

# The College **WRITER**

A Guide to Thinking, Writing, and Researching

**Sixth Edition**

Van Rys • Meyer • VanderMey • Sebranek



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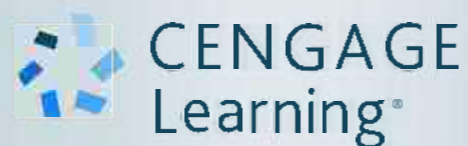
## Proofreading and Correction Symbols

<i>ab</i>	do not abbreviate	^	insert (word/s left out)
<i>ad</i>	incorrect adjective	¶	begin paragraph
<i>adv</i>	incorrect adverb		not parallel
<i>agr</i>	agreement problem	omit	omitted word
<i>ambig</i>	ambiguous wording	p	punctuation
<i>appr</i>	inappropriate language	^,	insert comma
<i>aud</i>	unclear audience	?	questionable idea
<i>avoid</i>	this should be avoided	pass	ineffective use of passive voice
<i>awk</i>	awkward expression	pro ref	pronoun reference
<i>cap (≡)</i>	capitalize	ramb	rambling sentence
<i>case</i>	error in case	red	redundant
<i>cf</i>	comma fault	rep	unnecessary repetition
	check this out	RO	run-on sentence
<i>choppy</i>	choppy style	shift	shift in tense/person
<i>coord</i>	faulty coordination	show	show, don't tell
<i>cs</i>	comma splice	sp	spelling
<i>d</i>	diction	ss	sentence structure
<i>details</i>	add details	stet	let it stand
<i>dev</i>	inadequate development	sub	faulty subordination
<i>dm</i>	dangling modifier	support	add evidence
<i>d neg</i>	double negative	t	wrong verb tense
<i>doc</i>	incorrect or incomplete documentation	thesis	thesis unclear or missing
<i>frag</i>	sentence fragment		delete
<i>gen</i>	be more specific	trans	weak transition
<i>gram</i>	grammatical error	TS	topic sentence
<i>inc</i>	incomplete construction	u	usage/mixed pair
<i>inf</i>	too informal	vary	add variety
<i>irr</i>	irregular verb error	voice	inconsistent voice
<i>ital</i>	italics (underscore)	w	wordy
<i>lc (ⓧ)</i>	use lowercase	wc	word choice
<i>logic</i>	not logical	wo	word order
<i>mm</i>	misplaced modifier	x	find and correct error
<i>ms</i>	manuscript form	#	insert space
<i>nc</i>	not clear	( )	close up space
<i>nonst</i>	nonstandard language	∇	insert apostrophe
<i>num</i>	error in use of numbers		

# The College WRITER

A Guide to Thinking, Writing, and Researching

**Sixth Edition**



Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

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# Preface

Combining streamlined instruction in the writing process with outstanding accessibility, the sixth edition of *The College Writer* is a fully updated four-in-one text with a rhetoric, a reader, a research guide, and a handbook for students at any skill level. Throughout the text, numerous student and professional writing samples highlight important features of academic writing—from voice to documentation—and offer guidance for students' own papers. The sixth edition features fully refreshed sample essays, stronger instruction in argumentative writing, revamped activities and projects, and MLA 8th edition updates.

## New Features

- **Thirty NEW sample essays**, 12 student and 18 professional, offer students fresh perspectives on relevant, current topics—from human empathy for whales to groupthink to cyberbullying. Perfect for discussion, these essays will also inspire students' own writing. New professional writers include such well-knowns as Susan Sontag, Amy Tan, Atul Gawande, Malcolm Gladwell, Ernest Hemingway, and David Brooks, along with Melissa Pritchard, Reshma Memon Yaqub, Brian Phillips, Maria Konnikova, Susan Cain, and James Kilmore. New student writers tackle topics such as family violence, cultural identity, face blindness, e-waste, and privacy in a surveillance age.
- **ENHANCED Chapter 17, “Strategies for Argumentation and Persuasion,” and the NEW Chapter 18, “Arguing for Positions, Actions, and Solutions,”** strengthen instruction in argumentative writing. Chapter 17 now includes attention to the contrast between Toulmin and Rogerian approaches to argument, along with a sample argument by Malcolm Gladwell and a fallacy-focused essay by philosopher Kathleen Dean Moore. Chapter 18 integrates and streamlines instruction in forms of argumentative writing that had previously been somewhat artificially separated into chapters on taking a position, calling for action, and solving problems. At the same time, this new chapter offers more instruction on the principles involved in forms of argumentative writing, along with new sample essays that cluster around campus controversies, environmental challenges, and social institutions (including the family).
- **NEW activities and projects** help students fully engage readings, complete their own writing, and extend their learning through critical thinking. After each sample essay, “Reading for Better Writing” questions now ask students to *connect* the reading to their own lives and experiences, show *comprehension* of the content, study *writing strategies* within the piece, and brainstorm related topics and approaches for their own projects. End-of-chapter activities now extend students' learning through critical-thinking applications such as *Photo Op*, *Wise Words*, *Living Today*, *Public Texts*, *Writing Reset*, and *Major Work*.



- **NEW and ENHANCED instruction in principles of academic writing** helps students to more effectively produce thoughtful, energetic, college-level prose. A new diagram of the writing process (Figure 2.2 on page 26) does justice to the recursive nature of writing, while more attention to thesis development (page 46) and an introduction to academic writing moves (pages 64–66) shows students how to strengthen, develop, and expand their ideas. A new overview of the rhetorical modes (pages 140–141) underscores how writers draw upon and integrate thinking patterns in their work. New attention to eliminating wordiness (page 102) and striving for plain English (page 105) helps students write clear, concise prose. And to reinforce new instruction, students will find tips on reviewing instructor feedback on writing (page 113).
- **Fully UPDATED MLA Documentation (8th edition)** gives students the instruction they need to understand the major changes to the MLA system and to implement those changes through correct and effective documentation of their research. The new system is introduced through an easy-reference quick guide, presented through clear examples, and modeled in new student essays.
- **REORGANIZED chapters in the Reader and the Handbook** offer a more logical progression in concepts for instructors and students. In the Reader, the analytical modes follow a sequence from lesser to greater thinking complexity: definition, classification, process, comparison-contrast, and cause-effect. In the Handbook, instruction now begins with the foundational matters of parts of speech and sentence structure before moving on to sentence errors, punctuation, mechanics, and usage.

## Key Features

- ***The College Writer* provides students with a concise yet complete overview of the writing process.** The text's unique "at-a-glance" visual format presents each major concept in a one- or two-page spread, with examples illustrating explanations, and then the opportunity for hands-on practice, with writing assignments or practice exercises.
- **Consistent attention to the rhetorical situation**—writer, reader, message, medium, and context—gives students a tool to analyze the works of others and create their own works. Chapter 1, for instance, begins with an illustration of the rhetorical situation and extended tips for reading actively.
- **"Learning Objectives" at the beginning of each chapter help students focus on key learning points;** main headings throughout the chapter reinforce those points; and "Learning-Objective Checklists" at the end of the chapter enable students to track their performance.
- **"Common Traits of College Writing,"** introduced in chapter 2 and then underlying much of the instruction in the text, help students understand and achieve college-level writing. These traits are also in sync with the "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition."



- **Emphasis on thesis and outline creation encourages students to organize their thinking as they write.**
- **High-interest academic writings from students and professionals help writers understand and create a scholarly tone.** Throughout the text, the authors offer examples of writing for different disciplines as well as in different work contexts.
- **“Writing with Sources” boxes, integrated into the writing-process chapters, show students how attention to research-related issues might help them at a given step in the writing process.**
- **Each chapter includes projects or activities that may be completed individually or in groups.** That way, the text is a flexible tool for cultivating individual skills and facilitating collaborative learning.
- **Chapter 16, “Reading Literature: A Case Study in Analysis,” addresses literary analysis as a form of analytical writing that utilizes many of the principles and practices addressed in the analytical writing chapters (11-15).** In that way, the chapter consolidates and illustrates that instruction, showing how writers draw upon several analytical modes to answer their questions about poems, short stories, and even films. The chapter also includes the poem and short story analyzed by student writers.
- **The Research section gives students all the tools they need to do twenty-first century research,** including working with digital databases; understanding the differences between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources; working effectively with sources, while avoiding plagiarism; learning to evaluate diverse sources; and documenting their research in MLA or APA format.
- **The Handbook covers key points of grammar, sentence structure, sentence errors, punctuation, mechanics, and usage, as well as multilingual and ESL guidelines.** These topics are reinforced by exercises available both in the text and online via MindTap.
- **Charts, graphs, and photos help visual learners grasp concepts and cultivate visual literacy in all students.** These elements range from the high-interest chapter-opening photos with a “Visually Speaking” prompt to “Photo Op” activities at the end of many chapters, critical-thinking through viewing examples in chapter 1, and graphic organizers in chapter 3.
- **Color-coded cut-out tabs make it easy to flip to any of the four sections of the book.**
- **The entire text is available as a multimedia eBook, featuring audio, video, exercises, models, and web links.**
- **Chapters on “Writing for the Web,” “Taking Tests,” “Writing for the Workplace,” and “Preparing Oral Presentations” are listed in the Table of Contents and are available online in MindTap.**



## New to This Edition

**New Sample Essays:** Thirty new sample essays include works by professionals such as Susan Sontag, Amy Tan, Atul Gawanda, Malcolm Gladwell, Ernest Hemingway, David Brooks, Melissa Pritchard, Reshma Memon Yaqub, Brian Phillips, and Maria Konnikova.

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Reader: Strategies and Samples

### Analyzing Medical Procedures

"No Risky Chances" is an essay excerpted from the book, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. In both texts, author and physician Dr. Atul Gawande critiques traditional procedures used by physicians to care for patients during their last stages of life. "Lacking a coherent view of how people might live successfully all the way to the very end," he says, "we have allowed our fates to be controlled by medicine, technology, and strangers."

#### No Risky Chances:

##### The conversation that matters most.

I learned about a lot of things in medical school, but mortality wasn't one of them. Although I was given a dry, leathery corpse to dissect in anatomy class in my first term, our textbooks contained almost nothing about aging or frailty or dying. The purpose of medical schooling was to teach how to save lives, not how to tend to their demise.

I had never seen anyone die before I became a doctor, and when I did, it came as a shock. I'd seen multiple family members—my wife, my parents, and my children—go through serious, life-threatening illnesses, but medicine had always pulled them through. I knew theoretically that my patients could die, of course, but every actual instance seemed like a violation, as if the rules I thought we were playing by were broken.

Dying and death confront every new doctor and nurse. The first times, some cry. Some shut down. Some hardly notice. When I saw a patient die, I would often find myself to weep. But I had recurring nightmares in which I would see a patient die in my house—even in my bed.

I felt as if I'd failed. But death, of course, is not my enemy, but it is also the natural order of things. I may be able to understand it abstractly, but I didn't know it concretely—th

for everyone but also for this person right in front of me. You don't have to spend much time with the patient to see how often medicine fails the people it is supposed to help. Our lives are given over to treatments that addle our brains and give us a sliver's chance of benefit. These days are spent in intensive-care units—where regimented, anonymous things that matter to us in life.

As recently as 1945, most deaths occurred in the home. Now, 90 percent did. Lacking a coherent view of how people

Chapter 11 | Definition

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### Illustrating a Term

Amy Tan is an award-winning writer whose many books include *The Joy Luck Club*, *The Kitchen God's Wife*, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, and *The Valley of Amazement*. When asked to respond to the writing prompt "confession," she relayed the following personal experience that concludes with an urgent confession.

#### Confession

"My mother had a very difficult childhood, having seen her own mother kill herself. So she didn't always know how to be the nurturing mother that we all expect we should have." —Amy Tan

My mother has Alzheimer's disease. Often her thoughts reach back like the winter tide, exposing the wreckage of a former shore. Often she's mired in 1968, the year my older brother and father died. This was also the year that she took me and my younger brother across an ocean to Switzerland, a place so preposterously different that she knew she had to give up grieving simply to survive. That year, she remembers, she was very, very sad. I too remember. I was sixteen then, and I recall a late-night hour when my mother and I were arguing in a chalet, that tinder box of emotions where we lived.

She had pushed me into the small bedroom we shared, and as she slapped me about the head, I backed into a corner, to a room that looked out upon the lake, the Alps, the beautiful outside world. My mother was furious because I had a boyfriend. She said he was a drug addict, a bad man who would use me for sex and throw me away like leftover garbage. "Stop seeing him!" she ordered. I shook my head. The more she beat me, the more implacable I became, and this in turn fueled her outrage. "You didn't love your daddy or Peter! When they die you not even sad." I kept my face to the window, unmoved. What does she know about sad? She sobbed and beat her chest. "I'd rather kill myself first than see you destroy your life!" Suicide. How many times had she threatened that before? "I wish you the one die! Not Peter, not Daddy." She had just confirmed what I had always suspected. Now she flew at me with her fists. "I rather kill you! I rather see you die!" And then perhaps horrified by what she had just said, she fled the room.

Thank God that was over. Suddenly she was back. She slammed shut the door, latched it, then locked it with a key. I saw the flash of a meat cleaver just before she pushed me to the wall and brought the blade's edge to within an inch from my throat. Her eyes were like a wild animal's, shiny, fixated on the kill. In an excited voice she said she was going to kill me first, then my younger brother, then herself, the whole

**Enhanced, Streamlined Instruction in Argumentation and Persuasion:** Chapter 17, “Strategies for Argumentation and Persuasion,” now includes attention to the contrast between Toulmin and Rogerian approaches to argument, along with sample arguments by Kathleen Dean Moore and Malcolm Gladwell. Chapter 18, “Arguing for Positions, Actions, and Solutions,” integrates instruction in three forms of argumentative writing.

## Structuring Arguments

The shape of an argument often emerges organically as you think about and research an issue. While you have a lot of freedom about how to shape arguments, two patterns have become popular methods of doing so: Toulmin and Rogerian. In what follows, you will find a brief introduction to each method. Use these introductions to guide your choices for specific arguments.

### Understand Toulmin Argumentation

Made popular by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin in his book *The Uses of Argument* (1958), this method lends structure to the way people naturally make arguments. Not exactly formal logic, this pattern offers a practical approach that allows writers and their readers to wrestle over debatable issues through sound thinking. Toulmin’s elements do not map out a strict sequence of elements, but writers may draw upon the elements to unfold their thinking within a paragraph or for an entire essay. Many of these elements are addressed more fully later in this chapter (pages 315–322), but here is an overview:

- **Claims** The debatable statement the writer aims to prove or support.
  - Planting trees is a practical step to fight climate change.
- **Qualifiers** Any limits the writer puts on claims in order to make those claims more reasonable, precise, and honest.
  - *Although it is a small step*, planting trees is *one* practical way that *many* people can fight climate change.
- **Support** The reasoning that the writer offers to explain and defend the claim; the evidence that the writer offers to back up the reasoning and thereby ground the claim (various forms of data, information, experience, narratives, authority, and so on).
  - According to the UN, “Deforestation causes 12-18 percent of the world’s carbon emission, almost equal to all the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the global transport sector.”
- **Warrants** The logical glue that holds together claims, reasons, and evidence; the assumptions, principles, and values (sometimes unstated), that lie behind the writer’s reasoning.
  - Stopping climate change is more important than the economic benefits of deforestation.
- **Backing** When warrants aren’t shared or understood by readers, the special reasoning and evidence writers offer to convince readers to accept those principles.
  - Recent research has determined that the 32 million acres of forest lost each year make a significant contribution to global warming.
- **Conditions of Rebuttal** The writer’s anticipation of and response to possible objections; his or her sense of other perspectives and positions.
  - Economies dependent on deforestation can take a number of steps toward sustainable practices.



**Enriching Questions, Activities, and Projects:** After each sample essay, “Reading for Better Writing” questions ask students to *connect* the reading to their own life, show *comprehension* of the content, study *writing strategies* within the piece, and brainstorm related topics and approaches for their own *project*. End-of-chapter activities extend students’ learning through critical-thinking applications such as *Photo Op*, *Wise Words*, *Living Today*, *Public Texts*, *Writing Reset*, and *Major Work*.

Chapter 18 | Arguing for Positions, Actions, and Solutions

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The university’s decision in the case of the Confederate statues runs counter to the core values it has long promoted. Carved in large letters prominently across the façade of the south entrance of the UT Tower are the liberating words of John 8:32: “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” The motto on the official seal of the university reads *Disciplina Praesidium Civitatis*. “A cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy.” The recent decision is not faithful to those values, nor is it in keeping with our university motto: “What starts here changes the world.”

All human lives matter, including historical lives. For over a century, people of color in Texas were treated as unworthy of the full rights and privileges of American citizens. We should not segregate any part of our past in a moral skeleton closet. Keeping, contextualizing, and explaining the Confederate statues and their history would convert those artworks into tools of historical witness to wrongs done and too long tolerated. And they would serve as conspicuous examples of how to change moral direction within our society.

**Reading for Better Writing**

1. **Connections:** How would you describe your own connection to and experience of the South? What about your knowledge of racial history in that region? What about statues? Are the statues on your campus (if there are some) particularly meaningful? What do they represent?
2. **Comprehension:** Early in their piece, Martinich and Palaima argue that the statue is a serious moral and ethical mistake. After this statement, what does context add?
3. **Writing Strategies:**
  - a. The authors are direct in stating their position. What does context add?
  - b. In paragraphs 4–7, Martinich and Palaima put their position in context. What does context add?
  - c. In paragraph 9, the authors criticize the university’s position. What weaknesses do they point out, and how effective are they?
  - d. In the final three paragraphs, how do Martinich and Palaima support their position? Are their strategies an effective way to argue their case?

**Your Project:** To find a topic for your own argumentative essay, research public objects and activities that are similarly controversial. Consider development projects, buildings, parks, pipelines, and other projects. Which of these debates interest you?

“Why Removing the Jefferson Davis Statue Is a Huge Mistake” by Martinich and Palaima. © The Chronicle of Higher Education. Reprinted by permission.

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Reader: Strategies and Samples

**Critical Thinking and Writing: Applications**

Once you have finished your argumentative essay, there may be more to think about. Consider how to apply what you have learned in the situations below.

1. **Wise Words:** One of Aesop’s fables goes like this: “Passion is often more effectual than force.” Is argumentative writing a form of passion? How is such passion different from force, perhaps even opposed to force?
2. **Photo Op:** Recall the photograph on this chapter’s opening page. Find another photograph or a short video that similarly portrays the nature of argumentation in an interesting and insightful way. As an alternative, find a photograph or other graphic that could be incorporated into your own argumentative essay.
3. **Living Today:** Contemporary America is filled with issues that seem to have opposing poles but no middle ground: gun control, immigration, abortion, and the war on terror, to name just a few. Choose an issue like this, and then research news commentaries, editorials, blogs, and comment threads that characterize the opposing positions. Given what you have learned about argumentation, can you explain what is going on in these entrenched oppositions?
4. **Public Texts:** Written arguments can be found throughout the digital landscape: at sites sponsored by news organizations, political groups, businesses, and not-for-profits. Choose an organization that interests you, relates to your life, or perhaps even aggravates you. Then go to its Web site, and search for a page containing an argument: a position, a call to action, or a solution to a problem. Assess how well the argument works.
5. **Major Work:** Consider your major and your future career. What is the focus of this field of study and this profession? Where and how will argument be part of what you do? Why will doing it well matter? Research these questions to get the answers you need.

**Learning-Objectives Checklist** ✓

Have you achieved this chapter’s learning objectives? Check your progress with the following items, revisiting topics in the chapter as needed. I have ...

- critically examined argumentative essays for well-crafted claims, reliable evidence, and valid warrants (313–322).
- identified logical fallacies in others’ writing and corrected them in my own writing, especially oversimplification, either/or thinking, appeals to pity, personal attacks, false cause, and slanted language (323–326).
- developed measured, reasonable claims, whether position statements, calls to action, or solutions to problems (333–335).
- researched and written a convincing argumentative essay that communicates in a measured but confident voice and appeals to readers’ needs and values (363–365).

**MindTap** Practice skills that you have learned in this chapter and receive automatic feedback. Reflect on your writing process.

**Enhanced Instruction in the Principles of Academic Writing:** The following new elements help students to more effectively produce thoughtful, energetic, college-level prose:

- A new diagram of the writing process illustrating the recursive nature of writing (Figure 2.2 on page 26).
- Expanded instruction on thesis development (page 46).
- An introduction to academic writing moves (pages 64–66) showing students how to strengthen, develop, and expand their ideas.
- A new overview of the rhetorical modes underscores how writers draw upon and integrate thinking patterns in their work (pages 140–141).
- New instructions that help students write clear, concise, and compelling prose (pages 78–81).

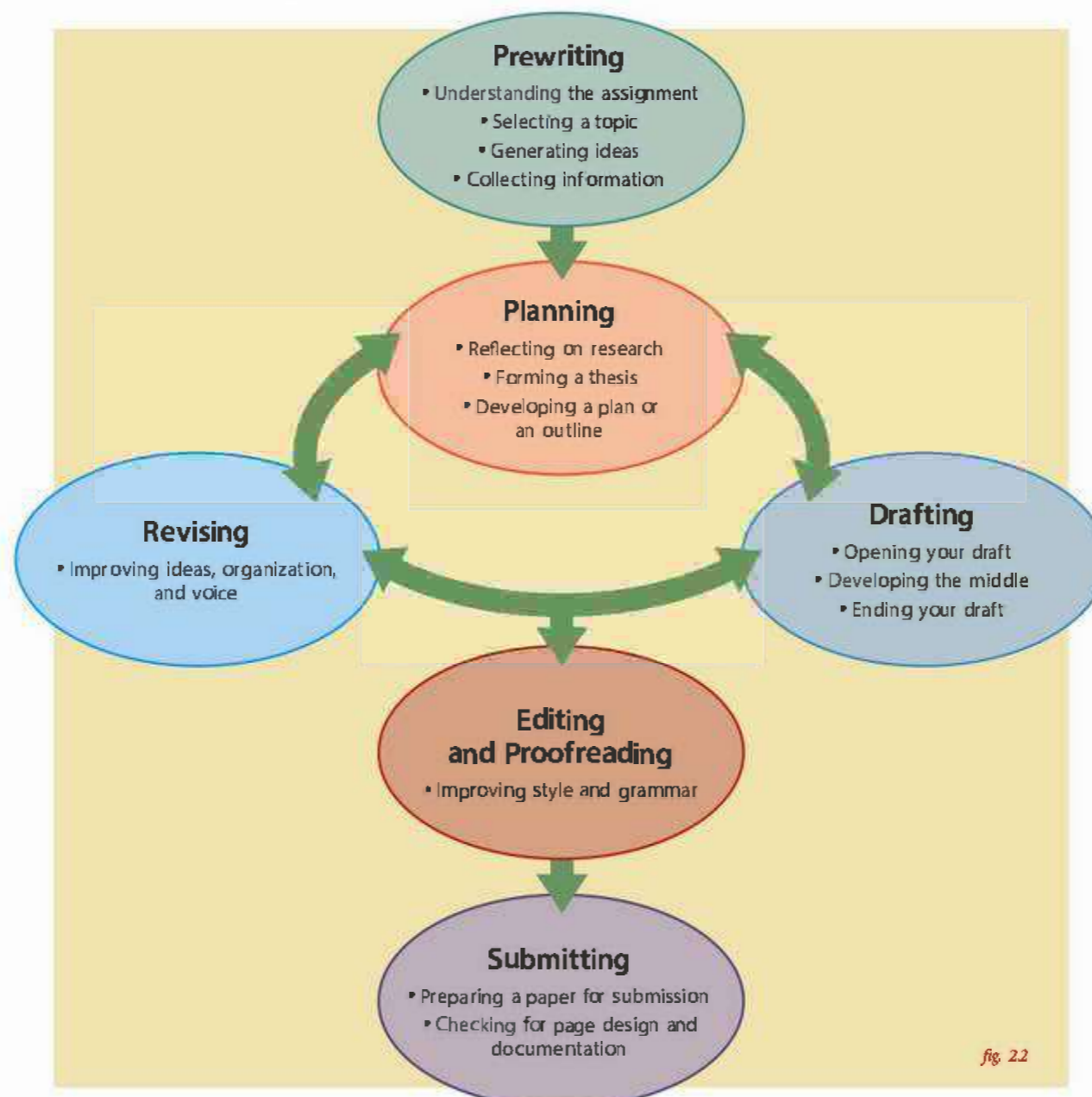
## The Writing Process: From Start to Finish

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by a writing project—especially if the form of writing is new to you, the topic is complex, or the paper must be long. However, using the writing process will relieve some of that pressure by breaking down the task into manageable steps.

### Consider the Writing Process

Figure 2.2 maps out the basic steps in the writing process. As you work on your writing project, periodically review this diagram to keep yourself on task.

#### Steps in the Writing Process





**Updated Chapter 23 Instructions on MLA Documentation and Style (8th edition):** Clear instructions and illustrations help students understand and use the current MLA system for documenting research writing. The new system is introduced through an easy-reference quick guide, presented through clear examples, and modeled in new student essays.

## Guidelines for Works-Cited Entries

The works-cited section lists only those sources that you have cited in your paper. For guidelines on formatting your works-cited list, see pages 487–488, as well as the sample works-cited list on pages 501–502. In what follows, you will first find a template for works-cited entries, showing the essential pattern to follow. After the template, you will find guidelines for constructing any entry by drawing upon the nine core elements of source identification and arranging those elements in the order listed.

### Works-Cited Template

Every works-cited entry will include some or all of nine elements, formatted and punctuated in the manner indicated.

Author. Title of Source [normally italicized or in quotation marks]. Title of Container,  
Other Contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication Date, Location.

### Works-Cited Components

The following table provides you with guidelines for presenting each of the nine main components of works-cited entries. Review both the instructions and examples to understand the logic of each element.

1. **The Author** is the person, people, or organization that created the source. Note that for online sources, pseudonyms and handles may be used. In general, omit titles and degrees from names, but present the name accurately from the source. Follow the author with a period.

- **One author:** Invert the author's name.
- **Two authors:** Follow the order given in the source. Invert the first author's name, but put the second in traditional order. Separate the authors' names with a comma.
- **Three or more authors:** Name only the first author listed, followed by *et al.* (meaning *and others*).
- **Other contributors:** If appropriate, you may put another contributor in this first position to emphasize the focus in your writing: an editor, a director, a performer, and so on. Spell out the role after the name and a comma.

Jacob, Mira.

King, Martin Luther, Jr.

@PiradorUSA.

Environmental  
Protection Agency.

Pratchett, Terry, and Neil  
Gaiman.

Raabe, William A., et al.

Dunham, Lena, performer.

**Reorganized Chapters in the Reader and the Handbook:** The new organization offers a more logical progression of instruction. In the Reader, the analytical modes (chapters 10–15) follow a sequence from lesser to greater thinking complexity: definition, classification, process, comparison-contrast, and cause-effect. Also in chapter 18, three forms (arguing for positions, actions, and solutions) are integrated and enhanced.

In the Handbook, instruction now begins with the foundational matters of parts of speech and sentence structure before moving on to sentence errors, punctuation, mechanics, and usage.

### Part II Reader: Strategies and Samples

9. Forms of College Writing
10. Narration, Description, and Reflection
11. Definition
12. Classification
13. Process
14. Comparison and Contrast
15. Cause and Effect
16. Analyzing Literature: A Case Study
17. Strategies for Argumentation and Persuasion
18. Arguing for Positions, Actions, and Solutions

### Part IV Handbook

25. Understanding Grammar
26. Constructing Sentences
27. Avoiding Sentence Errors
28. Marking Punctuation
29. Checking Mechanics
30. Using the Right Word
31. Multilingual and ESL Guidelines



## MindTap

MindTap® English for Van Rys/Meyer/VanderMey/Sebranek's *The College Writer*, 6th 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.

The logo for MindTap, featuring the word "MindTap" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "Mind" is in orange and the "Tap" is in blue. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the upper right of the "p".

- Interactive activities on grammar and mechanics promote application in student writing.
- An 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.

MindTap® English now comes equipped with the diagnostic-guided JUST IN TIME PLUS learning module for foundational concepts and embedded course support. The module features scaffolded video tutorials, instructional text content, and auto-graded activities designed to address each student's specific needs for practice and support to succeed in college-level composition courses.

## Instructor's Resources

The instructor's manual provides teaching suggestions, suggested answers to exercises, and a sample course syllabus to assist instructors in teaching the course. The instructor's manual and other resources for teaching can be accessed in MindTap.



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# I. Rhetoric:

## A College Student's Guide to Writing

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# Critical Thinking Through Reading, Viewing, and Writing

Every day, we encounter words and images; often, we create them for others to read and view. Exchanging these messages constitutes communication, a complex process that involves several variables: the writer/designer, the message and the medium used, the reader/viewer, and the context.

In college, such communication—whether in reading articles, viewing films, or writing essays—requires critical thinking. Such thinking puts ideas in context, makes connections between them, and tests their meaning and logic. This chapter provides strategies that will help you think critically as you read, view, and write.

**Visually Speaking** Figure 1.1 shows people viewing art in a museum. Look closely at the image: how would you describe what these people are doing? What thinking practices does such viewing involve? Consider, as well, other types of images. What viewing do you do, for what reasons, and using what brain power?

## MindTap®

Understand the goals of the chapter and complete a warm-up activity online.

## Learning Objectives

By working through this chapter, you will be able to

- actively read different written texts.
- produce personal responses to texts.
- objectively summarize texts.
- actively view, analyze, and critique visual images.
- implement strategies to think critically about topics.
- practice modes of thinking through writing.

*Adriano Castelli / Shutterstock.com*



fig. 1.1



## Critical Thinking Through Reading

Critical reading involves a kind of mental dialogue with the text. To initiate that dialogue, engage the text smartly by using strategies like these: reading actively, mapping the text, outlining it, responding to it, summarizing it, and evaluating it.

### Read Actively

Active reading is reading that is mentally alert. Practically speaking, you can read actively by following techniques like these.

- **Remove distractions.** Engaged reading requires that you disengage from all distractions such as your cell phone, Facebook, or TV.
- **Take your time.** Read in stretches of about 45 minutes, followed by short breaks. And when you break, think about what you read, what might come next, and why.
- **Assess the rhetorical situation.** Where and when was this text written and published? Who is the author, and why did he or she write the piece? What are the writer's qualifications to address this topic? Why are you reading it?
- **Preview, read, review.** Start by previewing the text: scan the title, opening and closing paragraphs, headings, topic sentences, and graphics. Next, read the text carefully, asking questions such as "What does this mean?" and "Why is this important?" Finally, review what you have learned and what questions remain unanswered.
- **Read aloud.** Do so for especially difficult parts of the text.
- **Write while reading.** Take notes, especially when working on research projects. Annotate the text by highlighting main points, writing a "?" beside puzzling parts, or jotting key insights in the margin.

### Sample Text

The following article was written by Dan Heath and was first published in the June 2, 2010 edition of *Fast Company*. Read the essay, using the active reading tips above and answering the questions that follow.

#### Why Change Is So Hard: Self-Control Is Exhaustible

You hear something a lot about change: People won't change because they're too lazy. 1  
Well, I'm here to stick up for the lazy people. In fact, I want to argue that what looks like laziness is actually exhaustion. The proof comes from a psychology study that is absolutely fascinating.

#### The Study

So picture this: Students come into a lab. It smells amazing—someone has just baked 2  
chocolate-chip cookies. On a table in front of them, there are two bowls. One has the fresh-baked cookies. The other has a bunch of radishes. Some of the students are asked to eat some cookies but no radishes. Others are told to eat radishes but no cookies, and while



they sit there, nibbling on rabbit food, the researchers leave the room—which is intended to tempt them and is frankly kind of sadistic. But in the study none of the radish-eaters slipped—they showed admirable self-control. And meanwhile, it probably goes without saying that the people gorging on cookies didn't experience much temptation.

Then, the two groups are asked to do a second, seemingly unrelated task—basically a kind of logic puzzle where they have to trace out a complicated geometric pattern without raising their pencils. Unbeknownst to the group, the puzzle can't be solved. The scientists are curious how long individuals will persist at a difficult task. So the cookie-eaters try again and again, for an average of 19 minutes, before they give up. But the radish-eaters—they only last an average of 8 minutes. What gives?

### The Results

The answer may surprise you: The radish-eaters ran out of self-control. Psychologists have discovered that self-control is an exhaustible resource. And I don't mean self-control only in the sense of turning down cookies or alcohol; I mean a broader sense of self-supervision—any time you're paying close attention to your actions, like when you're having a tough conversation or trying to stay focused on a paper you're writing. This helps to explain why, after a long hard day at the office, we're more likely to snap at our spouses or have one drink too many—we've depleted our self-control.

And here's why this matters for change: In almost all change situations, you're substituting new, unfamiliar behaviors for old, comfortable ones, and that burns self-control. Let's say I present a new morning routine to you that specifies how you'll shower and brush your teeth. You'll understand it and you might even agree with my process. But to pull it off, you'll have to supervise yourself very carefully. Every fiber of your being will want to go back to the old way of doing things. Inevitably, you'll slip. And if I were uncharitable, I'd see you going back to the old way and I'd say, "You're so lazy. Why can't you just change?"

This brings us back to the point I promised I'd make: That what looks like laziness is often exhaustion. Change wears people out—even well-intentioned people will simply run out of fuel.

## Reading for Better Writing

1. *Connections:* Think about your own life. Which activities require you to exert a great deal of self-control? How might this article help you with those struggles?
2. *Comprehension:* In a single sentence, what is the thesis of this essay? How does that thesis grow out of the findings of the psychology study that the essay discusses? Summarize those findings.
3. *Reading Strategies:* Which active-reading practices did you follow when reading this essay? Which ones helped you understand and engage the essay fully? Compare your notes and annotations with a classmate's.

**Your Project:** Dan Heath's essay explains the results of a research study. For your own writing, consider finding a research report on a topic that interests you. Then use the active reading strategies in this chapter to write an essay like Heath's.



## Map the Text

If you are visually oriented, you may understand a text best by mapping out its important parts. One way to do so is by “clustering.” Start by naming the main topic in an oval at the center of the page. Then branch out using lines and “balloons,” where each balloon contains a word or phrase for one major subtopic. Branch out in further layers of balloons to show even more subpoints, as in Figure 1.2. If you wish, add graphics, arrows, drawings—anything that helps you visualize the relationships among ideas.



fig. 1.2

## Outline the Text

Outlining is the traditional way of showing all the major parts, points, and subpoints in a text. An outline uses parallel structure to show main points and subordinate points. See pages 49–52 for more on outlines.

### Sample Outline for “Why Change Is So Hard: Self-Control Is Exhaustible”

1. Introduction: Change is hard not because of laziness but because of exhaustion.
2. A study tests self-control.
  - a. Some students must eat only cookies—using little self-control.
  - b. Some students must eat only radishes—using much self-control.
  - c. Both sets of students have to trace a pattern without lifting the pencil—an unsolvable puzzle.
    - Cookie-only students last an average of 19 minutes before quitting.
    - Radish-only students last an average of 8 minutes before quitting.
3. Results show that self-control is exhaustible.
  - a. Avoiding temptation and working in a hard, focused way require self-control.
  - b. Change requires self-control.
  - c. Failure to change often results from exhaustion of self-control.



## Evaluate the Text

Critical reading does not mean disproving the text or disapproving of it. It means thoughtfully inspecting, weighing, and evaluating the writer's ideas. To strengthen your reading skills, learn to evaluate texts using the following criteria.

1. **Judge the reading's credibility.** Where was it published? How reliable is the author? How current is the information? How accurate and complete does it seem to be? In addition, consider the author's tone of voice, attitude, and apparent biases.

**Discussion:** Dan Heath, the author of “Why Change Is So Hard” is a *New York Times* best-selling author, a consultant to the Aspen Institute, and a monthly columnist for *Fast Company*. How do these credentials affect your reading of the article? How does the article itself build or break credibility?

2. **Put the reading in a larger context.** How do the text's ideas match what you know from other sources? Which details of background, history, and social context help you understand this text's perspective? How have things changed or remained the same since the text's publication? Which allusions (references to people, events, and so on) does the writer use? Why?

**Discussion:** “Why Change Is So Hard” centers around a single psychological study and draws from it specific conclusions about self-control. What other studies have attempted to track self-control? Is this a new subdiscipline in psychological research, or a well-established one?

3. **Evaluate the reasoning and support.** Is the reasoning clear and logical? Are the examples and other supporting details appropriate and enlightening? Are inferences (what the text implies) consistent with the tone and message? (Look especially for hidden logic and irony that undercut what is said explicitly.)

**Discussion:** In “Why Change Is So Hard,” Heath identifies exhaustion of self-control as the reason for the difference between the performance of the two test groups. What other explanations could there be for the difference in performance between the two groups of subjects? Is Heath's reasoning sound and convincing?

4. **Reflect on how the reading challenges you.** Which of your beliefs and values does the reading call into question? What discomfort does it create? Does your own perspective skew your evaluation?

**Discussion:** What self-control issues have you faced? What might this article have to say about those who work two jobs, run single-parent households, serve extended terms in war zones, or otherwise must exert superhuman levels of self-control? What social changes could help keep people from “snapping”?



For additional help evaluating texts, see pages 384–387. For information on detecting logical fallacies, which weaken writers' arguments, see pages 323–326.



## Responding to a Text

In a sense, when you read a text, you enter into a dialogue with it. Your response expresses your turn in the dialogue. Such a response can take varied forms, from a journal entry to a blog to a posting in an online-comments forum.

### Guidelines for Response Writing

On the surface, responding to a text seems perfectly natural—just let it happen. But it can be a bit more complicated. A written response typically is not the same as a private diary entry but is instead shared with other readers, who may be in your class or elsewhere, including online. To develop a fitting response, keep in mind common expectations for this kind of writing, as well as your instructor's requirements, if the response is for a course:

1. **Be honest.** Although you want to remain sensitive to the context in which you will share your response, be bold enough to be honest about your reaction to the text—what it makes you think, feel, and question. To that end, a response usually allows you to express yourself directly using the pronoun “I.”
2. **Be fluid.** Let the flow of your thoughts guide you in what you write. Don't stop to worry about grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling. These can be quickly cleaned up before you share or submit your response.
3. **Be reflective.** Generally, the goal of a response is to offer thoughtful reflection as opposed to knee-jerk reaction. Show, then, that you are engaging the text's ideas, relating them to your own experience, looking both inward and outward. Avoid a shallow reaction that comes from skimming the text or misreading it.
4. **Be selective.** By nature, a response must limit its focus; it cannot exhaust all your reactions to the text. So zero in on one or two elements of your response, and run with those to see where they take you in your dialogue with the text.

### Sample Response

Here is part of a student's response to Dan Heath's “Why Change Is So Hard” on pages 4–5. Note the informality and explanatory tone.

Heath's report of the psychological experiment is very vivid, referring to the smell of chocolate-chip cookies and hungry students “gorging” on them. He uses the term “sadistic” to refer to making the radish-eaters sit and watch this go on. I wonder if this mild torment plays into the student's readiness to give up on the later test. If I'd been rewarded with cookies, I'd feel indebted to the testers and would stick with it longer. If I'd been punished with radishes, I might give up sooner just to spite the testers.

Now that I think of it, the digestion of all that sugar and fat in the cookies, as opposed to the digestion of roughage from the radishes, might also affect concentration and performance. Maybe the sugar “high” gives students the focus to keep going?



## Summarizing a Text

Writing a summary disciplines you by making you pull only essentials from a reading—the main points, the thread of the argument. By doing so, you create a brief record of the text’s contents and exercise your ability to comprehend, analyze, and synthesize.

### Guidelines for Summary Writing

Writing a summary requires sifting out the least important points, sorting the essential ones to show their relationships, and stating those points in your own words. Follow these guidelines:

1. **Skim first; then read closely.** First, get a sense of the whole, including the main idea and strategies for support. Then read carefully, taking notes as you do.
2. **Capture the text’s argument.** Review your notes and annotations, looking for main points and clear connections. State these briefly and clearly, in your own words. Include only what is essential, excluding most examples and details. Don’t say simply that the text talks about its subject; tell what it says about that subject.
3. **Test your summary.** Aim to objectively provide the heart of the text; avoid interjecting your own opinions and presence as a writer. Don’t confuse an objective summary of a text with a response to it (shown on the previous page). Check your summary against the original text for accuracy and consistency.

### Sample Summary

Below is a student’s summary of Dan Heath’s “Why Change Is So Hard,” on pages 4–5. Note how the summary writer includes only main points and phrases them in her own words. She departs from the precise order of details, but records them accurately.

In the article “Why Change Is So Hard,” Dan Heath argues that people who have trouble changing are not lazy, but have simply exhausted their self-control. Heath refers to a study in which one group of students was asked to eat cookies and not radishes, while another group in the same room was asked to eat radishes and not cookies. Afterward, both groups of students were asked to trace an endless geometric design without lifting their pencils. The cookie-only group traced on average 19 minutes before giving up, but the radish-only group traced on average only 8 minutes. They had already used up their self-control. Heath says that any behavioral change requires self-control, an exhaustible resource. Reverting to old behavior is what happens due not to laziness but to exhaustion.

**INSIGHT** Writing formal summaries—whether as part of literature reviews or as abstracts—is an important skill, especially in the social and natural sciences.