public Library: <http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/hum60.60.00>

# Primary Research Sources: Interviews and Surveys

At some point in your career at Sacramento State it's likely that you'll be asked to conduct primary research—original material/documents/accounts. Two common types of primary research in college research are interviews and surveys. Following are some strategies for conducting interviews and creating surveys:

## Strategies for Conducting Interviews

- **Arrange the interview as early as possible.** If you wait until the last minute to schedule an interview with someone, you run the risk of not being able to find a time that fits their schedule. It's courteous to give an interview subject at least a few weeks to find an open spot in their schedule.
- **Find experts by checking your sources.** As you conduct research, you might find some experts on your topic that you'd like to interview. Most of the time you can track down the contact information of these experts by searching their names on the Internet. Once you locate them, you can tell them that you're a college student doing some research and you'd like to interview them by phone or email. You might be shy about doing this, but you'd be surprised how open most experts are to being interviewed about the topic they've researched and written about.
- **Find experts by searching the Internet, the phone book, and the campus faculty directory.** The Internet is a great resource for finding experts to interview on your topic. Just checking search engines using keywords from your research topic can connect you to experts on your topic at universities and professional organizations. The local phone book can also connect you to experts on your research topic. For example, if you were researching the effects of physical abuse on the mental health of children for a psychology course, you could find a child psychologist in the phone book and arrange for an interview. Another great resource is the Sacramento State Web site. For example, you can visit the Web page of a department to find out the areas of expertise of each of the professors.
- **Prepare a list of questions ahead of time.** It's a good idea to brainstorm a list of questions and then narrow the list down to what you think are the most important questions. If you're not sure what to ask, let me give you some general ideas to get you started. You could ask the person you're interviewing...
  - To explain something about your topic you don't understand.
  - To discuss the history of your topic.
  - To talk about what they think is the most important or surprising aspect of their research.
  - To clear up common misconceptions about the topic.
  - To point you to further research and resources on your topic.



- **Ask follow-up questions.** Even though you want to have questions prepared before you begin the interview, when you conduct the actual interview, you might have new questions. These may be questions you hadn't thought of that come to you while you're interviewing, or follow-up questions you have to get the person you're interviewing to expand on what they're saying. During the interview, be a good listener and show the person you're interviewing that you're interested in what they have to say.
- **Take notes during the interview.** The best way to note what was said in an interview is to use a tape recorder. Using a tape recorder and also bringing a notepad is a good idea. When you're taking notes during an interview, try using abbreviations so you can write faster (for example, "w/o" for "without" or "+" for "and").

## Strategies for Conducting Surveys

- **Use a survey to complement your research or fill out areas where you need more information.** Since you'll only be able to survey a limited number of people (a small sample size), in most research at Sacramento State you won't be using a survey as the basis for your entire study. But a survey can help you complement your research or fill in the gaps in places where you need more information. Even a small survey can help show some patterns. For example, if you're writing a research paper about how much television college students watch, if you conducted a survey of 100 college students and found that most of them watched more than twenty hours a week, you can use that pattern as evidence in your research paper to complement other research information you've gathered.
- **Choose the type of questions that would be most effective for the information you need.** In a survey, you can ask multiple choice question, open-ended questions, or questions that use a scale. Here's an example of each of these types of question:

### Multiple choice question:

How much television do you watch in a week:

- 0-5 hours
- 5-10 hours
- more than 10 hours

### Open-ended question:

Do you think that college students watch too much television? Why or why not?

### Scale question:

On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being "frequently" and 1 being "never," how would you rate how often you watch television?

If you use open-ended questions, make sure the questions aren't too vague. For example, you wouldn't want to ask, "Do you watch a lot of television?" Try to avoid biased questions when you design your survey. For example, the question, "Do you think stem cell research is wrong because it kills human life?" is biased because it forces the survey respondent to agree with the assumption that stem cells are equivalent to human life, which is open for debate. Also be careful to avoid right or wrong, yes or no questions, or questions that can be considered sexist or racist.

- **Test your survey and get feedback before you distribute it.** It's difficult to see a flaw in a survey question until someone actually tries to respond to your survey, and you don't want to send out your survey and then find out too late that one of your questions is too broad or is biased. It's a good idea to test your survey before you send it out by giving it to a few friends and showing it to your teacher to get feedback.

# Evaluating Sources

If you want to persuade your audience that your research is reliable, you'll need to use sources that are appropriate for college-level research papers. The kind of sources you use will depend on your purpose, audience, and genre, but there are some general questions you can ask about your sources to help you evaluate them:

## Who is the author?

In your research at Sacramento State, pay close attention to the background of the authors that you cite. What makes them experts? Do they have an advanced degree like a PhD? Are they affiliated with a credible university or professional organization? Do they have other publications? Are they cited by other experts on the topic? It's a safe bet that the authors that are cited the most by the books and articles you're reading on your topic will be the most reliable, since they'll be considered the top experts in the field.

## Who is the publisher?

If it's a book, is it published by a university press or a professional organization? If it's a periodical, is it an academic, peer-reviewed journal? If it's a Web site, is it a ".edu" or ".org" domain? If it's a newspaper, is it a reputable newspaper with a national reputation, like [The New York Times](#) or [The Washington Post](#)? If the publisher isn't an academic press, be sure that the publishing company doesn't just publish books with a particular political slant. Some publishing companies publish books with only a very conservative or only a very liberal point of view, so your audience may perceive these sources as biased. In the case of a Web site, pay attention to whether it's published in a commercial domain (.com) or if it's published in a ".edu," ".org," or ".gov" domain.

## What is the date of publication?

Some kinds of research you do at Sacramento State will require that you use recent sources. If you're writing a research paper about American's obesity problems or recent developments in gene therapy, you'll want to cite recent research. If you're comparing advertising in the 1950s with today's advertising or investigating the social consequences of broken treaties for Native Americans in the 1800s, then you'll probably need to rely on at least some sources from the time period you're exploring.

## What are the conventions of the source?

Scholarly journals have specific conventions, like the necessity of citation of sources, the use of specialized language, a consideration of different points of view on an issue, and an absence of advertisements. Articles in commercial publications like magazines or newspapers will be written for a more general audience, and authors may or may not cite their sources. Commercial publications will have advertisements, and one of their primary goals is to make a profit. Some sources might appear to be scholarly, but present a biased point of view without carefully considering what other researchers have said about the subject.

Here's a quick list of things to look for when you're evaluating Web sources from the Sacramento State Library:

### **Authority**

- Credentials of authors, organizations?
- Purpose of the web page?
- Contact information?

### **Accuracy**

- Verifiable information?
- Correct spelling and grammar?

### **Objectivity**

- Bias toward subject matter?
- Particular viewpoints?
- Advertisements?
- Stereotyping?

### **Currency**

- Update posted?
- Recent subject matter?

### **Coverage**

- In depth coverage?
- Site map
- Relevant, live, and working hyperlinks?

There is an expectation that the information you're finding on the web and citing in your papers is as good as a scholarly journal article or monograph you accessed in the Library.

## Integrating Sources

When you write a research paper, you're not just summarizing what everyone else has said about a topic, and you're also not just "spouting off" your opinions without carefully considering what other experts have said about your topic. You're having a conversation with the experts on your topic (your sources), and through this conversation you're figuring out what you think and feel.

**Let's say you were given the following research paper assignment in a political science course:** Write a 10 page research paper arguing for or against one of the provisions of the USA Patriot Act. Your audience for this essay is general educated readers, and this could include conservatives, moderates, and liberals. Since your goal is to persuade your audience, you'll need to back up your assertions with information from credible sources that don't have an overt political agenda.

Now let's say that you've done some research and collected information and opinions from a variety of sources, including a book about the Patriot Act from a professor at the University of Chicago and an article about the Patriot Act from a political science journal. Let's pretend that the following is information directly from these sources that you'd like to use in your research paper: Passage from The Patriot Act Controversy, a scholarly book written by Juwanda Thomas, a political science professor at the University of Chicago:

Perhaps the most controversial provision of the Patriot Act is section 215, which deals with the implied right of the FBI to access library records of U.S. citizens. This provision allows the FBI to obtain a secret warrant from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISA) to access library records of anyone suspected of spying or international terrorism. Librarians and the ACLU have fought this provision, arguing that it violates a patron's rights.

Passage from the article, "Human Rights and the Patriot Act," written by Felix Gomez and published in a political science journal:

The provision of the Patriot Act that is most often seen as anti-constitutional is the authority of government agents to search library records of those they suspect of terrorism or spying. Although the Justice Department claims that this provision cannot be used to investigate American citizens who are not suspected of spying or connection with international terrorism, the ACLU has filed a lawsuit on behalf of a number of American Muslim groups that have had their library records searched without probable cause. The ACLU claims that section 215 violates the First Amendment of the Constitution. Given the history of unconstitutional FBI investigations into groups that were not a threat to the United States but simply disagreed with the political establishment (for example, Civil Rights and anti-war groups in the 1960s), one has to remain skeptical of the Justice Department's claim that their investigation of library records will be limited to

those suspected of spying or international terrorism. Suspending our constitutional rights is a dangerous path, and it's one we should go down carefully—if at all.

Now let's take a look at some example paragraphs from a student research paper that cites these sources. Read this example paragraph and think about whether or not the writer has done a good job of integrating the sources:

"Perhaps the most controversial provision of the Patriot Act is section 215, which deals with the implied right of the FBI to access library records of U.S. citizens" (Thomas 24). Section 215 allows the FBI to "obtain a secret warrant from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISA)" and "access library records of anyone suspected of spying or international terrorism" (Thomas 24). I agree with the ACLU that section 215 violates the constitution. As Felix Gomez argues, "Given the history of unconstitutional FBI investigations into groups that were not a threat to the United States but simply disagreed with the political establishment (for example, Civil Rights and anti-war groups in the 1960s), one has to remain sceptical of the Justice Department's claim that their investigation of library records will be limited to those suspected of spying or international terrorism" (Gomez 12).

The example paragraph above is a case where the writer is just "cutting and pasting" information and ideas from sources. The writer isn't really in a conversation with the sources, and there's no opinion, ideas, or reflections from the writer's point of view. Even if the writer paraphrased the information and ideas she quoted, it would just be one piece of information after another from sources, with no reflection from the student writer.

Now let's look at another example paragraph:

There's a delicate balance between respecting constitutional rights and protecting American citizens from terrorism, but one provision of the Patriot Act that fails to reach a balance is section 215. Section 215 gives the FBI the right to get a secret warrant and gain access to library records of American citizens suspected of spying or international terrorism (Thomas 24). This may not sound unconstitutional at first, but the problem is whether or not we trust the FBI to limit their searches to those citizens who are truly involved in spying or terrorism. As political scientists Felix Gomez point out, the FBI has a history of conducting unconstitutional investigations of groups that weren't involved in spying or terrorism (12). Gomez mentions 1960s anti-war groups as an example, and who's to say that the FBI won't search the records of groups that are against the Iraq war, even if there's no evidence that these modern anti-war groups are involved in spying or terrorism? As Gomez argues, "Suspending our constitutional rights is a dangerous path, and it's one we should go down carefully—if at all" (12). I think the U.S. has made a mistake and the Patriot Act is taking us down a very dangerous path.

In this paragraph, the student writer is not just stringing together information and ideas from the two outside sources. The writer begins the paragraph by talking about her own thoughts on the "delicate balance" between respecting the

constitution and protecting Americans, and argues section 215 goes too far. The writer supports this argument with some ideas from Gomez, but notice how the writer adds to the conversation by expanding on Gomez's point about the FBI investigating anti-war groups. When the writer does quote an entire passage from an outside source, it's done to capture Gomez's voice and language.

When you're integrating sources in your research writing at Sacramento State, it's important to be aware of the genre and academic field you're working in. For example, in scientific reports it's rare that you'll find frequent or extended quotations because the results of scientific research are more important than the words of individual researchers. In the arts and humanities, most genres of research writing contain frequent quotes from individual authors, and longer block quotes are common. In the arts and humanities writers often cite outside sources to show how their own arguments add something new to the conversation, but in the sciences the purpose of citing sources is often showing how the writer's research connects to previous studies, and is therefore a valid approach. Looking at examples of the genre of the research writing you've been assigned can help give you a sense of the way outside sources are integrated.

Remember that in most college research, you're not looking for "the truth" about a topic or the "correct" argument. If you were to research a topic like the Patriot Act, you'd find out that the experts disagree about whether it's constitutional or not. Some scholars would argue strongly that it isn't constitutional, and some would say that it is constitutional. Some members of Congress want to overturn the Patriot Act, and some are in favor of renewing it. This is the challenge of college-level research and this is also what makes college research more interesting than just reporting "objective" facts about a topic. You're going to have to think critically about what you're reading and decide for yourself where you stand.

## Advice for Integrating Sources

- **Annotate your sources as you research.** The better job you do of underlining key words and ideas and scribbling your responses and questions as you research, the easier time you'll have when you're ready to start integrating your sources. On notecards, a research notebook, or a computer file, keep track of the bibliographic information (author, title, publisher, date of publication, etc.), the main ideas of the author, your initial responses, and key quotes you might integrate.
- **Keep a double-entry journal as you research.** One technique for active reading that we discussed earlier in this section of the handbook is the double-entry journal. The double-entry journal is a great research paper tool, because it helps you keep track of the main ideas of everything you're reading, and also encourages you to begin responding to what you're reading. Your double-entry journal responses could be the starting place for your research paper.
- **Write summaries of your sources in your own words.** When you integrate sources, most of the time you'll find yourself putting an author's ideas or information in your own words, rather than constantly quoting passages from your sources. You don't want to just string together a

bunch of quotes, and the voice of your research paper will sound smoother if you take ideas and put them in your own words. To help you put things in your words, try writing a one-paragraph summary of every source you read. This will force you to put the ideas in your own words (but don't forget to cite your sources in your paper, even if you're putting ideas in your own words).

- **Balance information and ideas from outside sources with your own ideas and reflections.** As you draft your research paper and begin to integrate sources, try to find a balance between what experts have said about a topic, what you think of what these experts have said, and your own arguments or solutions. Remember that you're now participating in the conversation on this topic, so don't let all the other experts just drown out your voice and opinions. On the flip side, don't completely take over the conversation. Remember to consider what other experts have said, and respond to what they've said.
- **Avoid direct quotes unless you're capturing an author's tone or a distinctive phrase.** If you have direct quote after direct quote from sources in a paragraph or an entire paper, at a certain point you give up ownership of your own writing. The paper becomes just the voice of the sources you found, with none of your own voice. In general, it's a good idea to only use direct quotes when you're trying to capture an author's tone or a provocative thing they've said.
- **Use signal phrases to indicate when you are quoting or paraphrasing a source.** It's helpful to your readers when you introduce quotes or paraphrases with signal phrases like, "Levitz argues..." or "anthropology professor Sharif Ahad believes..." Using titles like "anthropology professor" or "President of the National Organization of Women" along with the name and signal phrase is a good idea, since it helps to persuade your audience of the credibility of the sources you're using. Here are some common signal phrases:

argues	believes	says	feels	claims
contends	observes	points out	suggests	thinks
adds	asserts	reports	shows	insists

Although it's good to vary the use of these signal phrases so your writing doesn't sound repetitive, keep in mind that each of these signal phrases has different connotations. For example, "argues" implies a stronger assertion than "claims," and "says" has a less assertive connotation than "contends" or "insists." "Reports" has connotations that the author is relaying information that she is confident is true, but "suggests" implies that the author is not stating something he or she believes to be a fact.

- **If you're feeling overwhelmed by your research, write a draft without any outside sources.** After doing a lot of research, it's easy to get overwhelmed by everything you've read about your topic. Sometimes too much information can be a bad thing. You might freeze up or get



lost in all of your books and articles. Try writing a draft of parts of your research paper (or even a draft of the entire paper) from just your point of view and in your own words, without using any information directly from your sources. Of course, if you've done a lot of research, your point of view will be influenced by what you've read, but you can go back and begin citing sources later, in the next drafts. You can also use this technique if you have some paragraphs that are just a "collage of sources." Try writing the paragraph without any outside sources, completely from your own point of view. Then go back in the next drafts and start integrating outside sources.

- **Read models of the genre of research writing you've been assigned to get a sense of the conventions for integrating outside sources.** Remember that different research genres and different academic fields have different conventions for integrating sources—there are no "universal" rules for integrating sources that can apply to every college writing situation. The way a social scientist will integrate outside sources in a case study will be much different than the way an art historian will integrate sources in an article for an art journal. Finding models of the kind of research genre you've been assigned can give you a sense of the citation conventions.

## Common Questions about Citing Sources

An important part of integrating sources into a college research paper in American academic culture is acknowledging where you're getting any information or ideas that are not your own or that aren't common knowledge. This usually involves "in-text" citations and a bibliography. In-text citations are the places in your essay where you acknowledge where you're getting information or ideas from outside sources, and you cite those sources in parentheses or in footnotes. A bibliography (or "reference" or "works cited" page) appears at the end of your research paper, and it's a list of all the sources you cited and their publication information. All of these different ways of citing sources might be confusing at first. You might be asking yourself, how do I decide if I should be using a works cited page or a bibliography? When do I use footnotes? Why are there so many different ways of citing sources anyways—wouldn't it be easier if there was just one way of doing it? In this section, we'll look at the most common questions students have about citing sources.

### Why is it important to cite your sources?

One reason why citing your sources is so important in American college writing is an ethical issue. If you use someone else's information or ideas without giving them credit, it's considered a kind of cheating because you're taking credit for someone else's ideas. It's also important to cite your sources so your readers can get access to them if they want to. Think of your readers and let them know where you're getting information and ideas so they can find your sources to evaluate them or to connect them to research that they're doing. If academic writing is a conversation, it's important to let your readers know who you're having a conversation with. Keep in mind that this emphasis on citing your sources is part

of American academic culture. In some cultures, it's common for students to begin an essay with information, ideas, and quotes from well-known authors without necessarily citing the authors, and this is just an accepted convention. Even though we've been emphasizing that writing college research papers is more than just repeating what others have said about your topic, in many countries outside of the U.S. students are expected to rely on outside sources in their writing as a show of respect to the cultural tradition. If you're coming to college from a country outside of the U.S., you might need to adjust your writing to adapt to academic writing in America, but keep in mind that these are just different cultural traditions: one is not better than the other, and the more knowledge you have of different ways of writing, the better writer you'll be. Just be aware that in American academic writing you're expected to cite your sources any time you use someone else's words, ideas, or information.

### **Do I need to cite something that I already knew before I began my research, or something that is common knowledge?**

Let's say you're doing research on identity theft, and you had a friend who was a victim of identity theft. Because of this friend, you knew a lot about what steps to take to protect yourself from identity theft and what to do if you become a victim of identity theft. But what if you did some research and found a book about identity theft that made some suggestions you already knew about? Do you need to cite the book? Technically, since you already knew the information, it wouldn't be necessary to cite it. But in college writing, it's not a bad idea to find sources that support what you already know about a topic, as a way to persuade your audience that the experts agree with the points you're making. In this situation you might let your readers know that you have knowledge of the topic because of what happened to your friend, but you might also cite the book for extra support. On almost any topic you write about, there will be "common knowledge" that you don't need to cite. "Common knowledge" is information that is shared by all of the members of a specific community. It's common knowledge that John F. Kennedy died in 1963 or that poverty is a major social problem in America. Keep in mind that "common knowledge" always depends on the rhetorical situation. If your economics teacher asks you to write a research paper exploring the impact of NAFTA as if you're preparing a report for Mexican, Canadian, and U.S. economists, the "common knowledge" will be much different than if the research paper was aimed at general readers. For example, it will be common knowledge among your audience of economists that NAFTA is an acronym for North American Free Trade Agreement, or that NAFTA was a trade agreement among the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.

### **How many different kinds of citation styles will I need to use in college, and how will I know which ones to use?**

A citation style is a convention for citing sources that's agreed upon by members of a specific academic community. For example, in the arts and humanities, the citation style that most authors use is called MLA, which is an acronym for Modern Language Association. In social science classes like anthropology or sociology or psychology, most of your teachers will want you to use APA style to cite your sources. APA is an acronym for American Psychological Association. In the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, etc.) authors typically use CSE

style, short for Council of Science Editors. You might encounter Chicago style in a history class, and there are other citation styles you might encounter as you move into your major (for example, engineering has its own citation style). Usually, your teacher will let you know which citation style they'd like you to use, but if you're not sure, just ask your teacher. In Part III of this handbook, you'll find guides for citing sources and preparing a bibliography in MLA, APA, and CSE style.

### **Why are there so many different citation styles? How come they can't have just one style to make it simple?**

In the humanities, the reputation of the authors you're citing tends to be more important than the date a book or article was published. In MLA style, you cite the author and page number in an in-text citation, but not the date. In the sciences, the year a study was conducted is usually important, since what counts as knowledge in science changes much more rapidly than it does in the humanities, and usually you need to cite the most recent studies in science research papers. So citation styles like APA and CSE emphasize the year of publication, and you include the year a book or the results of a study were published in the in-text citation. Keep in mind that some teachers really value correct citation style, and they will want you to follow the MLA or APA guidelines very carefully, making sure that all the commas and periods are in the right place. Other teachers will be more focused on just making sure that you've acknowledged your sources and that readers won't have a problem finding your sources, and these teachers won't ding you for a missing comma or putting a period in the wrong place.

### **What is plagiarism, and how can I avoid it?**

Plagiarism is such a serious issue in college writing that it's worth devoting some time to discussing. The next section is all about understanding plagiarism.

# Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism

Whenever you think about the definition of plagiarism, you need to consider the differences between intentional plagiarism and unintentional plagiarism. The definition of plagiarism from the Council of Writing Program Administrators focuses on “deliberate” use of someone else’s ideas without acknowledging them. Here the WPA’s definition of plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.<sup>8</sup>

If you try to cite your sources, but you use the wrong format or incorrectly use quotation marks, you’re not going to fail a class or be suspended from Sacramento State for plagiarism. Plagiarizing means deliberately presenting someone else’s ideas as if they were your own. The Internet makes access to term paper mills easy, and some students give in to the temptation to buy an essay online and turn it in as if they’d written it. Turning in an essay you’ve bought or copied and acting as if it was your own work is a serious kind of plagiarism with serious consequences. If you do this, you could not only fail the class, but you could be suspended or even kicked out of school. If you integrate outside sources in your essay but then never cite them in your text or in a bibliography, that’s also a form of plagiarism. Using an essay you’ve written in one class for a different class is also a form of plagiarism.

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*For information about the CSU Academic Honesty Policy and plagiarism, go to <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/UMA00150.htm>*

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## Tips to avoid plagiarism from the Sacramento State Library

- If in doubt, cite your sources! If you are not sure whether you should cite a passage or concept, do it. Unless the information is considered common knowledge, such as “George Washington was the first president of the United States,” then it is best to simply add a citation, either in text, in a footnote, or a parenthetical citation.
- Create a works cited page as you write your paper. While you are writing and including citations to strengthen your arguments, simply write down the citation information. That way, you will not need to hunt through all the resources at the end of the project trying to remember from which sources your supporting material came.
- Take a test to see if you understand plagiarism. The Indiana University School of Education has an online test to check your skills at detecting plagiarism. <http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/>

- Refer to a style manual frequently. No matter what citation style you're using, check the style manual frequently to see how they cite sources and create bibliographies. For example, the APA and MLA manuals are valuable resources to consult if and when questions arise. There are abbreviated style guides at the end of this handbook.

Check out these links to other sources on citation and plagiarism

- Sacramento State Library: Plagiarism Information for Sacramento State Students and Faculty <http://www.csus.edu/plagiarism>
- Sacramento State Library: Style Guides <http://library.csus.edu/guides/rogenmoserd/general/style.html>
- Research and Documentation Online Guide <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

## Need additional researching help? Visit the Sacramento State Library...

<b>In-Person</b>	If you are doing research in the Library, simply drop by the Reference Desk, located on the north side of the second floor, and chat in person with one of our research experts.
<b>Phone</b>	You can give us a call at (916) 278-5673.
<b>Email</b>	Submit a question to our Ask-A-Librarian email service, and a librarian will respond within 24 hours: <a href="http://library.csus.edu/services/asklibrarian/">http://library.csus.edu/services/asklibrarian/</a>
<b>Online Chat</b>	Get help anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by using our Ask-A-Librarian real-time chat service. <a href="http://library.csus.edu/services/asklibrarianlive/">http://library.csus.edu/services/asklibrarianlive/</a>
<b>Online Research Guides</b>	For help finding library resources for specific disciplines, classes, and topics, take a look at our research guides: <a href="http://library.csus.edu/guides/">http://library.csus.edu/guides/</a>
<b>Research Consultations</b>	Get in-depth help with your research by contacting a librarian who is a subject specialist in your area.
<b>Subject Specialists</b>	Recommend a book, journal, or other library resource by consulting the librarian responsible for collection development in the appropriate academic discipline.

## **Bibliographical Notes**

1. National of Teachers of English, "NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing," <http://www.ncte.org/prog/writing/research/118876.htm>.
2. Elizabeth Hanson, *Animal Attractions: Nature on Display in American Zoos*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p.7.
3. Charles T. Clotfelter, *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 1.

## Writing and Researching in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics



The ability to write clearly is critical for high performance in science courses. Everything from essay exam answers to lab write-ups require solid written communication. If the student's understanding of a concept doesn't come across clearly in their exams or papers, then their assessment may reflect a misunderstanding. In other words, if the student "gets it" conceptually but can't effectively put it into writing, they might not get credit for "getting it"

— **Professor Nathan Trueblood**, Biology Department

Scientific writing requires precision (straight to the point) and accuracy (in the sciences, words often have very specific meanings); this is a challenge for many students who have the impression that verbose writing is better. I expect that students will be able to integrate figures, graphs, and tables into their reports seamlessly, as it will be required as they move into the "real world." In fact, the ability to produce figures, graphs, and tables is a critical part of the art of scientific writing.

— **Professor William DeGraffenreid**, Physics Department

## An Overview of Writing and Researching in the Natural Sciences at Sacramento State

Natural science and mathematics departments at Sacramento State include:

- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry
- Geography
- Geology
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Physics and Astronomy

Other departments might draw on both science and social science research methods. For example, if you take a class in cultural anthropology you might be asked to draw on social science research methods, but if you take a class in physical anthropology you might be asked to do scientific research that is similar to research you would do in biology or chemistry.

Each of the natural sciences and mathematics departments listed above, and each teacher within these departments, will have different expectations for writing, reading, and researching. But the reason all of these departments are in the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics is because scientists do share some general approaches to writing and researching:

- Scientists use writing and researching to explore questions about the physical universe.
- Scientists use observations to make hypotheses, and then test these hypotheses by designing experiments, building on what other scientists have observed and reported in academic journals and books.
- Scientists report the results of these experiments in written genres like lab reports and scientific research reports.
- Because scientists follow the research methods of observation and hypothesis testing using experimentation, genres like the lab report and the scientific research report are organized in sections that correspond to the systematic, scientific approach to research: an introduction describing the hypothesis and background for the study, a section describing the research materials and methods, a section reporting the results of the study, and a discussion section that explores the significance of the results.
- Because scientists try to report accurately on complicated natural phenomenon, they value concise and precise language and formal conventions.
- Even though scientific research methods and conventions are fairly formal, some scientists break out of these conventions (for example, by writing personal stories about their work or writing “popular science” books for a non-expert audience).

Genres of science writing you might encounter in your classes at Sacramento State include:

Lab reports  
 Field notes  
 Scientific abstracts  
 Experimental reports  
 Research proposals  
 Reviews of scientific literature  
 Poster presentations  
 and many more...



# Guidelines for Writing in the Sciences from Sacramento State Science Professors



The following guidelines for scientific writing are from Professor Lisa Hammersley, who teaches geology, Professor Roger Sullivan, who teaches biological/physical anthropology, and Professor Brad Baker, who teaches chemistry.

## Scientific Writing Guidelines

### Professor Lisa Hammersley, Geology

Scientific writing is a little different to other types of composition. Science writing is generally very to-the-point. You should include the facts and not refer to yourself. (e.g. you should not start your paper “I have chosen to write about.....”). Whenever you use a technical term for the first time you should define it for the reader.

**Structure of report:** A good rule in scientific writing is that you explain what it is you are going to say, then say it, then tell us what you just said. In other words, the report should have an introduction, the main body of text (this can be subdivided) and a summary. Below I describe each of the sections that your report should contain.

Introduction – this is where you introduce the theme of your paper and explain the relevance of the topic. If the geologic process that you are describing affects human activity or is affected by human activity, outline that here. It is in this section that you get the interest of your reader so if you want to be “creative” in your writing, here’s where you get to do it.

Main body of text – this is the most important part of your report. Outline all the issues that you mean to discuss before writing it and make sure that it will flow well. Dividing this part of your paper into sections, each with its own heading will help you to keep your writing organized. This is commonly done in scientific writing to convey complex information to the reader.

Summary – this section outlines all the main points of your report. It’s where you tell the reader what it was that you just told them. It should be very concise and sum up in just a couple of paragraphs.

## Dr. Sullivan’s Undergraduate Essay Guide

### Writing Essays in Biological/Physical Anthropology

Science writing is *objective* rather than **subjective**. By *objective*, I mean three things:

First, science writing, and the argument that you form in your essay, must be based on objective “facts”. By facts, I don’t mean absolute truths. A fact in science can be thought of as the best current knowledge about a particular aspect

of the natural world (facts may be overturned or modified at any time). A fact in the science literature in effect means an opinion, report or observation that has already been published in the primary literature - usually a peer-reviewed journal or scholarly book. When you are constructing your essay, you must support your argument or ideas with reference to objective "facts" in the literature (references will be discussed in more detail below). In this way, science writing differs from critical writing in other disciplines, say English Literature, where your argument is often based on subjective opinions and impressions rather than objective facts.

Second, science writing is concrete and unambiguous. Whereas non-science critical writing often rewards wit, humor, irony and subtlety, science writing is a dry enterprise. Because science writing is objective rather than subjective, the priority is to assemble facts into a coherent argument with as little ambiguity as possible. This means using short, simple, sentences and avoiding sub-texts and vagueness in order to make your argument as plain as possible. In contrast to non-science critical writing, you will be penalized for the use of humor, irony, sarcasm and wit. This is not because science writers have no sense of humor (some may question this) but because humor and emotive criticism usually get in the way of a clear message. Sarcasm is particularly inappropriate in science writing because it is usually used to "dis" opposing perspectives. This is bad for several reasons: 1) opposing perspectives are also based on current knowledge 2) emotive criticism is often personal, and 3) criticism should be used to challenge arguments rather than the people making them.

Lastly, science (and your essay) is not about being right or wrong, either in terms of one perspective being "correct" or from a moral point of view. Science is a contest of ideas. At any one time some ideas may be better supported by "facts" than others, but it is usually possible to build formidable arguments for each and every opposing perspective. What I'm getting at here is that you can argue any perspective you like in your essay, as long as it is supported by facts in the literature. At the same time, you are also required to respect arguments opposed to your own perspective. In terms of grading, you don't have to try and figure out which perspective I favor and then tell me what I want to hear - my assessment will be based on how good your argument is, not which perspective you are arguing. But you will be penalized if you construct your own wacky argument without supporting references from the literature.

# Some Guidelines for Writing Lab Reports

## Professor Brad Baker, Chemistry

Reports should be no longer than they need to be to completely describe the work that was done and meaningfully explain the data that was obtained. Remember, your work in the lab is as good or bad as your lab report.

**The following is not necessarily a complete guide for report writing, but just some suggestions that I have thought of and written down while reading a variety of students' lab reports.**

### Abstract

A proper abstract is a concise summary of the paper (or presentation, or book chapter). It is not an introduction. The abstract should include a brief introduction to the experiment, why it is important, how it was carried out, and the important results that were obtained; including important numerical data. The amount of detail given in the abstract will depend on the allowed length.

An abstract needs to stand on its own. In general, references to other work should not be included unless there is a compelling reason to include one. References to figures and tables that may appear in the main body of the paper should not be made. (Figures and tables may be included in extended abstracts, which are usually written for conference proceedings.) If acronyms are used they must be defined the first time they are used. (Acronyms must always be defined the first time they are used unless they refer to commonly known measurement units). However, since the abstract stands alone, acronyms must be defined again in the main body of the paper, even if they have already been defined in the abstract.

### Introduction

The introduction is used to tell the reader why you did the experiment. The introduction should include a discussion of the science behind your experiment, and results that others may have attained. Important historical references regarding work related to your experiment should be in this section. If your experiment is testing a particular hypothesis or theory, it should be stated in the introduction. The results of your experiment should not be given in the introduction. There are usually no figures or tables in the introduction, unless they are referenced from some other source.

Parts of the introduction may be in the past tense and others in the present tense. If you are discussing a specific experiment or specific work that happened in the past, it would be presented in the past tense or mixed tense. For example, "Smith et al. (2003) found that time of flight mass spectroscopy works better than ion trap mass spectroscopy due to the faster response time." If you are discussing something in general, that is not linked to a specific reference, use the present tense. For example, "Isoprene is the most prevalent volatile organic compound emitted by plants." A statement like this may be followed by one or more references if it is not general knowledge in the field.

## Experiment

The experiment section tells the reader how you carried out your work. This section should describe in detail: where chemicals were obtained and what quality they were, methods and equipment used, any parameters that were set for these methods or equipment, how instrumentation was calibrated, how experimental controls were set up, any sampling and analysis protocols that were used, calculations that are not routine, etc. The amount of detail given should not be more than is necessary for the reader to repeat what you have done in the general sense. For instance, if you are describing how calibration solutions were made, it is appropriate to say, "A range of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  calibration solutions from  $1.00\mu\text{M}$  to  $10.0\mu\text{M}$  were prepared using volumetric glassware by serially diluting the  $5.00\text{mM}$   $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  stock solution with deionized water." (We assume here that the  $5.00\text{mM}$   $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  stock solution has already been discussed.) This amount of detail will allow anyone familiar with wet chemistry to make calibration solutions in the proper range. It would not be appropriate to say, "To make a  $10\mu\text{M}$   $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  calibration standard,  $2.00\text{mL}$  of the  $5.00\text{mM}$   $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  stock solution was added to a  $1000\text{mL}$  volumetric flask using a  $2.000\text{ mL}$  volumetric pipet, and then the volumetric flask was diluted to the mark with deionized water." This statement is wordy and unnecessary. However, if you are discussing a procedure that is new, extremely uncommon, or very sensitive to small changes in the procedure and may alter the outcome of the experiment, then this sort of detail may be appropriate. If some parameter was changed half-way through the experiment (and data is used from both before and after changing the parameter), then it should be mentioned in the experiment section. Why the parameter was changed should appear in the discussion section (a brief comment on why it was changed could be included in the experiment section to avoid confusion). None of your actual data or results should be presented in the experimental section.

Figures may be used in the experimental section if they show how an instrument was set-up or to show visually how an experiment was carried out. A table may be used to demonstrate a sampling protocol in a better way than could be explained in the text. In general, figures and tables should always be used sparingly, and only if they result in a better presentation of information than can be accomplished in the text. Never put a figure or table in your paper unless you refer to it in the text, and specifically discuss the contents of the figure or table in the text. If one of your figures is used to show an equation, use an equation editor to properly present this.

Most of the time, the experimental section will be written in the past tense. Any time you discuss something that was done in your experiment it should be in the past tense. However, if you are writing about something in the general sense, then the present tense should be used. For example, "Mass  $67^+$  was used to monitor isoprene since it is the most prevalent mass produced in the electron impact ionization of isoprene." The first part of the sentence is in the past tense since it refers to the experiment, the second part of the sentence is in the present tense, since it is a general property of electron impact ionization.

## Results/Data

The results/data section presents your data to the reader, but does not present an analysis of that data. Since this is sometimes difficult to do, it is common to combine the results section with the discussion section. Only show results that are pertinent to your experiment. If you made a mistake during the experiment, do not show the data from the mistake. Only show bad data if that data was used to direct the next step of the experiment. This would be common if your experiment involved method or instrument development. Do not show the same type of data more than once unless there is a good reason to do so. If you are analyzing ten samples with various concentrations of phenols, there is no reason to present more than one of the chromatograms; in general, they all look the same. A graph of concentration versus sample number, or time, or whatever is appropriate, would be more useful to the reader. Be sure to always use the appropriate number of significant figures in every number you report, including on the axes of graphs. Also be sure to include units with every number you report in the text, and in figures and tables. If the units require superscripts or subscripts, format these properly. There is no excuse not to when using a modern word processor. Avoid reporting raw data. For example, if you want to show the results of several chromatography analyses in a table, convert the area units to concentration (based on the calibration), or some other useful units before making the table. The exception to this may be if you are reporting the results of repeated standard analyses.

## Discussion

The discussion section should be used to put your results into the proper context. It is commonly combined with the results section. The results of the experiment should be explained in a meaningful way. This may include: comparing your results with the results of others (in your class or from published work), comparing various results from your own experiment, explaining how your work demonstrates a certain scientific principle, or supports or disagrees with a particular hypothesis or theory, discussing the quality of your data and if the quality of the data is not as good as possible, why, etc. If you want to show the process of making specific calculations, put these in an appendix at the end of the report. Do not go through detailed calculations in the main body of the report; although, important equations that are used for making calculations may show up in the experiment section. Detailed calculations should only appear in the main report if the study involves the derivation of the equations. The discussion section of your report should be the most thought out, and the most interesting.

## Conclusion

An effective conclusion is used to reflect on the experiment, and to suggest improvements for future experimenters who might repeat the work, and to suggest further studies that the current work has inspired. The intention of the experiment may be repeated (from the introduction) and whether or not the original goals were met can be discussed. Although the major results may be restated in a conclusion, this is not the primary purpose of this section.

## Comments on figures and tables

- Only use a figure or table when necessary. Ask yourself if the information in the figure or table can be adequately described in the text alone.
- Label figures and tables separately and in order.
- A caption should be associated with every figure or table that does not rely on the text of the paper, although the reader can be referred to the text for more information.
- Every figure and table included in the paper must be referred to in the text, and must be referred to in order. If the figures and tables are embedded in the text, try to have the referral in the text come before the figure or table appears. Otherwise, it is acceptable for all of the figures and tables to be included (in order) at the end of the text.
- The first time that the figure or table is referred to in the text, the figure or table must be described. Describe what the figure or table is displaying, and then discuss the data in the figure or table. After this, it is ok to make a reference to the figure or table without a specific discussion of the data in the figure or table. Use the present tense when referring to the actual table or figure. For example, "Figure 1 illustrates how the helium carrier gas was used to desorb compounds from the sampling traps."
- Use the correct or at least a reasonable number of significant figures in every number reported (and be consistent).
- Whenever possible, show uncertainty in your data. Use error bars on graphs to show uncertainty in each point, or to show variations from one analysis to the next. Be sure to explain your error bars or uncertainty in the caption.
- Units must be associated with every number reported. This may appear in the column heading for a table, or on the axis label in a graph. For chromatograms it is ok to use 'detector response' for the units of the y-axis, and area units for peak areas, however it is better if area units are converted to the final units used (the same units as the standards).
- Most instrument software allows the user to format how data looks for printing. Spend the time to learn the software and make your data look the way you want it before printing it out.
- The font for all lettering should be the same as in the text whenever possible. Do not use smaller than 10 point font in figures and 12 point in tables.
- All lines and points should show up clearly. This includes axis and trend lines, and data points.
- Use all of your space. There is no reason to have a graph on half a piece of paper if the other half is empty.
- Use enough space to display the data well. Short and wide chromatograms do not do as well as tall ones.

## Some unacceptable errors commonly found in lab reports

- Having numerous and blatantly misspelled words.
- Using poor writing structure (not having periods after sentences, missing spaces, etc.).
- Not describing and discussing figures and tables that are included in the report.
- Poor labeling of figures and tables, for example, if multiple figures have the same figure number, or if the incorrect figure is given in the text.
- Being excessively redundant. Never repeat what you have already said in the report, especially word for word. It may be appropriate to restate an idea if it is very important.
- Not reporting units (or incorrect units) and obviously reporting too many significant figures.
- Not using appropriate symbols, sub, and super scripts, and not using an equation editor to display equations.

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*All of these can easily be avoided by carefully reading your report before handing it in and having some pride in your work.*

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## Researching in the Natural Sciences

### The Nature of Research in the Natural Sciences

Scientists conduct research to explore questions they have about the physical universe. Scientists use observations to make hypotheses, and then test these hypotheses by designing experiments, building on what other scientists have observed and reported in academic journals and books. Each type of research assignment you get in science classes will have different research goals and guidelines, but there are some general features of research in the sciences that you should be aware of:

### Scientific research involves hypothesis-testing.

In his lab report guidelines above, Professor Baker emphasizes the importance of stating your hypothesis in the introduction of a lab report, and discussing how your findings agree or disagree with other scientist's hypotheses. In the natural sciences and mathematics, a hypothesis is a tentative explanation for a natural phenomenon that can be tested through scientific experimentation. As Professor Sullivan points out in his science writing guidelines above, scientists are constantly searching for better explanations of natural phenomenon, and that means forming and testing new hypotheses.

## **Scientific research is systematic and involves testing and experimentation.**

Professor Baker's lab report guidelines may seem strict, but there is a reason the scientific lab report has such a formal structure. Because scientists search for the best explanation possible for natural phenomenon, they are focused on being systematic. Scientists also value replication—which means that an experiment by one scientist should be able to be done again by other scientists with the same results. Both Professor Sullivan and Professor Baker point out that discourse communities of scientists share the results of testing and experimentation to further knowledge.

## **Scientific research involves exploring the research of other scientists.**

In his guide to science writing above, Professor Sullivan discusses the importance of citing peer-reviewed journals and scholarly books. Professor Baker says that in the introduction section of a lab report you should cite "important historical references regarding work related to your experiment," and in the results section you should compare the results of your experiment with other published work. It makes sense that since scientists value careful testing and retesting of hypotheses, they also value an understanding of and acknowledgment of the research that has already been done on the writer's topic.

## **What Counts as Evidence in the Natural Sciences?**

### **Descriptions of experiments and observations.**

In most genres of science writing there's an entire section devoted to describing the experiment, as Professor Baker describes in his guidelines for writing lab reports. Because other scientists need to be able to replicate the results of your experiment, it's critical in science writing that you describe the experiment accurately and clearly. A clear description of an experiment done well is strong evidence for the value of your results.

### **Data reported in tables, graphs, and charts.**

Often the results of scientific experiments are reported at least in part by creating visuals like tables, graphs, and charts. You can get a sense of how important this kind of visual reporting is by how much time Professor Baker devotes to describing how to create effective visuals in his guidelines for writing a lab report above. Tables, graphs, and charts are tools for presenting numerical data in ways that are easy for readers to understand.

### **Research from other scientists.**

In most science genres, the results of research from other scientists can be just as an important kind of evidence as the results of your own experiment. If other scientists performing your experiment have gotten similar results as you did, readers will be more persuaded by your results. For more advanced scientists, the results of a new kind of experiment might add to scientific knowledge or challenge the existing hypothesis. But whether scientists are replicating an experiment or adding to what counts as knowledge in their discourse community, the research of other scientists is always important evidence. In his science writing guide above,



Professor Sullivan says, "When you are constructing your essay, you must support your argument or ideas with reference to objective 'facts' in the literature."

## Natural Science and Mathematics Reference Books, Web Sites, and Databases

The following is a list of some reference books, Web sites, and databases for the natural sciences. For more resources on researching in various science disciplines, visit the library's research guides at <http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/>.

### Science and Mathematics Dictionaries

*The Biographical Dictionary of Scientists*, edited by R. Porter and M. Ogilvie

*Chambers Dictionary of Science and Technology*, by P. Walker

*Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, edited by C. Gillispie

*Dictionary of the History of Science*, edited by W.F. Bynum, E.J. Brown, and R. Porter

*Hammond Barnhart Dictionary of Science*, edited by R.K. Barnhart

*The New Penguin Dictionary of Science*, by M.J. Clugston

*Dictionary of Mathematics*, by J. Berry

*Dictionary of Mathematics*, McGraw-Hill

*Mathematics Dictionary*, R.C. James

### Science and Mathematics Encyclopedias

*Encyclopedia of Physical Science and Technology*, edited by R.A. Meyers

*McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology*

*Biographical Encyclopedia of Scientists*, edited by J. Daintith, et. al.

*Encyclopedia of World Scientists*, edited by E.H. Oakes

*Encyclopedia of Mathematics*, J.S. Tanton

### Science and Mathematics Web Sites

Science Writing, Colorado State University:

[http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/index.cfm?guides\\_active=science&category1=38](http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/index.cfm?guides_active=science&category1=38)

Scientific Reports, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

[http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/lab\\_report\\_complete.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/lab_report_complete.html)

Writing in the Sciences for Non-Majors, Dartmouth:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/sciences/write.shtml>

## **Science and Mathematics Periodical Databases**

Biological Abstracts

Chemical Abstracts

MathSciNet

ScienceDirect

Wiley InterScience

# Writing and Researching in the Social Sciences

## An Overview of Writing and Researching in the Social Sciences at Sacramento State

Social sciences departments and colleges at Sacramento State include:

Anthropology  
Criminal Justice  
Economics  
Education  
Ethnic Studies  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
Gerontology  
Political Science  
Psychology  
Social Work  
Sociology  
Women's Studies



Some departments, such as Communication Studies and English, are in the College of Arts and Letters but sometimes use social science research methods. For example, Linguistics and Composition Studies are disciplines in the English Department that both draw on social science research.

Each of the departments and colleges listed above, and each teacher within these departments and colleges, will have different expectations for writing, reading, and researching. But the reason all of these departments and colleges are considered “social sciences” is because social scientists share some general approaches to writing and researching:

- Social scientists use reading, writing, and researching to explore questions about human interaction.
- Social scientists, just like natural scientists, often inquire by forming hypotheses, but social scientists’ hypotheses focus on human behavior. Social scientists test these hypotheses by designing social or psychological experiments, collecting data through interviews or surveys, or systematically observing human behavior, building on what other social scientists have observed and reported in academic journals and books.

- Social scientists often conduct research using quantitative methods (methods that result in numbers and statistics) and qualitative methods (methods focused on observing, describing, and analyzing social behavior, social artifacts, and social institutions).
- Social scientists report the results of their experiments, data collection, or systematic observations in written genres like case studies, surveys, interviews, ethnographies, and research reports.
- Social scientists value a reasoned, systematic response to what are often controversial social issues. Social science researchers consider a variety of perspectives on social issues and usually support their positions and interpretations with evidence from data.
- Social scientists build theories of human behavior based on their research, and these theories are constantly being debated by social science discourse communities of writers and researchers.
- Because social scientists study human behavior using a variety of approaches and genres, the level of formality and conventions of social science writing will depend on the writer's purpose, audience, and genre. In general, though, social scientists tend to value writing that is precise and logically organized and that follows the conventions of whatever social science genre you're writing in.
- Even though social science genres have purposes and conventions that have been agreed upon over time by communities of social scientists, these genres are constantly evolving, and social scientists are always creating new genres and new conventions.

Genres of science writing you might encounter in your classes at Sacramento State include:

Research reports  
 Ethnographies  
 Interviews  
 Case studies  
 Content analyses  
 and many more...

## **Interview with a Sociology Professor about Reading, Writing, and Researching in the Social Sciences**

To help introduce you to writing in the social sciences, the following is an interview with Professor Todd Migliaccio, a teacher in the Sociology Department at Sacramento State. Here's what Professor Migliaccio had to say about reading, writing, and researching in the social sciences:

### **Q: What is the role of writing in the social sciences?**

A: The primary way we use writing is to convey ideas, whether it's to students, other social scientists, or the general populace. It's the primary way we share knowledge, findings, and/or information. Social scientists use writing to display connections between theories, challenge theories, or extend theories. It's a primary form of communication, and the best way to locate new findings and discussions in the field.

### **Q: What is the role of research in the social sciences?**

A: Research is about expanding ideas about social concepts and testing them in the empirical world. In the social sciences it's all about data, which we or someone else has collected, but that you use to test your theory or idea. In the social sciences we're always moving forward and expanding ideas, not just doing the same research again and again. Through the data, we want to be able to make generalizations about a population or at least make claims about the relationship between concepts. One problem we run into with students is that sometimes they think reviewing the literature on a subject is a source of data. Social scientists use a review of prior research on a subject to justify their research—it is not the actual research. The review of past literature helps justify and explain why the data being collected is useful. In their research papers students do a literature review to set up their own research, but then they need to go out and collect data in some form.

### **Q: Could you define "data" in the social sciences?**

A: Data can be anything from statistics to interviews—any information about people or institutions or groups. Data can be broken down into numbers like income, age, etc. or it can be information from an interview about an experience someone has had. Data can be artifacts like CD covers, pictures, television commercials, or magazine covers. We can use anything that is basically "social," because it all reflects the society in which it exists.

### **Q: What kind of research and writing assignments do you and teachers in your department assign in lower-division General Education classes?**

A: We generally assign two types of papers. Since students are learning sociology for the first time, a lot of teachers rely on journals. In journals students reflect on their experience in relation to class ideas or go out and collect some type of data, and then reflect on the data, as well as the process of collecting the data. A common journal assignment is what is called a breaching experiment, where students break a social norm. Then in a journal they write about their own experiences breaking the norm and what were

the reactions by others, and then they connect this to concepts they're talking about in the class. Instead of a journal paper, teachers may also assign a brief argumentative paper where students may conduct the same breaching experiment but then use the reactions of people as data to support an argument.

**Q: How are reading and writing connected in the social sciences?**

A: I think there's a strong relationship between being able to write and being able to read—to see the actual arguments going on in the reading. We emphasize reading not just to understand the ideas in an article but to see how the argument is constructed—getting students to see what is the point-by-point breakdown. In my classes I ask students to answer questions like, “What are the arguments made by the author?” “Do they justify the overall point?” All of this is in the hope that they will better understand not just the article but how to develop their own argument.

**Q: Overall, what kinds of thinking is most valued in the social sciences?**

A: In all of the social sciences we want you to see beyond what is sitting in front of your face. In sociology, we call it the “sociological imagination.” That means being able to see that there are larger social forces at work beyond your individual issues and problems. We want students to ask the question, “Why?” What is the relationship between your personal history and the history of society? What are the social forces that are creating a social problem? Then it is a matter of students conveying these ideas in their writing, and for us the important thing is that they convey their ideas with a sociological stance—that there are larger social forces that influence our behaviors and experiences. We don't think most people are ever taught to think that way, so it's a primary focus for most of our classes. We want students to think about the social world in a different context.

## **Example Writing Assignments from Sacramento State Social Sciences Classes**

One way to get a sense of writing in the social sciences at Sacramento State is to analyze some actual writing assignments from Sacramento State classes. As you look at the following assignments, think about what each assignment can tell you about the purposes, audiences, formats, styles, and research methods of social science writing.

### **Example Sociology Research Report Assignment**

In the interview above we looked at what reading, writing, and researching in the social sciences means for a Sacramento State Sociology professor, Todd Migliaccio. To get a sense of some of the common features of social science research reports, let's look at one of Sociology Professor Ellen Berg's research report assignments:

## SOC 133: Sport in Global Perspective

### Group Project: Content Analysis

You will work in groups of 2 (or 3 where necessary) to complete an original research project using content analysis – the collection and analysis of some form of communication (magazines, TV shows, newspapers, books, movies, websites, etc.). To complete this assignment you will need to do the following:

- Carefully examine the example of content analysis provided in your reader (reading 1)
- Develop a research question(s) related to sport that can be addressed using content analysis – if you can also develop specific hypotheses (as they do in Reading #1) that is fine also (in this case you would have a broader RQ, then specific H(s))
- Determine the variables that you will need to measure to answer this question (e.g. the # of depictions of women compared to men; the # of depictions that fit in certain categories, etc.)
- Determine the sample that you will analyze (e.g. all issues of Sports Illustrated from a 6 month period). You will need to have a rationale for why the sample you select provides a valid representation of data relevant to your topic.
- Look through your sample and determine how you will measure the key variables related to your research question.
- Perform the actual content analysis (i.e., look through the entire sample and measure your variables). Once you have determined how you are going to measure your variables, both people in the group should perform the analyses, then compare notes. Any discrepancies should be discussed and resolved. Difficult decisions should be noted, so you can include them in the methods section.
- You don't need to do any fancy analyses, you can come up with ways to draw conclusions just based on counting and calculating percentages. If you are able to do something more advanced like chi-square, based on your past statistics class (see Reading #1), then by all means do so, but it is not required.
- Write up an explanation of your research process and results.

THE KEY to this project is to utilize the example of a content analysis that I have provided in the reader, as well as any others that you may find, and follow these articles as models for your write up. I have examples of previous papers in my office that you can review.

## General Format:

All papers are to be typed. Please double-space and use 12-point font.

1. Papers should be approx. 6-9 pages in length (plus an abstract and reference page) with at least EIGHT scholarly references. Six pages is a bare minimum, most papers are closer to 9, and papers can be longer than 9 pages if necessary.
2. References and in-text citations should follow the ASA style manual. All sources cited in the text of the paper should be listed as references. ASA format is up on WebCT
3. Sources such as *Newsweek & Sports Illustrated* are not scholarly references. You can use them sparingly, in addition to your 8 scholarly references.
4. Only one of your references may come from the internet (journal articles that you access through the internet are fine, by "internet" I mean information you find on a website other than a library database).
5. ALWAYS TURN IN A REFERENCE PAGE WITH ANY DRAFT

## Sections:

**Abstract** – Write this after entire paper is completed – look at examples from all articles in reader. Abstract is VERY concise, only main research question, method used, and main finding (100-150 words)

**Introduction** – In this section you provide the background on your topic, why the question is sociologically significant, and provide justification for utilizing the sample that you have selected. Why is content that you are going to analyze appropriate for your research question? Why is the research question important to address? Include a clear statement of your research questions and hypotheses (if you have hypotheses) (1.5-2 pages)

**Background Literature** – A very short section that highlights past literature on your topic. Here you should reemphasize how your study builds on this past work. (1 – 1.5 pages)

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*NOTE: You can combine the two above sections into one (either titled Introduction or with no title as they do in Reading #1), just be careful to include enough background literature if you do it this way (and it would be 2.5-3.5 pages long total). It is also fine to do this in two separate sections with separate headings – Introduction and Background Literature.*

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**Methods** – Here you outline your sample and your variables. Explain exactly how you measured your variables. If you find another article that gives you a method for measuring and coding your variables be sure to cite it (as they do in



Reading #1), but also explain how you did the coding. Also explain how you resolved issues that arose when things were unclear (1-1.5 pages – perhaps more depending on complexity of measurement).

**Results** – What were the results of your analysis? Mainly just explain the findings, don't go into a great deal of detail on what they mean – this will go in the Discussion section (Results should be at least 1.5 pages, or more, depending on complexity). For example, if you have a category called "physical" – be sure to give an example of a comment that you counted in that category.

Also, use at least one table in this section. See the model article for how to include a table in the text. Be sure your table has a title and enough explanation to "stand-alone" meaning I can understand what it means without any additional explanation.

**Discussion** – Here you relate your findings back to the overall topic and previous literature. How do your findings fit into the broader topic, and how do they answer the research question that you asked? Did your results support your hypotheses if you had any? (1-2 pages)

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*NOTE: If you have hypotheses, you can address whether they are supported or not briefly in the Results section, as a way to organize your findings, but the main discussion should be in this last section.*

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## **Example Social Science Critical Analysis Paper**

The following family analysis paper is from a course in Family and Consumer Sciences taught by Merrikay Boylan. This assignment provides a good example of what critical analysis looks like in the social sciences.

### **Guidelines For Family Analysis Paper**

1. Introduction – 1 page maximum
  - A. Please write a description of your family of origin, including:
  - B. Names and birthdates of each member
  - C. Succinctly describe each member
  - D. If your family were a movie or theme song, what would be the title? What would be the story line?
2. Family Structure and Functions

You will be expected to use excerpts from your readings to support your interpretation and analysis. Please refer to definitions, etc. from the Yerby text, The Dance of Anger, and the library reserve room material. They should all three be on your references page. Be sure to include specific examples from your family interactions to clarify your points. Focus primarily on your parents' interactions with you and your siblings. THIS PAPER IS ABOUT YOUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN.

A. Ethnicity, Social Class, Religion (Library Reserve Room material) – 1 page minimum

Identify and state how these factors affect your family values, interactions, opportunities and lifestyle, and **thus your communication**. **Be specific about how these factors affect your communication! You must have citations to support your analysis.**

B. Parents' Marital Relationship - about 2 pages **You must have citations to support your analysis.**

Describe your parents' marital history.

1. How they met, their dating and engagement
2. Roles when first married
3. How these roles changed and affected the family system
4. Control patterns, competitive, complementary or parallel relationship (Ch 5)
5. If divorced – reasons for the divorce, effects on the family communication.
6. If widowed – changes in survivor's personality, communication and interactions

C. Family Dances (Chapter 6) (Lerner Chapters 3, 8 and 9) – about 1-1/2 pages

Pursuer/distancer, overfunctioner/underfunctioner, triangles, alliances and coalitions. Describe who played which of these parts in the family system of interactions. Give specific examples. **You must have citations to support your analysis.**

### **This is the End Of the First Half Of Your Paper and the First 100 Points.**

D. Family Type – (Chapter 10) – ½ page

Which of the family types described by Yerby fit your family? Explain why and what affect this had on the family.

**USE CITATIONS.**

E. Sibling Dynamics – (Chapter 10) ½ page - Describe cohesion and disconnection over time. **USE CITATIONS.**

### **3. Situational Dynamics – 1 page**

Critical aspects of family history, e.g. crises, major illnesses, untimely deaths, geographical moves, job changes, prior marriages, etc. Focus on only one incident. How did family communication help and/or hinder the situation.

#### 4. Current Challenges – about 1 page – CITE LERNER CHAPTERS 8 AND/OR 9.

All families have both strengths and weaknesses. Given what you have learned from this class and the analysis above:

- A. What are your family's current communication challenges?
- B. What are the underlying issues?
- C. How do these issues affect the individuals and the family as a whole?
- D. What do you see as possible solutions?
- E. What is the possible result of these issues being addressed?
- F. What steps will you take toward this solution? **Describe your plan.**  
You may use the strengths to help with the weaknesses.  
(Lerner Ch 8 & 9)

#### 5. Family of Procreation – about 1 page

How do the issues in your family of origin affect your family of procreation? If you do not yet have one, how do you think these issues might affect your future family of procreation? What will you do to mediate these effects? What strengths of your family of origin would you like to continue in your family of procreation?

#### 6. Conclusion – about ½ page

Conclude your paper with a brief synopsis of your experience doing this project, including both your EMOTIONAL and INTELLECTUAL responses. How do you FEEL about your family interactions and what do you THINK of these interactions?

**Format:** Please use a 12 pt. font, double space and have one-inch margins all around. You may use a cover page for privacy. Please do not use folders or other covers. Be sure to give appropriate references. That is, ALL professional terms, phrases, IDEAS, and quoted material must ALL be referenced, using APA style and including a reference page. You must turn in a reference page with the first half of your paper. Please be very careful to avoid plagiarism. This is a formal academic analysis. Please do not use "chatty" language or colloquialisms. Use your computer's spell and grammar check. Spelling and grammar errors are not acceptable on an upper division college paper. Please limit your paper to a total of 10 pages, turned in in two sections. That is, the first section, through items 2C, consisting of approximately 5-1/2 pages, will be turned in on the first paper due date on the syllabus. Please make corrections on the reference page when you turn it in the second time, and include ALL references for both sections of the paper. Each section will be worth 100 points and will be graded separately.

## Example Social Science Literature Review Paper

The following literature review paper is from a course in Child Development taught by Professor Sheri Hembree. This assignment provides a good example of what a literature review looks like in the social sciences:

This assignment allows you to investigate a (social developmental) topic of your choice in more depth than a survey course permits. The 6-8 page paper is a **focused** and **integrated** review of recent **empirical** research (at least 4 articles) on your topic, as well as a critical analysis of the research and suggestions for future research on the topic. The paper is worth 70 points (out of 350 total).

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*NOTE: by empirical articles, I mean articles from reputable peer-review journals - articles that report actual data, have methods sections, etc. Please see a list of acceptable journals below.*

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### Format

Your paper has three basic parts (**do not, however, use these headings – no headings are necessary in this paper**):

- I. **Introduction.** Briefly explain the relevance of your topic, outline the structure/ major points of your paper and state your thesis (i.e., what you intend to demonstrate/delineate in your paper). **You should be able to do this in 1-2 paragraphs.**
- II. **Body.** In this section, summarize each of the four articles in turn. Use a topic sentence that describes the main finding of each study as a means of introducing the study, then summarize the study (purpose, method, results, and conclusions) to support the statement you made.

#### **For example:**

There is evidence that children's peer acceptance is related to their parents' monitoring of their play activities. For example, Jones and Smith (2003) investigated whether mothers' use of peer-related coaching behaviors with their preschoolers was related to children's popularity with their peers as they entered Kindergarten. The researchers observed 58 predominantly middle-class mothers with their preschool-aged children as they played with peers in a lab-based play session. The sample included.... (continue to summarize the study in approximately one page)

Repeat this with each of the other articles. Be sure to use transition and topic sentences to integrate your articles as you go. When reporting the results of your summarized studies, do not report actual statistics, merely the most important results of the study.

- III. **Integration, conclusions, evaluation.** Finally, summarize the studies **as a whole**, i.e., what general conclusions can be drawn from your review of these studies? Next, evaluate the studies' method and conclusions, and suggest future research on the topic.

## Steps to completing your paper:

- 1) **Choose your topic.** Your textbook is a good place to start looking for a topic. For example, if you were interested in moral development and checked the moral development chapter of the text, you would see that there are sections on reasoning about moral issues, compliance with moral rules, and moral behavior which represent different topics related to moral development. Another source of topics can be found in the text boxes describing recent research, or the articles assigned for research discussions.

You should be able to express your thesis (or topic) in a single question or statement. Complete the statement: "My paper is about\_\_\_\_\_"; (e.g., gender differences in moral reasoning; factors predicting teenage pregnancy...). The biggest mistake students make is being too general or broad in their topic choice. The best advice I have is: BE SPECIFIC. Talk about a specific "thing" (a particular event or transition, a particular relationship, a particular age group, a particular skill). You may want to narrow your topic further by choosing a particular age group to investigate (e.g., adolescence or early childhood). Please consult with me if you are having difficulty narrowing down your topic.

**\*\*A one-sentence description of your topic is due on during the lab session the week of Sept. 23rd.**

- 2) **Research your topic.** Use PsycInfo to do a search on your topic. A lab session will be devoted to a review of PsycInfo use. Look for articles that are directly relevant to your topic (For example, if you are researching gender differences in play styles, don't bother with articles about gender differences in math performance). **At least three of your four articles must have been published since 1999.** Please use articles only from suitable peer-review journals listed below. You also might want to read a recent review of the literature (a book chapter or article which summarizes recent research) related to you topic as well. You may have to narrow or broaden your topic depending on the results of your search.
- 3) **Write an outline.** Write a one-page outline noting the major points you intend to make in each of the paragraphs of your paper. I will give you feedback on your outline, and I may ask you to revise it and return it to me for additional feedback. Included with your outline should be a list of your references (in APA style).

**\*\*\*A one page outline and list of references (word processed in APA style) is due on October 9<sup>th</sup>.**

- 4) **Write your paper... and REVISE, REVISE.** Your first draft will not pass muster. You may want to get feedback on your paper before you turn it in. I will read a draft of your paper and give you feedback if it is given to me no later than Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>. This is optional but encouraged, especially if you have never written a paper like this before. I will only read complete (NOT "rough") drafts; please proofread and edit your draft before turning it in to me.

**\*\*\*FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE BY Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>.**

**Evaluation.** You will be evaluated on:

- your ability to summarize the empirical research and use it to support your arguments
- your ability to integrate and evaluate the research
- your ability to identify key issues and/or questions for further study.
- correct use of APA style/grammar, paper organization

### **Important Tips**

- Please, please, please proofread and revise your paper. A portion of your grade will be based on style, grammar, spelling, clarity of expression, and organization.
- Please use APA style (see most recent (5th edition) style manual, published in 2001). You may wish to consult Tips on APA Style handout on the course web page for information.

### **Example Student Writing from a Social Science Class at Sacramento State**

Nancy Alkema was a student in a Child Development class when she wrote the following research proposal. Nancy's research proposal was published in the 2009 edition of *Writing the University*, an online undergraduate journal of writing from across the curriculum at Sacramento State at [www.csus.edu/wac/journal](http://www.csus.edu/wac/journal). Nancy's professor, Kristen Weede Alexander, said that in the research proposal

students needed to identify an area of interest in child development, conduct a library search to find relevant literature, design a feasible study to test a tangible research question, think about expected results and modes of analysis, and write a research proposal in the style of the discipline (American Psychological Association, APA).

Professor Weede Alexander said that Nancy's proposal

is an exemplary sample of writing in the discipline. She included important formatting details, such as a title page and effective abstract. Further, Ms. Alkema provided an integrated literature review, demonstrating an understanding of the articles she located and read and communicating clearly the details necessary to understand her topic. The Methods described are feasible and would produce a meaningful study to add to the literature. Finally, the Implications demonstrate critical thinking, a skill important to the discipline. Throughout the paper, Ms. Alkema effectively uses APA style to communicate her results in the style of the discipline.

## **Emotional Disturbances:**

### **The Effects of Parental Neglect Types on Children**

**Nancy Alkema**

#### **Abstract**

The aim of this current study will be to focus on a silent epidemic, that because of its often subtle nature goes unnoticed and untreated, yet creates life-changing problems for the children who experience parental emotional neglect. This study will attempt to narrow down which types of neglect are most harmful or most predictive of emotional disturbances. Neglect types that will be looked at are psychological/emotional, physical, and cognitive. Some neglectful behavior may fall into two or three of these categories, and each will be rated in this manner. Participants will be taken from several juvenile centers across the nation with an equal amount of males and females who have previously been diagnosed with emotional disturbances. They will each be interviewed by a highly trained and experienced juvenile psychologist and monitored by a lie-detector during the interview. This study will advance the knowledge of parental neglect on emotional disturbances in children. However, it would be beneficial for further studies to determine the effects of both neglect and abuse as separate and combined factors in emotional disturbances.

## **Emotional Disturbances:**

### **The Effects of Parental Neglect Types on Children**

In working with children with emotional disturbances, it is important to understand possible causes of this disorder. Although, there is a vast amount of research on various aspects of emotional disturbances, most of these studies deal with social support systems, while fewer studies investigate the actual causes. There may be some evidence toward biological determinants, as with children with developmental disorders; however, there is more evidence showing an effect between emotional disturbances, and parental neglect, most specifically within dysfunctional family systems. The premise behind the current study is consistent with other studies in showing that parental neglect, a form of child abuse, is a significant contributor to emotional disturbances. More specifically, it is important to determine which types of emotional neglect are most harmful in order to understand the problem better. Gender will also be studied to determine whether there is an effect.

The types of emotional neglect that will be looked at are emotional/psychological, cognitive, and physical. Emotional/psychological deals with depriving a child of his or her basic needs that provide support for healthy emotional and psychological growth such as leaving a child feeling anxious, stressed or fearful after experiencing a parental quarrel or fight. Cognitive neglect would be a form of neglect affecting the normal, healthy cognitive growth such as encouraging racism. Physical neglect would be considered as neglectful behaviors that put the child at an increased risk of harm such as ignoring a child's illness, not taking him or her to the doctor or giving medication to relieve pain.

It is also important to understand the difference between emotional neglect, emotional abuse, and emotional maltreatment. Emotional neglect is considered to be acts of omission concerning the care of a child. It is more narrowly defined as a pervasive problem within the interactions of the relationship. It is distinguished from emotional abuse, which would be acts of commission - deliberate acts. Emotional maltreatment is an inclusive term which includes neglect, and abuse (Iwaniec, Larkin, & McSherry, 2007). This term will be used throughout the literature review since that is how it is referred. However, the current study will attempt to single out emotional neglect as an indicator of emotional disturbances.

Iwaniec et al. (2007) also found that the effects of emotional maltreatment are detrimental to the child's development. These acts of maltreatment convey to the child that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, or endangered. It includes emotional unavailability, unresponsiveness, and withdrawal of attention. An emotional disturbance can be characterized by poor self image, cognitive delays and difficulties, problems with coping, and difficulty forming meaningful relationships, or connecting with others.

Changes in effects can be seen at different stages of development. Children who have been emotionally maltreated have higher aggression, anger, and frustration. Older children and adolescence experience social rejection, dependency and school difficulties. College students have difficulties with clinical distress, and psychological disturbances such as obsessive compulsiveness, depression and anxiety. Symptoms in adults include depression, eating disorders suicidal ideation, anxiety, low self-esteem, interpersonal and sexual problems. They are also more likely than others to have substance abuse problems (Iwaniec, et al. 2007).

Although all forms of maltreatment have an element of emotional harm, (Hart, Binggeli, & Brassard (1998), as seen in Iwaniec et al. 2007), psychological unavailability from parents was seen as the most harmful type of neglect (Egeland & Erickson 1987, as seen in Iwaniec et al. 2007). This type of neglect is defined as punishing positive normal behaviors such as smiling, exploration, discouraging early attachment, damaging self-esteem, and inhibiting the development of interpersonal skills. Consequences linked to psychological maltreatment are problems with verbal and non-verbal communication skills, patience, goal setting, and ego development in regard to confidence and security (Garbarino, 1997, as seen in Iwaniec et al., 2007).

Research also indicates that perceived low parental care and overprotection in childhood are associated with depression and anxiety disorders later in life (Gerslma et al.1990 as seen in Newcomb, Mineka, Zinbarg, & Griffith, 2007). Further research concluded that child maltreatment presents alarming challenges which interfere with a healthy development of self esteem and depressive symptoms. Physical neglect was positively associated with depressive symptoms, suggesting that children who had experienced physical neglect were at higher risk for depression, compared to those without such experiences (Kim & Ciechetti, 2006).

Another study (Herring, Gray, Taffe, Tonge, Sweeney, & Einfeld, 2006) looked beyond blaming the parents, and concluded that child behavior and emotional problems were significantly positively correlated with parent and family distress.



While this study was in reference to children with Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), the link between familial stress and the child's emotional problems were significant. Results showed the mothers' stress thermometer at 0.41, and the fathers' stress thermometer at 0.52. These results show significant effects of child behavior and emotional problems on parent outcome. This study did not suggest any evidence that these children were born with an emotional disturbance; instead, it discussed the observable link between parental stress and emotional problems in toddlers. This research suggested that parents of toddlers with PDD had an increased stress level compared to the parents with typical children. It also showed that parental stress and problem behavior are mutually escalating, and that stress contributed to the behavior and not the diagnosis itself, nor was it linked to the severity of the diagnosis (Herring, et al. 2006).

This study showed a link between parental stress and family dysfunction. It suggested that the reduction of the child's behavioral problems has the capability of reducing parental stress, mental health problems and family dysfunctions. The impact of a child's behavior may in fact determine the stress level, as well as the parent's behavior toward that child. However, it could also be speculated that the stress on the parent due to the child's behavior would only uncover dysfunctions already present within the parent, and not cause them. If this idea is correct, then it would also be true that a parent's effect on their child, could also uncover dysfunctions already present in the child.

Taken into consideration the difficulties experienced by children due to neglectful parenting, it is imperative to uncover the aspects of this problematic family function. These are not moments found throughout childhood that can be overlooked. They are systematic behaviors that can affect the lifespan of the individuals who experience these harmful behaviors. Therefore, further research is crucial. This study is intended to take that closer look into types of neglect and the impact they play on the lives of so many children.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants would be 100 previously diagnosed emotionally disturbed juveniles (50 females and 50 males) between 14 and 17 years old. They will be taken from several juvenile detention centers across the United States. The juveniles will participate on a voluntary basis, and will be selected using a simple random design of computer selection. Juveniles will be informed that there will be no early release in exchange for participating in the study, and will be given extra T.V. time for completion of the survey. The survey will be conducted by an interviewer who is a highly trained psychologist with background in emotionally disturbed juveniles, but will have no previous work experience with the juveniles in this study. A lie detector test will be administered during the interviews to give the study more credibility.

This study will take approximately one year to complete since time is needed to research and contact participants, set up, and conduct interviews, and gather and interpret data in a meaningful way.

## Procedure

Participants will be interviewed at their respective juvenile centers in the interrogation room or another room allowing little or no disruptions. A modified version of the Carers' Emotionally Abusive Behavior Questionnaire (Iwaniec, et al. 2006), will be used to rate the effect of different types of neglect on emotional disturbances. The reason for the modification will be to single out emotional neglect from emotional abuse, which may be hard to separate, but necessary since acts of neglect, are the central focus of this study.

The questionnaire will be completed by the interviewer in response to the answers given by the juveniles during the interview. The questionnaire consists of 24 questions related to their childhood memories of being neglected by their parents. In response to each question, the nominal scale will include the following categories: often, seldom, almost never, and length of neglect, defined as occasional or frequent which will help give the background of neglect as well as separate neglect types into categories. If the length of neglect was less than a year, or occurred almost never or seldom, it will not be considered as an effect on emotional disturbances. Some neglect types overlap, and will therefore be scored in more than one group. For example, parental self-harming behavior would be given a point for emotional neglect, as well as a point for cognitive neglect, as this act can affect the child's emotions and cognitive development. The scores will be added and categories will be compared to find an effect between types of neglect and emotional disturbances.

## Implications and Limitations

Although this study will increase the understanding of parental neglect on emotional disturbances as it focuses on acts of omission and separates abuse types, there are some limitations which need to be addressed. First of all is that these juveniles may have no memory for some of the neglect which may have happened during their formative years. They may also have suffered memory blocks due to the neglect. There may also be a problem in not looking at the confounding variable of abuse (acts of commission) against the child, which may be the real indicator of, or just an added influence on emotional disturbances. Perception should also be considered as a factor in that these juveniles may perceive neglect to be more serious than it was, or they may have thought that their experiences were normal, especially at a young age when life at home is what they were most familiar with.

One final limitation would be that the juveniles in detention centers do not accurately represent the emotionally disturbed population in the United States, or cross culturally. Nevertheless, this study adds to the knowledge base of understanding of emotional disturbances, and may lead to better services to help the families in which these behaviors occur. It is, however, necessary for further studies to look at the comparison of neglect and abuse and how they relate, and differentiate in their effect, both separate and combined, on emotional disturbances.

## References

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## Researching in the Social Sciences

### The Nature of Research in the Social Sciences

In another section of this handbook, we talked about the ways that natural scientists define research. There are some similarities in the ways that research is defined in the natural sciences and in the social sciences. In both the natural sciences and the social sciences, researchers explore open-ended but focused questions in systematic ways. In both the natural sciences and the social sciences, writers are more credible when they cite what previous researchers have said about their subject. Both natural science and social science researchers collect data and closely and carefully observe phenomenon. But natural science and social researchers differ in the kinds of questions they ask, the type of phenomenon they study, the kind of data they collect, and the research genres and methods they use. Here are some general features of research in the social sciences that you should be aware of:

### **Research in the social sciences usually involves exploring open-ended but focused questions about social behavior, relationships, and institutions.**

In the example social sciences research proposal above, Nancy Alkema chose an open-ended question: which types of neglect are most harmful or most predictive of emotional disturbances? The question focuses on causes of social behavior, and it explores a cause/effect relationship that is open for debate.

### **Research in the social sciences is systematic and often involves collecting data, making observations, conducting interviews and surveys, and analyzing social artifacts.**

In the assignment Nancy was given, she was asked to “design a feasible study to test a tangible research question.” Nancy decided to use interviews as her primary research method, and she conducted her interviews in a systematic way, surveying fifty males and fifty females and using a computer program to create a random sample. Nancy used a research tool that has proven reliable childhood development research, Carers’ Emotionally Abusive Behavior Questionnaire.

### **Research in the social sciences usually involves reviewing the research of other social scientists.**

Throughout her research proposal, Nancy cites the work of previous researchers on her topic to give a context to her own research and show her audience that she has done her homework on her subject. For example, when she defines a key term, “emotional maltreatment,” she cites the researchers Iwaniec and Larkin and McSherry. At other times she cites previous research studies to talk about the causes of emotional disorders—for example, when she makes the claim that low parental care and overprotection in childhood are associated with depression and anxiety disorders later in life and cites research studies by Gerlsma et al., Newcomb, Mineka, Zinbarg, and Griffith. By citing five different studies, Nancy establishes a pattern of results found in multiple research studies. Nancy’s teacher praises her research, saying, “Ms. Alkema provided an integrated literature review, demonstrating an understanding of the articles she located and read and communicating clearly the details necessary to understand her topic.”

## **What Counts as Evidence in the Social Sciences?**

### **Quantitative data from primary and secondary research.**

Social scientists are often looking for patterns in social behaviors, and one way to present evidence of a pattern of behavior is to quantify it. Social scientists use statistics, charts, graphs, and other numerical forms of data to support arguments about patterns they see in human interaction. For example, even though Nancy Alkema relied on interviews in her research proposal above, she uses the interviews to collect quantitative information: “scores will be added and categories will be compared to find an effect between types of neglect and emotional disturbances.” Statistics from surveys and questionnaires are a common form of evidence in the social sciences. Social scientists are careful to design surveys and questionnaires that are unbiased and that accurately represent the population the researcher is trying to sample. Social scientists are also careful to present statistics accurately and explain statistical evidence clearly to readers. A social scientist who uses poorly designed surveys or who misrepresents statistical results loses credibility as a writer.

### **Descriptions of human interaction that the researcher has observed or participated in.**

Social scientists need to be skilled at listening, watching, and reflecting. In genres of social science writing that rely on ethnographic evidence, clear and detailed description is critical as a form of evidence. Social scientists often

present evidence of patterns in human interactions using specific examples from observation. Social scientists are especially interested in events that occur repeatedly in a community, like rituals and ceremonies.

### **Information from interviews and discussions.**

The strategies for conducting effective interviews that we discussed in Part II of this handbook will be helpful to you in your social science courses. Information from formal and informal discussions with members of the group or culture being studied are critical kinds of evidence for social scientists. Statistics are important, and so are the observations of the researcher, but in interviews and discussions research subjects can speak for themselves and give “first-hand” evidence. In her interviews of juvenile delinquents, Nancy Alkema uses a highly structured and tested interview tool, the Carers’ Emotionally Abusive Behavior Questionnaire.

### **Close reading and analysis of cultural texts, artwork, rituals, etc.**

In social science classes, you might find yourself analyzing government documents, works of literature, advertisements, fashion, music, etc. Anything that reveals something important about a culture and the way humans interact can be useful evidence in the social sciences.

### **Research from other social scientists.**

There are few genres of social science writing that don’t demand at least some conversation with secondary sources. In the social sciences, knowledge is “socially constructed.” Researchers are expected to be familiar with significant studies on the subject they’re investigating, and to cite those studies when they report the results of their own research. Your social science teachers will want to know how the research you do connects to and builds on previous research. They will also want you to prove to your readers that you’re knowledgeable about your subject and you’ve carefully researched your topic. For example, in her research proposal, Nancy Alkema cites five different researchers, focusing on studies that are similar to the one she is proposing to conduct.

## **Social Science Reference Books, Web Sites, and Databases**

The following is a list of some reference books, Web sites, and databases for the social sciences. For more resources on researching in various social science disciplines, visit the library's research guides at <http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/>.

### **Social Science Dictionaries**

*A New Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, edited by G. Mitchell

*Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*, W. P. Vogt

*Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, edited by C. Calhoun

*International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, D. Sills and R.K. Merton

### **Social Science Encyclopedias**

*International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, edited by N. Smelser and P. Baltes

*International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, edited by D.L. Sills

*The Social Sciences Encyclopedia*, edited by A. Kuper and J. Kuper

### **Social Science Web Sites**

*General Advice for Writing in the Social Sciences*, Dartmouth Writing Program:  
[http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/soc\\_sciences/write.shtml](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/soc_sciences/write.shtml)

*Writing in the Social Sciences*, Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

### **Social Science Periodical Databases**

Anthropological Index Online

EconLit

ERIC

PsycINFO

Social Sciences Citation Index

Social Sciences Full Text

Sociological Abstracts

# Writing and Researching in the Arts and Humanities

## An Overview of Writing and Researching in the Arts and Humanities at Sacramento State

Departments in the College of Arts and Letters at Sacramento State include:

Art

Communication Studies

Design

English

Foreign Languages

History

Humanities and Religious Studies

Music

Philosophy

Theatre and Dance



Each of the departments and colleges listed above, and each teacher within these departments and colleges, will have different expectations for writing, reading, and researching. But the reason all of these departments are in the College of Arts and Letters is because they share some general approaches to writing and researching:

- Arts and humanities scholars use reading, writing, and researching to explore questions about the meaning and value of human experiences and artistic creations.
- Arts and humanities scholars make arguments and support their arguments by using the application of theories, close readings of texts and other artifacts, and discussions of personal experiences. When arts and humanities scholars make arguments and develop theories, they build on the conversation of academic discourse communities taking place in scholarly journals and books.
- Arts and humanities scholars publish their arguments in a variety of written genres like reviews, critical analysis papers, interviews, creative writing, and scholarly books.
- Because arts and humanities scholars focus on exploring ideas and arguments rather than conducting systematic experiments, arts and humanities genres tend to be less prescriptive than scientific genres in terms of language and form. Because the theories and arguments

expressed by arts and humanities scholars are often personal and “subjective,” a personal voice and engaging style is often valued in arts and humanities writing.

Genres of writing you might encounter in your arts and humanities classes at Sacramento State include:

Book reviews

Performance reviews

Critical analysis papers

Research papers

Personal narratives

Biographies

Fiction and poetry

Annotated bibliographies

and many more...

## **Example Writing Assignments from Sacramento State Arts and Humanities Classes**

One way to get a sense of writing in the arts and humanities at Sacramento State is to analyze some actual writing assignments from Sacramento State classes. As you look at the following assignments, think about what each assignment can tell you about the purposes, audiences, formats, styles, and research methods of writing in the arts and humanities.

### **Music performance essay from Professor Laura Basini, Music Department:**

#### **American Society and Its Music**

##### **Paper on Issues in Live Music Performance**

Write an essay discussing an issue in live performance, using ideas and supporting examples from a concert you attend this semester. The concert report is due in class on or before Monday April 10th.

The concert must have been held at Sacramento State University; you should supply the program along with your completed paper. On your way out of the hall, have one of the ushers stamp your program with proof of your concert attendance.

Focus your paper around one of the following prompts. Note that this paper should not merely be a description of the concert, but rather a discussion of your chosen issue, for which your concert experience will provide first-hand examples. You may also draw examples from other experiences or writings. The highest-grade papers will have a thesis and a compelling argument. Give your paper a title.



### **Prompt #1: Differences between live performances and recorded performances**

Why do you think that listening to live music remains a significant culture in our society? In what ways did your chosen concert explicate the reasons for which live performance has not died in the wake of recording and playback technologies?

In your answer, consider the repertoires of music performed, and the extent to which they are available easily in recorded form, as well as the purpose of the concert. For whom do you think this concert was primarily arranged - audience, performers, or both?

How did the audience respond to the pieces performed? Do you think these pieces were familiar or foreign to the audience? What was unique about the live concert that could not be experienced in a recorded form? Do you think we can say that pieces performed live and in recorded form are really the "same" works?

### **Prompt #2: Concerts as socio-political events**

In what ways do live concerts reflect and / or reinforce social dynamics of class and education? In the twenty-first century, are we living in an era of musical democracy, or of socio-musical stratification?

Did the musical styles appeal or speak to specific social groups? For works with text, outline the themes and issues presented by the musical works performed. In what ways did these themes seem relevant to the audience present, and in what ways far from their concerns? How did the audience respond to both musical style and content, and was their response what you expected?

In what ways did the organization and audience behavior during the concert seem defined by pre-existing social conventions? Do you think that these conventions help to exclude a broader audience for the type of music you heard? Do you think that it is possible, and desirable, to obtain as broad an audience as possible for the music you heard?

### **Prompt #3: Music genres, expectation, and response**

In what ways do you think audience pre-conception of a musical genre defines its response? To what extent is it ever possible to predict the effect of a live concert?

Outline what you expected from the information you were provided in the title and program. Describe the ways in which the music you heard, and the way it was performed, mirrored your expectations, and the ways in which it did not.

Do you think that the title and concert description was meant to appeal to a certain audience demographic? Were you correct? How did the audience behave throughout the performance? How did this behavior contrast with you might have expected from another genre of music? To what extent do you think that audiences define a musical genre, or vice versa?

# Rhetorical analysis essay from Professor Fiona Glade, English Department:

## Sorting Through the Junk

"The reading of the word, also a function of a search for text comprehension and thus of the objects contained therein, directs us to a reading of the world." Freire, Paulo. *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*. Trans. Donald Macedo et al. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998.

**How much junk mail did you receive last week? Last year? Most of us get so much that we never even open some of it to read!**

Your first formal essay assignment is to select a single piece of unsolicited junk mail, preferably one that is addressed personally to you rather than to "resident." Write a 4 page essay that presents a rhetorical analysis of the envelope's contents, focusing especially on the discourse(s) and ideologies signified by that particular piece of junk mail. It is important here that you examine carefully both the context of the text and the larger social context surrounding this contact zone. For example, consider why a particular organization has specifically targeted you as a likely consumer or supporter of their product or service. Think about the means by which they obtained your name and address, about the profile they may have formed of you to include you in this (probably) massive group mailing, about the methods by which they are appealing to you and others whom they consider to share certain characteristics with you, about the ideologies and assumptions that surround the text they have addressed to you. You should consider the visual as well as the verbal aspects of the text as you prepare your critical analysis.

Since you will be including sources in this essay, it is important that you understand how to cite your sources correctly in order to avoid plagiarism. I will review documentation rules in class, including styles are acceptable for your papers here. You may also wish to review your handbook for some fairly useful information about incorporating quotations smoothly. Of course, a Works Cited page or a Bibliography should be included as the final page of any piece of writing that refers to sources either by quoting or by paraphrasing. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, ask before you submit your essay draft to me.

The first typed draft of this essay is due at the beginning of class on Friday 22 September for a writer's workshop, in which you will read and respond to each other's drafts. After considering your colleagues' feedback, please work on revisions and submit a second typed draft to me in a manila folder with all required documents (see page two of the course syllabus, under "Writings") at the beginning of class on Monday 1 October. Please also include your junk mail text in your folder. I will not accept late submissions. I will respond to your drafts in writing; my goal is to return your work to you within one week of submission. You may then, if you wish, choose to select this essay for substantial further revision and inclusion as one of the essays in your Course Portfolio at the end of the semester.

## Reading journal assignment from Professor Elaine O'Brien, Art Department:

The **format** of a reading journal entry is a dialogue between the author and you.

- Make hard copy of reading that you can write on.
- Read the essay slowly all the way through, underlining important passages as you read.
- Start the journal entry with a paragraph summary of the entire reading that states the main idea (thesis) of the reading.
- Go back through the readings and reread the passages you underlined.
- Select at least three of the most interesting of the sentences you underlined from the entire reading to quote or paraphrase. Then proceed to a dialogue format.
- Quote or paraphrase the passages you selected and reply to each passage with questions and comments. Indicate the page number in parentheses next to the quote or paraphrase.
- **About *half* the journal entry should be what the author says and half your responses.** Connect the ideas to other readings, the textbook, videos and lectures, your other courses, and movies, books, music, literature and so on. Continue the dialogue with the author until you have written around 550 words.

### Example Student Writing from an Arts and Humanities Class at Sacramento State

Ronald Moore was a student in a Humanities and Religious Studies class when he wrote the following researched essay. Ronald's essay was published in the 2009 edition of *Writing the University*, an online undergraduate journal of writing from across the curriculum at Sacramento State at [www.csus.edu/wac/journal](http://www.csus.edu/wac/journal). Ronald's professor, Phillip C. DiMare, said that his students were given the assignment of

exploring the eighteenth century phenomenon of the "First Great Awakening." They were required to discuss how this event led colonial Americans to move from a religious context within which people did not conceive themselves "apart from a larger collectivity" to a revivalistic context within which this collective vision was "penetrated and shattered" by directing the message of Christianity "to the individual." They were also asked to discuss how the "massive stirrings of divine grace among the colonists were signs that America might have a special destiny in God's plan—as the site of the beginning of the millennial kingdom"; and how either Native Americans or Africans/African Americans were excluded, both collectively and individually, from experiencing this "millennial kingdom."

As you read Ronald's essay, think about the ways that it reflects writing and researching in the arts and humanities.

## America's First Great Awakening

Ronald Moore

America's First Great Awakening (1730s-1750s) was a time of reevaluation and transition. It was a time when traditional standards of the sacred and profane in the American religious community were challenged by young leaders who in fact claimed to be the champions of the true faith. The Great Awakening was seen by many to be a miraculous moving of God's providence: a sign that America was truly exceptional. Describing the Great Awakening, Robert L. Bushman contends: "A psychological earthquake had reshaped the human landscape."<sup>1</sup> If it was an earthquake, it not only shook the religious lives of Americans, but also its aftershocks- at times more mighty than the initial shaking- rippled through every colony, challenging the social and political foundations of each. This made the Great Awakening more than a revitalization of religion: it was the first true pan-colonial experience. It was a catalyst for the American individualism that continues to dominate American political, religious, and social life in the twenty-first century.

By the 1730s the American church had faced multiple challenges- from within its ranks as well as without. Economic pressures brought on by the Navigation Acts had dominated the second half of the seventeenth century and required religious colonists to rethink both theological and political ideologies. While Puritans enjoyed the prosperity of the time, they had to either admit that they were falling short of the Christian ideal set forth by John Winthrop and other puritan leaders or redefine what it meant to be a good Christian. They chose redefinition. No longer would prosperity be a sign of worldliness in Puritan dominated New England. From this point on, prosperity became a sign of God's blessing. In order to function within the new economy, traditional walls of religious separation also required redefinition. Members of Christian sects, who had often viewed others as profane become mutual conduits of economic success.

The pluralism, brought on by this prosperity, caused traditional lines to blur that once had banned many people from church membership and had kept some congregations and sects apart. This led to what some historians view as a time of declension within the Church. To battle the declension, groups like the New England Puritans tried to redefine church membership and to a smaller extent redefine what it meant to be Christian in order to preserve membership rolls within their churches. The new Halfway Covenant opened a door to church membership for those who would have previously been considered profane. Peter W. Williams views the Halfway Covenant as the "triumph of family loyalty over religious principle."<sup>2</sup> Such family loyalty was a definite sign that individualism was slowly finding its way into the church. Sydney E. Ahlstrom notes that the Halfway Covenant was not universally accepted in New England, leading some churches to split. Church splits and the willingness to question established congregational authority are indicative of the new individualism that was growing in American Christianity. The American church was maturing beyond the need of communal

<sup>1</sup> Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1967) 187.

<sup>2</sup> Peter W. Williams, *America's Religions* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 118.

acceptance. Though rejected by the leaders of the Great Awakening, the Halfway Covenant contributed to the church dynamics that led to the growth of individualism in American religion.

A new movement within the Christian Church was on the horizon. Young church leaders were at the forefront of the push for an experience based relationship with God. Men like Gilbert Tennent whose sermon "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" challenged the very salvation of older church leaders, who argued against an experienced-based conversion. Jonathon Edwards also rose to the fore, a one who Sydney E. Ahlstrom declares was an "apologist for strict Reformed doctrine and "New Light" experientialism in a world that was making enlightened reasonableness the criterion for faith"<sup>3</sup> attempted to turn the church back to what they viewed to be a scriptural based salvation. Though both men were Calvinists, their Calvinism took on a distinct American tone: Tennent and Edwards believed that an external experience was central to salvation. For Tennent and Edwards, communal based salvation and the morphology of conversion fell short of God's plan for the individual believer.

Tennent and Edwards began to preach emotional sermons based upon Luther's idea of justification by grace through faith alone. But now the believer had a part in their own conversion. Between 1734 and 1735, Edwards began to see a great number of "surprising conversions" in his Northampton, Massachusetts Church. These conversions, mixed with Edward's millennial theology led him to believe that God was moving in a special way in America. He hoped for a return to the commitment level of the 1630's infused with the emotionality and pietism common to the Moravian Churches.<sup>4</sup>

Similar events to those in Northampton began to take place throughout the colonies as the news of God's special providence spread; the Great Awakening had begun. Williams contends the Great Awakening was a "movement toward a religion of the heart"<sup>5</sup> initiated by small, local revivals. In this sense, it was a religion of the individual. The movement transcended denominational barriers and included both men and women from every colony and social class. Because of this broad appeal, Williams contends that "attempts to impose a simple economic or political interpretation are ill-advised." Though Williams sees a correlation between the Great Awakening and economic and political issues, he does not see a "causal effect."<sup>6</sup> Even though the preaching of Jonathon Edwards is not responsible for the Great Awakening, the movement is generally traced to Northampton, Massachusetts. Edwards' idea of a millennial-based American exceptionalism spread as the individualism and emotionalism of the Great Awakening moved beyond the walls of local churches into the social and political dynamics of a budding new nation.

One man who helped the Great Awakening spread throughout the colonies was

<sup>3</sup>. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979)312.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Philip C. DiMare, *History 170* (lecture, California State University, Sacramento, Fall 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Williams, 142.

<sup>6</sup>. Ibid.

George Whitefield. Whitefield, an Anglican preacher from England became known as the grand itinerant for his creation of a pan-colonial preaching circuit. A captivating speaker, Whitefield drew crowds by the thousands, crowds too large to be contained in any church building. This necessitated his having open air meetings which in turn took the gospel beyond the four walls of a church building. Whitefield's emotional preaching produced emotional results. Speaking of Whitefield, one German listener declared that she had never been so edified even though she could not understand a word of English.<sup>7</sup> Whitefield's open air meetings carried a sense of unity and equality. Rather than being segregated in indoor church services, men, women, and children all listened together, often vying for space. The freedom that people experienced through their individual emotional conversions gave them a boldness to publicly share their faith. It also allowed them to experience God in a way that was not dependent upon the whole congregation. These two freedoms would later be translated into the political realm as colonists spoke freely of their political complaints and began to believe that they no longer needed a king to rule them. In this sense, though the Great Awakening may not have had a causal tie to the American Revolution, there is an unmistakable correlation between the two.

African Americans also mixed with whites in many of Whitefield's services. This gave a sense to some that salvation was open to all mankind. This sense was not shared by all believers. While the Great Awakening, for the first time made faith real to many believers, for most whites, this new faith did not readily open itself up to African Americans. The salvation of blacks became an area of dispute in many white churches. Some contended that blacks could not be saved. Others argued that they should not be saved. Some white Christians were troubled with the thought that if blacks were saved, that their salvation might mean they were equal to whites before God. To most whites in the colonies, both North and South, blacks were little more than a source of labor. While most good Congregationalists could accept the Presbyterians and Anglicans as Christians because of the symbiotic economic relationship that had changed the face of the colonies, and many good Protestants could tolerate the Catholic and Jew for the same reason, few were willing to accept blacks on an equal basis. Blacks were not traders or merchants, professionals or growers. With few exceptions, blacks had no economic stake in the colonies and little personal economic power. The only thing most blacks possessed was their capacity for labor. This became their means of acceptance into the American Christian Church. Unlike Native Americans who in the eyes of most colonists were best dealt with when pushed aside or exterminated, the labor of blacks was vital to the prowess of the American Colonial economic juggernaut. Because of this, there was a sense that blacks could be saved for life in the next kingdom – but could not be free here. According to the actions of most American colonists, blacks were not intended to participate in the special millennial move that God was bringing to North America. Conversion did not bring freedom to enslaved blacks. In the few colonies that allowed citizenship to free blacks it was almost always void of many of the benefits enjoyed by white males. Either way, Conversion did not change the political standing of African Americans.

<sup>7</sup>Ahlstrom, 283.

While white Americans struggled with the question of black conversion and their acceptance into the family of God, blacks ignored the white ignorance and were converted by the thousands. Reminded of their African traditions, slave and free were drawn to the emotional conversion experiences afforded them by the Great Awakening. They transformed the Bible from a book of spiritual and moral teachings designed to prepare a soul for the Millennial Reign of Christ and later for an eternity in heaven into a book of deliverance from human bondage applicable to this present life. Stories like the Hebrew's exodus out of Egypt became symbolic of the black quest for freedom from slavery. Blacks sang spiritual songs that not only preached a gospel message but often instilled that same hope of deliverance. While whites may not have had a place for blacks in their millennial-based American exceptionalism of the late eighteenth century, blacks through agency created their own place before God.

The Great Awakening was a time of religious excitement. It was a time when religious Americans believed that God, through his divine providence, was doing something special in America. The religious fervor brought hope that the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ would soon be ushered in. John Winthrop's "City Upon a Hill" would pale in comparison to this new work of God's providence. The values of Americans were no longer simply American values, based upon the New England Way or an ambiguous Christian work ethic, but were God ordained and personally given to his chosen few who lived in North America: The Chosen Congregationalist and Anglican: the chosen Presbyterian, Baptist, Quaker and Lutheran: the chosen Protestant. All could be a part of this divine move of God - as long as they were white.

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## Researching in the Arts and Humanities

### The Nature of Research in the Arts and Humanities

In most of your arts and humanities classes, the types of research and inquiry you do will be very different from research and inquiry in the natural and social sciences. Rather than conducting experiments or systematic observations of natural phenomenon or human interactions, in arts and humanities classes your research is more likely to consist of closely analyzing books, works of art, or performances. Rather than looking for patterns in data and reporting these patterns in charts and graphs, in arts and humanities classes it's more likely your teachers will ask you to look for patterns of ideas in essays or books or novels or plays. Rarely in your

arts and humanities research writing will you be asked you to take on the “neutral” and “objective” persona of much scientific research. Inquiry in the arts and humanities is usually more “subjective” and personal than inquiry in the sciences, although you will often be asked to engage with previous scholarship on your subject so you can speak as an informed member of the discourse community of experts on your topic. Here are some general features of research in the arts and humanities that you should be aware of:

- **Inquiry in the arts and humanities usually involves asking open-ended but focused questions about scholarly texts, works of art, and performances.**

Ronald Moore, in his paper “America’s First Great Awakening” above, was asked to “explore” the Great Awakening. There are no right or wrong perspectives—the arguments Ronald makes are open to interpretation rather than trying to get at some kind of scientific truth. Even though the questions Ronald was asked to explore are open-ended, they are also focused, and require focused arguments and evidence.

- **Inquiry in the arts and humanities involves a close and careful analysis of scholarly texts, works of art, and performances and consideration of social and historical forces that help shape texts.**

In order to explore the Great Awakening, Ronald cites historians, sermons from the time period, and class lectures. In well developed paragraphs, he analyzes these texts and considers social and historical causes and effects of the Great Awakening. It’s common for scholars in the arts and humanities to discuss the ways that historical and social forces shape texts and works of art, and also to talk about what texts and works of art tell us about history and society.

- **Inquiry in the arts and humanities involves exploring what other scholars have said about the scholarly text, work of art, or subject you’re investigating and integrating the ideas of other scholars.**

Ronald focuses on his own analysis of history, but he also considers the work of other historians. Sometimes he quotes historians directly to capture their language and tone, and other times he paraphrases what he’s read and researched. These scholarly sources help support Ronald’s analysis and also help him establish credibility with his readers.

## **What Counts as Evidence in the Arts and Humanities?**

### **Specific examples from scholarly texts, works of art, and performances.**

In his essay above on the Great Awakening, Ronald Moore includes specific examples of religious figures, sermons, government acts, churches, and quotes from scholarly sources. Unlike the evidence commonly used in the natural and social sciences, evidence in the arts and humanities focuses more on texts and authors than quantitative data or the results of interviews or surveys.



## **Information and examples from the wider cultural context of the scholarly text, work of art, or performance.**

The explicit purpose of the assignment Ronald was given was to place the Great Awakening in cultural context, and it's common for arts and humanities assignments to require the writer to both closely analyze a text or work of art or performance and also consider the wider cultural context of the text. In his essay Ronald explores the wider social contexts of religion and race, and the connections between the two.

## **Well developed and coherent personal arguments, ideas, and experiences.**

Often writing assignments in arts and humanities classes will ask you to focus on your own opinions, arguments, and experiences. Unlike natural scientists, who try to be "objective" when they conduct experiments, and social scientists, who try to collect enough data to make generalizations about human behavior, the disciplines of the arts and humanities tend to value personal arguments and experiences. This doesn't mean that you can argue anything you want about any text or work of art and expect your readers to be persuaded by your arguments. Personal arguments need to be coherent, well-developed, and supported with evidence. Although Ronald Moore's essay doesn't focus on personal experience, the focus of the essay is on Ronald's perspective of historical events, and he uses language that is far from "neutral" or "objective." For example, the descriptive and strong assertion about the Great Awakening in the introduction: "If it was an earthquake, it not only shook the religious lives of Americans, but also its aftershocks- at times more mighty than the initial shaking- rippled through every colony, challenging the social and political foundations of each."

## **Arguments and theories from other arts and humanities scholars.**

In every paragraph of his essay Ronald is in conversation with the theories and words of other religious scholars. When Ronald is getting factual information from a source he puts the information in his own words and then cites the source to acknowledge that the information was not his own knowledge. When Ronald wants to give readers a sense of one of his source's strong arguments or vivid use of language he quotes the source directly. If you look at his Works Cited page you'll see that all of Ronald's sources are from peer reviewed, scholarly presses. Citing the scholars who have talked about the subject you're focusing on shows your readers that you're engaging with the discourse community in your discipline and that you're staking out your own position within this community.

# Arts and Humanities Reference Books, Web Sites, and Databases

The following is a list of some reference books, Web sites, and databases for the arts and humanities. For more resources on researching in various arts and humanities disciplines, visit the library's research guides at <http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/>.

## Arts and Humanities Dictionaries

### Music

Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music, edited by D. Randel

The New Harvard Dictionary of Music, edited by D. Randel

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, edited by S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell

### Art

Grove Dictionary of Art, edited by J. Turner

The Oxford Dictionary of Art, edited by I. Chilvers

McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Art, edited by S. Meyers

### Film

The Film Studies Dictionary, edited by S. Blandford, et al.

The Complete Film Dictionary, by I. Konisberg

Cinema: A Critical Dictionary, edited by R. Roud

Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory, edited by R. Pearson and P. Simpson

### Literature

A Dictionary of Writers and Their Works, by M. Cox

A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, by J.A. Cuddon

Dictionary of Literary Biography, Gale (online)

### Theatre and Dance

International Dictionary of Theatre, edited by J.P. Saint

The Drama Dictionary, by T. Hodgson

### Philosophy and Religious Studies

Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, edited by R. Audi

Philosopher's Dictionary, by R.M. Martin

A Dictionary of Philosophy, edited by T. Mautner

Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy, edited by G. MacGregor

Oxford Dictionary of World Religions, edited by J. Bowker

A Dictionary of Comparative Religion, by S.G. Brandon

## **Arts and Humanities Encyclopedias**

### **Music**

The Encyclopedia of Popular Music, edited by C. Larkin

The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, edited by Bruno Nettl, et al.

### **Art**

Encyclopedia of World Art, by B.S. Myers

Artist's Illustrated Encyclopedia, by P. Metzger

The Praeger Picture Encyclopedia of Art, by F.A. Praeger

### **Film**

The World Encyclopedia of Film, by T. Cawkwell and J. Smith

The Film Encyclopedia, by E. Katz

New York Times Encyclopedia of Film, edited by G. Brown

### **Literature**

The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Literature, edited by J. Parini

Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism, by M. Coyle

The Cambridge Guide to English Literature, edited by I. Ousby

The Oxford Companion to English Literature, edited by M. Drabble

### **Theatre and Dance**

The Cambridge Guide to Theatre, by M. Banham

McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama, by S. Hochman

Oxford Companion to the Theatre, edited by P. Hartnoll and P. Found

Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance, edited by D. Kennedy

The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre, by D. Rubin

### **Philosophy and Religious Studies**

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by N. Zalta

Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by E. Craig

Oxford Companion to Philosophy, edited by T. Honderich

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by J. Hastings

The Encyclopedia of Religion, edited by M. Eliade

Religions of the World, edited by M.E. Marty

## **Arts and Humanities Web Sites**

General Advice for Writing in the Humanities, Dartmouth Writing Program:  
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/humanities/write.shtml>

Resources for Writing in the Arts and Humanities, Brown University Writing Center: [http://www.brown.edu/Student\\_Services/Writing\\_Center/resources\\_writers/arts\\_humanities.html](http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Writing_Center/resources_writers/arts_humanities.html)

## **Arts and Humanities Periodical Databases**

Art Abstracts

Art Full Text

Arts and Humanities Citation Index

Humanities Abstracts

Humanities Full Text

MLA Bibliography

Music Index

Philosopher's Index

# Writing and Researching in Business and Professional Communications

I strongly believed that once I graduated, I was not going to need many writing skills because I was going into engineering. I was wrong. I am writing daily. If I knew this back then, I would have taken additional writing courses.

—Staff Engineer



Every order placed, every query I have to follow up, and every problem I handle has some form of written communication attached to it.

—Purchaser for a wholesale manufacturing firm

Writing is an important method of communicating in order to accomplish tasks and move activities forward to completion. I think good writing skills do affect decision-making when hiring of qualified candidates

—Administrator, Medical Research, UC Davis

While I was still a student at CSUS, I suppose I had an idea of the type of writing I would do as a law enforcement officer. However, I did not fully appreciate or understand the necessity for clear and precise word-choice and sentence structure in crime reports.

—Sergeant, Sacramento Sheriff's Dept

## An Overview of Writing and Researching in Business and Professional Communications at Sacramento State

You might practice business and professional (or “technical”) writing in a variety of departments at Sacramento State. You might write memos and feasibility reports for a business communications class in the College of Business, a brochure or newsletter in a technical writing class in the English Department, or a progress report in a Civil Engineering class. Even though you might encounter professional writing in a variety of departments, most business and professional writing has some common features:

- Businesspersons and professional writers use writing and researching to communicate ideas and information to business partners and clients.
- Businesspersons and professional writers use quantitative and qualitative research to systematically gather information.
- Businesspersons and professional writers report the results of their research in written genres like feasibility reports, memos, business plans, executive summaries, etc.

- Because businesspersons and professional writers report information to a variety of business partners and clients in the workplace, genres like feasibility reports or the business plans tend to follow a specific, highly organized form and format.
- Because businesspersons and professional writers report information to busy partners and clients, they value concise language, clear organization, and visual aids like graphs and charts.

Genres of business and professional writing you might encounter in your classes at Sacramento State include:

Memos

Business plans

Progress reports

Feasibility reports

PowerPoint presentations

Brochures

Press Releases

and many more...

## Real World Writing: What Employers Expect

### by Cynthia Linville, English Department

Just as many high school seniors are underprepared for college writing, many college graduates are underprepared for on-the-job writing. A recruitment director for a Silicon Valley corporation emphasizes this point. "Considering how highly educated our people are, many can't write clearly in their day-to-day work" (Sean Phillips qtd. in Dillon). One Sacramento State graduate reports, "I strongly believed that once I graduated I was not going to need many writing skills because I was going into Engineering. I was wrong. I am writing daily. If I knew this back then, I would have taken additional writing courses" (CSUS WAC Alumni Writing Survey).

College students often don't realize how important on-the-job writing is. When the National Commission on Writing recently surveyed large U.S. corporations employing a total of 3.7 million people, the commission found that "writing is a ticket to professional opportunity," a skill that is key to obtaining a salaried job (National 3, 6). Over half of these corporations consider writing when hiring professional employees (National 3). "Applicants who provide poorly written letters wouldn't get an interview," one corporate spokesperson states (National 10). Another says, "Generally, the staffing office would not pass along a badly written resume to the hiring divisions" (National 10).

Writing is not only key for obtaining a job, but also key for advancing in a career. Half of the corporations surveyed consider writing a "threshold skill" for

promotion (National 3). One employer states, "you can't move up without writing skills" (National 3). In a different study, Sacramento State graduates echo this point. "Due to the importance of writing in the law enforcement community, many promotional application processes include the submission of a writing sample," one police officer reports (CSUS WAC Alumni Survey). An engineer points out, "if [an employee] cannot write and convey information, advancement within the company will be very, very slow."

College students may also be surprised to find out how much on-the-job writing is required. The police officer in the CSUS WAC alumni survey study continues, "I was amazed at the large quantity of writing that is required for patrol officers and detectives. It is my experience that most, if not all, new officers are similarly surprised at the amount of report-writing in the law enforcement arena." The National Commission on Writing's data reinforces this point. Over half of the companies surveyed "frequently" require technical and formal reports, letters, and memos. "Communication through email . . . is almost universal," the study claims (National 4). One employer remarks, "Because of email, more employees have to write more often. Also, a lot more has to be documented" (National 4).

New employees are often surprised to find that the writing standards for business email are much higher than the standards for personal email. Text-messaging shorthand, such as "u" for "you," is unacceptable. A Sacramento State graduate states, "Anything I email to a co-worker has the potential to be seen by upper management, and I have to take that into consideration. . . . If an order I am working on is from a high-level customer, I assume that anything I email, external or internal, is likely to be passed on to my boss or above" (CSUS WAC Alumni Survey). Email writing can be so poor as to prevent communication of necessary information, as this email message sent in a high-tech Palo Alto firm clearly shows:

I updated the Status report for the four discrepancies Lennie forwarded us via e-mail (they in Barry file) . . . to make sure my logic was correct  
It seems we provide Murray with incorrect information . . . However  
after verifying control on JBL (JBL has the indicator as B ??? – I wanted  
to make sure with the recent changes – I process today – before Murray  
make the changes again on the mainframe to 'C'. (Dillon)

One employer sums it up: "[I]n email clarity is critical" (Sean Phillips qtd. in Dillon). In fact, when asked to identify which aspect of on-the-job writing is most valued, clear communication appears at the top of the list. Ninety-seven percent of corporations surveyed by the National Commission on Writing listed clarity, along with accuracy, as the most valued characteristic (National 28). Unclear communication can lead to lawsuits, lower productivity, costly mistakes, loss of clients, and low morale (Ferraro; Schnitt). A Sacramento area writing consultant explains, "Bad, weak writing is costing [companies] billions of dollars each year, mostly through poorly written proposals that end up causing firms to lose customers. . . . The worst is ambiguous writing that can lead to being sued" (Linda Vanderwold qtd. in Ferraro). One executive explains, "It's not that companies want to hire Tolstoy. But they need people who can write clearly, and many employees and applicants fall short of that standard" (Susan Trainman qtd. in Dillon).

Along with clarity, conciseness is also highly valued by 92% of corporations surveyed

by the National Commission on Writing (National 28). "It's increasingly important to be able to convey content in a tight, logical, direct manner, particularly in a fast-paced technological environment" one corporate spokesperson notes (National 8). Sacramento State graduates in the alumni survey agree that avoiding wordiness is important at work. "Professional experience outside the classroom . . . taught me that writing clearly and concisely wasn't something that just my professors wanted to see" one administrative assistant notes. A staff analyst agrees. Business writing "is much more concise than what I was taught in school. Letters and memos are more direct and to the point." A police officer adds, "Flowery and eloquent writing may be acceptable in the academic arena, but simple sentences with clear [word choice are] preferred in the world of law enforcement."

Writing clearly and concisely requires specific attention to word choice and sentence structure. The police officer in the alumni study continues, "Subtle change in word-choice and sentence structure can suggest a different sequence of events, thoughts, and actions. Such differing perceptions can create major issues when analyzing the legality of a search [or] arrest. . . ." An engineering alumnus agrees. "I am surprised by the amount of care required to convey a specific idea . . . . It is not the amount of writing as much as the quality required." Studies show that careful attention to grammar is also needed. ). Another engineering alumnus says, "Writing in college is much different because [students] do not have to deal with rewriting or editing documents until they meet the standard. . . . Sometimes it can take many versions of a document [at work] before it is edited and ready for signature."

Clarity, conciseness, and grammar aren't employers' only concerns about business writing, however. On-the-job writing must also demonstrate clear and persuasive logic. The National Commission on Writing found that corporate employers link "clear writing with clear thinking" (National 19). One employer comments, "My view is that good writing is a sign of good thinking. Writing that is persuasive, logical, and orderly is impressive. Writing that's not careful can be a signal of unclear thinking" (National 8). Sacramento State graduates in the WAC survey also emphasize the need for persuasive logic in their on-the-job writing. An engineer states, "Much of the writing required in the engineering field is done to convince others to accept [our] engineering judgments and the validity of [our] conclusions." A purchaser agrees:

Critical thinking, analysis, supporting and deconstructing arguments, organizing ideas, and appealing to an audience are a huge part of my job. . . . I have to be able to use very little information to present my argument to vendors, customers and [salespeople] in order to persuade them to do what I want. . . . I have to be able to reason out why or why not to stock certain products, and to defend my position to the company president.

As the purchaser highlights, awareness of audience and purpose can be key in business writing. She continues, "I have to be able to figure out what a salesperson, a warehouse worker, and even my boss want of me." Different business writing tasks require different styles of writing. The National Commission on Writing study found that "[c]orporate respondents make clear distinctions between the different requirements for writing, depending on purpose and



audience” (12). An administrator in the WAC study explains:

In a work environment, [an employee is] subject to utilizing writing skills for different purposes. For example, [she] may need to provide information so a worker can accomplish a job, . . . to persuade someone [to] a course of action, . . . to communicate the evaluation of someone’s performance, . . . or to advertise to attract candidates to a position .

Another Sacramento State graduate sums it up. “[Employees] need to be flexible in their writing styles. They may have to adjust their style to meet the company’s needs” (CSUS WAC Alumni Survey).

College students may be surprised by the importance of on-the-job writing and may feel overwhelmed by the high standards of writing that employers demand. However, the best time for students to raise their awareness about real world writing is while they are still students. One alumna the CSUS study says, “Students can prepare better for writing on their jobs by getting familiar with the types of documents” their employers will require. Another suggests, “Students can better prepare for on-the-job writing by doing [an] internship while in school.” And lastly, an alumnus encourages students simply to “practice” their writing skills.

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### **Example Student Professional Writing from a Class at Sacramento State**

To discuss a concrete example of professional writing, we’ll look at the work of a student engaging in research and writing in ENGL118T, a professional writing class at Sacramento State. Rani Marcos was a junior at California State University, Sacramento when he was asked to complete a group service learning project for ENGL118T: Professional Writing. Even though Rani completed his project in a class, his primary audience was the Sacramento City Manager’s Office. This emphasis on writing for an audience of professionals, and what is valued in professional writing, is emphasized in the teacher’s learning objectives:

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of a range of professional rhetorical situations and the cultural conditions that guide responses;
- Recognize and produce various professional genres (letter, proposal, project plan, progress report, etc.);
- Articulate their knowledge about the role of writing in public policy making and implementation.
- Critically analyze professional writing tools and technologies;
- Be able to explain the relationship(s) between words and images in print and electronic texts;
- Communicate with versatility and awareness of professional document design, style, tone, format, and organization;
- Produce polished documents and presentations.

The major assignment in ENGL118T was to work in groups to produce a document for a community partner. Here's the assignment from the syllabus:

*Service-Learning Writing Project: In groups, draft, write, and revise approximately 5000 words (in print and/or electronically) for a local organization. Depending on the specific needs of the community partners, the writing may be one long document or several shorter documents. At the culmination of this project, you will give a formal presentation to the class and the community partners.*

Rani chose to work on a report for the City of Sacramento's SIP program, a sobriety program for the homeless. This report was submitted to the City Manager's office to help them make decisions about how best to use public funds to help the homeless. Audience plays a crucial role in professional writing, and Rani said the audience shaped the style of the report and the use of visuals:

*Our primary audience...is the legislators in the city of Sacramento and other officials who can create change. They are busy professionals who have limited time reading reports. Therefore, we made sure our writings are succinct with visuals for shorter yet effective information... Being an English major, it is tempting to use creative and eloquent words. However, this is not necessary for this kind of writing; in fact, it could hinder our purpose. We focused on being short and straight to the point.*

Here is the final draft of Rani and his group's report:



*Photo Credits to www.images.google.com*

# **Addressing the Homeless Serial Inebriate Population In Sacramento County April 25, 2008**

## WHAT IS THE SERIAL INEBRIATE PROGRAM?

### What is the Serial Inebriate Program?

- The Serial Inebriate Program (SIP) is a 90-day court-mandated alternative to the Sacramento County Jail.

### What is the purpose of the SIP?

- The overall goal of the SIP is to curb the recidivism rates for the Sacramento serial inebriate population, reducing the expense of various public safety net services, including police, fire, ambulance, and hospital.

### Who are the serial inebriates?

- Individuals (predominantly homeless) who have been arrested or admitted to the Volunteers of America (VOA) facility while intoxicated 25 times or more in the previous 12 months.

### Where is the SIP? Who directs the program?

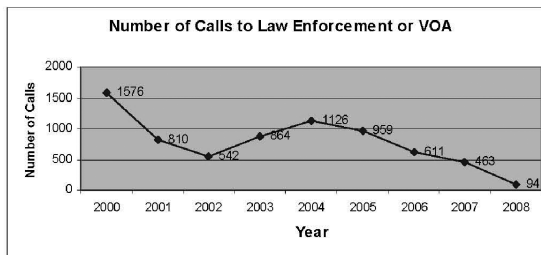
- The SIP is operated by the (VOA) at its facility at 700 North 5th Street in Sacramento.

### When did the SIP begin in Sacramento? Why was it implemented?

- The SIP began in May 2006. It was implemented to relieve Downtown Sacramento of the homeless serial inebriate population.

## SIP REDUCES VISIBLE INEBRIATES AND SAVES MONEY

Graph 1 below illustrates that in the beginning of 2007, the Downtown Sacramento Partnership (DSP) saw a substantial decline in calls to law enforcement compared to prior years, and it continues to maintain lower numbers than figures in the past eight years. The graph only indicates the participation of the SPD and the VOA; other public services are not included.



**Graph 1:**

This has resulted in a significant decline in wagon calls that transport serial inebriates either to law enforcement or the VOA. This chart shows a steep decline in calls after SIP's implementation in 2006. Expenses in prior years for transportation of offenders alone was exorbitant.

*Source: Downtown Sacramento Partnership Wagon Calls (2000-03/2008)*

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Court-Mandated** – Judge sentencing of serial inebriate to jail time or SIP (in lieu of jail).

**Community Partners** – A partnership between the DA, DSP, VOA and SPD to meet the goals of the SIP.

**Penal Code (PC) 647(f)**– Most frequent offense by serial inebriates, being drunk in public.

**Public (Safety Net) Services** – Including, but not limited to: police, fire, ambulance, hospital, jail, and social services.

**Serial Inebriate**– Individual who has been arrested or transported to VOA 25 or more times in one year.

## KEY ROLES IN THE SIP

**City of Sacramento:** Helps fund services for homeless population, including homeless serial inebriates.

**County of Sacramento:** Responsible for the homeless population and services implemented for their care.

**District Attorney (DA):** Also known as a Community Prosecutor, works with the DSP and the VOA in addressing the serial inebriates to offer them the SIP as an alternative to County Jail. The Community Prosecutor handles all the SIP cases, which ensures consistency when going through the court system.

**Downtown Sacramento Partnership (DSP):** Main liaison between Downtown businesses and social/public services to reduce serial inebriate offenses and homelessness.

**Sacramento Police Department (SPD):** Involved in the arrests of serial inebriates, also transports them to the VOA facility.

**Volunteers of America (VOA):** Non-profit organization serving as an alcohol detoxification center that includes the SIP. There are two other programs at this facility: the Comprehensive Alcohol Treatment Center (CATC) and a long-term care facility, Residential Treatment Center (RTC).

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SIP?

An eligible participant is an individual who has a history of penal code violations involving alcohol that results in arrests and/or admission into the CATC 25 times or more within a 12 month period. When arraigned before a judge, a court-mandated discretionary amount of jail time or 90 days in the SIP is offered to the potential SIP participant. There are 3 main conditions required for an inebriated person to be arrested under PC 647(f):

- 1) under the influence of liquor or drugs
- 2) jeopardizing one's own or others' safety
- 3) obstructing a public walkway  
*Source: Section 647(f) of California penal Code*

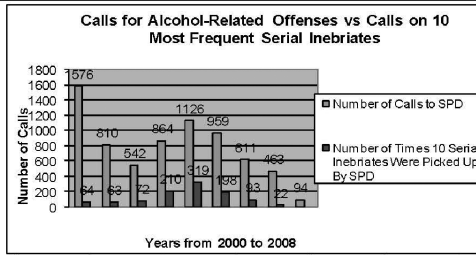
Those not accepted into the SIP: violent offenders, those with Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) issues and who have pending cases involving victim restitution.

There is no limit to how many times a person may be admitted in the SIP.

*Source: County of Sacramento, California, Department of Human Services (2006)*

## SERIAL INEBRIATES AT A GLANCE

**Graph 2:**



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Number of Calls	1576	810	542	864	1126	959	611	463	94
Percent of 10 Serial Inebriates	4%	8%	13%	24%	30%	21%	15%	5%	

The chart above shows DSP’s record of the calls made to the SPD for homeless serial inebriates, starting in 2000. The red bars show the impact of ten serial inebriates. These ten offenders were responsible for the consumption of more than half of services used. Notice that the start of the program in 2006 shows a dramatic reduction in calls.

Source: DSP and DA (2008)

### Actual Serial Inebriates

The Quatre SIP Team conducted interviews of obliging SIP participants in March 2008 (see Appendix A: Real Serial Inebriates). We found that most of these participants had families, homes and jobs at one time; yet, their alcoholism (sometimes coupled with drug abuse) devastated their lives. After years of abuse, they suffer not only from the loss of a happy family life, but from various disabilities caused by drinking and living on the streets. Damage is caused by, but not limited to: being victimized (beaten, robbed, and/or raped), fighting with others, falling and hurting themselves, lack of health care, and a poor diet. Most serial inebriates are homeless and in Sacramento County, 74% of all homeless people have one disability, 54% of all homeless have a drug or alcohol disability, and 28% have a mental disability.

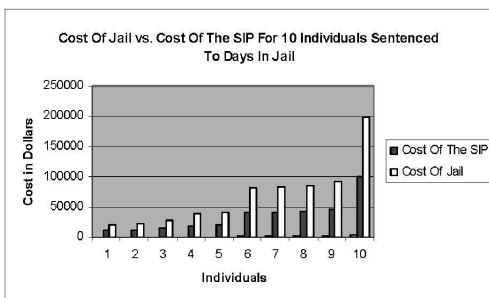
Source: Individual SIP Participants and Sacramento County, Homeless in Sacramento County Report (2007).

### Reasons for Homelessness

Homelessness is often assumed to be a lifestyle choice, but the main reason is the high cost of living. Some individuals cannot afford shelter for themselves. Other reasons are: drugs and alcohol, no family ties or a breakdown of family ties due to substance abuse.

Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness, Explainer (2007)

## JAIL VS. SIP: COST COMPARISON



**Graph 3:**

Person #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number Of Days Sentenced	345	360	473	642	684	1365	1384	1415	1534	3316
Difference Between Jail And The SIP	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%

**Result:** The cost of the SIP is roughly one-third the cost of incarceration over the same number of days.

**NOTE:** The multiplier here was \$28 per day in the SIP, and \$76 per day in County Jail.

*Source: Community Prosecutor and VOA Data (2008)*

## OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES: COST COMPARISON

There are other services that are utilized by the homeless that cost taxpayers' dollars: police, fire, ambulance, emergency rooms and other social services. In an 18 month period, 227 homeless serial inebriates tallied up approximately \$6 million in health care costs. The costs for police, ambulance and fire is still unknown, but will increase this figure. For example one chronic offender was taken to detox 212 times while another tallied up a hospital bill equaling \$187,000 in two years. In Sacramento, one serial inebriate's 24-hour hospital stay cost \$3,770; another's 4 to 8 hours cost \$2,767.94; and another's couple of hours in order to sober up before being transported to jail cost \$1,143.58.

*Source: San Diego County, Turning Lives Around (2003), and Community Prosecutor (2008)*

Most serial inebriates have been comfortable with the "Revolving Door Method" of using police, fire, ambulance, emergency rooms, detox, and jails. Most of these offenders have been picked up by police or arrested more than the required twenty-five times for the SIP. There has been a clear indication that the criminal justice system is not the answer for such conditions, but can be a motivational force for change.

*Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness, Fact Checker (2007)*

## PUBLIC ASPECTS OF THE SIP

### EQUITY

- **Homeless individuals** are afforded the opportunity of receiving help for their addictions and disabilities due to their chronic poor living conditions and substance abuse. They also have the opportunity to meet their health care needs, and work towards autonomy in a housing unit upon completion of the SIP, a major incentive.
- **Result:** Fairness and equal opportunity for individuals.

### FUNDING

- **Taxpayers** pay taxes to the federal and state governments who in return distribute funds to states, cities and counties.
- **City and County of Sacramento** help fund various programs for different social needs, although Sacramento County is responsible for the homeless population.
- **Private Contributions** are given by private individuals and/or organizations to help the SIP cause.
- **Result:** The SIP helps the County fulfill its duty to provide for the homeless population.

## PRIVATE ASPECTS OF THE SIP

### DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO

- Businesses, through the DSP, pay for services that include working towards solutions for the serial inebriate and homeless issues in Sacramento.
- DSP is also a private organization that makes a profit, which makes it very unique to this multi-faceted relationship between private business and social/public services.  
*Source: DSP (2008)*

## OUTCOMES IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY

### **How many people have gone through the SIP?**

- Since its implementation in May 2006, 30 individuals have gone through the SIP.

### **Of those 30, how many of them completed the program?**

- The completion rate is a remarkable 87.5% from May 2006 to February 2008.

### **What is the fiscal impact of the SIP?**

- The \$1.4 million contributed by the County, City and other donated funds cover the SIP along with the other programs at the VOA facility. There are no additional costs relating to the SIP.



## OUTCOMES CONTINUED...

### Is the SIP operated in other areas of Sacramento County?

- No, the only SIP in existence in Sacramento is at the VOA facility.

### What happens after the SIP?

- Proposals and work have been initiated, to expand the program to include housing after completion of the SIP. In March 2008, Sutter Health funded Self Help Housing with \$91,000.00 to cover the costs of two case managers for eight serial inebriates from the SIP.

*Source: (Will do later, promise).*

## UNEXPECTED ISSUES

**Table 1: Unanticipated Issues of the SIP**

Problem:	Result:	Possible Solution:
Unmet Housing Needs for SIP graduates	Serial Inebriates have no place to go after the SIP. Many return to the streets or the SIP for lack of alternatives.	Obtain housing funds for SIP graduates with minimal counseling support to help maintain sobriety and develop life skills.
Lack of Comprehensive Record Keeping	Not all data is available for examination. There may be unknown issues that need attention.	Increase data gathering
SIP participants stay at the VOA after graduation.	There is no real incentive or motivation for individuals to excel. SIP housing may be more expensive than basic housing program.	Set up a direct link between successful completion of the SIP program and follow-up housing.

## CONCLUSION

The SIP makes it possible for individuals to acknowledge and treat their alcohol addiction, as well as their disabilities, in a place that fosters their needs and addresses their addiction, such as the VOA facility. The SIP saves money because these individuals are in one facility that costs roughly one-third the price of jail. The serial inebriates are no longer going through the criminal justice system or using various public safety nets (such as emergency medical services) in as high a percentage, which saves public funds.

Due to the SIP, businesses in Downtown can be relieved of the penal code violations going on in front of their businesses, and Downtown can grow and prosper. The SIP will be beneficial for Sacramento County as a whole, as well as the homeless serial inebriates.

## KEY ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

- Fact: The SIP creates equity and affords opportunity to individuals who would not otherwise receive treatment or a chance to make changes in their lives. This equity is created at the benefit of public funds.

*Should government expand the funding of the SIP? This in order to insure a better means of increasing the program for all qualified individuals to avoid the default of the expensive "Revolving Door Methods."*

- Fact: The Downtown Sacramento Partnership (DSP) receives funds from the Downtown businesses associated with the costs of serial inebriates.

*Is it a private or a public issue? Should private industry be responsible for funding what is a public issue? Should it be the government's responsibility? To what extent should private business be involved in social affairs?*

- Fact: The SIP is only a small portion of the bigger fight against homelessness.

*Are the findings relating to the SIP enough to warrant attention and intervention? Should the SIP be expanded? Should a housing program for the SIP graduates be implemented?*

- Fact: More data and information would be helpful for assessing the program.

*Because of a deficiency of data, how sure can the community partners be that the results will be an accurate judgment of the program?*

- Fact: Housing is needed for reformed serial inebriates, with supportive counseling to keep them on the right track.

*Will supportive housing keep reformed serial inebriates from returning to homelessness and substance abuse?*

## REFERENCES

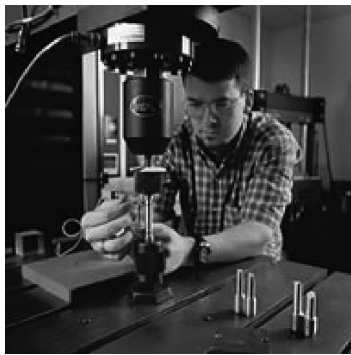
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- Leavenworth, Stuart. Rousting the homeless embarrasses our community. 11 Nov. 2007. 28 Mar 2008. <http://www.sacbee.com/110/v-print/story/482019.html>.
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- Explainer. Sept. 2007.
- Fact Checker. Mar. 2007.
- “Prevention: Diversion From Criminal Justice. 2008.
- Serial Inebriates. Personal interviews by Quatre SIP Team. 02-03 Apr. 2008.
- Spillane, Rita. Group meeting. 01 Apr. 2008.
- “Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.” 2006. 27 Mar. 2008. <http://www.communitycouncil.org/level-3/homeless-plan.html>.
- 
- Authorized by California State University, Sacramento, Professional Writing Students:
- Quatre SIP:
- Rani Marcos
  - Loselea Naufahu
  - Lorraine Powell
  - Peter Schwarck

Rani and his group's report has many features that are common in technical and professional writing:

- Written for the purpose of informing and/or persuading the audience to take a specific action or position.
- Short sentences and paragraphs and concise phrasing
- Use of visuals like graphs and images
- Formatted for ease of reading using bold font, headings, bullets, numbered lists, etc.
- Inclusion of persuasive facts and figures

## Researching in Business and Professional Writing

### The Nature of Research in Business and Professional Writing



Businesspersons and professional writers conduct research to test products, to analyze companies, to support recommendations regarding financial decisions, to persuade the public of the value of their services, etc. Many genres of business and professional writing require collecting numerical data and presenting this data in charts and graphs. But business research could also include analyzing companies, interviewing customers or other business professionals, or citing government reports. Because there is such a variety of genres of business and professional writing that include research—

technical reports, business plans, marketing forecasts, project proposals, newspaper reports—there are a variety of kinds of research. But there are some general features of doing research in business and professional writing that are exemplified in Rani Marcos' SIP report above:

#### **Research in business and professional writing often involves collecting and analyzing numerical data**

In their report on serial inebriates above, Rani's group collected data on calls to law enforcement and created a graph that shows a pattern over time, from 2000 to 2008. They also created crime and cost comparison graphs that required them to work with both whole numbers and percentages.

#### **Research in business and professional writing often involves extensive reading and analysis of secondary sources from business and government documents.**

In order to become experts on their topic and present a persuasive argument, Rani's group researched multiple government Web sites and reports. A glance at their reference page shows just how much research they needed to do in order to provide enough support for their arguments.

Research in business and professional writing often involves searching for facts.

The goal of research in business and professional writing tends to be less about theories or opinions and more about facts. Rani's group focuses on factual information that can help them evaluate the SIP program and make comparisons in an "objective" way. Of course, what is "fact" and what is "opinion" can depend on individual interpretation, and humans can never be completely "objective."

## Business Reference Books, Web Sites, and Databases

The following is a list of some reference books, Web sites, and databases useful for writing and researching in business classes. For more resources on researching in business, visit the Sacramento State Library's research guides at <http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/>.

### Business and Professional Writing Guides

*Effective Business Writing*, Maryanne Piotrowski

*Prentice Hall Reference Guide for Professional Writing*, Muriel Harris

*The Business Writer's Handbook*, Gerald Alred et al.

*The Elements of Business Writing*, Gary Blake and Robert Bly

*Writing and Speaking at Work*, Edward Bailey

*Writing for Business*. the Harvard Business School

### Business and Professional Writing Web Sites

*Business Writing*, Colorado State University: [http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/index.cfm?guides\\_active=business&category1=37](http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/index.cfm?guides_active=business&category1=37)

*Workplace Writers*, Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/681/01/>

*Writing for the Workplace*, Marquette University: <http://www.marquette.edu/wac/departmental/writingonthejob.shtml>

### Business and Professional Writing Periodical Databases

ABI/INFORM

Business Source Premier

EconLit

Factiva

LexisNexis

# Documentation Styles

In this section of the handbook you'll find a guide to citing sources in different documentation styles: APA, MLA, and CSE. APA is an acronym for the American Psychological Association, and it's the most common citation style in the social sciences. MLA (the style of the Modern Language Association) is frequently used in the arts and humanities, and CSE (Council of Science Editors) is commonly used to document sources in the natural sciences.

## Citing Sources in the Natural Sciences: CSE Style

In Part II of this handbook, we mentioned that different disciplines have different conventions for citing sources. In the discourse communities of the natural sciences, readers will expect you to give credit to the work of scientists whom you refer to in your writing. After all, scientists build on each other's work to create new knowledge, so it's important to clearly acknowledge information and ideas you're referring to in your writing for science classes. There are different citation systems for different fields of science, but the most common citation style is CSE (Council of Science Editors). Just by the name alone you can see how discourse communities decide on the conventions of a discipline. The Council of Science Editors has over 1,200 members, and together they help shape the conventions for writing in the sciences. These "rules" for citing sources may seem random to you at first, but there's a reason that in CSE style you include the author or authors' last names and the year whenever you cite an outside source in your paper. In science the date of the research you cite is usually very important—the most current research is often the most credible and valuable research. CSE Style also has guidelines for formatting your manuscript: setting margins, labeling and placing visuals like tables and figures, using headings, etc.

CSE has two ways of citing sources: the name-year system and the citation-sequence system. In the name-year system, the author of the source is named in the text and in the reference page, which is in alphabetical order. In the citation-sequence system, each source cited is given a number. Anytime the source is referred to again, the same number is used as a citation. If you're writing a paper for a science class and you're not sure if your teacher wants you to use the name-year or citation-sequence system, just ask your teacher. Some science teachers—especially in General Education science classes—don't require students to use CSE style. It's not uncommon for science teachers to use APA in lower-division courses, since APA is similar to CSE and students may be more familiar with APA. It's important to ask your science teachers which citation style they want you to use.

### In-text Citations in CSE Style

When scientists use the research of other scientists in their writing, they're very careful to cite the authors (or authors) and date of the research they cite. It's important that you give credit to your sources whenever you refer to them in your paper, whether you're citing someone else's data or referring to their ideas or arguments.

One way that scientists integrate information and ideas from other researchers is by quoting them directly. In CSE name-year system, whenever you have a quote from another author in your paper, make sure that you give your readers the author's name and the date of the publication of the source you're getting the quote from. The publication date should be in parenthesis at the end of the quote. Here's an example:

National Science Foundation director Barry Munoz argues that "the theory of intelligent design cannot be taught in a science course if it cannot withstand the scrutiny of the scientific method" (2005).

The date in parenthesis is always placed outside the quotation mark, and the period is placed after the parentheses. If there are more than two authors, use et al. (Munoz et al. argue...). Note that since you introduced the author ("National Science Foundation director Barry Munoz argues...") you don't need to include the author's last name in the parentheses. It's usually a good idea to introduce an author when you're quoting, and often science writers will give the credentials of the people they're citing. This is especially important because in the discourse community of the sciences, the more credible and reliable science researchers and theorists are associated with a trusted academic, professional, or government institution.

If you were using the CSE citation-sequence style, you would use a number in superscript format to cite the source, and then give the full citation in the reference page. Here's how the previous passage would look in the citation-sequence system:

National Science Foundation director Barry Munoz argues that "the theory of intelligent design cannot be taught in a science course if it cannot withstand the scrutiny of the scientific method."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to direct quotes from secondary sources, often science writers will integrate facts, data, and statistics. Sometimes you'll quote this data directly, but more often you'll paraphrase the information. For example, let's say you want to cite the following information from an article by Anita Burnell:

The success rates for cloning are low: the sheep Dolly was the single success of 276 tries. In reproductive cloning in general, over 90% of attempts fail to produce a viable offspring. Besides the low success rate, cloning can also result in animals with poor health. For example, one third of cloned calves die have died young.

Although you could put this entire passage in quotes and cite it word-for-word in your paper, since the information is just a series of statistics, it would be more effective to simply summarize the information in your own words and cite the source. Here's an example in the author-date system:

Geneticist Anita Burnell presents evidence for the lack of success of cloning at this early stage in the research. Burnell cites the example of Dolly the sheep, who was the single successful clone of 276 tries. This statistic isn't surprising, considering that 90% of reproductive clones don't

results in a viable offspring. Burnell also points out that there are health concerns associated with cloning. One third of all cloned calves, Burnell says, have died young (2004).

## Preparing a CSE Style Reference Page

The CSE in-text citations in the author-date system let your reader know exactly where in your paper you're referring to information and ideas from an outside source, and who the authors of the sources are and when they were published. But if other scientists want to check on the reliability of your sources and if they want to find some of those sources to use in their own research, the in-text citation doesn't give them enough information. This is why it's important to include a reference page that gives detailed publication information for every work you cite in the text of your paper. The following section of this chapter provides the basic guidelines for listing sources in your reference page in CSE author-date system and citation-sequence system, but if you need to cite a kind of source that is not covered below, go to the reference area of the library and consult the CSE Style Manual or visit the following Web sites:

### CSE Resource Web sites

University of North Carolina Library:  
<http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/cse/>

University Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center:  
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocCBE.html>

## A book with one author

For the author-date system, cite the author's last name, first initial, year of publication, title, place of publication, publisher, and number of pages. If the book does not have an author, begin with the title, but do not use articles when you alphabetize (A, The, or An). For the publisher, use the abbreviation "Univ" for "University" and "Pr" for "Press." For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the publisher.

### Author-date system:

Rubin A. 2006. *Disturbing the solar system: impacts, close encounters, and coming attractions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ Pr. 383 p.

### Citation-sequence system:

1. Rubin A. *Disturbing the solar system: impacts, close encounters, and coming attractions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ Pr; 2006. 383 p.

## A book with more than one author

List all the authors in the order they're listed in the book, separated by commas. For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the publisher.

Maxwell D, Hiram S, Osaki K. 2003. *Bioengineering*. New York: Wiley. 272 p.



## **An edited book**

List the editor or editors, followed by "editor" or "editors." For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the place of publisher.

Walker C, editor. 1996. *Astronomy before the telescope*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 352 p.

## **A selection from an edited book or anthology**

Cite the author, date of publication, title of the selection, editor and title of the anthology, place of publication, publisher, and page range. For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the publisher.

Norris D. Transgene. 1998. In: Miglani G, editor. *Dictionary of plant genetics and molecular biology*. New York: Food Products Press. p. 133-134.

## **A government document**

When no author is provided, use the government agency as the author. For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the publisher.

National Research Council. *An overview of the endangered species act*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; 2000. 38 p.

## **An article in a scholarly journal**

For the author-date system, cite the author, year of publication, article title, journal, volume and number of journal, and page range. For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the title of the journal.

### **Author-date system:**

Powell K. 2006. How does the teenage brain work? *Nature* 442(24):865-867.

### **Citation-sequence system:**

Powell K. How does the teenage brain work? *Nature* 2006; 442(24):865-867.

## **A magazine article**

Cite the author, year, article title, magazine, volume, and page range. For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the title of the magazine.

Laredo S. 1998 July. Global warming debate rages on. *Newsweek* 112: 55-57.

## **A newspaper article**

Cite the author, year, article title, newspaper, day, month, and page number. For the citation-sequence system, include the year of publication after the title of the newspaper.

Anderson J. 2003 March 8. Bush's war on science. *The New York Times*. C3.

## **An online article or abstract from a database**

Cite the author, article title, journal, date of publication, date cited, volume and number of journal, and the address of the database.

Ginsburg G, Donahue M, Newby K. Prospects for personalized cardiovascular medicine: the impact of genomics. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 2005 November [cited 2005 December 8]: 46(9). Available from: <http://www.sciencedirect.com>

## **A Web site**

Cite the author, title of the work or Web site, organization hosting the website, year published (if available), date cited, and website address.

National Institutes of Health. Stem cell information. Bethesda, MA: Department of Health and Human Services; © 2005 [cited 2005 November 12]. Available from: <http://stemcells.nih.gov/index.asp2005>.

## **Citing Sources in the Social Sciences: APA Style**

Some sub-disciplines of the social sciences will have their own style for citing sources, but most social science fields use APA (American Psychological Association) style. APA style is outlined in the [APA Publication Manual](#), which is available at the reference section of the Sacramento State Library. Just as in CSE style in the natural sciences, APA style emphasizes the author (or authors) and date of the research. Just as with CSE style and the Council of Science Editors, there's a discourse community that created (and now updates) APA style—the American Psychological Association, which has 150,000 members. Even though the conventions for APA style grew out of the discipline of psychology, other social sciences like sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics often use APA style. In addition to rules about citing and referencing sources, the APA style manual has guidelines for language use (avoiding sexist and biased language), formatting, and using visuals like charts and graphs.

### **In-text Citations in APA Style**

Social science writers are expected to cite the current and most respected research on their subject. Citing prior studies gives you credibility as a social scientist, and shows your readers that you're knowledgeable about your topic. In APA style, whenever you quote or paraphrase a source, you need to give the author, year, and page number. Here's an example:

McGuire (2005) argues that "the slippery slope of nuclear proliferation, with each side building bigger and deadlier weapons of mass destruction, leads us ever faster to our own destruction" (p. 32).

Note that since you introduced the author ("McGuire (2005) argues..."), you don't need to include the author's last name in the parentheses at the end of the sentence. If you include the year and the name of the author in the sentence ("McGuire (2005) argues...") you only need to cite the page number in the parentheses at the end of the sentence. The parentheses are always placed outside the quotation mark, and the period is placed after the parentheses. If there

are more than two authors, use et al. (McGuire et al., 2005, p.32). Typically, you should only quote authors directly when you're trying to capture an author's distinctive style, tone, or argument. Avoid overquoting and turning your essay into a collage of quotes from secondary sources.

When you're citing facts and statistics from a secondary source, it's usually best to summarize the information in your own words. Let's say you want to cite the following information from an article by Townsend:

The number of hours Americans work annually has dropped from about 2,700 at the beginning of the century to about 1,800 today; average life expectancy has gone up about 45 years to 80.

Although you could put this entire passage in quotes and cite it word-for-word in your essay, since the information is just a series of statistics, it would be more effective to simply summarize the information in your own words and cite the source. For example:

Social scientists such as Townsend (2003) argue that American life has vastly improved over the last hundred years. Townsend points out that Americans work 1,800 hours annually today, compared to 2,700 hours at the beginning of the 20th century, and life expectancy has increased forty-five years (p.59).

## Preparing an APA Style Reference Page

The following section of this chapter provides the basic guidelines for citing sources in your reference page in APA style, but if you need to cite a kind of source that is not covered below, go to the reference area of the library and consult the *APA Publication Manual* or visit the following Web sites:

### APA Resource Web Sites

Purdue Online Writing Lab:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resources/560/01/>

University of North Carolina Library:  
<http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/apa/>

University Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center:  
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>

### A book with one author

Cite the author's last name, first initials, year of publication, title, place of publication, and publisher. If the book does not have an author, begin with the title, but do not use articles when you alphabetize (A, The, or An).

Cuba, L. (2002). *A short guide to writing about social science*. New York: Longman.

### **A book with more than one author**

List all the authors in the order they're listed in the book, separated by commas.

Miller, P. M. & Wilson, M. J. (1983). *A dictionary of social science methods*. New York: Wiley.

### **An edited book**

List the editor or editors, followed by (Ed.) or (Eds.).

Outhwaite, W. & Bottomore, T. (Eds.). (1993). *The Blackwell dictionary of twentieth-century social thought*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Reference.

### **A selection from an edited book or anthology**

Cite the author and title of the selection, editor and title of the anthology, and page range of the selection.

Koslowski, P. (2002). *Ethics of capitalism*. In L. Zsolnai (Ed.), *Ethics and the future of capitalism* (pp. 43-67). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

### **Two or more works by the same author**

List the works in order of date of publication, the earliest date first.

Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and education*. New York: MacMillan.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Colliers Books.

### **A government document**

When no author is provided, use the government agency as the author.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *Digest of education statistics 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

### **An article in a scholarly journal**

Cite the author, year and month, article title, journal, volume and number of journal, and page range.

Thies, C. G. (2005, June). War, rivalry, and state building in Latin America. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49 (3), 451-466.

### **A magazine article**

Cite the author, year and month (and day if the magazine is published weekly), article title, magazine, volume, and page range.

Samuelson, R. (1995, May 22). Economics lesson. *Newsweek*, 125, 67.

### **A newspaper article**

Cite the author, year, month, day, article title, newspaper, and page number.

Kinzer, S. (2004, December 26). Rethinking past American cultures. *The New York Times*, p. C1.

## **An online article or abstract from a database**

Cite the author, year and month, article title, journal title, volume and number of journal, page range, and DOI number. The DOI number is typically located on the first page of an electronic article, near the copyright information.

Weil, S. (2005, Winter). Child rearing in America: Challenges facing parents with young children. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 36 (1), 155-156. doi: 10.1037/0278-6134.24.3.271

## **A Web site**

Cite the author or organization hosting the Web site, date the site was published or last updated, title, and Web site address.

U.S. Department of Justice. (2004, December). Criminal offender statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/crimoff.htm#findings>

## **Citing Sources in the Arts and Humanities: MLA Style**

Most teachers in the College of Arts and Letters will ask you to use MLA (Modern Language Association) style when you cite sources and prepare a works cited page. Unlike CSE and APA, MLA style emphasizes the author and not the date of publication. In the sciences, the most recent experiments are usually the most reliable and most frequently cited, and the quality of the experiment is more important than the author (or authors) of the experiment. But in the arts and humanities, there's a greater emphasis on the expertise of the author. Science research done in ancient times is hardly of value today, other than of historical interest. But philosophers still discuss the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, and continue to publish books and articles debating the merits of the arguments of these ancient philosophers. It's understandable, then, that MLA style would emphasize the author and deemphasize the date of publication. In addition to rules about citing and referencing sources, the MLA style manual has guidelines for language use (avoiding sexist and biased language) and formatting. The MLA style manual is available in the reference section of the library.

### **In-text Citations in MLA Style**

If the credibility and expertise of authors is an important part of writing and researching in the arts and humanities, it makes sense that arts and humanities scholars are careful to acknowledge the authors they are in conversation with in their papers. In MLA style, whenever you quote or paraphrase a source, you need to give the author and page number. Here's an example:

Min argues that "works of art have no meaning. It is the observer who brings meaning to the work, not the work that brings meaning to the observer" (32).

Note that since you introduced the author ("Min argues..."), you don't need to include the author's last name in the parentheses. The parentheses are placed outside the quotation mark, and the period is placed after the parentheses. If there is more than one author, use et al. (Min et al. 32).

In the previous passage, it made sense to quote Min directly in order to capture the voice and tone of her strong assertion. But if you're integrating facts or statistics from a secondary source, it's better to put the information in your own words and then cite it rather than quoting it directly. Let's say you want to cite the following information from an article by Ray Suarez:

There is ample proof that art museums across the nation are doing better than just treading water. In a 2005 survey of 138 art museums, it was reported that attendance has risen by 24% from 2004 to 2005, and membership has risen by 28%. The museums reported that private funding is mostly stable, with a only a slight decrease (down 2%).

Although you could put this entire passage in quotes and cite it word-for-word in your essay, since the information is just a series of statistics, it would be more effective to simply summarize the information in your own words and cite the source. For example:

Art historian Ray Suarez argues that American art museums are doing well. Suarez points to a 2005 national survey of art museums that reports an increase in attendance (up 24%) and membership (up 28%) from 2004 to 2005, as well as stability in private funding (59).

## Preparing an MLA Style Works Cited Page

The following section of this chapter provides the basic guidelines for listing sources in your works cited page in MLA style, but if you need to cite a kind of source that is not covered below, go to the reference area of the library and consult the MLA Style Manual or visit the following Web sites:

### MLA Resource Web Sites

Purdue Online Writing Lab:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resources/557/01/>

University of North Carolina Library:

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/mla/>

University Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center:

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html>

### A book with one author

Cite the author's last name, first initials, book title, place of publication, publisher, year of publication, and publication medium. If the book does not have an author, begin with the title, but do not use articles when you alphabetize (A, The, or An).

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1937. Print.

## **A book with more than one author**

List all the authors in the order they're listed in the book, separated by commas.

Ede, Lisa, and Andrea Lunsford. *Singular Texts, Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1990. Print.

## **An edited book**

List the editor or editors, followed by ed. or eds.

Randel, Don Michael, ed. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1986. Print.

## **A selection from an edited book or anthology**

Cite the author and title of the selection, editor and title of the anthology, and page range of the selection.

Ginet, Carl. "Deciding to Believe." *Knowledge, Truth and Duty: Essays on Epistemic Justification, Responsibility, and Virtue*. Ed. Matthias Steup. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001. 63-76. Print.

## **Two or more works by the same author**

List the works alphabetically by title. Use the author's name only for the first entry: for all other entries use hyphens and a period.

Goldberg, Vicki. *How Photographs Changed Our Lives*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1991. Print.

—, ed. *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981. Print.

## **An article in a scholarly journal**

Cite the author, article title, journal, volume and number of the journal, year and month, and page range.

Dean, Andrea O. "Women in Architecture: Individual Profiles and a Discussion of Issues." *AIA Journal* 71 (January 1982): 42-51. Print.

## **A magazine article**

Cite the author, article title, magazine, volume, year and month (and day if the magazine is published weekly), and page range.

McGuigan, Cathleen. "MOMA Cops Street Cred." *Newsweek* 1 July 2002: 56. Print.

## **A newspaper article**

Cite the author, article title, newspaper, year, month, day, and page number.

Norwich, William. "Shall We Dance?" *New York Times* 2 November 2003: C8. Print.

### **An online article or abstract from a database**

Cite the author, article title, journal title, volume and number of journal, year and month, page range, name of database, medium (Web), and date the article was retrieved.

Pinckney, W.R. "Jazz in the U.S. Virgin Islands." *American Music* 10.4 (Winter 1992): 441-67. Music Index. Web. 3 February 2009.

### **A Web site**

Cite the author (or organization hosting the Web site), title of the site, date the site was published or last updated, name of any sponsoring organization, medium (Web), and date you accessed the site.

Zalta, Edward, ed. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2005. Stanford University. Web 22 April 2005.

### **A published interview**

Name the person interviewed, the title, the interviewer (Interview with...), and the rest of the publication information.

Kubrick, Stanley. "Stanley Kubrick." Interview with Tim Cahill. *Rolling Stone* 27 (August 1987): 29-34. Print.

### **A film or video**

Cite the title, director, lead actors or narrator (Perf. of Narr.), distributor, and year. *Fight Club*. Dir. David Fincher. Perf. Brad Pitt, Edward Norton. Twentieth Century Fox, 1999. Film.

### **A sound recording**

Cite the composer or performer, title, medium, artists (if not already mentioned), manufacturer, and date of release.

Davis, Miles. *Kind of Blue*. LP. Columbia, 1959. LP.

### **An artwork**

Provide the artist's name, title of the artwork, and the institution and city in which the artwork can be found.

Picasso, Pablo. *Girl Reading at a Table*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Painting.



## Other Citation Styles

In most of your college classes, you'll be asked to use CSE, APA, or MLA citation styles. But there are other citation styles you may be asked to use, especially as you move beyond General Education classes into your major, and you need to be aware that there are more than three types of citation styles. Below are some resources for other citation styles you might be asked to use in your career at CSU Sacramento.

### **ASA (American Sociological Association)**

<http://library.csus.edu/guides/blackmer/ASAformat.htm>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/>

<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/bi/rsalina/asa.styleguide.html>

### **Chicago Style**

<http://library.csus.edu/guides/wangh/chicagostyle.htm>

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

<http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/chicagogd.php>

### **AMA (American Medical Association)**

<http://healthlinks.washington.edu/hsl/styleguides/ama.html>

[http://www.ajph.org/misc/ama\\_references.shtml](http://www.ajph.org/misc/ama_references.shtml)

<http://libraries.evansville.edu/style/ama.html>

### **IEEE Style (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)**

<http://standards.ieee.org/guides/style/>

[http://www.ece.uiuc.edu/pubs/ref\\_guides/ieee.html](http://www.ece.uiuc.edu/pubs/ref_guides/ieee.html)

<http://www.ecf.utoronto.ca/~writing/handbook-docum1b.html>

### **ASME style (American Society of Mechanical Engineers)**

<http://library.ucr.edu/?view=help/science/asmecite.html>

[http://www.asme.org/Publications/ConfProceedings/Author/References\\_2.cfm](http://www.asme.org/Publications/ConfProceedings/Author/References_2.cfm)