The Pocket Cengage Handbook

KIRSZNER
& MANDELL

Includes the
2016
MLA updates

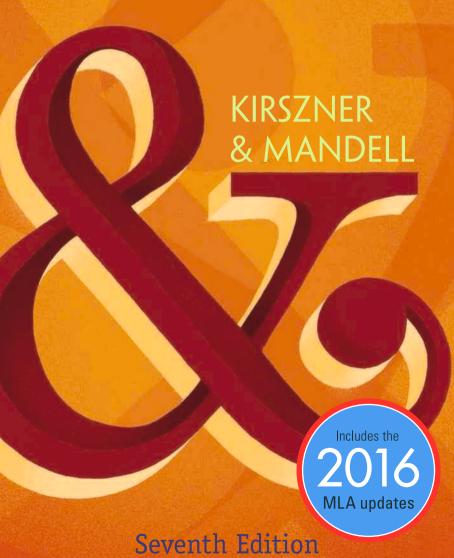Seventh Edition

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Brief Contents

Contents

Ten Habits of Successful Students

Successful students have learned to be successful: they have developed specific strategies for success, and they apply those strategies to their education. You can learn the habits of successful students and apply them to your own college education—and, later on, to your career.

1 Learn to manage your time effectively.

College makes many demands on your time, and if you don't take control of your schedule, it will take control of you. If you are organized, you will be better prepared to handle the pressures of a college workload.

The calendar function in your cell phone is one valuable time-management tool.

FOR SCHOOL, RECORD . . .

- assignment due dates.
- your study schedule.
- study group meetings.
- exams conference appointments.
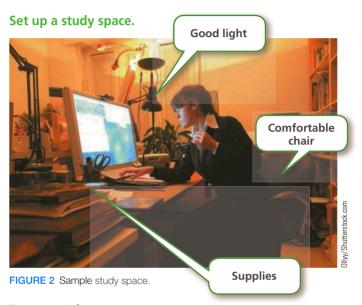
FOR WORK AND HOME, RECORD . . .

- work hours.
- medical appointments.
- family obligations.
- plans with friends.

FIGURE 1 Sample cell phone calendar.

2 Put studying first.

- Studying is something you do regularly, not just right before an exam.
- Studying involves more than memorizing facts: it also means reading, rereading, and discussing ideas until you understand them.

Set up a study space.

Good light

Comfortable chair

Supplies

Olly/Shutterstock.com

FIGURE 2 Sample study space.

Form a study group.

By discussing concepts with other students in a **study group**, you can try out your ideas and get feedback, clarify complex concepts, and formulate questions for your instructor.

STUDY GROUP GROUND RULES

- Meet regularly.
- Decide in advance who will be responsible for which tasks.
- Set deadlines.
- Listen when someone else is speaking.
- Avoid rejecting others' ideas without considering them very carefully.
- Assign a note-taker.
- Take stock of the group's problems and progress at regular intervals.
- Be attentive to other students' learning styles and special needs.

3   Be sure you understand school and course requirements.

School Policies

Consult your school's student handbook, which is likely available online. Be sure to keep copies of any orientation materials you receive, and if you have questions, ask a peer counselor or your advisor.

FIGURE 3 Sample course syllabus.

Course Policies

Requirements vary significantly from course to course. Consult the course's **syllabus** to tell you when assignments are due and exams are scheduled. Usually, it also explains your instructor's policies about attendance, lateness, deadlines, plagiarism, and classroom etiquette, as well as information on office hours and grading.

4   Take advantage of college services.

Colleges and universities offer students a wide variety of support services.

FIGURE 4 Student meeting with academic advisor.

Are you struggling in a course?	Visit a campus tutoring service.
Do you need help writing a paper?	Make an appointment at the writing center.
Do you want advice about which courses to take, or about choosing a major?	Talk to your academic advisor.
Are you having trouble adjusting to college life, or do you want to talk about a personal problem?	Talk to a peer counselor or resident advisor, or make an appointment with a professional at the counseling center.

5   Be an active learner in the classroom.

Participate.

- ✔ Take as many small classes as you can.
- ✔ Take classes that require writing **(See Parts 1 and 8)**.
- ✔ Do your homework and keep up with the reading.
- ✔ Attend classes regularly—and arrive on time.
- ✔ Listen attentively and take careful, complete notes.
- ✔ Engage in class discussions: ask and answer questions.

Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com

FIGURE 5 Students participating in class.

Use active reading strategies
(See Chapter 1).

> In the early years of the nineteenth century, Americans began drinking more than they ever had before or since, embarking on a collective bender that confronted the young republic with its first major public health crisis—the obesity epidemic of its day. Corn whiskey, suddenly superabundant and cheap, became the drink of choice, and in 1820 the typical American was putting away half a pint of the stuff every day. That comes to more than five gallons of spirits a year for every man, woman, and child in America. The figure today is less than one.
>
> As the historian W. J. Rorabaugh tells the story in *The Alcoholic Republic*, we drank the hard stuff at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, before work and after and very often during. Employers were expected to supply spirits over the course of the workday; in fact, the modern coffee break began as a late-morning whiskey break called "the elevenses." (Just to pronounce it makes you sound tipsy.) Except for a brief respite Sunday morning in church, Americans simply did not gather—whether for a barn raising or quilting bee, corn husking or political rally—without passing the whiskey jug. Visitors from Europe—hardly models of sobriety themselves—marveled at the free flow of American spirits. "Come on then, if you love toping," the journalist William Cobbett wrote his fellow Englishmen in a dispatch from America. "For here you may drink yourself blind at the price of sixpence."
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> The results of all this toping were entirely predictable: a rising tide of public drunkenness, violence, and family abandonment, and a spike in alcohol-related diseases. Several of the Founding Fathers—including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams—denounced the excesses of "the Alcoholic Republic," inaugurating an American quarrel over drinking that would culminate a century later in Prohibition.
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> But the outcome of our national drinking binge is not nearly as relevant to our own situation as its underlying cause. Which, put simply, is this: American farmers were producing far too much corn. This was particularly true in the newly settled regions west of the Appalachians, where fertile, virgin soils yielded one bumper crop after another. A

Marginal annotations: *People drank 5x as much as they do today* · !! · ? · # · *Did the gov't take action?* · why? · #

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FIGURE 6 Sample highlighting and annotations of a book passage.

6 Be an active learner outside the classroom.

As successful students know, education is more than just attending classes. You can take an active role in your education beyond the classroom.

At School . . .

✔ Take advantage of your instructors' office hours. Make appointments, and ask questions.
✔ Get to know your academic advisor, and share your interests and goals with him or her.
✔ Keep up to date on your school's news and activities. Read your school newspaper. Open and read any relevant emails and newsletters. Check your college's website regularly.
✔ Participate in campus activities. This can enhance your education while offering opportunities to make valuable connections and friendships.

Beyond School . . .

✔ Try to arrange an **internship**, a job that enables you to gain practical experience. Many businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies offer internships—paid or unpaid—to qualified students **(See Chapter 41)**. Visit your school's career services department to start exploring options.
✔ Take **service-learning courses**, if they are offered at your school, or volunteer at a local school or social agency.

FIGURE 7 Student intern.

7 Use the library.

Even—and especially!—in the digital age, learning to use the library is an important part of your education (See Chapters 6–7).

A library provides . . .

- a quiet place to study, away from family or roommates.
- access to materials that cannot be found online: rare books, special collections, and audiovisual materials.

FIGURE 8 Students in the library.

- expert advice from reference librarians, who can answer questions, guide your research, and point out sources you might never have found on your own (See Part 2).

Libraries also provide **free access through subscription databases to thousands of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and archives**. At most schools, you can access this resource at the library itself or anywhere online with your school email or ID and a password.

FIGURE 9 Home page of an academic library's website.

8 Use technology.

Being tech-savvy is essential to success in college. You probably already have most of the skills you need but if you don't, it's important to make an effort to become fluent in the following:

- ✔ Composing in word-processing programs such as *Microsoft Word* or *Google Drive*
- ✔ Sending emails and attaching files to them
- ✔ Using the Internet and evaluating websites **(See Chapter 7)**
- ✔ Using your library's electronic resources **(See Chapter 6)**
- ✔ Scanning and inserting documents that contain images as well as text
- ✔ Using technology to enhance a project—for example, learning how to use *PowerPoint* or *Keynote* for a presentation **(See Chapter 42)** or *Google Sheets* to make a table **(See Chapter 39)**
- ✔ Syncing information among various devices (phone, computer, tablet, etc.)
- ✔ Knowing when to use technology —and when not to **(See Chapters 39–40)**

FIGURE 10 Sample notes on a journal article in the *ZotPad* app.

Notetaking apps like *ZotPad* can be useful both in and out of the classroom.

Be aware of the online services your school offers.

Many campuses rely on customizable information-management systems called **portals**. You can use your user ID (or school email) and password to access services such as locating and contacting your advisor and viewing your class schedule and grades. Portals may also be connected to individual course websites.

9 Make contacts.

Classmates

Be sure you have the phone numbers and email addresses of at least two students in each of your classes. These will come in handy if you miss class, need help understanding notes, or want to form a study group.

FIGURE 11 Student talking with instructor.

Friends from Activities or Work-Study Jobs

Build relationships with students who participate in college activities with you. They are likely to share your goals and interests, and you may want to discuss decisions like choosing a major, considering further education, and making career choices.

Instructors
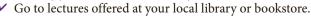
Develop a relationship with your instructors, particularly those in the areas of study that interest you most.

Successful students often say that **mentors**— teachers and other professionals -- have given them advice that they trust. Long after you leave college, you will find these contacts useful.

10 Be a lifelong learner.

✔ Get in the habit of reading local and national newspapers.
✔ Make connections outside the college community to keep in touch with the larger world.
✔ Attend plays and concerts sponsored by your school or community.
✔ Go to lectures offered at your local library or bookstore.

FIGURE 12 Students at a performance.

Never miss an opportunity to learn.

Think about the life you will lead after college. Think about who you want to be and what you have to do to get there. This is what successful students do.

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KIRSZNER & MANDELL

2016 MLA Update Edition

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Seventh Edition
2016 MLA Update Edition

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CENGAGE
Learning®

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How to Use This Book

We would like to introduce you to *The Pocket Cengage Handbook*, Seventh Edition, a quick reference guide for college students. This book was designed to be a truly portable handbook that can fit easily in a backpack or pocket. Despite its compact size, *The Pocket Cengage Handbook* covers all the topics you'd expect to find in a much longer book: the writing process (illustrated by a model student essay); sentence grammar and style; punctuation and mechanics; the research process (illustrated by four model student research papers); and MLA, APA, Chicago, and CSE documentation styles. In addition, the book devotes a full chapter to writing an argumentative essay—and a full section to practical assignments (including composing in digital environments, document design, writing in the workplace, presentations, and composing in the disciplines). Finally, it includes a chapter that addresses the concerns of multilingual writers.

The explanations and examples of writing in *The Pocket Cengage Handbook* can guide you not just in first-year courses but throughout your college career and beyond. Our goal throughout is to make the book clear, accessible, useful, and—most of all—easy to navigate. To achieve this goal, we incorporated distinctive design features throughout to make information easy to find and easy to use.

Design Features

- **New planning guides** throughout the text help you plan and organize a range of documents in various genres.
- **Numerous checklists** summarize key information that you can quickly access as needed.
- **Close-up boxes** provide an in-depth look at some of the more perplexing writing-related issues you will encounter.
- **Part 3 (easily identified with a "Documenting Sources" tab)** includes the most up-to-date documentation and format guidelines from the Modern Language Association, the American Psychological Association, the University of Chicago Press, and the Council of Science Editors.

- Chapter 10 includes the updated documentation guidelines put forth in the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook* (2016). The style has been simplified to emphasize a common approach to a wide variety of source types, and the updated chapter introduces the new approach while continuing to offer numerous citation examples for students.
- **Specially designed documentation directories** make it easy to locate models for various kinds of sources, including those found in online databases such as *Academic Search Premier* and *LexisNexis*. In addition, annotated diagrams of sample works-cited entries clearly illustrate the elements of proper documentation.
- **Marginal cross-references** throughout the book allow you to flip directly to other sections that treat topics in more detail.
- **Marginal multilingual cross-references** throughout the book direct you to sections of Part 9, "Composing for Multilingual Writers," where concepts are presented as they apply specifically to multilingual writers.
- **Multilingual tips** are woven throughout the text to explain concepts in relation to the unique experiences of multilingual students.
- **A new "Ten Habits of Successful Students" foldout** illustrates and helps you apply the strategies of successful students both in and out of college.

Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Anne Stameshkin for her work on the new "Ten Habits of Successful Students" foldout and on the documentation updates; Kelly Cannon, Muhlenberg College, for his research advice; and Sherry Rankins-Robertson, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, for her digital writing advice.

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January 2016

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Teaching and Learning Resources

Online Instructor's Manual

The Online Instructor's Manual contains an abundance of instructor materials, including sample syllabi and activities. To download or print the manual, log on to <https://login.cengage.com> with your faculty account.

MindTap

MindTap® English for Kirszner and Mandell's *The Pocket Cengage Handbook*, seventh edition, engages your students to become better thinkers, communicators, and writers by blending your course materials with content that supports every aspect of the writing process.

- Interactive activities on grammar and mechanics promote application in student writing
- Easy-to-use paper management system helps prevent plagiarism and allows for electronic submission, grading, and peer review
- A vast database of scholarly sources with video tutorials and examples supports every step of the research process
- Professional tutoring guides students from rough drafts to polished writing
- Visual analytics track student progress and engagement
- Seamless integration into your campus learning management system keeps all your course materials in one place

MindTap lets you compose your course, your way.

Approaching Texts

Reading to Write

Reading is an essential part of learning. Before you can become an effective writer and a successful student, you need to know how to get the most out of the texts you read.

Central to developing strong reading skills is learning the techniques of **active reading**: marking the text in order to identify parallels, question ambiguities, distinguish important points from not-so-important ones, and connect causes with effects and generalizations with specific examples. The understanding you gain from active reading prepares you to think (and write) critically about a text.

MULTILINGUAL TIP

When you read a text for the first time, don't worry about understanding every word. Instead, just try to get a general idea of what the text is about and how it is organized. Later on, you can use a dictionary to look up any unfamiliar words.

1a Previewing a Text

Before you begin reading a text, you should **preview** it—that is, skim it to get a general sense of its content and emphasis.

When you preview a **periodical article**, scan the introductory and concluding paragraphs for summaries of the author's main points. (Journal articles in the sciences and social sciences often begin with summaries called **abstracts**.) Thesis statements, topic sentences, repeated key terms, transitional words and phrases, and transitional paragraphs can also help you to identify the key points a writer is making. In addition, look for the visual cues—such as **headings and lists**—that writers use to emphasize ideas.

When you preview a **book**, start by looking at its table of contents, especially at the sections that pertain to your topic. Then, turn to its index to see how much coverage the book gives to subjects that may be important to you. As you leave through the chapters, look at any pictures, graphs, and tables, and read the captions that appear with them.
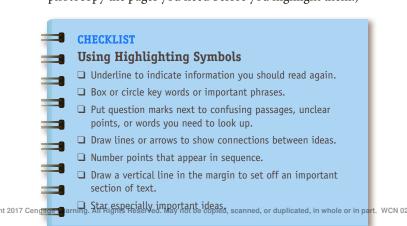
Previewing a Text

When you preview a text, try to answer these questions:

❑ What is the text's general subject?

❑ What are the writer's main points?

❑ How much space does the writer devote to topics relevant to your interests or research?

❑ What other topics are covered?

❑ Who is the author of the text? What do you know about this writer?

❑ Is the text current? Is its information up to date?

❑ Does the text strike you as interesting, accessible, and useful?

Close-Up VISUAL CUES

When you preview a text, don't forget to note its use of color and of various typographical elements—such as typeface and type size, boldface and italics—to emphasize ideas.

1b Highlighting a Text

When you have finished previewing a work, you should **highlight** it—that is, use a system of symbols and underlining to identify the writer's key points and their relationships to one another. (If you are working with library material, photocopy the pages you need before you highlight them.)

CHECKLIST

Using Highlighting Symbols

❑ Underline to indicate information you should read again.

❑ Box or circle key words or important phrases.

❑ Put question marks next to confusing passages, unclear points, or words you need to look up.

❑ Draw lines or arrows to show connections between ideas.

❑ Number points that appear in sequence.

❑ Draw a vertical line in the margin to set off an important section of text.

❑ Star especially important ideas.

1c   Annotating a Text

After you have read through a text once, read it again—this time, more critically. At this stage, you should **annotate** the pages, recording your responses to what you read. This process of recording notes in the margins or between the lines will help you understand the writer's ideas and your own reactions to those ideas.

> **MULTILINGUAL TIP**
> You may find it useful to use your native language when you annotate a text.

Some of your annotations may be relatively straightforward. For example, you may define new words, identify unfamiliar references, or jot down brief summaries. Other annotations may reflect your personal reactions to the text. For example, you may identify a parallel between your own experience and one described in the text, or you may record your opinion of the writer's position.

As you start to **think critically** about a text, your annotations may identify points that confirm (or dispute) your own ideas, question the appropriateness or accuracy of the writer's support, uncover the writer's biases, or even question (or challenge) the writer's conclusion.

The following passage illustrates a student's highlighting and annotations of a passage from Michael Pollan's book *The Omnivore's Dilemma.*

> *People drank 5x as much as they do today*
>
> In the early years of the nineteenth century, Americans began drinking more than they ever had before or since, embarking on a collective bender that confronted the young republic with its first major public health crisis—the obesity epidemic of its day. Corn whiskey, suddenly superabundant and cheap, became the drink of choice, and in 1820 the typical American was putting away half a pint of the stuff every day. That comes to more than five gallons of spirits a year for every man, woman, and child in America. The figure today is less than one.
>
> !!   As the historian W. J. Rorabaugh tells the story in *The Alcoholic Republic*, we drank the hard stuff at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, before work and after and very often during,

Employers were expected to supply spirits over the course of the workday; in fact, the modern coffee break began as a late-morning whiskey break called "the elevenses." (Just to pronounce it makes you sound tipsy.) Except for a brief respite Sunday morning in church, Americans simply did not gather—whether for a barn raising or quilting bee, corn husking or political rally—without passing the whiskey jug. Visitors from Europe—hardly models of sobriety themselves—marveled at the free flow of American spirits. "Come on then, if you love toping," the journalist William Cobbett wrote his fellow Englishmen in a dispatch from America. "For here you may drink yourself blind at the price of sixpence."

?

The results of all this toping were entirely predictable: a rising tide of public drunkenness, violence, and family abandonment, and a spike in alcohol-related diseases. Several of the Founding Fathers—including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams—denounced the excesses of "the Alcoholic Republic," inaugurating an American quarrel over drinking that would culminate a century later in Prohibition.

✱

Did the gov't take action?

But the outcome of our national drinking binge is not nearly as relevant to our own situation as its underlying cause. Which, put simply, was this: American farmers were producing far too much corn. This was particularly true in the newly settled regions west of the Appalachians, where fertile, virgin soils yielded one bumper crop after another. A mountain of surplus corn piled up in the Ohio River Valley. Much as today, the astounding productivity of American farmers proved to be their own worst enemy, as well as a threat to public health. For when yields rise, the market is flooded with grain, and its price collapses. What happens next? The excess biomass works like a vacuum in reverse: Sooner or later, clever marketers will figure out a way to induce the human omnivore to consume the surfeit of cheap calories.

Why?

✱

Examples from contemporary US farming?

This is his point

CHECKLIST

Reading Texts

As you read a text, keep the following questions in mind:

❑ Does the writer provide any information about his or her background? If so, how does this information affect your reading of the text?

❑ What is the writer's **purpose**? How can you tell?

❑ What **audience** is the text aimed at? How can you tell?

❑ What **genre** is the writer using? What are the genre's specific features?

❑ What is the most important idea? What support does the writer provide for that idea?

❑ What information can you learn from the introduction and conclusion?

❑ What information can you learn from the **thesis statement** and topic sentences?

❑ What key words are repeated? What does this repetition tell you about the writer's purpose and emphasis?

❑ How would you characterize the writer's tone?

❑ Where do you agree with the writer? Where do you disagree?

❑ What, if anything, is not clear to you?

1d Reading Electronic Texts

Even when electronic documents physically resemble print documents (as they do in online newspaper articles), the way they present information can be very different. Print documents are **linear**; that is, readers move in a straight line from the beginning of a document to the end. Print documents are also self-contained, including all the background information, explanations, supporting details, and visuals necessary to make their point.

Electronic documents, however, are usually not linear. They often include advertising, marginal commentary, and graphics, and they may also include sound and video. In addition, links embedded in the text encourage readers to go to other sites for facts, statistical data, visuals, or additional articles that supplement the discussion. For example, readers of the electronic discussion of gun control pictured in Figure 1.1 could link to FBI data about the connection between "concealed carry laws" and violent crime. Once they access this material, they can choose to read it carefully, skim it, or ignore it.

FIGURE 1.1 Excerpt from "Do More Guns Mean Less Crime?" A *Reason Online* Debate. Reprinted by permission of Reason.

The format of electronic texts presents challenges to readers. First, because links to other material interrupt the document's flow, it may be hard for readers to focus on a writer's main idea and key points or to follow an argument's logic. In addition, pages may be very busy, crowded with distracting marginalia, visuals, and advertisements. For these reasons, it makes sense to use a slightly different process when you apply active reading strategies to an electronic text.

Previewing During the previewing stage, you will probably want to skim the text online, doing your best to ignore visuals, marginal commentary, advertising, and links. If the text looks like something you will want to read more closely, you should print it out (taking care to choose the "printer-friendly" version, which will usually omit the distracting material and enable you to focus on the text's content).
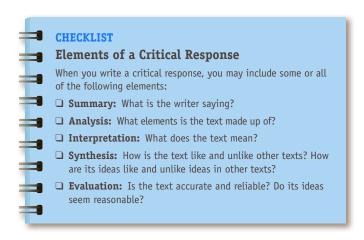
Highlighting and Annotating Once you have hard copy of an electronic text, you can proceed to highlight and annotate it just as you would a print text. Reading on hard copy will enable you to follow the writer's main idea instead of clicking on every link. However, you should be sure to circle any links that look promising so you can explore them later on.

Note: You can also highlight and annotate web-based texts by using a program such as *Diigo*, which makes it possible for you to highlight and write self-stick notes on electronic documents.

1e   Writing a Critical Response

Once you have previewed, highlighted, and annotated a text, you should have the understanding (and the material) you need to write a **critical response** that *summarizes*, *analyzes*, and *interprets* the text's key ideas and perhaps *evaluates* them as well. It can also *synthesize* the ideas in the text with ideas in other texts.

CHECKLIST

Elements of a Critical Response

When you write a critical response, you may include some or all of the following elements:

❑ **Summary:** What is the writer saying?

❑ **Analysis:** What elements is the text made up of?

❑ **Interpretation:** What does the text mean?

❑ **Synthesis:** How is the text like and unlike other texts? How are its ideas like and unlike ideas in other texts?

❑ **Evaluation:** Is the text accurate and reliable? Do its ideas seem reasonable?

The following is a student's critical response to the passage from *The Omnivore's Dilemma* on pages 4–5.

Author and title identified
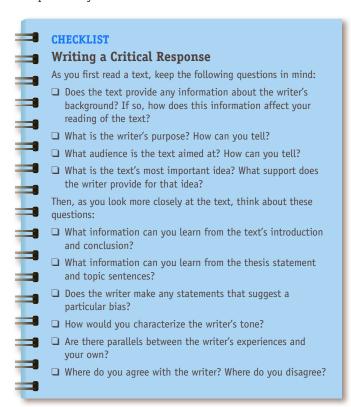
In an excerpt from his book *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Michael Pollan discusses the drinking habits of nineteenth-century Americans and makes a connection between the cause of this "national drinking binge" and

Summary

the factors behind our twenty-first-century unhealthy diets. In both cases, he blames the overproduction of grain by American farmers. He links nineteenth-century overproduction of corn with "a rising tide of public drunkenness, violence, and family abandonment, and a spike in alcohol-related deaths," and he also links the

Analysis and interpretation

current overproduction of grain with a "threat to public health." Although there are certainly other causes of our current problems with obesity, particularly among young children, Pollan's analogy makes sense. As long as

Evaluation

farmers need to sell their overabundant crops, consumers

will be presented with a "surfeit of cheap calories"—with potentially disastrous results.

> **CHECKLIST**
> ### Writing a Critical Response
>
> As you first read a text, keep the following questions in mind:
>
> ❏ Does the text provide any information about the writer's background? If so, how does this information affect your reading of the text?
>
> ❏ What is the writer's purpose? How can you tell?
>
> ❏ What audience is the text aimed at? How can you tell?
>
> ❏ What is the text's most important idea? What support does the writer provide for that idea?
>
> Then, as you look more closely at the text, think about these questions:
>
> ❏ What information can you learn from the text's introduction and conclusion?
>
> ❏ What information can you learn from the thesis statement and topic sentences?
>
> ❏ Does the writer make any statements that suggest a particular bias?
>
> ❏ How would you characterize the writer's tone?
>
> ❏ Are there parallels between the writer's experiences and your own?
>
> ❏ Where do you agree with the writer? Where do you disagree?

CHAPTER **2**

Understanding the Rhetorical Situation

Everyone who sets out to write confronts a series of choices. In the writing that you do in school, on the job, and in your personal life, your understanding of the rhetorical situation

is essential, influencing the choices you make about content, emphasis, organization, format, style, and tone.

Before you begin to write, you should try to answer the following questions:

- What is my **rhetorical situation**, or context for writing?
- What is my **purpose** for writing?
- Who is my **audience**?
- What **genre** should I use in this situation?

2a Considering the Rhetorical Situation

Begin by considering the **rhetorical situation**, the set of conventions that are associated with a particular writing assignment. By keeping this rhetorical situation in mind throughout the writing process, you make sure that your writing keeps its focus.

In college, the rhetorical situation is often identified by your assignment prompt. In personal, civic, and professional writing, the rhetorical situation is often determined by a particular event, interest, or concern that creates the need for this writing.

2b Determining Your Purpose

In simple terms, your **purpose** for writing is what you want to accomplish:

- **Writing to Reflect**   In journals, writers are often introspective, exploring private ideas and feelings to make sense of their experiences; in autobiographical memoirs and personal blog posts, writers communicate their emotions and reactions to others. Another type of reflective writing is **metacognitive writing**, in which writers explain what they have learned and consider the decisions made throughout the writing process.
- **Writing to Inform**   In news articles, writers report information, communicating factual details to readers; in reference books, instruction manuals, textbooks, and the like (as well as on websites sponsored by government agencies or nonprofit organizations), writers provide definitions and explain concepts or processes, trying to help readers see relationships and understand ideas.

Note: In your personal writing, you may convey information informally in *Facebook* updates, text messages, tweets, and instant messages.

- **Writing to Persuade**   In proposals and editorials, as well as in advertising and on political websites and blogs, writers try to convince readers to accept their positions on various issues.
- **Writing to Evaluate**   In reviews of books, films, or performances and in reports, critiques, and program evaluations, writers assess the validity, accuracy, and quality of information, ideas, techniques, products, procedures, or services, perhaps assessing the relative merits of two or more things.

Although writers write to reflect, to inform, to persuade, and to evaluate, these purposes are not mutually exclusive, and writers may have other purposes as well. And, of course, in any piece of writing, a writer may have a primary aim and one or more secondary purposes; in fact, a writer may even have different purposes in different sections—or different drafts—of a single document. The checklist below lists some specific purposes for writing.

CHECKLIST
Determining Your Purpose

In any piece of writing, you can have one or more of the following purposes:

❑ to express emotions	❑ to satirize
❑ to inform	❑ to speculate
❑ to persuade	❑ to warn
❑ to explain	❑ to reassure
❑ to amuse or entertain	❑ to take a stand
❑ to evaluate	❑ to identify problems
❑ to discover	❑ to propose solutions
❑ to analyze	❑ to identify causes
❑ to debunk	❑ to predict effects
❑ to draw comparisons	❑ to reflect
❑ to make an analogy	❑ to interpret
❑ to define	❑ to instruct
❑ to criticize	❑ to inspire
❑ to motivate	

As you begin to write, determining your purpose for writing is critical. As you consider the requirements of your genre, your rhetorical situation and purpose work together. Later, identifying and considering the needs of your audience will shape the content, organization, tone, and style of your writing.

2c   Identifying Your Audience

Most of the writing you compose is directed at a specific **audience**, a particular reader or group of readers.

1 Writing for an Audience

At different times, in different roles, you address a variety of audiences. Before you write, you should think about the characteristics of the audience (or audiences) that you will be addressing.

- **In your personal life**, you may write notes, emails, or texts to friends and family members. You may find yourself writing on social media and for special occasions in a variety of formats or **genres**.

- **As a citizen**, a consumer, or a member of a community, you may respond to social, economic, or political issues by writing emails or letters to a newspaper, a public official, or a representative of a special interest group.

- **As an employee**, you may write letters, memos, and reports to your superiors, to staff members you supervise, or to coworkers; you may also be asked to address customers or critics, board members or stockholders, funding agencies, or the general public.

- **As a student**, you will likely write reflective statements and responses as well as essays, reports, and exams in various academic **disciplines**. You may also participate in **peer review** sessions, writing evaluations of classmates' drafts as well as written responses to classmates' comments about your own work-in-progress.

As you write, you shape your writing in terms of what you think your audience needs and expects. Your assessment of your readers' interests, educational level, biases, and expectations determines what information you include, what you emphasize, and how you arrange your material.

2 The College Writer's Audience

As a student, you may be asked to write for a specific audience, or you may be asked to select an audience. Often, college writers assume they are writing for an audience of one: the instructor who assigns the essay; however, this is not always the case because many instructors want students to address real-life rhetorical situations.

When writing for your instructors, you need to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject; instructors want to see whether you can express your ideas clearly and accurately. They assign written work to encourage you to use **critical thinking** skills—to ask questions and form judgments—so the way you organize and express your ideas can be as important as the ideas themselves.

Instructors expect accurate information, standard grammar and correct spelling, logically presented ideas, and a reasonable degree of stylistic sophistication. They also expect you to define your terms and to support your generalizations with specific examples. Finally, instructors also expect you to draw your own conclusions and to provide full and accurate **documentation** for ideas that are not your own.

3 Writing for Other Students

Before you submit an essay to an instructor, you may have an opportunity to participate in **peer review**, sharing your work with your fellow students and responding in writing to their work.

- **Writing Drafts** If you know that other students will read a draft of your essay, consider how they might react to your ideas. For example, are they likely to agree with you? To challenge your ideas? To be confused, or even mystified, by any of your references? To be shocked or offended by your essay's language or content? You should not assume that your fellow students will automatically share your values or your cultural frame of reference. For this reason, it is important to maintain a neutral tone and use moderate language in your essay and to explain any historical, geographical, or cultural references that you think might be unfamiliar to your audience.
- **Making Comments** When you respond to another student's writing, you should take into account how he

or she will react to your comments. Your tone is important. You want to be encouraging and polite, offering insightful comments that can help your classmate write a stronger essay. Remember, when you respond to another student's essay, your goal is to be constructive, not critical or negative.

CHECKLIST

Audience Concerns for Peer-Review Participants

To get the most out of a peer-review session, keep the following guidelines in mind:

❑ **Know the material.** To be sure you understand what kind of comments will be most helpful, read the essay several times before you begin writing your response.

❑ **Focus on the big picture.** Try not to get bogged down by minor problems with punctuation or mechanics or become distracted by an essay's proofreading errors.

❑ **Look for the strongest feature.** Try to zero in on what you think is the essay's greatest strength.

❑ **Be positive throughout.** Try to avoid words such as *weak, poor*, and *bad*; instead, try using a compliment before delivering the "bad news": "Paragraph 2 is really well developed; can you add this kind of support in paragraph 4?"

❑ **Show respect.** It is perfectly acceptable to tell a writer that something is confusing or inaccurate, but don't go on the attack.

❑ **Be specific.** Avoid generalizations such as "needs more examples" or "could be more interesting"; instead, try to offer helpful, focused suggestions: "You could add an example after the second sentence in paragraph 2"; "Explaining how this process operates would make your discussion more interesting."

❑ **Don't give orders.** Ask questions, and make suggestions.

❑ **Include a few words of encouragement.** In your summary, try to emphasize the essay's strong points.

2d Selecting a Genre

In your college courses, you will compose many different kinds of texts—for example, academic essays, book reviews, research reports, proposals, lab reports, and case studies.

These different types of texts—with their distinctive characteristics and conventions—are referred to as **genres**. In simple terms, a genre is a way of classifying a text according to its style, structure, and format.

A writer's choice of a genre, structure, and medium for writing is based on the message he or she wants to send and the audience he or she intends to reach. Most college writing assignments specify a particular genre. For example, your composition instructor might ask you to write an essay about a personal experience, to evaluate a novel or a film, or to take a position on an issue that you feel strongly about. In these cases, your familiarity with the conventions of the narrative essay, the book or film review, and argumentative writing, respectively, would help you decide how to approach and develop the assignment. Your knowledge of the requirements and features of a specific genre would also be essential if you were going to complete a literature review for your psychology class, a lab report for your chemistry class, or a business proposal for your management class. (For detailed discussions of the genres most frequently used in various disciplines, **see Part 8**.)

CHAPTER 3

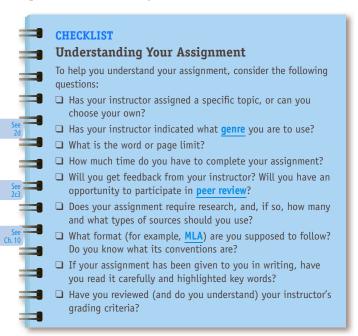# Developing Essay Projects

Writing is a constant process of decision making—of selecting, reconsidering, deleting, and rearranging material as you plan, shape, draft and revise, and edit and proofread your work.

3a Planning

Once you understand the **rhetorical situation** you are ready to begin planning your essay—thinking about what you want to say and how you want to say it.

See
Ch. 2

1 Understanding Your Assignment

Before you start writing, be sure you understand the exact requirements of your **assignment**, and keep those guidelines in mind as you write and revise. Don't assume anything; ask questions, and be sure you understand the answers.

CHECKLIST

Understanding Your Assignment

To help you understand your assignment, consider the following questions:

- ❑ Has your instructor assigned a specific topic, or can you choose your own?

See 2d

- ❑ Has your instructor indicated what **genre** you are to use?
- ❑ What is the word or page limit?
- ❑ How much time do you have to complete your assignment?
- ❑ Will you get feedback from your instructor? Will you have an

See 2c3

  opportunity to participate in **peer review**?
- ❑ Does your assignment require research, and, if so, how many and what types of sources should you use?

See Ch. 10

- ❑ What format (for example, **MLA**) are you supposed to follow? Do you know what its conventions are?
- ❑ If your assignment has been given to you in writing, have you read it carefully and highlighted key words?
- ❑ Have you reviewed (and do you understand) your instructor's grading criteria?

2 Finding a Topic

Sometimes your instructor will assign a specific topic, but most of the time you will be given a general, structured assignment, which you will have to narrow to a **topic** that suits your purpose, audience, and page limit.

Finding a Topic

Course	Assignment	Topic
Composition	Write an essay about a challenge students face in their college classes	Learning how to evaluate research sources

3 Finding Something to Say

Once you have a topic, you can begin to collect ideas for your essay, using one (or several) of the strategies listed below:

- **Reading and Observing**   As you read textbooks, magazines, and newspapers and explore the Internet, as you engage in conversation with friends and family, and as you watch films and TV shows, look for ideas you can use.
- **Keeping a Journal**   Try recording your thoughts about your topic in a print or electronic journal, where you can explore ideas, ask questions, reflect on your thinking and the information you are processing, and draw tentative conclusions.
- **Freewriting**   Try doing timed, unstructured writing. Writing informally for five to ten minutes without stopping may unlock ideas and encourage you to make free associations about your topic.
- **Brainstorming**   On an unlined sheet of paper, record everything you can think of about your topic—comments, questions, lists, single words, and even symbols and diagrams.
- **Asking Questions**   If you prefer an orderly, systematic strategy for finding material to write about, apply the basic journalistic questions—*who? what? why? where? when?* and *how?*—to your topic.
- **Doing Research**   Many college assignments require you to do library or Internet research. **See Part 2** for information on composing with sources.

MULTILINGUAL TIP
Don't waste time worrying about writing grammatically correct sentences. Remember, the purpose of writing is to communicate ideas. If you want to write an interesting, well-developed essay, you will need to devote plenty of time to the planning activities described in this section. You can then edit your work once you have determined and refined your ideas.

3b   Shaping

Once you have collected material for your essay, your next step is to **shape** your material into a thesis-and-support structure.

A **thesis-and-support essay** includes a **thesis statement** (which expresses the **thesis,** or main idea, of the essay) and the specific information that explains and develops that thesis.

PLANNING GUIDE

THESIS-AND-SUPPORT ESSAY

Your **assignment** will ask you to write an essay that supports a thesis.

Your **purpose** will be to present ideas and support them with specific reasons, examples, and so on.

Your **audience** will usually be your instructor or other students in your class.

INTRODUCTION

Thesis statement templates:
• Although…,…
• Because…, it seems likely that…
• Many people believe…; however,…

- Begin by introducing readers to your subject.
- Use a specific introductory strategy to create interest.
- State your essay's thesis.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Topic sentence templates:
• The first (second, third) cause is…
• One (another, the final) example is…

Templates for introducing support:
• For example,…
• As…points out,…
• According to…,…

- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that states the paragraph's main idea.
- In each paragraph, support the topic sentence with facts, details, reasons, examples, and so on.
- Arrange material in each paragraph according to a specific pattern of development: narration, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, and so on.
- Include transitional words and phrases to connect ideas within and between paragraphs.

CONCLUSION

Closing statement templates:
• All in all,…
• All things considered,…
• For all these reasons,…

- Begin with a restatement of your thesis (in different words) or a review of your essay's main points.
- Use a specific concluding strategy to sum up your ideas.
- Try to close with a memorable sentence.

Close-Up WRITING EFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENTS

An effective thesis statement has four characteristics:

1. **An effective thesis statement clearly communicates your essay's main idea.** It tells your readers not only what your essay's topic is but also how you will approach that topic and what you will say about it. Thus, your thesis statement reflects your essay's **purpose**.

2. **An effective thesis statement is more than a general subject, a statement of fact, or an announcement of your intent.**

   Subject: *Wikipedia*

   Statement of Fact: Many college students rely on *Wikipedia* for basic information.

   Announcement: The essay that follows will show why *Wikipedia* is not a trustworthy source for a research paper.

   Thesis Statement: For college-level research, *Wikipedia* is most valuable not as an end in itself but as a gateway to more reliable research sources.

3. **An effective thesis statement is carefully worded.** Your thesis statement—usually expressed in a single concise sentence—should be direct and straightforward. Avoid vague phrases, such as *centers on*, *deals with*, *involves*, *revolves around*, or *is concerned with*. Do not include phrases such as *As I will show, I plan to demonstrate*, and *It seems to me*, which weaken your credibility by suggesting that your conclusions are based on opinion rather than on reading, observation, and experience.

4. **Finally, an effective thesis statement suggests your essay's direction, emphasis, and scope.** Your thesis statement should not make promises that your essay will not fulfill. It should suggest the major points you will cover and the order in which you will introduce them.

Note: As you write and rewrite, you may modify your essay's direction, emphasis, and scope; if you do so, you must also reword your thesis statement.

3c Constructing a Scratch Outline

Once you have a thesis statement, you may want to construct a scratch outline to guide you as you write. A **scratch outline** is a brief, informal organizational plan that arranges your essay's main points (and perhaps its major supporting ideas) in an orderly way.

The following is a scratch outline for the model student essay in **3f**.

Scratch Outline

Thesis statement: For college-level research, *Wikipedia* is most valuable not as an end in itself but as a gateway to more reliable research sources.

- Definition of wiki and explanation of *Wikipedia*
- *Wikipedia*'s benefits
  - Links
  - Comprehensive abstracts
  - Current and popular culture topics
  - "Stub" articles
- *Wikipedia*'s potential
- *Wikipedia*'s drawbacks
  - Not accurate
  - Bias
  - Vandalism
  - Not enough citations
- Financial accounting example: benefits
- Financial accounting example: drawbacks

3d Drafting and Revising

1 Writing a Rough Draft

When you write a rough draft, your goal is to get ideas down so you can react to them. You will generally do several drafts of your essay, and you should expect to add or delete words, reword sentences, rethink ideas, and reorder paragraphs as you write. You should also be open to discovering new ideas—or even to taking an unexpected detour.

At this point, concentrate on the body of your essay, and don't waste time writing the "perfect" introduction and conclusion. To make revision easier, leave extra space between lines. You may want to print out your draft and edit by hand on hard copy, typing in your changes on subsequent drafts.

MULTILINGUAL TIP

Using your native language occasionally as you draft your essay may keep you from losing your train of thought. However, writing most or all of your draft in your native language and then translating it into English is generally not a good idea. This process will take a long time, and the translation into English may sound awkward, especially if it comes from a translation tool located online or in your word-processing program.

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2 Revising Your Drafts

When you revise, you "re-see" what you have written and write additional drafts. Everyone's revision process is different, but the following specific strategies can be helpful at this stage of the process:

- **Outline your draft.** A formal outline can help you check the logic of your essay's structure.
- **Use word-processing tools.** Use tools such as *Microsoft Word*'s **Track Changes** and **Compare Documents** to help you see how your revisions change your work-in-progress.
- **Participate in peer review.** Ask a classmate for feedback on your draft.
- **Use instructors' comments.** Study your instructor's comments on your draft, and arrange a conference if necessary.
- **Schedule a writing center conference.** A writing center tutor can give you additional feedback on your draft.
- **Use a revision checklist.** Revise in stages, first looking at the whole essay and then turning your attention to the individual paragraphs, sentences, and words. You can use the revision checklists on the next page to guide you through the process.

CHECKLISTS FOR REVISING YOUR ESSAY

The Whole Essay

❑ Are your thesis and support logically related, with each body paragraph supporting your thesis statement? **(See 3b.)**

❑ Is your thesis statement clearly and specifically worded? **(See 3b.)**

❑ Have you discussed everything promised in your thesis statement? **(See 3b.)**

Paragraphs

❑ Does each body paragraph focus on one main idea, expressed in a clearly worded topic sentence? **(See 20a.)**

❑ Are the relationships of sentences within paragraphs clear? **(See 20b.)**

❑ Are your body paragraphs fully developed? **(See 20c.)**

❑ Does your introductory paragraph arouse interest and prepare readers for what is to come? **(See 20d1.)**

❑ Does your concluding paragraph sum up your essay's main idea? **(See 20d2.)**

Sentences

❑ Have you used correct sentence structure? **(See Chapters 14 and 15.)**

❑ Are your sentences varied? **(See Chapter 21.)**

❑ Have you eliminated wordiness and unnecessary repetition? **(See 22a–b.)**

❑ Have you avoided overloading your sentences with too many words, phrases, and clauses? **(See 22c.)**

❑ Have you avoided potentially confusing shifts in tense, voice, mood, person, or number? **(See 23a.)**

❑ Are your sentences constructed logically? **(See 23b–c.)**

❑ Have you strengthened your sentences by using parallel words, phrases, and clauses? **(See 24a.)**

❑ Have you placed modifiers clearly and logically? **(See Chapter 25.)**

Words

❑ Have you eliminated jargon, pretentious diction, clichés, and offensive language from your writing? **(See 26b–c.)**

Close-Up CHOOSING A TITLE

When you are ready to decide on a title for your essay, keep these criteria in mind:

- A title should convey your essay's focus, perhaps using key words and phrases from your essay or echoing the wording of your assignment.
- A title should arouse interest, perhaps with a provocative question, a quotation, or a controversial position.

Assignment: Write an essay about a challenge students face in their college classes.

Topic: Learning how to evaluate research sources.

Possible Titles:

Evaluating Research Sources: A Challenge for College Students (echoes wording of assignment and uses key words from essay)

Wikipedia: "Making Life Easier" (quotation)

Blocking *Wikipedia* on Campus: The Only Solution to a Growing Problem (controversial position)

Wikipedia: Friend or Foe? (provocative question)

3e Editing and Proofreading

When you **edit**, you concentrate on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics. When you **proofread**, you reread every word carefully to make sure you did not introduce any errors as you typed.

Close-Up PROOFREADING STRATEGIES

To help you proofread more effectively, try using these strategies:

- Read your essay aloud, listening for places where you stumble or hesitate.
- Have a friend read your essay aloud to you.
- Read silently, word by word, using your finger or a sheet of paper to help you keep your place.
- Read your essay's sentences in reverse order, beginning with the last sentence.

As you edit, use the Search or Find command to look for usage errors you commonly make—for instance, confusing *it's* with *its, lay* with *lie, effect* with *affect, their* with *there*, or *too* with *to*. You can also uncover **sexist language** by searching for words such as *he, his, him*, or *man*.

Keep in mind that neatness does not equal correctness. The clean text that your computer produces can mask flaws that might otherwise be apparent; for this reason, it is up to you to make sure no spelling errors or typos slip by. When you have finished proofreading, check to make sure the final typed copy of your essay conforms to your instructor's format requirements.

Close-Up   USING SPELL CHECKERS AND GRAMMAR CHECKERS

Although spell checkers and grammar checkers can make the process of editing and proofreading your work easier, they have limitations. Remember, spell checkers and grammar checkers are no substitutes for careful editing and proofreading.

- **Spell Checkers** A spell checker simply identifies strings of letters it does not recognize; it does not distinguish between homophones or spot every typographical error. For example, it does not recognize *there* in "They forgot there books" as incorrect, nor does it identify a typo that produces a correctly spelled word, such as *word* for *work* or *thing* for *think*. Moreover, a spell checker may not recognize every technical term, proper noun, or foreign word you may use.
- **Grammar Checkers** A grammar checker scans documents for certain features (the number of words in a sentence, for example); however, it is not able to read a document to see if it makes sense. As a result, a grammar checker is not always accurate. For example, it may identify a long sentence as a run-on when it is, in fact, grammatically correct, and it generally advises against using passive voice—even in contexts where it is appropriate. Moreover, a grammar checker does not always supply answers; often, it asks questions—for example, whether *which* should be *that* or whether *which* should be preceded by a comma—that you must answer. In short, a grammar checker can guide your editing and proofreading, but you must be the one who decides when a sentence is (or is not) correct.

3f Model Student Essay

James 1

Rebecca James

Professor Burks

English 101

14 March 2016

Wikipedia: Friend or Foe?

When given a research assignment, students Introduction often turn first to *Wikipedia*, the popular free online encyclopedia. With over 26,000,000 articles, *Wikipedia* is a valuable source for anyone seeking general information on a topic. For college-level research, however, *Wikipedia* is most valuable Thesis statement when it is used not as an authoritative source but as a gateway to more reliable research sources.

A wiki is an open-source website that allows Background on wikis and *Wikipedia* users to edit and add to its content. Derived from a Hawaiian word meaning "quick," the term *wiki* conveys the swiftness and ease with which users can access information on such sites as well as contribute content ("Wiki"). Since its creation in 2001 by Jimmy Wales, *Wikipedia* has grown into a huge database of articles on topics ranging from contemporary rock bands to obscure scientific and technical concepts. In accordance with the site's policies, users can edit existing articles and add new articles using *Wikipedia*'s editing tools, which do not require specialized programming knowledge or expertise.

Wikipedia offers several benefits to Benefits of *Wikipedia* researchers seeking information on a topic. Longer *Wikipedia* articles often include comprehensive abstracts that summarize their content. Articles

also often include links to other *Wikipedia* articles. In fact, *Wikipedia*'s internal links, or "wikilinks," are so prevalent that they significantly increase *Wikipedia*'s web presence. According to Alison J. Head and Michael B. Eisenberg, college students conducting a *Google* search often click first on the *Wikipedia* link, which usually appears on the first page of *Google*'s list of search results. Head and Eisenberg quote a student from their study as saying, "I don't really start with *Wikipedia*; I *Google* something and then a *Wikipedia* entry usually comes up early on, so I guess I use both in kind of a two-step process." In addition, many *Wikipedia* articles contain external links to other online and print sources, including reliable peer-reviewed sources. Finally, because its online format allows users to update its content at any time from any location, *Wikipedia* offers up-to-the-minute coverage of political and cultural events as well as information on popular culture topics that receive little or no attention in other reference sources. Even when the available information on a particular topic is limited, *Wikipedia* allows users to create "stub" articles, which provide basic information that other users can expand over time. In this way, *Wikipedia* offers an online forum for a developing bank of information on a range of topics.

Benefits of *Wikipedia*

Another benefit of *Wikipedia* is that it has the potential to become a reliable and comprehensive database of information. As *Wikipedia*'s "About" page explains, the site's articles "are never

James 3

considered complete and may be continually edited and improved." This ongoing editing improves quality and helps to ensure "a neutral representation of information." Using the criteria of accuracy, neutrality, completeness, and style, *Wikipedia* classifies its best articles as "featured" and its second-best articles as "good." In addition, *Wikipedia*'s policy statements indicate that the information in its articles must be verifiable and must be based on documented, preexisting research. Although no professional editorial board oversees the development of content within *Wikipedia*, experienced users may become editors, and this role allows them to monitor the process by which content is added and updated. Users may also use the "Talk" page to discuss an article's content and make suggestions for improvement. With these control measures in place, some *Wikipedia* articles are comparable to articles in professionally edited online resources.

Despite its numerous benefits and its enormous potential, *Wikipedia* is not an authoritative research source. As the site's "Researching with *Wikipedia*" page concedes, "not everything in *Wikipedia* is accurate, comprehensive, or unbiased." Because anyone can create or edit *Wikipedia* articles, they can be factually inaccurate or biased—and they can even be vandalized. Many *Wikipedia* articles, especially those that are underdeveloped, do not supply citations to the sources that support their claims. This absence

Limitations of *Wikipedia*

James 4

of source information should lead users to question the articles' reliability. Of course, many underdeveloped *Wikipedia* articles include labels to identify their particular shortcomings—for example, poor grammar or missing documentation. Still, users cannot always determine the legitimacy of information contained in the *Wikipedia* articles they consult.

Strengths of "Financial Accounting" *Wikipedia* article

For college students, *Wikipedia* can provide useful general information and links to helpful resources. For example, accounting students will find that the *Wikipedia* article "Financial Accounting" defines this field in relation to basic accounting concepts and offers a visual breakdown of the key terms within the discipline. This article can help students in accounting classes to understand the basic differences between this and other types of accounting. The article contains several internal links to related *Wikipedia* articles and some external links to additional resources and references. In comparison, the wiki *Citizendium* does not contain an article on financial accounting, and the "Financial Accounting" article in the professionally edited *Encyclopaedia Britannica* consists only of a link to a related *EB* article.

Weaknesses of "Financial Accounting" *Wikipedia* article

Although the *Wikipedia* article on financial accounting provides helpful general information about this accounting field, it is limited in terms of its reliability and scope. The top of the article displays a warning label that identifies the article's shortcomings. As fig. 1 illustrates, the article's

James 5

problems include a lack of cited sources. The limitations of the financial accounting article reinforce the sense that *Wikipedia* is best used not as a source but as a path to more reliable and comprehensive research sources.

Fig. 1. "Financial Accounting." *Wikipedia*. 14 Mar. 2016, 15:04, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_accounting.

Conclusion

Like other encyclopedia articles, *Wikipedia* articles should be used only as a starting point for research and as a link to more in-depth sources. Moreover, users should keep in mind that *Wikipedia* articles can include more factual errors, bias, and inconsistencies than professionally edited encyclopedia articles. Although future enhancements to the site may make it more reliable, *Wikipedia* users should understand the current shortcomings of this popular online tool.

James 6

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3g Creating a Writing Portfolio

A **writing portfolio**, a collection of written work in print or
electronic form, offers a unique opportunity for you to pre-
sent your intellectual track record, showing how you have
developed as a writer in response to the **learning outcomes**
(what you are expected to learn) set by your instructor or
your school. Increasingly, colleges have been using port-
folios as a way not only to assess individual students' per-
formance but also to see if the student body as a whole is
meeting the school's standards.

While compiling individual items (usually called **artifacts**)
to include in their portfolios, students reflect on their work
and measure their progress; as they do so, they may improve
their ability to evaluate their own work.

1 Assembling Your Portfolio

Many academic disciplines are moving toward electronic
portfolios because, when posted on the Internet, they are

immediately accessible to peers and instructors (as well as to prospective employers).

> ### CHECKLIST
> ### Suggested Content for Portfolios
> The following material might be included in a portfolio:
> - ❑ **Internal hyperlinks within a table of contents or home page** to help readers navigate artifacts in the portfolio
> - ❑ A <u>reflective statement</u> in the form of a cover memo, letter, or essay, with internal hyperlinks to portfolio content
> - ❑ **Writing prompts** that provide context for portfolio content
> - ❑ **Planning material**, such as journal or blog entries and brainstorming notes
> - ❑ **Shaping material**, such as thesis statements and outlines
> - ❑ **Rough drafts with comments** made by peer reviewers, instructors, and writing center tutors
> - ❑ **Revised drafts**, showing revisions made with Track Changes
> - ❑ **Photocopies of source material**
> - ❑ **Final drafts**
> - ❑ **External hyperlinks** to online source material and other websites that support the portfolio
> - ❑ **Visuals** that enhance your documents
> - ❑ **Audio and video clips of presentations**
> - ❑ *PowerPoint* slides
> - ❑ **Collaborative work**, with your own contributions clearly marked
> - ❑ **A résumé,** if the portfolio will be submitted to a prospective employer

2 Writing a Reflective Statement

Instructors usually require students to introduce their portfolios with a **reflective statement**—a memo, letter, or essay in which students assess their writing improvement and achievements over a period of time.

Excerpt from Reflective Statement

What has always scared me even more than staring at a blank computer screen is working hard on an essay only to have it returned full of red comments. The step-by-step *Wikipedia* essay assignment helped me to confront my fear

of revision and realize that revision—including outside feedback—is essential to writing.

Comments I received in peer review showed me that feedback could be constructive. I was relieved to see my classmates' comments were tactful and not too critical of my essay's flaws. I think the electronic format was easier for me than face-to-face discussions would have been because I tend to get discouraged and start apologizing when I hear negative comments.

C H A P T E R **4**

Writing an Argumentative Essay

4a **Organizing an Argumentative Essay**

An **argumentative essay** takes a stand on an issue and uses logic and evidence to change the way readers think or to move them to action. When you write an argumentative essay, you follow the same process you use when you write any **essay**. However, argumentative essays use special strategies to win audience approval and to overcome potential opposition.

See
Ch. 3

PLANNING GUIDE

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

Your **assignment** will ask you to take a stand on an issue.
Your **purpose** will be to convince readers to accept your position on the issue.
Your **audience** will be your instructor or other students in your class or school.

INTRODUCTION

- Begin by presenting a brief overview of your subject.
- Show readers how your subject concerns them.
- State your thesis. (If your thesis is very controversial, you may want to delay stating it until later in the essay.)

Thesis statement templates:
- The idea that…is popular, but…
- Recent studies, however, suggest that…
- The following actions are necessary because…
- In my opinion,…

BACKGROUND

- Briefly review the basic facts of the controversy.
- Provide definitions of key terms or an overview of others' opinions on the issue.

Topic sentence templates:
- One (another) way is…
- The first (second, third) reason is…
- One advantage (another advantage) is…

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE THESIS

- Begin with your weakest argument and work up to the strongest.
- If your arguments are equally strong, begin with the one with which your readers are most familiar and most likely to accept.
- Support your arguments with evidence—facts, examples, and expert opinion.

Templates for introducing support:
- As…mentions in his/her article, "…"
- According to…,…
- In his/her book,…says, "…"

REFUTATION OF OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

- Refute opposing arguments by demonstrating that they are untrue, unfair, illogical, or inaccurate.
- If an opposing argument is particularly strong, concede its strength, and point out its limitations.

Refutation templates:
- Of course, not everyone agrees that…; however,…
- Although it is true that…, it is not necessarily true that…
- On the one hand,…; on the other hand,…

CONCLUSION

- Reinforce the stand you are taking.
- Remind readers of the weaknesses of opposing arguments, or underscore the logic of your position.
- End with a strong concluding statement, such as a memorable quotation or a call to action.

Closing statement templates:
- For these reasons,…
- The current situation can be improved by…
- Let us hope that…
- In conclusion,…

4b **Model Argumentative Essay**

The following argumentative essay includes many of the elements outlined in the Planning Guide. The student, Samantha Masterton, was asked to write an argumentative essay on a topic of her choice, drawing her supporting evidence from her own knowledge and experience as well as from other sources.