WRITING AND READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

FOURTEENTH EDITION

LAURENCE BEHRENS & LEONARD ROSEN

Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum

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Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum

Fourteenth Edition

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Brief Contents

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FOLKLORE

BUSINESS

Preface

When *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* was first published, more than thirty-five years ago, the response was both immediate and enthusiastic. Instructors found the topics in *WRAC* both interesting and teachable, and students appreciated the links that such topics suggested to the courses they were taking concurrently in the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences. Readers told us how practical they found our "summary, synthesis, and critique" approach to writing college-level papers, and in later editions welcomed the addition of "analysis" to our coverage in Part I.

In developing each successive edition of *WRAC*, we strive to retain the essential multidisciplinary character of the text while providing ample new topics and individual readings to keep it fresh and timely. Some topics have proven particularly enduring—our "Obedience" chapter has been a fixture, as has "Fairy Tales: A Closer Look at 'Cinderella.'" But we take care to make sure that a substantial portion of the book is completely new every time, both by extensively revising existing chapters and by creating new ones. While we retain an emphasis on summary, critique, synthesis, and analysis, we continue to develop content on topics such as the process of writing and argumentation that address the issues and interests of today's classrooms.

What's New in the 14th Edition

The fourteenth edition of *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* represents a major revision of the previous edition.

- We are pleased to offer an altogether new Note to the Student, titled "An Introduction to Thinking and Writing in College," which provides a graphically rich overview of the foundational skills needed for success in college life. These foundational skills include cultivating intellectual curiosity, exploring similarities and differences, arguing with logic and evidence, and challenging arguments. "An Introduction to Thinking and Writing in College" builds on the topic "The Idea of Money," the same topic that forms the basis of the new model synthesis in Chapter 4.
- **Chapter 1** on Summary **now distinguishes between summarizing readily accessible texts and summarizing more difficult ones**, providing examples and strategies for summarizing each. The chapter also includes an **expanded discussion on incorporating quotations** into sentences.
- **Chapter 2** on Critical Reading and Critique **includes a new model critique**: "The Right to Bury the Online Past"—an op-ed arguing that people harmed by the Web's infinite memory should have the right to petition search providers like Google to de-list links to sensitive materials.
- **Chapter 4** on Explanatory Synthesis **includes a new model explanatory synthesis** on "The 'Idea' of Money," a paper on how rectangular pieces of paper in a wallet, dolphin teeth, diamonds, and squirrel pelts—all forms of money at different points in history—hold no inherent value: they're worth only what we agree they're worth. The topic for this new model paper provides the topic for the new "An Introduction to Thinking and Writing in College."
- The **extensively revised and updated Chapter 7** on Locating, Mining, and Citing Sources

introduces students to the latest techniques for conducting college-level research. The update includes **the most current citation formats for APA and MLA**.

- **Nearly 50 new readings** throughout the book span the disciplines, representing a range of perspectives and encouraging students to write critical responses, summaries, analyses, and syntheses. Every chapter has been refreshed with new readings.
- **With its new foundational song, the immortal "Over the Rainbow,"** Chapter 8 continues to introduce students to perceptive listening and to writing about popular music.
- **Chapter 11, "First Impressions,"** provides **four new novel openings**: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*; Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; and Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*. **Also new: additional movies** with fresh Discussion and Writing Suggestions for each opening scene.
- **New to this edition, Artificial Intelligence, Chapter 12, introduces students to rapid advances in AI science and related, potential upheavals in biology, politics, philosophy, and the economy.**
- **Chapter 14 restores** a perennial favorite in WRAC: **Fairy Tales: A Closer Look at Cinderella.** In addition to multiple versions of the tale, we include several new, hard-hitting (brief) critiques as well as readings on the tale's core structure and its feminist implications.
- **Chapter 15, Advertising, offers two portfolios, one directing students to archives of print ads and another to carefully curated television commercials. Students will practice their visual literacy skills by conducting close analyses.**
- **Online text and video sources** are provided throughout, with recommended search terms and strategies.

Structure and Signature Strengths

Structure

Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum is divided into a rhetoric and an anthology of readings. The anthology of readings is further subdivided into two parts, the first of these serving as a kind of bridge between the rhetoric and the anthology.

Part I takes students step-by-step through the process of writing papers based on source material, explaining and demonstrating how summaries, critiques, syntheses, and analyses can be generated from the kinds of readings students will encounter later in the book—and throughout their academic careers.

Part II, "Brief Takes," offers mini-chapters of five to seven readings that are accompanied by a set of sequential writing exercises. We see working on one or more of these brief takes as a kind of "warm-up" exercise for the more intensive intellectual activities involved in tackling the full-length chapters. "The Roar of the Tiger Mom" and "The Art of the Musical Cover" (albeit with a different song to organize the chapter) are carried over from the previous edition. The third chapter, "Obedience to Authority," is distilled from a full-length chapter in the thirteenth edition.

Part III offers full-length anthology chapters of ten or more readings on compelling topics selected to stimulate student interest. Tackling a range of perspectives, voices, and writing and argument strategies, these units immerse students in the kinds of sustained reading and writing required for other college courses.

Signature Strengths

Continued focus on argument in Part I emphasizes the following:

- The Elements of Argument: Claim, Support, Assumption. This section adapts the Toulmin

approach to the kinds of readings students will encounter in Parts II and III of the text.

- The Three Appeals of Logos, Ethos, Pathos. This discussion may be used to analyze arguments in the readings in Parts II and III of the book.
- Developing and Organizing Support for Arguments. This section helps students mine source materials for facts, expert opinions, and examples that will support their arguments.
- Annotated Student Papers. Model summaries, critique, explanatory synthesis, and argument synthesis emphasize writing strategies and careful use of sources.

Revel

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the authors' narrative lets students read, explore interactive content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

Learn more about Revel
www.pearson.com/revel

Supplements

Make more time for your students with instructor resources that offer effective learning assessments and classroom engagement. Pearson's partnership with educators does not end with the delivery of course materials; Pearson is there with you on the first day of class and beyond. A dedicated team of local Pearson representatives will work with you to not only choose course materials but also integrate them into your class and assess their effectiveness. Our goal is your goal—to improve instruction with each semester.

Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download from Revel or on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for access.

- **Instructor's Resource Manual** Create a comprehensive roadmap for teaching classroom, online, or hybrid courses. Designed for new and experienced instructors, the Instructor's Manual for the fourteenth edition of *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* provides sample syllabi and course calendars, chapter summaries, classroom ideas for writing assignments, introductions to each set of readings, and answers to review questions. Available within Revel and on the IRC.
- **Powerpoint Presentation** Make lectures more enriching for students. The PowerPoint Presentation includes a full lecture outline and photos and figures from the textbook and Revel edition. Available on the IRC.

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An Introduction to Thinking and Writing in College

Learning Objectives

After completing this introduction, you will be able to:

0.1 Define academic thinking and writing.

0.2 Cultivate intellectual curiosity.

0.3 Explore similarities and differences.

0.4 Understand the importance of arguing with logic and evidence.

0.5 Understand why arguments must be challenged.

0.6 Understand how writing can be a tool for critical thinking.

College may initially seem both overwhelming and bewildering. You may not even be clear, at first, what college is *for*, aside from taking classes you hope will help you to land a better job one day. The statistics are clear: a diploma will significantly boost your employment prospects and earning power. Of course, it's not just the diploma that improves your fortunes; it's the skills and habits of thinking you've developed along the way.

These skills and habits include your ability to

1. cultivate intellectual curiosity;
2. explore similarities and differences;
3. argue, using logic and evidence; and
4. challenge arguments.

This brief introduction to thinking and writing in college will touch on these habits and skills and will suggest some of the ways you'll grow intellectually in the coming years.

Defining Academic Thinking and Writing

0.1 Define academic thinking and writing.

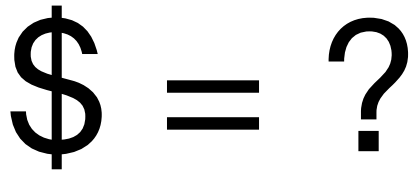
What do people think and write about in college? In a word, everything. Besides teaching your classes, grading papers, and serving on academic committees, your instructors also spend a great deal of time investigating questions that fascinate them. What was the main cause of the Soviet Union's collapse? What gives a poem its beauty and power? How can viruses be used to fight cancer?

Pick a topic, any topic, and you're almost certain to find someone on campus studying it in order to understand more deeply what it is and how it works. To take one example, consider a dollar bill—that is, a piece of money.

What could be more typical or ordinary? Is there any point to studying money in an academic setting? Well, yes, there is. Read this excerpt from a student paper, "The 'Idea' of Money." (You'll find the complete paper in Chapter 4.)

> In a barter-based economy, people traded goods and services they agreed had equal value. In an economy based on money, objects became a substitute for goods and services that would otherwise have been traded. Such substitutes became "currency" or "money." In this new system, the butcher no longer had to trade his meat for beer or shoes if he had no need for them. As long as the butcher, brewer, and shoemaker each valued the same currency—be it stone tools, gold nuggets, or cowry shells—a new kind of exchange could take place. Money emerged across different cultures for the

same reason: convenience. But the *form* money took varied from one society to the next and from one historical period to the next depending on what people considered valuable. This raises an important question: If different forms of money arose in different places and at different times, what, exactly, gives money its value?



Sheldon Kearney's paper on the origins of money led him to a strange conclusion: the notion that money itself holds no value—that is to say, a nugget of gold is inherently worth no more than a handful of sea shells. More on that in a moment. The point here is that *any* topic, even the most ordinary, can be studied in an academic setting, and inquiries can lead to surprising results.

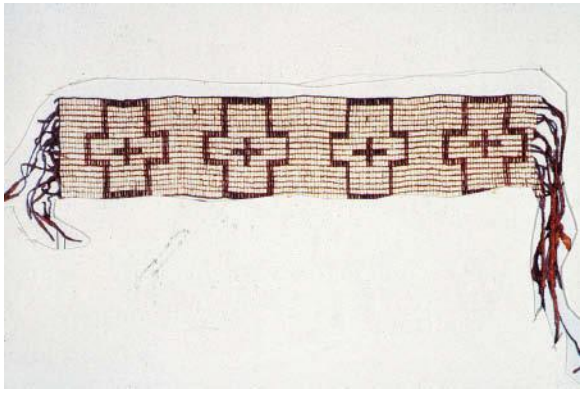
Academic writing builds on careful study and differs from personal writing and business writing. Personal, expressive writing makes private experience (the "I" experience) public in ways the writer hopes will be meaningful to readers. Business writing, such as e-mails, letters, proposals, advertising brochures, and reports, promotes the interests of a company or corporation. Academic writing involves reading widely, searching for evidence, and thinking logically—all in an effort to understand more deeply and to communicate understanding in books, articles, essays, speeches, blog posts, films, and other media.

Cultivating Intellectual Curiosity

0.2 Cultivate intellectual curiosity.

From high school you'll recall that knowledge is divided among broad areas of study—the humanities, sciences, social sciences, performing arts, and so on. These same divisions hold true in college. Within each broad area we find further divisions called disciplines, such as philosophy, physics, history, and anthropology. A single topic—let's consider money once more—can be studied from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Consider a few of the many ways that researchers might study money in an academic setting:

Anthropologists study the origins of civilization. They might focus on the forms that money has taken over time and ask: What explains the different forms of money we find in different cultures—for instance, wampum and dolphin teeth?



Wampum (Beads)

Dolphin Teeth

Historians might investigate when and why state-issued money first became widespread. They might study the Roman Empire, which stretched from present-day Great Britain to North Africa and the Middle East. In an empire spanning such vast territories and comprising so many cultures and languages—each with its own forms of money—a common currency would have helped to promote trade and consolidate central authority. During the rule of Julius Caesar, Rome issued the aureus, examples of which survive today.

Roman Aureus

Metallurgists might wonder how changing technologies for extracting metals from raw ore enabled the production and widespread use of state-issued coins like the aureus. For example, how were early crucibles used for smelting gold constructed?

Crucible

Sociologists might study the financial organization of marriages and ask how and why the tradition of paying dowries (the transfer of wealth from the bride's family to the groom's) emerged. Does that ancient tradition survive today in the customary payment of weddings by a bride's family?

Artists create objects such as paintings, sculptures, stories, and poems that provoke conversations. Think how many books you have read or films you have seen that turn on the goal of acquiring money. Consider, for example, novels like Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* or Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Consider films like *Wall Street*, *Ocean's 11*, and *Trading Places*. In what ways do artists provoke conversations? Why are these conversations important?

Gun Wrapped in Money

Economists might ask: What *is* money? How does money get its value? What precisely distinguishes one form of money—say, cowry shells—from other forms like dollars? Why would a grocer accept dollars but *not* cowry shells as payment for a quart of milk? Is one currency inherently more valuable than others? This is the question taken up in the paper "The 'Idea' of Money" in Chapter 4.

Every discipline approaches a topic in characteristic ways, with characteristic questions. You can be sure that each approach fascinates its investigators: the historians, economists, and sociologists who study money, for instance, from their distinctive points of view. Your job in taking courses across the curriculum is to be curious: to ask *why*, to cultivate fascination. In time, your fascination will guide you in choosing a major field of study.

Salt

Curious

- Salt was once used as money? Why?
- The word "salary" is derived from salt? When and why did this use develop?
- Salt has been farmed and mined for profit? Where? When? How?
- How does salt raise blood pressure?

Not so much

This is a pile of salt.

What does it take to be curious?

For the most part, as a freshman or sophomore, you'll be receiving established knowledge in the form of books, articles, lectures, and lab studies. You're not likely to start out creating knowledge the way your instructors do in their own investigations. But they'll be preparing you to create knowledge by teaching you their methods of investigation. That is, they'll be teaching both the *what* of their discipline and the *how*. The *what* is content: the history of Roman money, for instance, or economic theories of money. The *how* is thinking critically about that content. *Critical* in an academic sense doesn't mean *negative* but rather *careful* and *alert*. Thinking critically involves many skills, chief among them the ability to explore similarities and differences, to argue with logic and evidence, and to challenge arguments (especially your own).

Whether you major in finance, nursing, computer science, or literature, the larger goal is to become a careful, disciplined thinker. That's what employers value in college graduates, and that is what is required of you in becoming an informed, engaged citizen. Plenty of biology and philosophy majors end up working in fields that have nothing to do with biology or philosophy. But the skills and habits of thinking they developed in their studies have everything to do with their success.

Let's take a closer look at four important skills that anchor intellectual life at college:

- Exploring similarities and differences
- Arguing with logic and evidence
- Challenging arguments
- Communicating critical thinking through writing

Exploring Similarities and Differences

0.3 Explore similarities and differences.

Academic thinking often involves close study of examples. Any time you gather multiple examples of a topic and study them, you'll have an occasion to make comparisons and contrasts. Examine these images, which are forms of money from different times and places.

Cowry Shells

Gold Nugget

Stone Tools

Lobi Snakes (Iron)

Squirrel Pelts

Quarter Dollar

In comparing these forms of money, we can observe different materials: worked objects (coins, iron snakes, stone tools) and objects in their natural state (gold nuggets, cowry shells). Squirrel pelts, used as currency in medieval Russia and Finland, are both worked and unworked: squirrels had to be killed and skinned. We can also observe similarities: All these forms of money are portable. People could carry them easily. These forms of money are also divisible: People could accept one cowry shell or many as payment, a smaller lobi snake (once used in Burkina Faso) or a larger one, pennies and nickels in place of a quarter, and so on.

If you were writing a paper about money, you would quickly conclude that money takes no single form. How would you treat the differences and the similarities you found? What conclusions would you draw? In college-level work, you will frequently observe similarities and differences, and you will need to

account for them. You can see how Sheldon Kearney handles such comparisons and contrasts in his paper, "The 'Idea' of Money," in Chapter 4.

Arguing with Logic and Evidence

0.4 Understand the importance of arguing with logic and evidence.

In social settings, few people want to be known for arguing all the time. In academic settings, people are *expected* to argue: to use logic and evidence both to present their work and review the work of others.

Later in this text you will learn strategies and techniques for arguing. For now, consider the debatable statement that money is "an idea." Could you convince others that money is not a "thing" but rather an "agreement" among people? Arguing the point would require you to state that gold in itself, as a metal dug from the earth, is no more valuable than the feathers of a goose or chicken. Is it possible? Say you're trapped in an Arctic outpost. Winter is approaching and what you need, urgently, is insulation to keep you from freezing to death. In this case, wouldn't three pounds of feathers (to make a down blanket) be of far more value to you than three pounds of gold? And if that's the case, what can be said about the inherent value of gold, feathers, or *any* form of money? Perhaps money *is* an idea!

Gold Nugget

Feather

We're headed toward strange territory here: the notion that money is valuable not in itself but because people agree to value it. Consider this idea: Money is an *agreement*, not a thing. Feathers could be money, and so could salt, beads, or

pieces of paper in our wallets. The particular *form* that money takes is meaningless. All that's needed for the larger economy to function is for everyone to agree that whatever we exchange and call money has value. An economy based on sunflower seeds? Why not—peppercorns were once used as money! If you're not comfortable making this argument, you could look for help in the form of experts who could support your position. That's why Sheldon Kearney quotes this source in his paper, "The 'Idea' of Money":

> [T]he notion that gold is somehow [a] more "real" [form of money] than paper [money] is, well, a mirage. Gold is valuable because we've collectively decided that it's valuable and that we'll accept goods and services in exchange for it. And that's no different, ultimately, from our collective decision that colorful rectangles of paper [in our wallets] are valuable and that we'll accept goods and services in exchange for them. . . .
>
> We cling to the belief that money needs to be backed by something "solid."
>
> —James Surowiecki, IEEE Spectrum, 30 May 2012

In a college setting, our knowledge of the world is built through argument: the ability to examine evidence, reach a conclusion, and convince others that our conclusions are correct or reasonable. Argument will become one of the core skills you'll learn in college.

Challenging Arguments

0.5 Understand why arguments must be challenged.

If arguing is essential in academic settings, so is pushing back against arguments when their logic or evidence is flawed. Consider that the larger intellectual goal in the academy is to build knowledge, and no one is well served when faulty arguments are accepted as true. Later in this text you'll learn how to evaluate and challenge the arguments of others. It goes without saying that others will challenge you when they're not convinced of the soundness of your arguments. So pushing back, respectfully and logically, is essential to your success both in college and beyond.

An example: The enormously influential eighteenth-century thinker Adam Smith is regarded as the first modern economist, and his theory of the emergence of money from barter economies is widely accepted. He believed that people in early societies traded one good for others of equal (mutually agreed upon) value. Eventually, Smith wrote, barter gave way to money when it was no longer convenient or practical to exchange goods in trade. That's the generally accepted view.

The Barter Economy

But in an academic setting, no view of the world, however well regarded, however celebrated its creator, is immune to challenge. Some scholars dispute Smith's theory of how currency emerged in early civilizations. Consider this challenge from anthropologist David Graeber:

> Adam Smith first proposed in *The Wealth of Nations* that as soon as a division of labor appeared in human society, some specializing in hunting, for instance, others making arrowheads, people would begin swapping goods with one another (6 arrowheads for a beaver pelt, for instance). . . . For exchange to be possible, both sides have to have something the other is willing to accept in trade. This was assumed to eventually lead to the people stockpiling items deemed likely to be generally desirable, which would thus become ever more desirable for that reason, and eventually become money. Barter thus gave birth to money. . . .
>
> Anthropologists gradually fanned out into the world and began directly observing how economies where money was not used . . . actually worked. . . . What they never found was any place, anywhere, where economic relations between members of community took the form economists predicted [based on Adam Smith's theory of barter]: "I'll give you twenty chickens for that cow." Hence in the definitive anthropological work on the subject, Cambridge anthropology professor Caroline Humphrey concludes, "No example of a barter economy, pure and simple, has ever been described, let alone the emergence from it of money; all available [studies suggest] that there never has been such a thing."

Graeber is an anthropologist who has used the evidence of field research to challenge the widely accepted views of Adam Smith. Not surprisingly, supporters of Smith's views have pushed back. A debate, an academic conversation about barter and the emergence of money, has developed. (To catch some of its flavor, Google "Graeber Smith barter money debate.") Why does this debate matter? It

matters because some scholars believe that a confused understanding of what money is and how it emerged has profound implications for our economy today.

Challenging arguments is as important as making them; at times, mounting a challenge will take a degree of fearlessness. But if your goal is to help the larger community better understand how the world works, in the end people will thank you.

Communicating Critical Thinking Through Writing

0.6 Understand how writing can be a tool for critical thinking.

Your writing class, indeed all your classes, will be devoted to improving your skills of critical thinking. By way of demonstration, you have followed an example of how *any* topic—in our case, money—can be studied critically. What distinguishes academic study is not the topic but rather the questions that investigators pose about the topic and the methods they use to investigate.

As a college student, you are now—you are becoming—an investigator. You will think critically whenever you cultivate your intellectual curiosity, question similarities and differences, argue using logic and evidence, and challenge the work of others. If your college diploma means anything, it's that you have developed skills in and a respect for critical thinking.

Writing is one of the main ways of both expressing and developing your knowledge. As you write, you force yourself to clarify ideas before communicating them. In this way, writing itself becomes a tool for learning.

Your writing in college will take five typical forms:

- **Summary** accurately distills what you've read or seen.
- **Evaluation** judges the merits of and responds to the arguments of others.
- **Explanation** defines and describes neutrally, without interpretation.
- **Argument** uses evidence and logic to answer debatable questions, build new knowledge, and influence others.
- **Analysis** studies an object closely, illuminating it to yourself and others.

Your college writing course and this text, *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*, will teach you these forms of writing, as well as the broader skills of critical thinking from which they follow.

So what is college *for* aside from your gaining skills to boost your job prospects and earning power? College is for making knowledge through collaboration and argument; it's for teaching both the content and habits of thinking you'll need to be an informed, engaged citizen who understands that learning never ends. You have embarked on a journey, one that will reward you in ways large and small in the years to come. Enjoy the trip!

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Part I
Structures and Strategies

Chapter 1
Summary, Paraphrase, and Quotation

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **1.1** Preview a selection.
- **1.2** Form a preliminary understanding of topic and purpose based on your preview.
- **1.3** Reread for content and structure.
- **1.4** Summarize and paraphrase parts of sources.
- **1.5** Summarize entire works using a systematic strategy.
- **1.6** Write a summary of an especially challenging source.
- **1.7** Write summaries of visual presentations, including graphs, charts, and tables.
- **1.8** Select effective material to quote directly and indirectly.
- **1.9** Alter quotations with ellipses and brackets.
- **1.10** Avoid classic mistakes in using quotations.
- **1.11** Use six strategies to incorporate quotations, summaries, and paraphrases into your sentences.
- **1.12** Avoid plagiarism by citing sources and using your own words and sentence structure.

A summary is a brief, objective, and complete restatement of a source. At times, instructors will ask that you summarize an *entire* article or book as a stand-alone assignment. In such cases, your summary will be a paper unto itself (more on this below). More typically, you will read an article or book and identify

potentially useful *parts*—a few sentences or paragraphs, perhaps. Later, you might summarize these parts and incorporate them into your papers.

A paraphrase is also an objective restatement of a source, and you use it the same way you do a summary. Paraphrases are more detailed than summaries, however, and sometimes may be the same length of the original passage. Summary and paraphrase are basic to working with sources. Both demonstrate your understanding of what you've read.

Being able to read a passage and summarize or paraphrase what it says is basic to college-level work. But for all kinds of reasons, people don't always read carefully—and in college that's a problem because your academic success depends on your ability to understand source materials: books, scholarly articles, essays and popular articles, research reports, op-eds, and more.

This chapter focuses on reading with attention, so that you will be able to summarize and paraphrase sources as well as quote them in support of the papers you write.

Previewing to Understand the Author's Purpose

1.1 Preview a selection.

Writers of articles and nonfiction books aim to inform, persuade, or some combination of the two. Explanatory writing defines, describes, and is usually information-rich. In explanations, authors do not inject their opinions. By contrast, in persuasive writing, authors attempt to change your thinking about a topic or to convince you that their opinions are the best ones.[1]

Sources will not be all one type or the other. A paper arguing that the government should mandate a reduction in the salt content of commercially prepared foods might first explain how salt intake affects health. The argument would then follow and build on the explanation. In reading any passage of text, determine the extent to which the author is attempting to explain and/or persuade. Imagine placing every source you read somewhere on a continuum:

Explain_____Persuade

Ask: Where along this continuum should I place this source?

[1]There is serious academic debate concerning the extent to which *all* writing attempts to persuade. Still, for practical purposes, it is reasonable to say that writing that makes a good-faith effort to emphasize the topic and not the writer's views can be considered explanatory or informational, while writing that promotes the writer's views is persuasive.

Before writing notes on a source, preview it to gain a sense of the whole. Skim the text. Read quickly and identify the author's purpose: to explain and/or persuade.

For an article:

- Read summaries (also called abstracts) if available.
- Read opening and closing paragraphs.
- Read all major headings.
- Read the first line of every paragraph.

For a book:

- Read book jacket information, including the author's biography.
- Read the preface.
- Skim the table of contents.
- Read the first and last paragraph of every chapter.

Let's adapt these strategies to reading and summarizing a single paragraph before applying them to an article-length selection. The following is excerpted from "A Framework for Thinking Ethically."

> **THE UTILITARIAN APPROACH TO ETHICS**
>
> Some [philosophers] emphasize that the ethical action is the one that provides the most good or does the least harm, or, to put it another way, produces the greatest balance of good over harm. The ethical corporate action, then, is the one that produces the greatest good and does the least harm for all who are affected—customers, employees, shareholders, the community, and the environment. Ethical warfare balances the good achieved in ending terrorism with the harm done to all parties through death, injuries, and destruction. The utilitarian approach deals with consequences; it tries both to increase the good done and to reduce the harm done.
>
> —Manuel Velasquez

Let's characterize the author's purpose. To what extent do you find Velasquez explaining? Arguing? Some combination of the two? It should be clear from the first and last sentences as well as from the paragraph's heading (included in the original article) that the author is defining a term: *utilitarianism*. From this brief preview, you've learned enough to write a summary based on your understanding of the author's purpose, topic, and content:

Purpose	to explain
Topic	the philosophy of utilitarianism
Content	maximizing good and minimizing bad
Summary	Utilitarianism is an "[a]pproach to ethics" that seeks to maximize the good effects of our actions over bad effects.

To test the accuracy of this summary, reread the paragraph—this time every word. You'll discover that Velasquez devotes the interior sentences to two

examples of utilitarianism, neither of which requires making a change to our summary.

Preview one more paragraph: Read the first and final sentences to determine if you've learned enough to understand the author's purpose, topic, and content.

> **"Responding to Bullies" [a student paper]**
>
> Definitions in antibullying laws are inconsistent, the effectiveness of antibullying programs is unproven, and cyberbullying laws may threaten free speech. Still, bullying persists and we must respond. Each day, 160,000 children skip school because they don't want to confront their tormentors (National). Even bullies are at risk: In one study, over half of the middle-school boys characterized as bullies had court records by their 24th birthday (Fox et al. 2). While bullying in childhood may not be the sole or even main *cause* of later criminal behavior (another possibility: there may be abuse in the home), these statistics provide all the more reason to intervene in the bully/victim relationship. Both victims and bullies require our help.
>
> —Peter Simmons

We learn a great deal from reading the first and last sentences of this paragraph (excerpted from a student paper, which you can find in Chapter 5 on pp. 142–48):

Purpose	to argue—to present data that changes our opinion
Topic	bullying
Content	difficulties dealing effectively with bullies
Summary	The problem of bullying demands an institutional response that has, up to now, been ineffective and has hurt both bullies and their victims.

When you reread the paragraph in full, you find its interior sentences given to evidence that Simmons uses to change our thinking about bullies. Again, what we learn from the interior sentences does not require changes to our summary.

Exercise 1.1

Previewing a Paragraph

Choose a six- to eight-sentence paragraph from an article of interest in a newspaper or magazine (print or online) and preview it as illustrated above. Then summarize that paragraph in a single sentence after noting its purpose, topic, and content.

Now let's apply the previewing strategies to an entire article—concerning the benefits and concerns associated with computer-chip brain implants. For the moment, do not read every word. First, *preview* the article to gain a sense of the author's purpose, topic, and content. Later, you'll return to the selection to read word for word and make notes. As with the paragraphs above, you may be surprised at how much you can learn from a quick preview.

External Enhancements of Memory May Soon Go High-Tech

Jyutika Mehta

December 4, 2015

"Pentagon spurs new work on a brain implant to aid memory problems"

—Headline, *Los Angeles Times,* July 9, 2014

1 Imagine never again forgetting where you parked your car, or that last item you had on your grocery list, or why you walked into this room anyway. If you trust media stories about research currently under way at Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to build an implantable device to restore memory, you might not have to worry about these memory lapses in the future.

2 Many neuroscientists share the dream of neuroprosthetic technology that could help damaged brains function. Many such devices are in various stages of experimentation. Beyond helping those with impaired memories, the next step could conceivably be implantable "brain chips" that would improve the memories of the rest of us, ensuring that in the future we never forget anything.

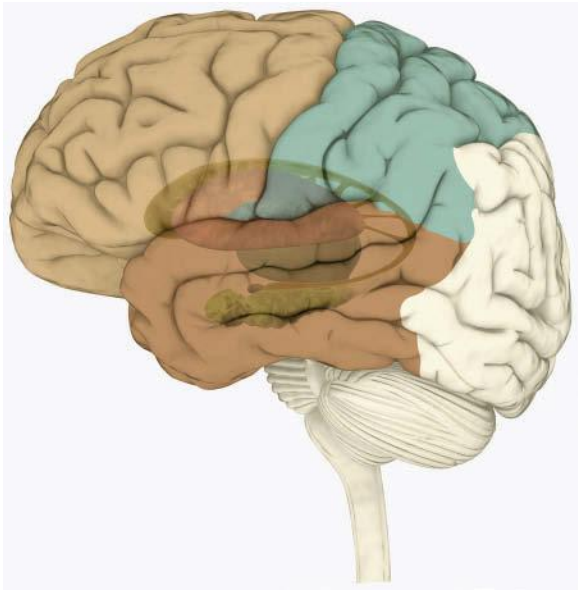
3 But what would it really mean if we were able to remember every single thing?

How brains remember

4 Since the early neurological work on memory in the 1950s and 1960s, studies have demonstrated that memories are not stored in just one part of the brain. They're widely distributed across the whole brain, particularly in an area called the cortex.

5 Contrary to the popular notion, our memories are not stored in our brains like books on shelves in specific categories. They're actively reconstructed from elements scattered throughout various areas of the cortex by a process called encoding.

6 As we experience the world through our eyes, ears, and so on, various groups of neurons in the cortex fire together to form a neural pathway from each of these senses and encode these patterns into memories. That's why the aroma of cornbread may trigger a Thanksgiving dinner memory at grandmother's house many years ago, or the sound of a car backfiring may trigger a panic attack in a war veteran.



The Human Brain

A structure called the hippocampus, located within the cerebral cortex, plays a vital role in memory. We find the hippocampus is damaged in conditions that affect memory such as Alzheimer's disease. 7

Forgetting, then, is an inability (either temporary or permanent) to retrieve part of the neural pathway that's been encoded in the brain. Increasing forgetfulness is a normal part of the aging process, as the neurons start to lose their connections and pathways start to wither off. Ultimately the brain shrinks and becomes less effective at remembering. The hippocampus is one of the first areas of the brain to deteriorate with age. 8

Some things are better left forgotten

I believe that forgetting is almost as critical as remembering. 9

I study the brain and examine how language, communication, and hence memory are represented in the brain and the influence disorders such as stroke and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have on it. While human memory is dynamic and flexible, it's also susceptible to distortions arising from aging and pathological processes. 10

But forgetting isn't just a loss that comes with age. It's a normal part of the memory process. We don't need to remember a lot of what happens to us—what we made for dinner two years ago, where we left the car the last five times we parked in this lot. Those are examples of things that aren't useful to remember anymore. 11

There's also the question of memories that are actively hindering our lives. Research suggests, and my work with memory-related conditions corroborates, that some people have an inability to forget traumatic events. This characteristic is partially responsible for conditions including depression and PTSD. 12

When memories of terrible events don't fade naturally, can we move on with our lives? 13

A patient diagnosed with PTSD-related depression in one of my studies wanted to suppress all memories of his combat experience. He lost two friends in a particular battle and has had difficulty getting past that experience. It appears that we cannot willfully eliminate memories. 14

"The mission of the National Center for PTSD is to advance the clinical care and social welfare of America's Veterans and others who have experienced trauma, or who suffer from PTSD, through research, education, and training in the science, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD and stress-related disorders."

—National Center for PTSD

He tells me that yes, he would like to recall where he put his car keys and would like to remember his children's birthdays, but he would rather eliminate the traumatic memories of his combat experience.

Developing technology for total recall may sound wonderful and time-saving for improving daily living. Never forget an appointment, never spend precious minutes looking for misplaced keys, perhaps never even need a calendar to remember important events. And, of course, an implantable brain chip would be a huge boon for those whose memories have been destroyed by disease or injury. But there's a hitch to total recall that doesn't allow us as individuals and as a society to forget.

Perfect memory engenders stasis—the legacy of any failures (personal or in others) won't be allowed to fade and therefore we cannot move past them. Forgetting allows for new beginnings and for personal and societal healing and forgiveness. It is critical for a war veteran to advance past a traumatizing event from the battlefield, or a spouse with hurt feelings to be able to let go of that experience to repair a relationship. We all need to let some memories go; it's part of the process that allows us to appreciate the proverbial forest of our existence while not getting too bogged down with the trees of our daily lives.

For better or worse, technology for not ever forgetting may be here sometime soon. Whatever form this imagined external memory enhancement takes, it will be interesting to see how a new way of remembering changes us in return.

Perhaps some of us may have to add one more thing to our list—remember to forget.

Forming a Preliminary Understanding of Topic and Purpose

1.2 Form a preliminary understanding of topic and purpose based on your preview.

Based on a quick preview—*skimming,* not word-for-word reading just yet—restate the topic and purpose of the selection in your own words:

> Devices to improve memory and reduce forgetfulness are coming; but we should be cautious in welcoming them because at least some forgetting is a natural part of remembering and may even be beneficial.

Where would you place the article on a continuum ranging from explanatory to persuasive?

Explain_____I_____Persuade

Why did we locate the article at a point *between* Explain and Persuade? As noted earlier, authors often do both in one article, and Jyutika Mehta does so here. Based on a quick preview, we've classified the author's purpose as more explanatory than persuasive. Why?

Even from a brief preview, we can see that Mehta both explains how the brain stores and processes memories and argues that some amount of forgetting is useful. The paragraphs of the selection devoted to storage and processing are informational, while the paragraphs devoted to the usefulness of forgetting express Mehta's opinion. From our brief preview, it's possible to get a clear sense of Mehta's purpose: to both explain *and* argue. Mehta has weighted the article more toward explanation. She is not making a strong argument: for instance, that implanted memory chips are a terrible idea. Rather, she's urging caution. From the preview, then, we can determine purpose, topic, and a general sense of content:

Purpose	to explain *and* argue
Topic	brain implants that enhance memory
Content	pluses and minuses of forgetting and of brain implants that enhance memory
Preliminary Summary	We should respond cautiously to brain implants designed to enhance memory.

Rereading for Content and Structure

1.3 Reread for content and structure.

Once you've previewed a selection, reread it carefully. Read every word, prepared to make notes:

- Label sections. Make margin notes to highlight a reading's main sections—that is, groupings of related paragraphs. (The author may have done this for you by providing headings.)
- Underline or highlight the main idea and supporting ideas of each section.
- Label the thesis**.** Every selection will have a main point, a thesis. Underline or highlight it.
- Is the author's purpose to inform, to persuade, or both?
  - If the purpose is to inform, identify the topic and its parts. Identify facts, examples, definitions, processes.
  - If the purpose is to persuade, identify the author's claim—the main opinion. Identify reasons and evidence. Is the author arguing based on logic? On emotions?
- Identify what you *don't* understand.

Skim the source once more and review your notes. Distinguish as clearly as you can between what you do and do not understand.

- In two or three sentences, restate the main point.
- Seek other sources to clarify what you do not understand.

Consider how a section of this reading looks after it's been marked up:

How Brains Remember

(4–5) Memory consists of parts distributed throughout brain

4 Since the early neurological work on memory in the 1950s and 1960s, studies have demonstrated that memories are not stored in just one part of the brain. They're widely distributed across the whole brain, particularly in an area called the cortex.

5 Contrary to the popular notion, our memories are not stored in our brains like books on shelves in specific categories. They're actively reconstructed from elements scattered throughout various areas of the cortex by a process called encoding.

(6) Each sense has corresponding brain area to store parts of memories. Connections across parts form memories.

6 As we experience the world through our eyes, ears, and so on, various groups of neurons in the cortex fire together to form a neural pathway from each of these senses and encode these patterns into memories. That's why the aroma of cornbread may trigger a Thanksgiving dinner memory at grandmother's house many years ago, or the sound of a car backfiring may trigger a panic attack in a war veteran.

(7) Disease affects memory

7 A structure called the hippocampus, located within the cerebral cortex, plays a vital role in memory. We find the hippocampus is damaged in conditions that affect memory such as Alzheimer's disease.

(8) Forgetting is natural part of aging. Neural connections break down.

8 Forgetting, then, is an inability (either temporary or permanent) to retrieve part of the neural pathway that's been encoded in the brain. Increasing forgetfulness is a normal part of the aging process, as the neurons start to lose their connections and pathways start to wither off. Ultimately the brain shrinks and becomes less effective at remembering. The hippocampus is one of the first areas of the brain to deteriorate with age.

Exercise 1.2

Marking up a Passage

Reread the opening of the article by Mehta (p. 18) and mark up paragraphs 1–3.

- In the margin, label this opening section "Introduction." Write a few words beneath this label to express the meaning of these paragraphs.
- Underline, circle, or otherwise highlight what you consider important information in these paragraphs.

Reread the end of Mehta's article (p. 20) and mark up paragraphs 18 and 19.

- In the margin, label this section "Conclusion." Write a few words beneath this label to express the meaning of these paragraphs.
- Underline, circle, or otherwise highlight what you consider important information in these paragraphs.

Critical Reading for Summary

- ***Examine the context.*** Note the credentials, occupation, and publications of the author. Identify the source in which the piece originally appeared. This information helps illuminate the author's perspective on the topic he or she is addressing.
- ***Note the title and subtitle.*** Some titles are straightforward, whereas the meanings of others become clearer as you read. In either case, titles typically identify the topic being addressed and often reveal the author's attitude toward that topic.
- ***Identify the main point.*** Whether a piece of writing contains a thesis statement in the first few paragraphs or builds its main point without stating it up front, look at the entire piece to arrive at an understanding of the overall point being made.
- ***Identify the subordinate points.*** Notice the smaller subpoints that make up the main point, and make sure you understand how they relate to the main point. If a particular subpoint doesn't clearly relate to the main point you've identified, you may need to modify your understanding of the main point.
- ***Break the reading into sections.*** Notice which paragraphs make up a piece's introduction, body, and conclusion. Break up the body paragraphs into sections that address the writer's various subpoints.
- ***Distinguish between points, examples, counterarguments.*** Critical reading requires careful attention to what a writer is doing as well as what he or she is saying. When a writer quotes someone else or relays an example of something, ask yourself why this is being done. What point is the example supporting? Is another source being quoted as support for a point or as a counterargument that the writer sets out to address?
- ***Watch for transitions within and between paragraphs.*** In order to follow the logic of a piece of writing, as well as to distinguish between points, examples, and counterarguments, pay attention to the transitional words and phrases writers use. Transitions function like road signs, preparing the reader for what's next.
- ***Read actively and recursively.*** Don't treat reading as a passive, linear progression through a text. Instead, read as though you are engaged in a dialogue with the writer: Ask questions of the text as you read, make notes in the margin, underline key ideas in pencil, put question or exclamation marks next to passages that confuse or excite you. Go back to earlier points once you finish a reading, stop during your reading to recap what's come so far, and move back and forth through a text.

Summarizing and Paraphrasing *Parts* of Sources

1.4 Summarize and paraphrase parts of sources.

Summarizing *Parts* of Sources

To write a summary of a few sentences or paragraphs, follow these steps:

1. Identify the *part* of the source you want to use.
2. Decide whether you want to summarize, paraphrase, or quote from the source.

3. State as briefly as possible your understanding of the author's point.
   - Condense lists into phrases (a list of governors, for example, could be condensed to *current governors*).
   - Reduce multiple examples to a single example (or eliminate examples altogether).
   - Condense stages of a detailed process to a single, descriptive statement.
4. Use your own words. (Quote an occasional word or brief phrase.)
5. Use your own sentence structure. Do not copy the author's sentence structure, substituting your words for the author's.
6. Credit the author. See Chapter 7 for details on citation format.

Here's a paragraph (from a lengthy article) used as a source for a paper on using computers to rebuild distressed communities:

ORIGINAL PASSAGE

In the United States, communities seem to be deteriorating from a complex combination of causes. In the inner cities of big urban centers, many people fear street crime and stay off the streets at night. In the larger suburban and post-suburban areas, many people hardly know their neighbors and "latch key" children often have little adult contact after school. An African proverb which says that "it takes a whole village to raise a child" refers to a rich community life with a sense of mutual responsibility that is difficult to find in many new neighborhoods. . . . Some advocates believe that computer technology in concert with other efforts could play a role in rebuilding community life by improving communication, economic opportunity, civic participation, and education.

—Rob Kling, "Social Relationships in Electronic Forums"

Here's a summary of the source as it might appear on a digital note card:

COMPUTER POWER TO HELP HEAL BROKEN COMMUNITIES

Using tech tools to communicate may keep people talking within communities that are in decline. A community depends on people acting in the interests of neighbors for the common good. Computers can be part of the solution for rebuilding. (Kling 439)

And here's how this summary (highlighted) might appear in a paper titled "Re-imagining Our Neighborhoods." Notice the citation, which combines the source author's name in the lead-up to the summary and a page reference.

> In a pattern that's all too common, the character of a neighborhood can quickly change when good jobs disappear. Neighborhoods once anchored by middle-class manufacturing work disintegrate as homeowners are laid off. Unable to pay the mortgage, people abandon their homes and urban blight

> sets in, both physical and social. Houses with weed-choked lots and boarded-up windows form the outward signs of decline. Those who remain give up on their neighborhood. They might stop visiting on summer evenings or stop calling to see if everything's okay when a walkway goes unshoveled in winter. Hope may be on the way, however, in programs that introduce computers to marginal neighborhoods. According to sociologist Rob Kling, using computers to communicate may keep people talking within communities that are in decline. A community, after all, is built on people acting in the interests of neighbors for the common good. Computers can be part of the solution for rebuilding (439).
>
> In one neighborhood in Detroit, . . .

CAN A SUMMARY BE OBJECTIVE? By definition, writing a summary requires you to select and restate some parts of the original source and leave out other parts. Deciding what to select and what to leave out calls for your personal judgment, so a summary is in one sense a work of interpretation. And certainly your interpretation of a passage may differ from another person's.

One factor affecting the nature and quality of your interpretation is prior knowledge. If you're new to the subject of anthropology, say, and you're summarizing a journal article in that field, your summary will likely differ from that of your professor. She's an expert, after all, who will have a much clearer sense of what information is crucial and should be included in a summary.

Still, one must begin somewhere. Every expert at some point was a novice. As you gain experience in a subject area, you'll gain in confidence and accuracy. In most cases it's possible to produce a reasonably objective, and accurate, summary of a passage if you read with attention and make a conscious, good-faith effort to be unbiased—which means not allowing your own feelings on the subject to distort your account of the text.

When to Summarize and Paraphrase

Summarize:

- To present main points of a lengthy passage (article or book)
- To condense long lists or other details

Paraphrase:

- To clarify a short or complex passage
- To emphasize main points

Paraphrasing *Parts* of Sources

Paraphrase a passage when you want to preserve all (or virtually all) the points, major and minor, of a brief original passage and when, for clarity (perhaps the language of the original is especially complex), you want to communicate the

ideas in your own words. To avoid plagiarism when paraphrasing, bear two principles in mind:

1. Use your own words. Quote only an occasional word or brief phrase, if needed.
2. Use your own sentence structure. Do not reproduce the author's sentence structure.

ORIGINAL PASSAGE

We have found out that the distortion in dreams which hinders our understanding of them is due to the activities of a censorship, directed against the unacceptable, unconscious wish-impulses.

—Sigmund Freud

Here's a paraphrase as it might appear on a digital note card. As you can see, it is as long as Freud's original passage.

CENSORSHIP OF DREAMS

It is difficult to understand dreams because they contain distortions. Freud believed that these distortions arise from our internal censor, which attempts to suppress unconscious and forbidden thoughts.

You incorporate paraphrases into your writing just as you do summaries, as illustrated above.

Summarizing Entire Works

1.5 Summarize entire works using a systematic strategy.

Sometimes you will be asked to write stand-alone summaries—brief papers that summarize an entire source. For instance, an instructor may ask you to summarize a lecture, an article, or a book in order to assess your level of understanding. Here are three typical assignments that call for a summary:

Film Studies	Summarize Harvey Greenberg's essay on the film classic *King Kong*.
Mathematics	Read "Structuring Mathematical Proofs" by Uri Leron [*The American Mathematical Monthly* 90 (March 1983): 174–85]. In two to four pages, summarize the concept of linear proof, giving one good example from this course.
Psychology	Summarize Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance.

Guidelines for Writing Summaries

- **Read the passage carefully.** Determine its structure. Identify the author's purpose in writing. (This will help you distinguish between more important and less important information.) Make a note in the margin when you get confused or when you think something is important; highlight or underline points sparingly, if at all.
- **Reread.** This time divide the passage into sections or stages of thought. The author's use of paragraphing will often be a useful guide. Label, on the passage itself, each section or stage of thought. Underline key ideas and terms. Write notes in the margin.
- **Write one-sentence summaries,** on a separate sheet of paper, of each stage of thought.
- **Write a thesis—a one- or two-sentence summary of the entire passage.** The thesis should express the central idea of the passage, as you have determined it from the preceding steps. You may find it useful to follow the approach of most newspaper stories—naming the what, who, why, where, when, and how of the matter. For persuasive passages, summarize in a sentence the author's conclusion. For descriptive passages, indicate the subject of the description and its key feature(s). *Note:* In some cases, a suitable thesis may already be in the original passage. If so, you may want to quote it directly in your summary.
- **Write the first draft of your summary** by (1) combining the thesis with your list of one-sentence summaries or (2) combining the thesis with one-sentence summaries plus significant details from the passage. In either case, eliminate repetition and less important information. Disregard minor details or generalize them (e.g., George W. Bush and Barack Obama might be generalized as "recent presidents"). Use as few words as possible to convey the main ideas.
- **Check your summary against the original passage** and make whatever adjustments are necessary for accuracy and completeness.
- **Revise your summary,** inserting transitional words and phrases where necessary to ensure coherence. Check for style. Avoid a series of short, choppy sentences. Combine sentences for a smooth, logical flow of ideas. Check for grammatical correctness, punctuation, and spelling.

Read, Reread, and Highlight

Here are three goals in writing a stand-alone summary:

1. To state the author's thesis.
2. To state the author's purpose (which will usually be to inform or argue).
3. To state the main ideas that support the thesis.

As we've seen, achieving these goals requires reading with attention. Before summarizing a source, underline key phrases or sentences; circle important words; at each paragraph, write three- to five-word summaries in the margin. If the author has grouped paragraphs according to specific ideas, give these groupings a label. (The writer may already identify such sections for you by providing headings.) See, for example, Jyutika Mehta's article on digital memory enhancements, pages 18–20. Note the use of margin notes and highlights.

Divide into Stages of Thought and Write a Brief Summary of Each Stage of Thought

Before writing a summary, review the sections you've identified and labeled (if the source author has not already provided headings). For each section, convert your margin notes to sentences. Mehta labeled two main sections of her article: "How brains remember" and "Some things are better left forgotten." In addition to these we've labeled the opening and closing sections "Introduction" and "Conclusion." Here are the four sections headings for her article, along with sentences of summary for each:

Introduction: paragraphs 1–3

> Devices to enhance memory are coming. Just as prosthetic limbs improve the function of people who have lost an arm or leg, "neuroprosthetic technology" holds the potential to improve the function of those with diminished memories.

Section 1: How brains remember, paragraphs 4–8

> The brain does not store memories whole "like books on shelves." Rather, it "widely distribute[s]" the constituent parts of memories to various areas associated with functions like sight and smell. A memory is "encode[d]" through connections among areas and can be lost when these connections break down due to disease or the natural aging process.

Section 2: Some things are better left forgotten, paragraphs 9–15

> Mehta claims that "forgetting is almost as critical as remembering" both in terms of what we typically and usefully forget and what we can't forget. We don't need to remember insignificant details (like what we ate for dinner years ago). At the same time, traumas we can't forget can disrupt our lives. Soldiers who can't forget deadly battles can suffer from depression.

Conclusion: paragraphs 16–19

> Brain chips to enhance memory could benefit people, but we should be cautious because, while forgetting can be useful, perfect memory comes with potential problems. Enhanced memories could relieve us of tedious problems like misplacing keys and could also restore function to people with damaged brains. Yet forgetting has its uses in allowing traumatized people and societies to move on from a painful past to new beginnings. Even as they improve our memories, we may need for our own good to "remember to forget."

Write a Thesis: A Brief Summary of the Entire Passage

The thesis is the statement that announces a paper's subject and the claim that you or—in the case of a summary—a source author will be making about that subject. It is the one-sentence conclusion, or main idea, of the selection. The thesis will be the most general statement of your summary and (absent details, of course) can serve *as* a summary.

Every selection you read will have a thesis, a main point. Begin the summary paper with *your* summary of the author's thesis. The thesis may be located at the beginning of the work. This is called a *deductive* organization: main idea first, supporting details following. The author may locate the thesis at the end of the work: specific details first, leading to the main idea. This is called an *inductive* organization. The author might also locate the thesis anywhere between the beginning and the end.

Here's our summary of Jyutika Mehta's thesis for her article on implantable memory devices:

Our Thesis: In the online journal *The Conversation*, brain and communications researcher Jyutika Mehta reports that devices to reduce forgetfulness are coming and advises that we respond cautiously because at least some forgetting is a natural, beneficial part of remembering.

Your brief restatement of the author's thesis is the most important sentence of your summary, and you should rewrite as necessary until you've accurately distilled the author's main idea. (We revised the thesis of Mehta's article three times before settling on the version above.)

Draft 1: Forgetting is important to memory.
Problem: Statement makes no mention of devices to enhance memory.

Draft 2: Devices to improve memory are coming, but we should be cautious in welcoming them.
Problem: Better because it introduces Mehta's caution. But there's no attempt to *explain* the caution.

Draft 3: Devices to reduce forgetfulness are coming, but we should be cautious in welcoming them because at least some forgetting is a natural, beneficial part of remembering.
Problem: No mention of author or source.

Write Your Summary

To organize your summary, join paragraph or section summaries to your version of the thesis. After placing these sentences into paragraph form, revise to ensure the smooth flow of ideas and to eliminate redundancy. Match the length of your summary to your intended use of the summary. As a general rule, the longest summaries should be no longer than one-fourth the length of the original source. If you are summarizing a book, a book chapter, or an especially long article, your summary should be quite a bit shorter than that.

WRITE A ONE- OR TWO-SENTENCE SUMMARY. The briefest summary would consist of the thesis only—and, possibly, a brief expansion to essential points of the passage. You might use a one-sentence summary to introduce a quotation or to make a brief reference to a source.

WRITE A MIDDLE-LENGTH SUMMARY. When you devote a paragraph or more to discussing a source, you may want to introduce it with a longer

summary. Follow the thesis with section summaries. You'll likely need to revise to ensure smooth flow among and to eliminate repetition. Note that we've highlighted transitions.

A Summary of "External Enhancements of Memory May Soon Go High-Tech" by Jyutika Mehta

In the online journal *The Conversation*, brain and communications researcher Jyutika Mehta reports that devices to reduce forgetfulness are coming and advises that we respond cautiously because at least some forgetting is a natural, beneficial part of remembering. The promise of enhanced memory is enormous: Just as prosthetic limbs improve the function of people who have lost an arm or leg, "neuroprosthetic technology" holds out the potential to improve the function of those with diminished memories. The brain, Mehta explains, does not store memories whole "like books on shelves." Rather, it "widely distribute[s]" the constituent parts of memories to various areas associated with functions like sight and smell. A memory is "encode[d]" through connections among areas and can be lost when these connections break down due to disease or the natural aging process. Mehta claims that "forgetting is almost as critical as remembering" both in terms of what we typically and usefully forget and what we can't. We don't need to remember insignificant details like what we ate for dinner years ago. At the same time, traumas we can't forget can disrupt our lives. For instance, soldiers who can't forget deadly battles can suffer from depression or PTSD. Brain chips to enhance memory could benefit many, but we should be cautious about such technology because perfect memory comes with potential problems. True, enhanced memories could relieve us of tedious problems like misplacing keys and could also restore function to people with damaged brains. Yet forgetting has its uses, allowing people and entire societies to move on from painful pasts to new beginnings. Even as technologies that enhance memories improve our memories, for our own good we may need to "remember to forget."

WRITE AN EXPANDED SUMMARY. A third, more detailed kind of summary consists of a thesis followed by summaries of most of the selection's paragraphs. Use an expanded summary when you intend to devote significant discussion to the source—if, for instance, you are planning to evaluate it. In this case you would summarize more closely, including more details so that you would introduce each point thoroughly (and neutrally) before evaluating it. This is the approach taken by the student who wrote the model critique in Chapter 2. In that paper, the writer devotes three full paragraphs of summary to the article she is evaluating. The point to remember is that a summary has no fixed length (although by definition it is a *brief* restatement); rather, you should expand it and trim it according to your needs.

Where Do We Find Written Summaries?

Here are just a few of the types of writing that involve summary:

Academic Writing

- **Critique papers.** Summarize material in order to critique it.
- **Synthesis papers.** Summarize to show relationships between sources.
- **Analysis papers.** Summarize theoretical perspectives before applying them.
- **Research papers.** Note taking and reporting research require summary.
- **Literature reviews.** Overviews of work presented in brief summaries.
- **Argument papers.** Summarize evidence and opposing arguments.
- **Essay exams.** Demonstrate understanding of course materials through summary.

Workplace Writing

- **Policy briefs.** Condense complex public policy.
- **Business plans.** Summarize costs, relevant environmental impacts, and other important matters.
- **Memos, letters, and reports.** Summarize procedures, meetings, product assessments, expenditures, and more.
- **Medical charts.** Record patient data in summarized form.
- **Legal briefs.** Summarize relevant facts of cases.

Summarizing Challenging Sources

1.6 Write a summary of an especially challenging source.

Inevitably, you will encounter readings that challenge you—that on first glance may seem too difficult or too long for easy comprehension. When you encounter such material, use the skills learned above on attentive reading and the skills learned here to read and understand, and then demonstrate your understanding by writing a summary. Take heart: If you work systematically, you will make progress. Remember that you don't need to read a difficult source all in one sitting. If, in previewing the selection, you can identify sections (or if the author has labeled sections), read and make margin notes for one section at a sitting. Return to the assignment regularly, reading a section (or two) at a time, and soon enough you'll have completed the task.

In "The Baby in the Well," by Paul Bloom, we find a fascinating but challenging essay on the topic of "empathy": the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's circumstance and "feel his or her pain." We've eased the difficulty of the piece in three ways:

- Leading off with a summary
- Providing section headings, which do not appear in the original *New Yorker* essay
- Highlighting the thesis

When encountering challenging selections on your own, you won't have the benefit of these aids—although authors will, on occasion, divide their work with section headings. Still, by reading systematically, you *can* take on difficult material and understand it.

Reading and Summarizing Challenging Sources

- Use your preview skills.
- Realize you may not complete your reading in one sitting.
- Expect to be confused. When you encounter sentences that confuse you, reread them. Place a question mark in the margin. Move on—and when you complete your reading, revisit passages you've highlighted with a question mark.
- Identifying sections as you read—groupings of related paragraphs—is a key to understanding: The better you can divide the whole into parts, distinguishing main ideas from supporting ideas, the clearer the entire piece will be.

Demonstration Summary of Paul Bloom's "The Baby in the Well"

Read this summary of "The Baby in the Well" before reading the essay itself. After reading, you can follow the process of how we wrote section summaries and prepared to write the summary.

> In "The Baby in the Well: The Case against Empathy," Paul Bloom argues that, while empathy is important in fostering positive human relationships, we should prefer reason as a guide to social policy because empathy's focus on the distress of one individual may blind us to the suffering of thousands whose names and faces we do not know. Bloom begins with an uncontroversial point: Many believe that what makes us moral beings is empathy, the ability to see the world from others' points of view, to feel their pain and distress, and to feel the impulse to help them. Most people are capable of empathy, a quality Bloom believes is necessary not only for human progress but also for the survival of our species.
>
> There is a downside to empathy, however: Empathy tends to focus on the distress of individuals or relatively small groups of individuals whose names and faces we know, a phenomenon known as the "identifiable victim effect." But the same people who feel empathetic toward individuals can be oblivious to large-scale catastrophes such as genocide, mass starvation, and deaths due to preventable illnesses as well as to routine homicides that occur in the thousands every year. Because our empathetic impulses may overpower our "dispassionate analysis of a situation," empathy can "lead us astray." When we act only on impulses of empathy, we may help a relatively small number of identifiable individuals, but we often ignore many other individuals who don't have "names or stories" or with whose political values we don't sympathize.