

Engaging Questions A Guide to Writing

Third Edition

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ENGAGING OUESTIONS: A GUIDE TO WRITING, THIRD EDITION

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DEDICATION

For James L. Kinneavy

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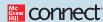
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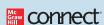
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WHY ENGAGING QUESTIONS?

The Spirit of Writing as Discovery

Engaging Questions is dedicated to the spirit of writing as discovery, encouraging students to interact—with the texts they read and write, as well as with peers, professors, and others involved in a writing project. By emphasizing interaction and critical thinking, Engaging Questions transforms passive learners into active learners empowered to ask their own questions and pursue those questions wherever they lead:

Judge a person by their questions, rather than their answers. VOLTAIRE

- In reading and thinking before writing, to interpret texts and assignments and to evaluate the credibility of sources.
- In planning and organizing, to investigate the writing situation, to find a topic, and to formulate a coherent thesis.
- In drafting, to consider choices of style, voice, and genre and question the effectiveness of the choices made.
- In revising and editing, to anticipate readers' experience with the text and see where changes could make the text more readable and effective.

BEST PRACTICES

Sources of Information for Profiles

- Besides interviewing the person you are profiling, talk to people who know your subject as well as or better than you do, such as friends, associates, family members, and other relatives.
- Find out if your person has written anything that you might gain access to: articles, books, texts for speeches, diaries, journals, blogs, even e-mail exchanges she or he might be willing to share.
- 3. Ask if you may look at scrapbooks or photo albums your subject might
- 4. Look for information via Google, news stories you can find via your local paper's index or your library's databases (see pages 364–66), Who's Who publications, résumés, bios written by your subject or by someone else, and so on. Ask your subject for help in accessing such information.
- Arrange to attend meetings or other gatherings of people in which your subject plays a prominent role.

CONCEPT CLOSE-UP

Visualizing the Structure

A case has the following structure:

The claim answers the question, What are you asserting?
Reasons answer the question, Why do you make this claim?
Evidence answers the question, What information confirms your reasoning?

Engaging Questions works equally well as a print text in a traditional classroom or as an ebook in courses of all kinds. No matter the setting or format of your course, and regardless of the kinds of writing you teach, everything comes together in the art of questioning, in writing as discovery.

An Inquiry-Based Approach

With *Engaging Questions*, students will learn to see writing as essential to thinking, discussing, and reading, all of which develop around the questions they pose and pursue. These key questions are built into each assignment chapter, guiding students through a process that is both creative and critical, inviting genuine engagement, and preparing them to become skilled thinkers and confident writers.

Part I of *Engaging Questions* assists students in developing a set of highly transferable skills that they will return to again and again whenever critical thinking, reading, and writing are in play. Students will learn to ask fundamental questions about their own writing, as well as that of others, such as:

- What is the rhetorical situation?
- What is critical reading?
- What could I write about?

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Preface



Parts II, III, and IV introduce students to the specific questions that apply to each kind of writing and to such related activities as doing research, making an argument, avoiding plagiarism, and speaking to groups. For example:

- How do writers make a case?
- How do I write a visual analysis?
- How do I decide if a source is reliable?
- How do I deliver an oral presentation?

In the third edition of *Engaging Questions*, each chapter will open with a list of such questions, establishing the framework of that chapter as well as the learning objectives covered therein. The result is an innovative, comprehensive, and coherent approach to writing instruction.

ENGAGING QUESTIONS

In this chapter, you will engage with the following questions

- What does it mean to edit a piece of writing?
- Why do writers edit their work?
- How do writers evaluate their work for coherence and flow?
- What key points can writers keep in mind when editing their work?

THE ART OF QUESTIONING

What Really Persuades Us?

Many people say they are persuaded only by reasons and evidence. That is, logos matters most. Aristotle thought that ethos might be more powerful: If we think that a writer is intelligent, well informed, and trustworthy and has genuine concern for our needs, we will tend to believe most of what that person says. Look at advertising and you will probably conclude that pathos is the prime persuader. Nearly all ads appeal to emotions and attitudes most of all.

What do you think? Consider the last important decision you made. How did you persuade yourself to do one thing rather than another? If someone tried to persuade you, what kinds of appeal did the person use? Which of these appeals had the most impact on the decision you made?

Highlights of the Third Edition

The third edition of *Engaging Questions* continues to use critical thinking, reading, and writing as its framework for instruction. The new edition also features the following significant updates:

- The table of contents has been redesigned to foreground the instruction and assignment types that are critical to the first-year writing course and makes this coverage accessible in the print edition as well as in the ebook. Two new chapters feature coverage of literary analysis—including a new student sample paper—and writing résumés and letters of application.
- Learning objectives tied to each main section of chapter coverage align across print and digital editions, as well as in instructor support materials. Within the text, these objectives are presented as sets of questions for students to consider at the start of each chapter. Instructors will find the same content, posed as conventional objectives with Bloom's levels and verbiage, within the Instructor's Manual.
- Annotated reading selections, including formatted student papers, are now accessible within the ebook and conform to WCAG design requirements.

Here is a quick look at some of the other changes you will find within the chapters:

Chapter 1: Critical Thinking and the Art of Questioning

New op-ed example addresses the dangers of "alternative facts."

Chapter 2: Reading Critically and the Art of Questioning

■ New A-head section instructs students on "dealing with the difficulties of scholarly texts."

Chapter 4: Narrating Experiences

New professional reading by Brent Staples, "Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space," exemplifies narration in relation to the author's own experience with everyday racism.







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Preface

Chapter 5: Describing People and Places

Coverage of profiles has been expanded to cover "describing people and places," including a new professional reading selection profiling New Jersey's Meadowlands.

Chapter 6: Presenting Information

- New professional informative reading presents data on the educational and professional opportunities available to young people today.
- Throughout, refreshed examples demonstrate how to evaluate research effectively.

Chapter 7: Exploring a Concept

New professional example of concept exploration, written by sociologist Allan Johnson, asks the question "What Is a 'System of Privilege'?"; a second example features Mark Twain's classic "Corn-pone Opinions," an exploration of the concept of conformity.

Chapter 8: Comparing Perspectives

• Features a revised student paper that compares perspectives on the ethics of eating meat.

Chapter 10: Making an Argument

- Previously titled "Making a Case," this chapter teaches students how to develop their own opinions on controversial topics into a well-supported case, or argument.
- Features a new professional example by teacher and blogger José Vilson who makes the case for more teachers of color.

Chapter 11: Arguing to Persuade

Previously titled "Appealing for Action," this chapter now emphasizes instruction on persuasion and features two new professional examples of persuasive writing that make appeals for action—an op-ed from the LA Times on the banning of plastic bags and an article on the practice of forest bathing.

Chapter 12: Writing an Evaluation

Presents two new examples of evaluation, including a review of a smartphone and a professional report evaluating "the promises and pitfalls" of online education platforms.

Chapter 13: Choosing Modes of Development

- Now available in the print edition of Engaging Questions, this chapter includes updated coverage of the various modes writers use to develop their work, as well as guidance on how these modes can be applied across assignment types.
- New textual and visual examples throughout demonstrate modes of conceptual description, scientific description, and comparison and contrast.
- New professional reading selection examines and calls out specific examples of the range of modes covered within the chapter.

Chapter 14: Editing Fundamentals

New professional examples demonstrate the moves a writer makes when editing for paragraph sequence and transitions.







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Chapter 17: Evaluating Sources

- Updated discussion and examples of evaluating sources for credibility and reliability.
- Entirely new section addresses the question "How do I recognize false information?"

Chapter 18: Incorporating Source Materials

New professional reading by a specialist in information technology includes annotations that demonstrate effective note-taking on a source.

Chapter 20: Documenting Your Sources: MLA

Includes new instruction for citing online sources, including a new example citation for a video on YouTube.

Chapter 21: Documenting Your Sources: APA

■ Fully updated to reflect the latest guidelines put forth by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 7th edition.

New! Chapter 25: Writing a Literary Analysis

- Entirely new coverage of literary analysis now includes instruction on how to interpret both poetry and short stories.
- New coverage of poetry analysis walks students through Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."
- Chapter features full text of Kate Chopin's "Désirée's Baby" accompanied by a new student paper that analyzes the story's themes for a contemporary audience.
- New examples throughout demonstrate how to ask questions about the features of a story; how to find an angle for a literary analysis; how to think as a writer and claim voice; and how to handle topic sentences and conclusions, including first drafts, revisions, and edited versions from one student's paper.

Chapter 32: Designing Documents and Using Graphics

- Now available in the print edition, this coverage includes updated examples of graphics and document types throughout.
- Chapter now puts special focus on models for business documents created on the job; an entirely new chapter (Chapter 39) addresses writing résumés and letters of application.

Chapter 34: Writing Portfolios

 Features updated coverage of preparing electronic portfolios and puts emphasis on the importance of backing up all work.

Chapter 35: Mastering Essay Exams

Updated examples of essay exam topics and questions.

Chapter 37: Writing a Review

• Features new professional review of a restaurant.

New! Chapter 39: Writing Résumés and Job Letters

Entirely new chapter instructs students on writing to gain employment, including how to write résumés and letters of application.







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For more information on any of these features, please email a member of the McGraw-Hill English team at english@mheducation.com.

Co-requisite Course Support

Engaging Questions also comes with a pre-built Connect course that provides customizable assignments for instructors to choose from, including support for co-requisite models. Within the pre-built course, suggested assignment combinations provide students with plenty of practice in critical reading and writing, as well as choosing correct style, grammar, and punctuation.

In addition, co-requisite course support is now available in the *Engaging Questions* Instructor's Manual. Within this resource, pacing guides for each chapter of the text offer co-requisite class support activities, as well as a chart to help instructors align co-requisite instruction with the goals of the composition course. Please contact your sales representative, or a member of the McGraw-Hill English team, at english@mheducation.com, for more information.

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Exploring Writingand Reading

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1 Critical Thinking and the Art of Questioning

2 Reading Critically and the Art of Questioning

3 Writing and the Art of Questioning







CHAPTER 1

Critical Thinking and the Art of Questioning

ENGAGING QUESTIONS

In this chapter, you will engage with the following questions:

- What is the relationship between questioning and critical thinking, reading, and writing?
- What is the relationship between thinking critically and stating opinions?
- Why is it important to question meaning in language?
- Why is it important to question the accuracy of statements?
- How do writers think critically about statements based on values and beliefs?
- What are the benefits of critical thinking?

MOST PEOPLE EQUATE INTELLIGENCE AND EDUCATION WITH KNOWL-

EDGE—that is, having a large store of information in one's head. Of course, knowledge is important. A college education is partly about acquiring more knowledge by taking a wide range of courses. However, what you can do with what you know matters more. You can look up information you lack. You cannot look up the ability to think critically, interpret information, evaluate it, and put it to new uses.

By **thinking critically** we mean the ability to examine anything you or someone else has done, said, or written to discover how sound or useful it is. Critical thinking depends on **the art of questioning,** which means finding, asking, and pursuing the questions that enable you to examine what you or someone else has done, said, or written. Thinking critically and questioning go hand in hand. Together, they promote genuine engagement with writing and the other language activities essential to success in college, career, and life.

Why Is Questioning Important?

Questioning helps you become engaged when performing any of the following language activities:

■ **Thinking** Thinking underlies everything we do. Without it, any other activity—including discussion, reading, and writing—is meaningless. Critical thinking first begins with questioning what we think, read, observe, or hear. Through critical thinking, we examine and revise our beliefs and opinions.





- **Discussing** Talking with other people, which means listening to them and asking them questions, not just holding the floor ourselves, has enormous value. It is central not only to forming friendships but also to learning from and collaborating with classmates, colleagues, and others. Discussion allows us to try out and refine first thoughts in response to the thoughts and reactions of other people. Thought nurtures discussion; discussion nurtures thought.
- Reading Reading is central to both college and career. It fuels our thinking and discussions. Whether the text is a magazine or a book, an e-mail or a report, reading it effectively means not just passing the eyes over the page but going beyond the surface to understand and question what the text says. Like thinking critically, reading critically requires thoughtful engagement.
- Writing Because writing requires us to express our ideas completely and precisely, it is central to both college and career. Lab reports, essay exams, and research papers are common tools used to measure whether students have absorbed facts, mastered concepts, and become engaged enough to think critically and creatively about what they have learned. Writing does not end with graduation. In our knowledge-based economy, people spend up to 50 percent of their time at work composing e-mails, reports, proposals, letters, and so on.¹ Even in community and personal activities, from writing letters to the editor to updating a Facebook page, writing is how we represent ourselves. Most importantly, writing our thoughts down helps us examine them; writing is a tool for questioning what we think and read and discuss.

Thinking, discussing, reading, and writing are too deeply intertwined to describe fully; **Figure 1.1** will help you envision how intertwined they are.

To learn more about reading critically, see pages 13–31.

BEST PRACTICES

The Importance of Informal Writing

Throughout Engaging Questions, we will invite you to write in various informal ways. Each Writer's Notebook provides valuable informal writing practice, but the activities can take many different forms, such as online journals, files on your computer, or even old-fashioned notebooks.

Informal writing supports all of the language activities described above. While thinking, people make outlines, flowcharts, lists, and notes. During class discussions and meetings, people write notes to hold onto interesting ideas. While reading, people annotate the margins of books or ebooks with informal notes to themselves. And writing itself usually begins with informal writing, sometimes called freewriting, intended to get early thoughts out where they can be examined. The more you write informally, the easier it will be for you to write in more formal ways.





^{1.} Deborah Brandt. The Rise of Writing: Redefining Mass Literacy. Cambridge UP, 2015.

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FIGURE 1.1

The Circle of Language Activities

What is the common thread in the activities that these people are engaging in?

Top: © Flying Colours Ltd/Getty Images, RF; right: © Radius Images/ Getty Images; bottom: © Laura Doss/Getty Images; left: © Ingram Publishing/Getty Images, RF



Thinking, discussing, reading, and especially writing all start with asking questions. The sections that follow demonstrate how focusing on a few crucial questions—such as What do I really think? What does that word mean? Is that statement accurate? and Is that statement true?—can help us become more critical thinkers, readers, writers, and discussion participants. These and other questions will appear throughout this book. We hope you will keep them with you and use them to dig deeper and discover what is important to you and to your readers.

ACTIVITY 1.1 Collaborative Activity

Exploring the Connection between Writing and Discussing

Spend five minutes freewriting (writing nonstop) about a question that interests you, such as a course to take as an elective or the qualities that make a good friend. Then, discuss these questions in groups of three or four. Add to your freewriting any further thoughts that occurred as a result of discussion. Finally, write a paragraph about this process: Did your freewriting stimulate thought about your topic? Why or why not? To what extent did discussion help refine your ideas?





What Do I Really Think?

"What do I really think?" is a serious and challenging question. It is serious because critical thinking must be honest, and it is challenging because being honest is not easy. Sometimes students are taught to keep their opinions out of their writing, yet critical thinking cannot begin without opinions. Frequently, we know what we are supposed to think because other people tell us what the "right" opinions are. To get beyond what "everybody thinks," however, we must consider what we really think, as student Tony Lee does in the following blog post.

Steroids for Your Brain

Coffee. Red Bull. Adderall.

Set for another study session, I am enhancing my focus and ability to stay awake so that I can do better in my classes. The truth of the matter is that with the drugs and energy supplements I can push myself to study longer and work more than someone not taking the supplements can. Basically, I'm taking steroids for my brain to help me achieve a goal. Unlike steroids, however, there are no long-lasting side effects, and my reward is knowledge.

Is using these drugs a form of cheating? Is using them similar to an athlete taking steroids? The thing with steroids is that they don't themselves build muscle; you have to be willing to put time in to lift weights. In the same way, although Adderall or Ritalin helps you stay awake and focus on what you study, you actually have to open a book and learn the material. So is it any different from physical enhancers?

Lee knows what he thinks and has expressed his opinion clearly. The problem is that too often thinking *stops* with stating an opinion, whereas critical thinking *begins* with an opinion. Now we have something to examine, to explore with questions. What questions can we ask?

What Does That Word Mean?

The meaning of even the most ordinary word needs examination. What prevents us from asking, "What does that word mean?" is the assumption that "everybody knows" what it means, and therefore we do not need to ask. The assumption is usually wrong.

For example, what does *enhancement* mean? It means *anything* people can do to improve their ability to perform a task better. Certainly Adderall, a drug used to treat attention deficit disorder (ADD), can increase concentration and therefore enhance Lee's ability to study. However, if Lee takes Adderall on a doctor's prescription to treat ADD, what he is doing may qualify not as enhancement, but only as restoring the normal ability to concentrate.

What does cheating mean? It means violating the rules that all participants in an activity are supposed to observe. Steroid use is dangerous and unwise for people who







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train with weights, but it is cheating in professional baseball because the rules governing the game prohibit it.

So what can we say about Lee's question, "Is using these drugs a form of cheating?" The answer is: It depends. It would be cheating if the honor code at Lee's university prohibited the use of brain-enhancing drugs. Otherwise, it cannot be called cheating.

Just by examining what the words *enhancement* and *cheating* mean, we can answer Lee's question and therefore advance the thinking begun in his blog post.

ACTIVITY 1.2 Writer's Notebook

To learn more about exploring a concept, see pages 161–91.

Reflecting on Key Terms

Return to the question you freewrote about in Activity 1.1 on page 4. In one or two paragraphs, explore the meaning of a key term, such as *elective* or *friend*.

Is That Statement Accurate?

What other questions might help us examine Lee's blog post? Just as we can fail to examine the meaning of words because we think "everybody knows" what they mean, we can fail to examine statements because "everybody knows" that they are accurate.

Consider Lee's statement that drugs like Adderall have "no long-lasting side effects." Is this accurate? The answer to the question is a matter of fact. To answer it, we must locate authoritative information. Perhaps Lee is right, perhaps he is wrong, or perhaps the long-term effects depend on the individual, how much the person takes, and for how long. Whatever the case may be, the question needs to be asked and answered, or else we may assume that a statement is accurate when it is not. Letting inaccurate statements slide by is another common way critical thinking can go wrong; it is just as common as not thinking about what words mean.

ACTIVITY 1.3 In Your Own Work

To learn how to conduct an effective Internet search, see Chapter 16, pages 366–69.

Checking the Accuracy of Statements

Freewrite for five minutes on an opinion you hold, explaining why you believe that opinion is correct. Then look over what you wrote. Did you make any statements that you are not positive are totally accurate? Did you make any statements that you think are accurate but that someone else might challenge? Do an Internet search to check the accuracy of any factual statements you made. Then revise your statements to eliminate inaccuracies and to incorporate information that improves what you wrote.

Is That Statement True?

There are many other questions we could ask about Lee's blog post. A short list of such questions follows on pages 8-9. First, let's consider a general point: If we are truly dedicated to critical thinking, then nobody should get a free pass. We have





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been considering a student's blog post, but the same process can be applied to the work of others, no matter who they are. Let's consider the passage below, excerpted from a book by Michael Walzer, a distinguished philosopher:

My subject is toleration—or, perhaps better, the peaceful coexistence of groups of people with different histories, cultures, and identities, which is what toleration makes possible. I begin with the proposition that peaceful coexistence (of a certain sort: I am not writing here about the coexistence of masters and slaves) is always a good thing.

-MICHAEL WALZER, ON TOLERATION

We value "toleration" and "peaceful coexistence," so we are likely to agree with Walzer's proposition without thinking it through. Nevertheless, we should resist this temptation and ask, "Is peaceful coexistence always a good thing?"

Note that we are asking a question that is different from the one we asked about Adderall's long-term side effects. That one-"Is it accurate to say that Adderall has no long-term side effects?"-is a question of fact. This one-"Is peaceful coexistence always a good thing?"-is a question of value. Data, or facts, can answer the first question, but no amount of data can answer the second, because questions about what is good or desirable are questions of belief and not of accuracy. The answers to questions of belief must be based on our knowledge and experience.

How, then, can we think critically about Walzer's statement that peaceful coexistence is always a good thing? The sentence in parentheses—"I am not writing here about the coexistence of masters and slaves"-offers one way to think about what he says. Clearly, Walzer does not believe that everything should be tolerated. He excludes masters and slaves because he considers slavery intolerable. What other conditions might also be intolerable?

ACTIVITY 1.4 Collaborative Activity

Thinking through What Walzer Says

In groups of two or three, discuss the limits of toleration. What behavior can we peacefully coexist with and what behavior must we oppose by persuasion, law, or force? For instance, can we tolerate organizations in the United States that promote terrorism and other forms of violent protest? How long can we peacefully coexist with Iran when its government seeks the destruction of Israel? Then write one or two paragraphs in which you explore your beliefs about this topic. ■

What Do You Gain from Thinking Critically?

You gain a number of things by devoting time and effort to thinking through a statement like the one Walzer made about toleration and peaceful coexistence:

1. Instead of letting what he says slide by, your mind is engaged with what you are reading.







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When you think critically and respond thoughtfully, you take part in the conversation—a key goal of education.

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- 2. You have something to look for as you read and to talk about. If you go on to read the book that contains Walzer's passage, you will read in part to see if the author deals with the relation between tolerance and peaceful coexistence in a way that answers your questions and resolves your doubts.
- 3. You become interested in words and the relation of words to reality. You are not only thinking but also *thinking as a writer thinks*, as a person who works with words and their meanings. If you write about tolerance and peaceful coexistence yourself, you are much better prepared to do so because you thought critically about what Walzer said. Indeed, *the very ability to say something of your own depends on asking questions*. Otherwise you can do little more than repeat what someone else has said.
- 4. You claim power by asking and pursuing questions.

 Usually people defer to authority figures like Walzer and let him ask the questions. Asking one yourself can help you claim authority. All it takes is finding a good question, being willing to ask it, and then pursuing it wherever it leads.
- **5.** You take part in the conversation—a key goal of education—by thinking and responding thoughtfully. When you ask a question, you show that you are listening carefully enough to think of a question worth asking.

In sum, from practicing the art of questioning you gain the ability to think critically, to determine what you really think, to challenge what "everybody knows," and to decide for yourself what is really true and why. We invite you to turn the world upside down. Instead of being satisfied with obvious answers, learn to value questions. For only when you pose questions, especially those that challenge the obvious answers, can real thinking begin.

THE ART OF QUESTIONING

Common Critical Thinking Questions

In this chapter we have seen the value of asking four critical thinking questions:

- 1. What do I really think?
- 2. What does that word mean?
- 3. Is that statement accurate?
- 4. Is that statement true?

There are many more such questions. Indeed, any question that helps you explore what you or someone else has said is a good question. Here are a few more commonly asked critical thinking questions.





5. What does "x" assume?

Almost every statement is based on assumptions. Asking questions can help us determine whether we should accept or challenge assumptions. For example, consider this statement: "Jane is smart; her IQ is 130." It assumes that the tests purporting to measure intelligence are reliable. Because the reliability of these tests is frequently disputed, we can challenge this assumption.

6. What does "x" imply?

Asking questions about what follows from a statement can help us determine whether we should accept it. For example, if someone says, "Internet privacy should be protected no matter what," then you can ask, "Are you willing to give up free Internet access to protect your privacy?" "Are you willing to protect the privacy of terrorists?" You can ask these questions because the statement implies them.

7. Is "x" a good analogy?

Frequently statements are based on analogies or comparisons. The claim that animals have rights, for example, is based on an analogy, a comparison with people's rights, such as the right to vote or the right to a trial by jury. Obviously animals do not have the *same* rights as human beings, so what rights should they have and why?

8. How many kinds of "x" can we distinguish?

Often a single word or concept has many meanings. Love can mean the feelings of a parent for a child or a lover for the beloved. The biblical command to "love thy neighbor as thyself" has nothing to do with emotions. Here love means treating others with courtesy and respect. Many concepts are like "love"; they are used to refer to numerous situations or behaviors. We often need to distinguish among the meanings of a word.

9. What is a good example of "x"?

Thinking of concrete examples can often help us understand and think critically about abstract ideas. For example, *peaceful coexistence* may initially seem a wonderful thing. However, when we think about a concrete example of peaceful coexistence, such as Britain and France peacefully coexisting with Nazi Germany in the 1930s, we realize that it may come at a high price.

10. What are the likely consequences of "x"?

With any proposal for action, we should consider what is likely to happen. If someone says, "We should withdraw our troops from Afghanistan as soon as we can," we should ask questions like the following: "If we pull out, will Afghanistan again fall under Taliban control?" "Will the Taliban allow al-Qaeda to reestablish a base of operations there?" "What will happen to women and girls there?"





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READING 1.1

Alternative Facts: Bad for Society and Business

VIRGIL SCUDDER

ruth and trust, two cornerstones of a smoothfunctioning democratic society, are having a bad year—in fact, several bad years.

In a recent study, the highly regarded Edelman Trust Barometer for 2017 showed the largest-ever drop in trust across institutions of government, business, media and non-government organizations. CEO of a public relations firm and author of World Class Communication (2012), Virgil Scudder wrote this op-ed in November 2017 for the South Florida Sun Sentinel. Arguing that a democratic society cannot function well without truth and trust, Scudder joins a chorus of voices warning us that the decrease in "honest and ethical behavior" since the 2016 election must be taken seriously. Nothing less than the health of society depends on truth and trust.

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Among other things, it indicated that an average person posting a statement online is generally more likely to be believed and trusted than a science expert or business or government leader.

Edelman senior vice president Kety Esquivel said, "The cycle of distrust is magnified by a media echo chamber that reinforces personal beliefs while shutting out opposing points of view."

The foundation of trust is truth—the ability to believe that what we are told is factual and presented in context. But truth can be hard to discern these days. Enter the era of "alternative facts."

The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was fond of saying, "Everybody is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts." Too many people, especially in politics and in business today, haven't read their Moynihan. What they say and do fly in the face of honest and ethical behavior.

Hasn't that always been the case? Yes, but seemingly to a much lesser degree.

A global auto company fakes emission tests to put cars on the road that can increase deaths and illness from excessive air pollution. A major bank creates false accounts for customers and charges them fees for services they never signed up for. Politicians put out numbers on such issues as taxation and climate change that are pure fabrications. Actions like these are almost invariably accompanied by lies, evasions or deceptions

Tom Hudson, vice president of news at WLRN [TV, Miami, Florida] said, "The current environment, especially fake news charges and attacks on media, is corrosive to our civil conversation, erodes our sense of community, and unmoors our society from being able to have civil debates and conversations about some of our biggest problems."

Florida International University journalism professor Fred Blevens, PhD, agrees, saying our society needs more news literacy and critical thinking, two things that he stresses in his classes.





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Unethical behavior, including putting out information that is false or misleading, not only confuses the public but can take a great toll on a business, including fines, loss of reputation and alienated customers, according to Travis Winslow, vice president of ethics and compliance at Carnival Corporation. Winslow believes every company needs a strong ethics program that is enforced. Winslow notes, "The purpose of having ethical standards is protection of the bottom line. Without trust, customers won't come back."

Alfred Sanchez, president and CEO of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, sees the building of trust through ethical behavior as essential to the continued growth and prosperity of the entire region. He puts it this way: "In large part, the South Florida business community is a close network of companies that rely on each other for consistent growth. Operating under unethical business practices will not only undermine a company's reputation but can also impact other companies' growth potential."

A good reputation based on ethical behavior is also an important factor in an individual's career success. Many people have lost high positions at the peak of their careers when unethical behavior in their early days suddenly comes to light.

For the good of our country, our institutions and all of us as individuals, the era of deception, blind acceptance of "alternative facts" and listening only to people who reinforce our views must end. Holding our leaders and institutions to truth-telling and ethical behavior will bring back the trust our society so desperately needs.

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■ Writer's Notebook

Asking Critical Questions

Analyze the reading selection by asking one or more of the ten critical questions listed on pages 8–9 and write a paragraph answering your question or questions. Exchange paragraphs with other students and then, in class discussion, address all the concerns and issues your class found worth discussing. ■

CREDITS

page 5: Tony Lee. "Steroids for Your Brain." *Another View, Blogspot*, 26 Oct. 2008. page 7: Michael Walzer. *On Toleration*. Yale University Press, 1997. page 11: Scudder,

Virgil. (2017). "Alternative Facts: Bad for Society and Business." *South Florida Sun Sentinel*. Reprinted by permission of Virgil Scudder. All rights reserved.







CHAPTER 2

Reading Critically and the Art of Questioning

ENGAGING QUESTIONS

In this chapter, you will engage with the following questions:

- What does it mean to read critically?
- What kinds of information do readers use to make inferences?
- How do writers use questions to interact with a text?
- How do writers interact with difficult scholarly texts?
- How do writers use questions to find suitable topics for a response essay?
- How do the elements of the rhetorical situation apply to the writing process for a personal response essay?

WHY INCLUDE A CHAPTER ON READING IN A BOOK ABOUT WRITING?

Reading is complementary to writing. It provides the raw material for having something to say. It also increases vocabulary, making it easier to think and express ideas. And it develops the art of questioning and critical thinking described in Chapter 1. The habit of questioning when you read carries over to the habit of questioning when you write, allowing writers to see where their writing needs rethinking and revising.

There are many ways to read, depending on your purpose. Skimming may be appropriate when you are looking for bits of information. Slower, repeated reading is needed when your goal is to understand and retain the specialized information in textbooks. When the goal deepens from just gathering information to following an author's train of thought in order to respond to his or her ideas and opinions, then critical reading is necessary. Most of the reading you do in college—and in business—requires this kind of critical engagement.

What Is Critical Reading?

Critical reading is active and involved interaction with a text, not just reading to find out what it says, but reading to respond to it by asking and answering questions. Reading critically is like engaging in a silent dialogue with the text and its author. When we read, we seldom think about our dialogue with the text, but we are often unconsciously asking and answering questions like the following:

What does this word mean, based on the words around it?

What is likely to come next?





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Is the author being ironic?

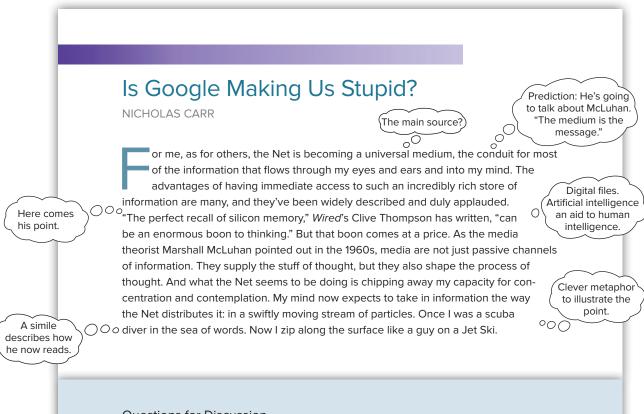
Why do I find this part of the text confusing?

Is this a convincing argument?

What do I think about this new idea?

Through questions like these, we not only monitor our comprehension but construct our own ideas about the meaning of a text.

The following passage provides an example of a reader's dialogue with a text. In this excerpt from an Atlantic Monthly article, the writer is concerned that his use of the Internet is undermining his ability to read deeply.



Questions for Discussion

- 1. Do you agree with Carr that using the Internet reduces your ability to concentrate when reading? How would you describe the difference between your experience of reading online and reading a printed book? Are there some kinds of texts for which you prefer one medium over the other?
- 2. Marshall McLuhan is famous for saying, "The medium is the message." Discuss what this means. Do you think the medium (printed versus online, for example) of your communication affects the message? For example, consider how e-mail messages differ from text messages or posts on Twitter or Facebook.





How Does Critical Reading Work?

What distinguishes critical reading from reading to get the gist is the ability to find underlying meanings, to "read between the lines." Reading between the lines means following complex lines of thought, understanding what is implied but not stated explicitly, and noting how the parts add up to construct the big picture. An important skill for reading between the lines is the ability to draw inferences from evidence in the text.

CONCEPT CLOSE-UP

Drawing Inferences

Inferences are educated guesses about what we do not know, based on facts we do know. In a windowless classroom, for example, we may not know whether it has started to rain, but by observing students entering with wet hair and soaked jackets, we would be able to infer that it is raining.

Readers infer meanings of unfamiliar words by looking for synonyms or, better yet, patterns of synonyms in a text. Consider the sentences below from the reading selection on page 13:

Unfamiliar word

Context clue

Synonym for

For me, as for others, the Net is becoming a universal medium, the conduit for most of the information that flows through my eyes and ears and into my mind. . . . As the media theorist Marshall McLuhan pointed out in the 1960s, media are not just passive channels of information.

If the word conduit is unfamiliar, you can infer its meaning because you know that liquids usually "flow" and that "channels" (like the English Channel) are waterways. Putting these pieces of information together, you realize that conduit must mean a pipeline or waterway.

Readers also infer meaning by bringing outside knowledge to a text. When Clive Thompson, quoted in the passage on page 13, talks about the "perfect recall of silicon memory," the reader infers that he is talking about information stored on computers. This inference is based on knowledge that computers store data on silicon chips.

ACTIVITY 2.1 Writer's Notebook

Drawing Inferences from a Cartoon

Visual texts also require readers to draw inferences. This is especially true of cartoons. Readers have to use prior knowledge to draw inferences about meaning.

The following cartoon by Adam Zyglis appeared in The Buffalo News.

To infer the point of the cartoon, you have to connect outside knowledge with observations of the text. In your Writer's Notebook, answer the following questions.

- What is the purpose of a school science fair?
- How is the science experiment of the girl on the right similar to those of the other two children? How is it different from theirs?







What Questions Guide Critical Reading?

- What current events problem is Adam Zyglis calling our attention to? How do the sign above the girl and the words on her tee shirt show the seriousness of this problem?
- Cartoons often make us laugh by taking something we usually see in one context and showing it to us in another unlikely context. How does this cartoon persuade readers to laugh at parents who choose not to vaccinate their children?



Readers must draw inferences from visual texts such as cartoons, which require knowledge of current events.

© "Unvaccinated" published February 17, 2019 by Adam Zyglis politicalcartoons.com. Used with permission of Cagle Cartoons.

ACTIVITY 2.2 Collaborative Activity

Interpreting a Visual

Working with a partner, find another cartoon. Bring copies to class or arrange to project the image. In a brief oral presentation, explain what observations you used to draw inferences about the cartoonist's comment on the topic. How would you state the cartoonist's point in your own words?

What Questions Guide Critical Reading?

Because critical reading is interacting with a text, you need to be able to focus your attention on it. Begin by finding a place where your friends are unlikely to seek you out, and turn off your smartphone. Like any serious task or skill, critical reading is more successful if you work methodically by doing the following:

- *Preview the text*.
- Read the text slowly to discover the key ideas and the author's angle on the topic.
- Reread the text to deepen your comprehension and to evaluate the author's reasoning.







Previewing the Text

Find out what you are getting into before you plunge into reading a text. Besides gauging how long it will take you to read it, you should also ask the following questions about the text and its rhetorical situation. The **rhetorical situation** means *the variables in any writing situation:* the author and his or her purpose for writing, the audience to whom the text is addressed, and the decisions the author makes in constructing the text to suit purpose and audience. Chapter 3, Writing and the Art of Questioning, explains rhetorical situation in more detail. (See Figure 3.1 on page 40.) Questions to ask include:

- What is this text about? From the title, what can you infer about the *topic* and the author's *angle*, or point of view, on the topic? Skim the subheadings if the text has them; if not, look at the opening of each paragraph. Skim the introduction and the conclusion. Based on your preview, try to predict what questions this text will answer. Make a list of questions about the topic that you expect to find answered in the reading. Looking for answers to these questions will make your reading more purposeful.
- What do I already know about the topic? What opinions do I have about it? Before reading, take a moment to recall what you may already know about the topic of the text. Refreshing your memory about relevant facts and issues readies you for thinking about what the text will offer. Reflect as well on your own bias, if you have one, and what the origins of that bias might be.
- Who wrote this text? When and where was it published? What can you find out about the author or authors? Biographical details about an author (such as date of birth and level of education) and the author's political or philosophical positions and other writings offer many clues for comprehending the text. The Internet is a good resource for this step.
- Who is the audience for this text? The author had a readership in mind while composing. Your comprehension will be better if you consider who this readership was and why the author wrote to those readers. How do you match or differ from the intended readers?
- What special features does the text contain that might aid comprehension? Aspects of layout and visual presentation such as photographs and other images, charts or graphs, boxes or sidebars, and subheadings can all aid understanding. Subheadings are especially helpful when sampling a text to predict what it will say.
- Epigraphs (from the Greek, meaning "to write on" or inscribe) are another common feature. Epigraphs are usually *brief quotations from some other text, set above and apart, followed by the author's name and sometimes the title of the source.* They set up the theme of a reading. Take a moment to look up the source and author of an epigraph; this information will help you draw inferences about the relevance of the passage.

We will work with a reading titled "Notes of an Alien Son: Immigration Paradoxes" to illustrate the stages of critical reading. Skim the reading on pages 17–19. Then look at our answers below to the questions for previewing a text.

■ What is this text about? Skimming Codrescu's essay through to the end, we see that he is describing his mother's experience as a Romanian immigrant. It will show the





- contradictions between her expectations for a better life in America and what she actually found-and why immigrating might have been a "good deal after all."
- What do I know about the topic? What opinions do I have about it? From the title, you might infer that the author is an immigrant, the son of immigrants. Skimming it, you notice that he is describing his mother's difficulties in adjusting to life in America. What do you know about some of the problems people have when coming to the United States from other cultures? What opinions do you have about American customs and culture and why adjusting to it is sometimes difficult?
- Who wrote this text? When and where was it published? The author is Andrei Codrescu, a well-known writer of essays, novels, and poetry. He is the MacCurdy Distinguished Professor of English at Louisiana State University and a regular columnist on National Public Radio. Codrescu was born in Romania and lived there with his family while the country was under communist rule, which ended in a revolution in 1989. The family left in 1966 when Codrescu was twenty. This essay was published originally in 1994 in The Nation magazine.
- Who is the audience for this text? Readers of *The Nation* are the well-educated public, people concerned with political and social issues. This essay has been reprinted in numerous anthologies or collections of essays on the immigrant experience.
- What special features does the text contain that might aid comprehension? This is a brief text, without a need for subheadings. However, a closer look reveals that Codrescu uses signal words, like first and second, to clue the reader to the moves he makes in writing the essay. He speaks of "one" paradox, the two stages of his mother's sense of loss, and the two things she learned. He also uses chronological signal words, such as at this point, to help readers see the evolving process of her understanding.



Notes of an Alien Son: Immigration **Paradoxes**

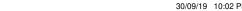
ANDREI CODRESCU

y mother, ever a practical woman, started investing in furniture when she came to America. Not just any furniture. Sears furniture. Furniture that she kept the plastic on for fifteen years before she had to conclude, sadly, that Sears wasn't such a great investment. In Romania, she would have been the richest woman on the block.

Which brings us to at least one paradox of immigration. Most people come here because they are sick of being poor. They want to eat and they want to show something











for their industry. But soon enough it becomes evident to them that these things aren't enough. They have eaten and they are full, but they have eaten alone and there was no one with whom to make toasts and sing songs. They have new furniture with plastic on it but the neighbors aren't coming over to ooh and aah. If American neighbors or less recent immigrants do come over, they smile condescendingly at the poor taste and the pathetic greed. And so, the greenhorns find themselves poor once more: This time they are lacking something more elusive than salami and furniture. They are bereft of a social and cultural milieu.

My mother, who was middle class by Romanian standards, found herself immensely impoverished after her first flush of material well-being. It wasn't just the disappearance of her milieu—that was obvious—but the feeling that she had, somehow, been had. The American supermarket tomatoes didn't taste at all like the rare genuine item back in Romania. American chicken was tasteless. Mass-produced furniture was built to fall apart. Her car, the crowning glory of her achievements in the eyes of folks back home, was only three years old and was already beginning to wheeze and groan. It began to dawn on my mother that she had perhaps made a bad deal: She had traded in her friends and relatives for ersatz tomatoes, fake chicken, phony furniture.

Leaving behind your kin, your friends, your language, your smells, your childhood, is traumatic. It is a kind of death. You're dead for the home folk and they are dead to you. When you first arrive on these shores you are in mourning. The only consolations are these products, which had been imbued with religious significance back at home. But when these things turn out not to be the real things, you begin to experience a second death, brought about by betrayal. You begin to suspect that the religious significance you had attached to them was only possible back home, where these things did not exist. Here, where they are plentiful, they have no significance whatsoever. They are inanimate fetishes, somebody else's fetishes, no help to you at all. When this realization dawned on my mother, she began to rage against her new country. She deplored its rudeness, its insensitivity, its outright meanness, its indifference, the chase after the almighty buck, the social isolation of most Americans, their inability to partake in warm, genuine fellowship and, above all, their deplorable lack of awe before what they had

This was the second stage of grief for her old self. The first, leaving her country, was sharp and immediate, almost toxic in its violence. The second was more prolonged, more damaging, because no hope was attached to it. Certainly not the hope of return.

And here, thinking of return, she began to reflect that perhaps there had been more to this deal than she'd first thought. True, she had left behind a lot that was good, but she had also left behind a vast range of daily humiliations. If she was ordered to move out of town she had to comply. If a party member took a dislike to her she had to go to extraordinary lengths to placate him because she was considered petit-bourgeois and could easily have lost her small photo shop. She lived in fear of being denounced for something she had said. And worst of all, she was a Jew,

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which meant that she was structurally incapable of obtaining any justice in her native land. She had lived by the grace of an immensely complicated web of human relations, kept in place by a thousand small concessions, betrayals, indignities, bribes, little and big lies.

At this point, the ersatz tomatoes and the faux chicken did not appear all that important. An imponderable had made its appearance, a bracing, heady feeling of liberty. If she took that ersatz tomato and flung it at the head of the Agriculture Secretary of the United States, she would be making a statement about the disastrous effects of pesticides and mechanized farming. Flinging that faux chicken at Barbara Mandrell would be equally dramatic and perhaps even media-worthy. And she'd probably serve only a suspended sentence. What's more, she didn't have to eat those things, because she could buy organic tomatoes and free-range chicken. Of course, it would cost more, but that was one of the paradoxes of America: To eat as well as people in a Third World country eat (when they eat) costs more.

My mother was beginning to learn two things: one, that she had gotten a good deal after all, because in addition to food and furniture they had thrown in freedom; and two, America is a place of paradoxes; one proceeds from paradox to paradox like a chicken from the pot into the fire.

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■ Writer's Notebook

Practicing Previewing

Choose a different reading and preview it on your own. This might be a reading your instructor assigns, or one of the readings in Chapters 4 through 12. Write answers to the questions that appear on page 16. ■

Reading the Text

After you have skimmed a text and answered the previewing questions, you are ready to settle in and read the text slowly, straight through. Try to keep moving forward. You can go back over difficult passages, but do not stop reading just because you do not fully understand them. Finishing the text will give you insights that will make the difficult passages more accessible when you go back to them. Have a pen or pencil ready to mark up the reading as described below.

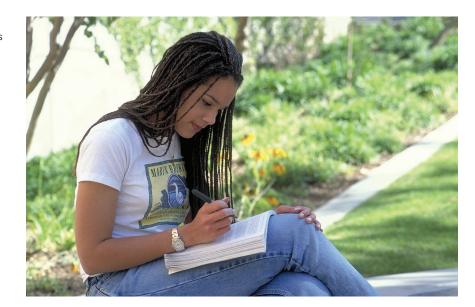
As you read, mark the text with **annotations**—that is, *notes in the margins*. Annotating is essential to reading critically. If you do not want to mark up a book, photocopy the reading or use sticky notes. The important thing is to use a pen or pencil, not a highlighter. You want to preserve your thoughts as you read; you cannot do this with a highlighter.





Annotating helps you preserve your thoughts as you read. This is essential to reading critically.

© Gary Conner/ PhotoEdit



THE ART OF QUESTIONING

Some Questions for Annotations

How should you annotate? Here are some questions your annotations might answer:

- What words do I not know? You can look them up now and write the definition in an annotation or circle them and look them up later. Why is it important not just to skip them? In the short run, the more you skip, the less you comprehend. In the long run, looking up the words will help build your vocabulary and enable you to infer the meaning of words in future readings, allowing you more time to engage with the ideas as you read.
- What are the main points as opposed to subordinate passages? Mark the main ideas in the margin so you can easily find them later. Use brackets to show which paragraphs go together to develop each main idea.
- What words signal turns in the author's train of thought? Words like however and but show that the author will contradict something just stated. Expressions like for example suggest that the author will elaborate on an idea. Circle or underline these words, and note how the author's train of thought shifts.
- Where does the author introduce viewpoints other than his or her own?

 Authors often introduce other people who agree or disagree with their ideas.

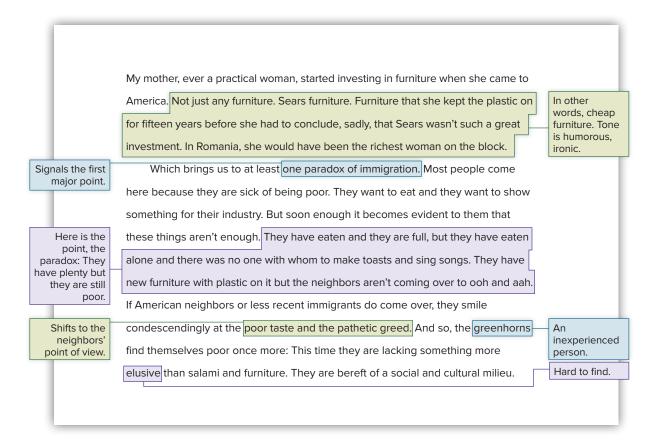
 They may present others' viewpoints as direct quotations but often use paraphrases.





How well am I connecting with this reading? If you find some parts of a text difficult to comprehend, put a question mark in the margin to tell yourself what you need to return to later. If you can connect any prior knowledge, observation, or personal opinion to something in the text, note it in the margin.

We have reprinted the first two paragraphs of the reading by Codrescu to demonstrate the kinds of annotations a critical reader could make.



ACTIVITY 2.3 Collaborative Activity

Comparing Annotations

Write annotations to the remainder of Codrescu's essay. In small groups, compare your annotations. Did you agree on the main points? Did you have similar questions about any part of the reading? ■







22 Chapter 2 Reading Critically and the Art of Questioning

ACTIVITY 2.4 Writer's Notebook

Adding to Your Vocabulary

In your reading journal, make a list of words that you had to look up or for which you had to use context clues to infer the meaning. Write the definition next to each. You might also "flex" your knowledge of a word by writing some other words with the same root:

indignities-indignity-dignity

Then, for each vocabulary word, write an original sentence using the word in a way that demonstrates your understanding of its meaning. Using the word a few times will help you establish it in your working vocabulary.

Rereading the Text

When you are preparing to discuss a reading in class or to use it in your own writing, you will want to reread it or at least portions of it. Go back to passages that you marked as difficult. You will understand them better once you have finished the entire reading. Activities 2.5–2.10 help you get the most out of rereading.

Recognizing Shifts in Point of View and Voice

Writers shift point of view more often than you might expect. Attentive readers note where the author is speaking for himself or herself, and where he or she has slipped into someone else's perspective and voice. For example, an author might present an opposing view without signaling the shift with quotation marks or a transitional expression. If you have been paying attention to the point of view established by the author, you can infer where the point of view shifts.

We noted in Codrescu's essay that he briefly shifts in paragraph 2 to the perspective of the American neighbors who might view new immigrants as having "poor taste" and "pathetic greed." You know that this is not Codrescu's own point of view, not his voice, because he sympathizes with his mother and other immigrants who, as he says in paragraph 4, seek out material objects as "consolations."

ACTIVITY 2.5 Collaborative Activity

Identifying Voice

In pairs or small groups, reread the paragraph below and decide in which sentences Codrescu shifts from his own point of view and voice to the point of view of his mother.

My mother, who was middle class by Romanian standards, found herself immensely impoverished after her first flush of material well-being. It wasn't just the disappearance of her milieu—that was obvious—but the feeling that she







had, somehow, been had. The American supermarket tomatoes didn't taste at all like the rare genuine item back in Romania. American chicken was tasteless. Mass-produced furniture was built to fall apart. Her car, the crowning glory of her achievements in the eyes of folks back home, was only three years old and was already beginning to wheeze and groan. It began to dawn on my mother that she had perhaps made a bad deal: She had traded in her friends and relatives for ersatz tomatoes, fake chicken, phony furniture.

Analyzing Figurative Language

Figurative language (or figures of speech) is language used in a nonliteral way to convey meaning in a vivid and powerful way. Two common figures of speech are metaphors and similes. Metaphors make an implicit (or not-on-the-surface) comparison between two things that are not apparently very much alike at all: "The news story went viral" implicitly compares the spread of news with the spread of a virus. A simile also makes a comparison between two unlike things, but it does so explicitly, using words such as like or as: "The news spread like a virus." Other common figures of speech include analogy (an extended metaphor or simile), personification (attributing human qualities to animals, ideas, or objects), and hyperbole (exaggeration for emphasis).

We already noted on page 13 that Nicholas Carr used a metaphor to describe his former reading style ("Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words") and a simile to describe what has happened to his reading ("Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski"). Figurative language adds voice and angle to writing. The metaphor of the scuba diver suggests depth and silence, while the "guy on a Jet Ski" suggests superficiality and noise.

ACTIVITY 2.6 Writer's Notebook

Interpreting Figurative Language

Reread paragraph 4 in Codrescu's essay on page 18. In your Writer's Notebook, discuss the effect of Codrescu's use of death as a simile for the loss experienced by new immigrants. Codrescu also uses the word *religion* metaphorically in this paragraph, but he is not referring to an actual religion such as Judaism or Christianity. How would you interpret the meaning of "religion" in the context of this paragraph? Writers often extend an idea through a series of related metaphors, as Codrescu does here. Highlight or underline all of the references to religion in paragraph 4. How do these assembled religious metaphors contribute to the point Codrescu is making about material objects in the lives of immigrants who are experiencing "a kind of death"? Be ready to discuss your answers to these questions in class.





Chapter 2 Reading Critically and the Art of Questioning

Paraphrasing Difficult Passages

To learn more about paraphrasing, see Chapter 18, pages 387–89.

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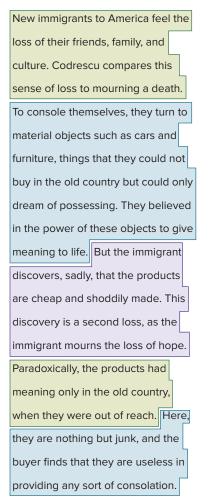
The reading you do in college is sometimes difficult. Paraphrasing can help you make sense of challenging passages. A **paraphrase** is a *restatement in your own words and sentences*. Paraphrasing is like translating the passage into language you can better understand—using shorter, more direct sentences and more familiar vocabulary. It ought to substitute your own language for the author's voice, sentence patterns, and word choices. A paraphrase should be in your own voice, which usually means trading more literal language for any metaphors or similes, unless you put them in quotation marks.

Below is a passage from Codrescu's reading in which he explains the immigrant's disillusionment with American material goods. Note that the paraphrase, on the right, is approximately as long as the original. A paraphrase is not a summary, and it should contain all of the points in the original passage. As the color coding indicates, all the points in the original appear in the paraphrase.

Original Passage

When you first arrive on these shores, you are in mourning. only consolations are these products, which had been imbued with religious significance back at home. But when these things turn out not to be the real things, you begin to experience a second death, brought about by betrayal. You begin to suspect that the religious significance you had attached to them was only possible back home, where these things did not exist. Here, where they are plentiful, they have no significance whatsoever. They are inanimate fetishes, somebody else's fetishes, no help to you at all.

Paraphrase









Practicing Paraphrase

Using the advice and the example paraphrase, write a paraphrase of another passage. More help with writing paraphrase is available in Chapter 18; see pages 387–89. For a passage to paraphrase, you might look at the alternative reading you may have already previewed and annotated, or you may use the passage below, from Codrescu's essay. You will need to go back to see where the passage fits into the text so that you can write a good paraphrase that clarifies what point in time Codrescu refers to here.

At this point, the ersatz tomatoes and the faux chicken did not appear all that important. An imponderable had made its appearance, a bracing, heady feeling of liberty.

Finding the Writer's Moves in a Text

One way of seeing the big picture of any text you are reading is to go behind the scenes and think about how the text was constructed. What moves did the writer make in creating it? Groups of paragraphs often work together to perform a function, such as providing an introduction, background information, an opposing view, or an illustration.

Recognizing these universally available moves and distinguishing them from their specific content is a way to analyze any text. A good strategy is to make a descriptive outline showing the major subdivisions. For each subdivision of the reading, a descriptive outline answers two questions:

- What is the move or function of this section? In other words, what is it doing?
- What is the main point or content of this section? In other words, what is it saying?

Writing a descriptive outline requires two skills: analyzing the function of each section and paraphrasing the most important point or points in each section. Following is an example showing the subdivisions of this short reading by Codrescu.

Subdivisions of "Notes of an Alien Son: Immigration Paradoxes"

Paragraphs 1-2

Does: Gives an example of one problem, or paradox.

Says: When Andrei Codrescu's mother emigrated from Romania, she found a better life materially, but she had to accept the loss of her home, friends, and family—her supportive social and cultural environment.

Paragraphs 3-4

Does: Gives an example of another problem, or paradox.

Says: American products turned out to be cheaply made junk that did not last. They had been more powerful as dream than as reality. Realizing their dreams were built on false expectations is an even greater loss for the immigrants than leaving home and family.





Paragraph 5

Does: Sums up the two main points of the essay so far.

Says: His mother suffered two losses: first, the loss of her cultural and social environment, and second, the loss of her belief in products as

a consolation for the first loss.

Paragraphs 6-7

Does: Puts the problems into a larger context or perspective.

Says: She realized that going back to Romania would be worse. In Romania, her life was bound by a bureaucracy run by favors and bribes. In America, she had freedom, an amazing discovery.

Paragraph 8

Does: Sums up the main point of the whole essay.

Says: His mother learned that the benefits of emigrating were worth the costs and also that life in America was more complicated than she

had envisioned.

ACTIVITY 2.8 Thinking as a Writer

Finding a Writer's Moves in a Different Reading

Analyze the reading selection you previewed, read, and annotated (as instructed on pages 19-21). Note the major subdivisions and the main point of each subdivision. Make an outline to show (1) how each subdivision functions (the role it performs) and (2) what it says (the point it makes). Use the example outline above as a model.





Summarizing the Text

To learn more about summarizing, see Chapter 18, pages 389-91.

Writing a summary of a reading helps you see the text as a whole, not a series of parts. It is often necessary to sum up the entire content of a reading, such as when you want to explain someone else's argument in a paper of your own or when writing an annotated bibliography to let others know the content of your sources.

To write a summary, you must first sort out the main ideas from the supporting details and then put the main ideas into your own words—that is, paraphrase them. Writing a descriptive outline, as explained above, is an excellent strategy for drafting a summary. Once you have found the major subdivisions of a reading and paraphrased their key points, you have material to work with for a summary.

Simply splicing the paraphrases together, however, may not result in a smooth summary. The biggest challenge is to unite these paraphrases into a coherent piece of writing that reflects the train of thought in the original passage. You will need to add transitions and possibly some additional information from the original text. You may use brief quotations. Bear in mind, however, that a summary should be no more than one-third the length of the original.

An example summary of "Notes of an Alien Son: Immigration Paradoxes" follows. The original complete text is on pages 17-19.





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ACTIVITY 2.9 Writer's Notebook

Summarizing a Reading

After having worked through the critical reading stages for an alternative reading, write a summary of it using the advice on page 26 and the model above. You should also consult Chapter 18 for more advice on how to write summaries; see pages 389-91. ■





Responding to a Reading

During and after rereading, you should have more extensive responses to a stimulating text, with more thoughts than can fit in a marginal note. That is why serious readers and researchers keep reading response journals for recording thoughts, reactions, and opinions that are more extensive than brief annotations.

You could simply write your thoughts in a spiral notebook or in a file you keep on your computer, or you could follow the suggestion of many reading experts and use a double-entry journal, a notebook, or online document divided into two columns with quotations or paraphrases of the text in one column and your reactions on the right. Following is an example of a double-entry reading journal:

What the text says:

Par. 2: Codrescu shows how isolated immigrants can be: "there was no one with whom to make toasts and sing songs."

Par. 3: "She had traded in her friends and relatives for ersatz tomatoes, fake chicken, phony furniture."

Par. 4: "She deplored its rudeness, its insensitivity, its outright meanness, its indifference, the chase after the almighty buck, the social isolation of most Americans, their inability to partake in warm, genuine fellowship and, above all, their deplorable lack of awe before what they had made."

What I say back to the text:

This passage explains why many new immigrants want to live in neighborhoods with others who share their customs and language. I think as they assimilate, they lose this dependency, but that is sad too because their children often forget about their roots.

His mother expected American products to be a good part, and they weren't. Why not? Possibly because Americans are more interested in saving money on necessities like food and furniture so they can spend it on other more status-symbol things.

This is a pretty harsh description of Americans. It shows how an outsider notices the downside of our fast-paced, materialistic lifestyle—things that we might acknowledge if pointed out to us, but that we just accept as how it is. It would be interesting to get other opinions about this, such as from exchange students.







Par. 6: "... she had left behind a vast range of daily humiliations."

Romania has changed now that it is a democracy and part of the European Union. She may not even want to leave if she lived there today, but the point of the essay is still relevant because it describes a universal experience for the many who still want to escape to America for freedom and a better life.

Par. 8: "America is a place of paradoxes. . . ."

What does he mean here? What other examples can I think of? An example would be American middle-class women who can choose to eat a healthy diet but are forced by fashion images to eat the calorie intake of someone in a developing country. They are free and yet they are controlled by media messages. That's a paradox.

The advantage of the double-entry journal is that it shows the connection between what you read and what you thought about what you read. The double-entry journal is useful for stimulating your own thinking in response to the text. You can also consult it for citing the passages in the text when writing in response to a reading.

ACTIVITY 2.10 Writer's Notebook

Double-Entry Journal

Use a double-entry template to make your own notes and responses to Codrescu's text. Is there any connection among the comments you made in the right-hand column? Write two or three paragraphs describing these connections.

How Do I Deal with the Difficulties of Scholarly Texts?

The reading you do in college often includes scholarly texts—that is, books and articles written by professors for people who have a high level of knowledge on the topic, such as other professors and advanced students in the field. You will encounter





scholarly texts in many of your courses and when doing research on your own for various writing projects. (See page 368 in Chapter 16 for more about different types of scholarly articles.) In this chapter, we give you some tips for reading these especially challenging texts. Follow this advice *after* you have skimmed potential sources for your project and chosen one to drill down on because it looks useful for your project.

Our example text was written by a professor in the history of political thought. It is not just about history, but about how political ideas are presented and sold to gain public support. This is an important topic because throughout history and up into the present day, people are constantly persuaded to favor one position over others. In this case, the professor is interested in how a single symbol, a bolt of lightning, was used to persuade the people of France to rally around the cause of the French Revolution, to topple the monarchy and install a democratic government.

The text appears on pp. 32-35. Before reading it, preview it using the Questions for Previewing, which we have reprinted below.

What is this text about? The title tells you it is about revolution, and the illustration shows that it is about the French Revolution in particular. Skimming the first sentences of many paragraphs, you may notice the frequency of words relating to science. You deduce that the author is going to talk about the role of science in the political thought of the eighteenth century.

What do I already know about the topic? What opinions do I have about it? Many topics encountered in college will be new to you. Test your knowledge on this one by jotting down what you may already know. If you find your storehouse is empty, do something to stock it with some basic information. Many students find it worthwhile to begin by first reading *down*—that is, by reading a less specialized text such as an encyclopedia entry or textbook pages covering the topic. For the French Revolution, you might try the History Channel website.

Who wrote this text? When and where was it published? Read the head note to Kevin Duong's article to find out something about the author and his interests. You might be surprised to see the term "flash mob" in the title of a scholarly article. Remember that scholars are people too, and they should write with voice and angle. You see that Duong is having a little fun with his topic and appealing to his audience with a humorous pun on lightning. The French Revolution, however, was a serious and bloody business. You are probably familiar with the role played by the guillotine in the overthrow of King Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette. One year of the Revolution, 1793–1794, was known as the Reign of Terror, with more than 1,400 people killed by the Revolutionaries. As you read this article, look for the author's voice and angle on the Revolution.

Who is the audience for this text? By the first sentence of the second paragraph, you can see that Duong is off and running with lots of names of historical figures he expects his audience is already familiar with. He is, after all, writing primarily to other professors of history, history of ideas, art history, or the history of science and technology. We have provided marginal comments on some of the names Duong drops to save you time in using our example, but you will have to





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look up many names and vocabulary words when doing research on your own. It's part of the process of learning. But having said that, be careful not to let all the unfamiliar names distract you from the content: what is the main argument of the text? Getting the big ideas in any article is much more important than dwelling on details.

What special features does the text contain that might aid comprehension? Many scholarly articles follow a standard pattern of organization with subdivisions such as an *abstract* summarizing the whole, an introduction including a *review of literature* already out there on a topic, the *claim or thesis* to be proven, an *argument* with reasons and evidence to support the claim, a *conclusion*, and a list of *references* or end notes. Or the article may have *subheadings* to guide readers through the text.

Most scholarly articles are organized as exposition, not narration, like Codrescu's story about his mother's experience in America. Expository writing has a logical structure based on generalizations and specifics that develop them.

Consider this brief passage from Duong's article:

Revolutionary scientists designed a variety of strategies to make the will of the people

discernable. They ranged from the statistical to the legalistic. However, one particular approach stood out, both for its intrinsic peculiarity and for its frequency: attempts to analogize the will of the people to lightning strikes.

Most specific.

Being able to pick out the main ideas, the most general points, from the more specific ones, such as facts and examples, will help you navigate scholarly articles. And nearly all scholarly articles make an argument; the generalizations offer thesis and reasons, while the specifics offer evidence in support. Duong argues to show how the lightening bolt worked as persuasion for the political idea of democracy.

ACTIVITY 2.11 Collaborative Activity

Reading Visuals

This article contains many historical images that are in the public domain, or free to use, because of their age. (All of the images can be viewed on the *Public Domain Review* website.) In the first image, Lady Liberty holds two symbols of the Revolution, lightning bolts and the red cap, which itself has a long political history. The second image depicts Benjamin Franklin performing a famous experiment in which he attached a metal key to a kite string during a thunderstorm to prove that lightning and electricity were one and the same.

In small groups of two or three, interpret the meaning of these two images. What persuasive similarities do you notice between the two images reprinted here? What inferences can you draw about Kevin Duong's angle on his topic, based on details from the pictures?





READING 2.2

Flash Mob: Revolution, Lightning, and the People's Will

KEVIN DUONG

Rousseau (1712 - 1798)was a philosopher of the French Enlightenment, best known for his belief that in a state of nature, humans are essentially good but are corrupted by social forces that develop within civilizations.

Edmund Burke
(1729–1797)
was an AngloIrish
Conservative
politician who
feared mob
rule—and thus
opposed the
French
Revolution.

The governing revolutionary body in France from June 17th to July 9th in 1789.

> Liberty Triumphant

A Phrygian cap is a coneshaped red hat that came to symbolize liberty and freedom. t is often observed that the French Revolution was a revolution of scientists.

Nourished by airy abstractions and heartfelt cries to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, its leaders sought a society grounded, not in God or tradition, but in what Edmund Burke decried as "the conquering empire of light and reason". To be sure, if we tallied the professional affiliations of the members of the first National Assembly, we would find it overwhelmingly populated by lawyers. But the revolution's symbols and motifs were not derived from legal

Detail from *La Liberté Triomphante* (1792), showing Liberty brandishing a thunderbolt in one hand and a Phrygian cap on a stick in the other.

Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, Reserve QB-370 (26)-FT 4 [De Vinck, 4461].

Kevin Duong is an Assistant Professor in Political Studies at Bard College. His interests include the history of political thought, revolution and violence, modern social theory, and feminism and gender studies. This reading is excerpted from an essay of the same name that appeared in the Public Domain Review in November 2017. Duong's essay uses illustrations that belong to the public domain, meaning they are creative works that no one holds copyright or trademark on, usually because the copyright has expired.

We have already begun annotating the essay with information about historical figures. As you read, add annotations of your own based on the five questions in the "Art of Questioning" box on page 20.

practices and traditions, and it was not as men of law that Maximilien Robespierre and Jean-Paul Marat called for the death of their king and the creation of a democratic republic. Rather, they did so as scientists—middle class intellectuals who saw in government a field ripe for experimentation, innovation, and improvement.

Nowhere was this as clear as in their approach to "the will of the people." Of the many puzzles to which revolutionaries applied themselves as scientists, few seemed so pressing and so intractable. It is obvious what a king's will looks like, or so we like to think. Kings

Robespierre (1758–1794) was a leader of the French Revolution.

Marat (1743– 1793) was a radical leader of the Reign of Terror after the Revolution, when many people were put to death if they were suspected of opposing the Revolution.

King Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette, were put to death at the quillotine.





are individuals, they have bodies, and they can tell us what to do. However they choose to communicate their will-through voice, a gesture, a written pronouncement—it is relatively clear when such acts belong to them. But "the people" enjoy no such obvious body and no evident means of self-expression. What does the will of the people actually look like? And how do we hear their voice if they don't have a mouth with which to speak? As French revolutionaries enthroned the will of the people, they stepped into uncharted terrain. Democratic revolution, it turned out, required men capable of visualizing the invisible and making appear what escaped our immediate senses. Indeed, it seemed to require the labor of scientific inquiry applied to the people themselves. Like the invisible composition of air, the secret patterns of a magnetic field, or the stratifications of the earth's soil, democratic politics was governed by a hidden law that the scientist-statesman had to uncover.

Revolutionary scientists designed a variety of strategies to make the will of the people discernable. They ranged from the statistical to the legalistic. However, one particular approach stood out, both for its intrinsic peculiarity and for its frequency: attempts to analogize the will of the people to lightning strikes. The historian Mary Ashburn Miller has documented the long history of symbolizing sovereignty as lightning. In the absolutist imagination, lightning symbolized royal power and its Jupiterian pretensions. The frontispiece to Thomas Hobbes' 1651 Leviathan features a thunderbolt alongside a crown, cannon, and other items

in absolutism's symbolic ensemble.

Absolutism is the belief in a

such as an

absolute monarch, or

king.

single authority,

Hobbes (1588-

English political

best known for

1679) was an

philosopher

Leviathan, in

arqued for a

autocratic,

during

War.

government

strong central,

England's Civil

his book

which he

With the Revolution, French intellectuals seized this lightning and redirected it against their king. In 1792, as the Revolution radicalized into a democratic revolution, members of the National Convention found themselves debating what to do with Louis XVI. On December 3, 1792, Robespierre answered that the king should be summarily executed rather than tried for treason, because "a people does not judge as does a court of law. It does not hand down sentences, it hurls down thunderbolts." Louis XVI was struck down by the guillotine in the Place de la Révolution on January 21, 1793.

A large square in Paris now known as the Place de la Concorde.

The trope was ubiquitous, not only in texts and speeches, but also in the visual culture of the Revolution. An allegorical print from 1792 features "Liberty," the figurehead and personification of the people. She is depicted striking down the remnants of monarchy with a fist full of lightning. Behind her, powerful bands of light (and enlightenment) repel the dark clouds that allude to the obscurity of monarchical superstition.

A trope is the metaphorical use of a word or image-in this case, lightning.

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It was no accident that lightning was chosen as a model for the will of the people. The language of science and the language of politics were melding together in the crucible of democratic revolution, and not only in France. A fascination with

1. Mary Ashburn Miller, A Natural History of Revolution: Violence and Nature in the French Revolutionary Imagination, 1789-1794 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011).



^{2.} Maximilien Robespierre, "Speech to the Convention, 3 December 1792", in Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI, ed. Michael Walzer, trans. Marian Rothstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 133.