Instructor’s Resource Manual

THE ST. MARTIN’S GUIDE TO WRITING

Ninth Edition

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Contents

TEACHING THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT CHAPTERS OF THE GUIDE 1

PART ONE DETAILED CHAPTER PLANS 19

1 INTRODUCTION 19
2 REMEMBERING AN EVENT 21
3 WRITING PROFILES 50
4 EXPLAINING A CONCEPT 80
5 FINDING COMMON GROUND 107
6 ARGUING A POSITION 137
7 PROPOSING A SOLUTION 169
8 JUSTIFYING AN EVALUATION 205
9 SPECULATING ABOUT CAUSES 239
10 ANALYZING STORIES 271
11 A CATALOG OF INVENTION STRATEGIES 286
12 A CATALOG OF READING STRATEGIES 287
13 CUEING THE READER 288
14 NARRATING 292
15 DESCRIBING 295
16 DEFINING 299
17 CLASSIFYING 302
CONTENTS

18  COMPARING AND CONTRASTING  304
19  ARGUING  306
20  ANALYZING VISUALS  309
21  DESIGNING DOCUMENTS  311
22  FIELD RESEARCH  312
23  LIBRARY AND INTERNET RESEARCH  316
24  USING SOURCES  318
25  ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND LITERATURE REVIEWS  319
26  ESSAY EXAMINATIONS  321
27  WRITING PORTFOLIOS  322
28  ORAL PRESENTATIONS  323
29  WORKING WITH OTHERS  324
30  WRITING IN YOUR COMMUNITY  325
31  USING THE HANDBOOK  326

PART TWO  TEACHING STRATEGIES  327
32  TEACHING PRACTICES  327
33  EVALUATION PRACTICES  332
34  TECHNOLOGY AND THE GUIDE  340
35  SUGGESTED COURSE PLANS  351

PART THREE  BIBLIOGRAPHY IN COMPOSITION STUDIES  356
36  BIBLIOGRAPHY IN COMPOSITION STUDIES  356
Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of The Guide

This section offers general teaching strategies for the Part One Writing Assignment chapters of The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing. For more specific advice on teaching individual chapters, refer to the Detailed Chapter Plans that follow.

This chapter is divided into two sections:

- **Time Management Strategies** to help you plan how you’ll use the resources in this manual and in The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing.
- **Overview of the Writing Assignment Chapters** with teaching tips to help you design your course.

## Time Management Strategies

There is a lot of material to work with in this manual and in The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing, and you will probably find that you don’t have enough time to do everything you want to do. For this reason, we’d like to offer some tips for making the most out of your scant classroom hours. In addition to simply skipping some features outright, you can use the options listed below to squeeze in the activities you feel are essential.

- **Try rotating features.** For example, each chapter has a feature called Beyond the Traditional Essay. You might decide to use that feature in class only while your students are working on the Profile assignment and skip it for other assignments. You might decide to show students the Writer at Work section for the first assignment in the class, discuss it then, let them know that an equivalent feature appears in every chapter, and leave the other Writer at Work sections out of your later lesson plans.

- **Rotate trust.** Trust students to try some activities or explore some features on their own, without your collecting or checking their work; but rotate the kinds of activities handled this way, so that students are eventually introduced to most of the types of features in a way that is required and provides feedback.

- **Reserve some features as tools for office hours.** Schedule group meetings during office hours and try some of the collaborative activities or Analyzing Writing Strategies features in that cozier environment rather than in the classroom.

- **Reserve some features for makeup work, or use some in lieu of revision.** As a kind of makeup policy, you can have students who miss class or who turn in heavily flawed
assignments earn back lost quiz, attendance, or paper points by completing Analyzing Writing Strategies tasks that you had skipped in class or responding to the Making Connections features.

• **Assign some features as individual homework.** You can simply collect and check off the homework, or you can have students use the homework as a foundation for in-class discussion or some other in-class exercise.

• **Assign a feature as group homework.** With texting, wikis, chat rooms, instant messaging, and free collaborative software like Google Docs (docs.google.com) all available to students, you might consider breaking students into groups and then assigning group homework. They can meet in person or work online (whichever best suits their schedules). The homework can be collected, checked off, and returned, or it can be used to spur class discussion by having each group present to the class what it prepared.

• **Assign some features or activities from the textbook as online work.** Like assigning homework, having students post activity work online frees up class time for working on other activities. However, online work can be put up on an overhead projector (if your classroom has one) and discussed in class, accelerating classroom discussion by moving the creation of the discussed documents outside the brick-and-mortar room. You can also have students remark on each other’s work in the online environment, outside of class—essentially moving both the exercise and the discussion of it into the virtual realm.

• **Use some activities for in-class individual or group work.** The chief disadvantage to in-class work is that it takes up limited class time, but there are many advantages to working on the activities from *The St. Martin’s Guide* in the classroom:
  - Students are less likely to get burned out on homework if some of the work is done in-class.
  - In-class activities are more energizing and engaging than lecture.
  - Students can call on you for help.
  - Talking to students while they’re working can give you insight into their thought processes and help you anticipate and respond to misunderstandings.
  - You gain better insight into how the papers will turn out and can address common issues or problems in-class before the due date instead of writing the same comments repeatedly on the graded papers.
  - Doing some invention work in-class makes plagiarism less likely.

**Pros and Cons of Individual and Group Work**

There are advantages and disadvantages to each kind of class work. Individual work is less likely than group work to lead to socializing, more likely to provide the class with diverse perspectives, and less likely to lead to groupthink; but there’s more to read if you collect the work, and you might find yourself answering the same questions repeatedly. Group work exposes students to different viewpoints and academic habits; it cuts down on the amount of repetition and your grading of in-class work. However, group work almost always takes longer to complete than individual work, needs to be carefully planned and
managed, and eats up a lot of class time. Many instructors use both teaching strategies, but it depends on the instructor’s inclination and the students’ receptivity.

### Overview of the Writing Assignment Chapters

Each of the nine chapters in Part One focuses on a different kind of nonfiction prose genre that you may have your students write. These chapters all follow the same five-part structure:

1. Introductory Material
2. Readings and Accompanying Activities
3. Guide to Writing
4. A Writer at Work
5. Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

In the Detailed Chapter Plans that follow, we will suggest ways of teaching each individual assignment chapter. Here, we examine each of the components listed above to suggest ways of using them in your teaching.

#### Introductory Material: Chapter Entry Points

There are four sections that introduce the genre, any of which could be used to get started:

- Scenarios
- A Brief Description of the Genre
- A Collaborative Activity
- Reading the Genre: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

You can start your students’ study of a genre with any of these introductory components, in any order and in any combination. In addition, there are two other possible entry points not found in this introductory section:

- The Annotated Reading (the first essay in the Readings section)
- Choosing a Subject to Write About (in the Guide to Writing)

#### Scenarios

At the beginning of each chapter are three scenarios about writing situations — In College Courses, In the Community, and In the Workplace — in which people wrote the genre in question. These scenarios serve at least four purposes:

- They demonstrate the basic features of the genre.
- They show how the genre is used in different writing situations, including in the world beyond the classroom.
- They often describe, succinctly, a person’s writing process and show the process that real-world writers use to create their texts.
- One of the scenarios is keyed to the Thinking about Document Design section in the Guide to Writing, as noted in the Detailed Chapter Plans (except for the chapter that has no Document Design section: Chapter 10: Analyzing Stories).
The Detailed Chapter Plans suggest specific questions and other strategies to spur class discussion of these scenarios.

Teaching Tips

• Try analyzing one scenario with the class, reviewing the thinking process of the writer and highlighting key features of the genre. Then ask students in pairs or small groups to do the same thing with the other scenarios. Or ask students to analyze one other scenario as homework.

• If you want to focus on visuals and other design elements, you could spend a few minutes analyzing the images at the top of each scenario’s column. Also, you could spend a few minutes looking together at the Thinking about Document Design section in the Guide to Writing.

• Consider moving directly from the scenarios to the first reading, which is annotated to help students notice the genre’s basic features and strategies. The annotated reading was written by a student; consequently, students usually find it especially interesting.

Brief Description of the Genre

Following the scenarios are a few paragraphs that describe the genre. They seek to interest students in the genre, remind them that they may already be familiar with it, and motivate them to want to learn more about it. This short introduction often includes

• Examples of the genre in various contexts, often including brief references to the opening scenarios

• An emphasis on the various purposes and audiences—the rhetorical situations—in which the genre is typically used

• Some of the benefits—practical, educational, and pleasurable—that can accrue from spending time learning to write effectively in the genre as well as learning to read it with a critical eye

• Reference to other genres or writing strategies students may have already studied in The Guide

• Identification of special features of the genre or research techniques that might interest students in the genre

Teaching Tip

Spur discussion by asking students when the last time was that they read or wrote the genre in question. Or have them bring in examples of the genre from other contexts—such as classes, clubs, work, the Internet, or leisure reading. This activity prompts students to discover the genre’s features inductively.
Collaborative Activity

This activity invites students to practice the genre in an informal and ungraded way, and then to reflect on the experience. The activity serves several purposes:

- It reminds students that they already know something about the genre.
- It enables them to practice the genre orally, informally.
- It helps introduce the genre’s basic features.
- It introduces some of the language of the assignment.
- It encourages students, especially in Part 2 of the activity, to begin thinking metacognitively about the genre.

Don’t skip this activity! Students learn through practice and reflection, and this activity gives them a quick dose of both, before they ever write a word that will be graded. Most students, once they have tried the genre in this brief format, will be more attentive to the other materials in the chapter, more likely to apply them, and more inquisitive because they’ll be able to relate the lessons to their experience. In other words, they’ll get it. They’ll understand roughly what they will need to do to write an essay in the genre.

Teaching Tips

- You can do this activity in class or through an online chat room or discussion board.
- Consider following up this activity with some general class discussion on topic ideas, such as warnings about unpromising topics. Refer to the section on choosing a subject in the Guide to Writing, especially the Criteria for Choosing a subject.

Reading the Genre: Basic Features, Purpose, and Audience

The key features of the genre are described and color-coded so readers can identify each feature at work in the first sample essay and then practice spotting those features in later essays. A brief discussion highlights issues of purpose and audience common to this type of writing.

Teaching Tip

Apply this guide to the Annotated Reading that follows. Then ask students to analyze the same features in one of the scenarios or in another reading so they can practice analysis and sharpen their understanding of the assignment.

Readings and Accompanying Activities

The Writing Assignment chapters focus on teaching students the basic features and writing strategies typical of each genre. But they also attempt to engage students in critical thinking inspired by the readings. Reading plays an important role in learning to write. Students benefit from an array of examples of writing in the genre, studied not as models for imitation but as examples of the many possible directions in which they can take their
own writing. To cover all the readings and activities in depth takes at least two class peri-
ods and some homework assignments, so in each chapter you may want to concentrate on
just one or two readings, discussing the others briefly. A few carefully chosen readings
allow you to demonstrate the choices available to writers and point out basic features and
writing strategies typical of the genre. Students can study the similarities and differences
between the readings and consider, with the help of the Guide to Writing, how they can
apply what they have learned to their own writing.

The readings and analytical activities constitute a large part of each chapter, so it is
worthwhile to consider how they might fit into your class plan. There are two basic
approaches: You can focus on the readings and analyses first and have students start their
writing later; or you can blend discussions of the readings with invention and planning
activities for the students’ own essays. The first option is simplest, but handled properly
the second is the better option. Many instructors combine the two approaches by begin-
ning with the annotated student essay to give students a basic understanding of the genre
and then starting on the students’ own writing in the genre—by way of the Writer at
Work demonstration that is referred to later in the chapter or by having students do one
of the invention activities from the Guide to Writing in class.

There are three components to the Readings section:

1. An Annotated Student Essay
2. Additional Readings with Accompanying Activities
3. Beyond the Traditional Essay

An Annotated Student Essay

The Readings section opens with an annotated essay by a student who used an earlier version
of the St. Martin’s Guide. We begin with a student essay because students usually find it easier
to look critically at student writing than at published writing. They also tend to feel encour-
gaged that they, too, can write a strong essay in the genre. Like the other essays in the chapter,
this one begins with a brief headnote that tells readers something about the writer and the sit-
uation in which the essay was written. Notice that the headnote always ends with an “As you
read” question designed to engage readers in the essay by calling attention to a central theme
or basic feature. The marginal annotations identify the basic features (which are color-coded
throughout the chapter to reinforce learning and ease navigation). The annotations are not
intended to be exhaustive. In fact, the pattern is to front-load the annotations: more early on
and fewer toward the end. Also, not every instance of the basic features and writing strategies
is annotated, so there is plenty of room for instructors to ask questions of their own. The
annotations are usually in question form to enable active reading and class discussion.

Teaching Tip: Working with Annotations

Many instructors assign readings as homework, but then have students reread the essay
aloud in class—pausing to respond to and expand on the annotations. The Detailed
Chapter Plans that follow this chapter suggest other sections of the essay you could use as
a way to follow up on the annotations early in the essay.
Connecting to Later Material. To introduce the Guide to Writing, show students the Writer at Work section.

Additional Readings and Their Accompanying Activities

Following the annotated reading are additional examples of the genre with apparatus to help students analyze the basic features and strategies writers typically use.

Teaching Tip

If you like to have students work in groups and report orally to the class, you could assign each group to report on a different reading and one of the Analyzing Writing Strategies for that reading. Giving students class time to prepare a report and modeling for them how you want them to organize and present the report will make this activity productive and enjoyable.

Teaching Tip: Presentation Guidelines

Each presentation is worth 75 points. You have two to five minutes to present the material. Think of yourself as teaching the class the material you have been assigned. Be specific and clear. Get to your main points fast. You may choose to create a PowerPoint or a handout.

50 points: Each presenter gets an automatic 50 points for presenting the required material at the assigned time. If you do not present at the time you are scheduled, you may not have a chance to reschedule and you will lose those 75 points automatically. You have two to five minutes to present your material. If you go over five minutes, points will be deducted. Time yourself.

25 points: For the remaining 25 points, you will be graded on merit. How informative was your presentation? How creatively did you present the material? How well did you involve the students—for example, by asking questions or constructing an activity? This presentation is absolutely yours to do with as you like as long as you present the material. Be creative and make it your own.

Tips: Try not to read off a piece of paper. If you must, make note cards. It’s distracting to listen to you read, and it’s difficult to follow along.

The apparatus following these readings consists of three activities:

1. Making Connections
2. Analyzing Writing Strategies
3. Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

In nearly every chapter, there is also a fourth activity—Analyzing Visuals—following at least one reading.
Making Connections. This activity asks students to respond to the essays as readers and to make personal connections to the subject matter. It encourages students to see writing as something to be read and makes them more interested in analyzing the essay. It also trains them to read as readers first, during peer reviews, before they begin critiquing.

Teaching Tips
- Use Making Connections to spark in-class writing at the start of class. This section could be used as a kind of reading quiz.
- If you would like to hold these discussions in an online forum, you can designate several students as moderators, rotating the job with each reading or chapter. Moderators would ask questions, encourage participants to flesh out sketchy responses, and keep things civil.
- As a follow-up, you can have students write journal entries based on their ideas from this discussion and share them with a team at the next session, refining their ideas.

Analyzing Writing Strategies. The second set of activities asks students to analyze the essay, looking for particular basic features to study the writing strategies and their rhetorical effects. The questions in this section are designed to encourage students to reread specific passages in the example essays in order to focus on particular features and how they are used to achieve the writer’s purpose. Some of the activities also ask students to assess the effectiveness of the rhetorical moves made by the sampled writers and to suggest alternatives or improvements to those moves.

Teaching Tips
- Although you can simply ask the analysis questions in class and discuss them straightforwardly, here’s another option: Have students answer the Analyzing Writing Strategies questions individually, in writing, either as homework before class or during the first few minutes of class. Then put them in teams tasked with developing team answers. Finally, have each team report orally to the class about its findings.
- It might be helpful at times to go over a reading line by line, slowly, in class, reading aloud and discussing, the way you might analyze a poem in class.
- You can test understanding of a strategy by having students search for and analyze new strategies in other essays from the same chapter.

Connecting Reading and Writing
- Many of the Analyzing Writing Strategies activities can be fruitfully paired with related invention work in the chapter’s Guide to Writing, as suggested in the chapter-by-chapter sections.
Once students have wrapped up their invention work, you can return to the readings to have students create scratch outlines of a reading, then — after discussing the outlines in class — developing an outline to plan their own essays.

Once students have written a draft, they can highlight the basic features as in the annotated reading to see whether they have included all of the features and developed them enough. This same activity could be used as part of the Critical Reading activity — either having the writers highlight their own drafts or having peer reviewers do it for them.

**Considering Topics for Your Own Essay.** This activity gives students a chance to think of topics they might write about on issues or themes related to those in the sample essay. It will give students valuable practice generating ideas and possibly some workable ideas for papers.

**Teaching Tip**
You can profitably approach this activity as an occasion for whole-class brainstorming. Each student can contribute at least one topic and speculate about its appeal and requirements. Discuss the possibilities of these topics — what kinds of research would be needed, for example — and with the class, single out topics that seem especially promising. Each student can then take a topic and rehearse it briefly in writing, reading what they have written to the other students. Even if just a few students share their exploratory writing, the experience will help everyone.

**Analyzing Visuals.** This activity helps students analyze one or more visuals in the reading. For visual images, it may invite students to apply the Criteria for Analyzing Visuals in Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals. For graphs, it may refer to Chapter 21: Designing Documents. You can use this activity and the demonstration that concludes the Readings section, Beyond the Traditional Essay, to discuss issues related to visual rhetoric. By analyzing visual rhetoric, you can help students think about ways such elements can strengthen the rhetorical purpose with the particular audience to whom the essay is addressed.

**Teaching Tips**
- You could connect this activity to the Invention activity (usually called Designing Your Document) that invites students to consider what visuals or graphics could be used in their own essay.
- Consider discussing the Thinking about Document Design demonstration at the end of the Guide to Writing. This demonstration discusses the use of visuals in one of the scenarios that open the chapter.
- If you want to emphasize writing about visuals, you could have students write a short essay like the one that is demonstrated in Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals.
Beyond the Traditional Essay: Visual Rhetoric and Multimedia

The Readings section closes with a look at an artifact that belongs to the same genre but that is not an essay. In Chapter 2: Remembering an Event, for example, it’s the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The objective of this brief demonstration is to show variations on the genre, particularly those in new media. By analyzing visual rhetoric, you can help students think about ways such elements can strengthen the rhetorical purpose with the particular audience to whom the essay is addressed.

Teaching Tip

You could invite students to bring in examples of genre they have encountered on the Internet and in other rhetorical contexts.

Guide to Writing

The Guide to Writing walks students through a range of heuristic activities to help them with invention and research (coming up with things to say), planning and drafting, getting (and giving) feedback on a draft, revising, and editing and proofreading. The activities here are not intended as a linear, step-by-step recipe—they do not need to be followed in order, and depending on the writer and the subject, some strategies might be more helpful than others.

The flexibility of the Guide to Writing is reinforced in many ways—for example:

- The opening Starting Points suggest a variety of resources in the chapter that can be used to help students begin work on their writing.
- The several Ways In tables throughout the Invention and Research section present various strategies for exploring and developing ideas. Although English speakers typically read from left to right and top to bottom, these tables can be accessed in any number of ways that may be most appropriate to the subject or most comfortable for the writer. The lead-in to these tables emphasizes this flexibility. It even acknowledges that sometimes the exploratory writing on one of these activities could lead the student to compose a zero or first draft. But it also reminds students to be sure to complete the other activities in the table, either to layer the additional material into the draft or to develop other aspects of their invention and research notes.
- The Troubleshooting Your Draft table in the Revising section is keyed to the Critical Reading Guide. Although you may want to use it for peer review, it can also be used by writers as they explore and develop their invention notes or as they work on their drafts.

The Writing Assignment

The writing assignment is typically framed in terms of the purpose, the audience, and the genre’s basic features. You may choose to prepare a post or handout of your own elaborating on the assignment, as illustrated in the following Teaching Tip.
**Teaching Tip: Sample Prompt**

**ESSAY 1: Remembering an Event**

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write an essay of 550–750 words that focuses on a significant event in your life for the purpose of telling an engaging and meaningful story that lets readers understand why the event is memorable for you. For a thorough description of writing that remembers an event, review *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing*, chapter 2, pp. 14–63.

**TOPIC:** To arrive at a topic, follow instructions in *The Guide on Considering Topics for Your Own Essay* (pp. 28, 34, 38) and *Choosing an Event to Write About* (p. 42), or use one of the topics we began exploring in class.

**PURPOSE:** In an autobiographical essay, your general purpose will be to present yourself to readers by telling a story that discloses something significant about your life. More specifically, you should try to make your story interesting by telling what happened in a way that enhances the dramatic potential of the event and by describing in vivid detail the place and people involved. Most importantly, your narrative and descriptive details should cohere or hang together around a dominant impression that reinforces the event’s significance in your life.

**AUDIENCE:** Essentially you will be writing to your instructor and classmates, people who are just getting to know you and who are curious to learn more about you. You are not being asked to reveal anything you do not feel comfortable sharing with these readers. Consider carefully.

**INVENTION AND WRITING:** You are required to follow through on the Guide to Writing, pp. 40–57. We will be generating text based on these suggestions and activities both in class and as homework. Be sure to follow instructions completely, writing all lists, descriptions, dialogue, and sketches as instructed. You are expected to generate several pages of invention. We will be doing peer review as well as revising and editing in class; make sure you have your completed draft and all invention material with you on the days dedicated to these tasks.

**Specific Skills/Abilities Required by This Assignment**

You will

- Draw on your experience for material.
- Arrange the narrative in climactic chronological order.
- Develop the event with vivid details, dialogue, examples, and illustrations.
- Reflect on the effects of the event on you and/or others, the meaning of the event, or the insight you gained from the experience.

**Traps to Avoid**

You will want to especially avoid the following problems:

- Choosing a topic that is too broad (such as “Our Championship Season”).
- Failing to create suspense and to build to a climax.
- Failing to reflect on the significance of the experience.
- Oversimplifying or sentimentalizing the significance of the experience.
Starting Points

The Starting Points is a kind of index that introduces students to some of the resources in the Guide to Writing and the Readings sections of the chapter. A table, organized according to basic features of the genre, offers students many ways to start writing their essay. Next to each basic feature are several common questions that students might have while they are planning and developing their essay. The answers point them to useful parts of the chapter that can help them explore these questions.

You can choose to lead students systematically through the Guide to Writing or invite them to find their own way. If you choose the latter option, this table will help students find the activities in the Guide to Writing that will help them discover and develop their ideas.

Teaching Tips

- One way to use this Starting Points table is as an orientation to the Guide to Writing. Looking it over with your students, you can point out the many resources available in the Guide that will help them as they work on their essay.
- You can also use this table to help students see that encountering difficulties—and sometimes raising more questions than they are answering—as they write is not a personal weakness but part of a process that even the most expert writers face.
- You can also use this table to reinforce what your students have learned or are learning by doing the Analyzing Writing Strategies activities following the readings.
- This table can be especially helpful for students who want to start drafting before they have done much invention or planning. When they run out of ideas, they can return to the table to see what they have left out or have not yet developed.

Invention and Research

Through careful questions, this section helps students come up with a subject, develop material on that subject through any of the Ways In exercises, test the subject out with an audience of peers, identify a purpose and audience, and work toward a thesis. The Invention activities also often include library and/or field research. Many of these activities are critical but frequently undervalued by student writers, who too seldom recognize them as productive heuristic tools for thinking and writing.

Blending Invention Activities with Reading and Analysis

- Jump to Choosing a Subject and the list of subjects to consider in that section after wrapping up the opening Collaborative Activity, and/or after the Considering Topics for Your Own Essay activity associated with a reading, while student ideas for topics are already rolling.
- Jump to Ways In after Analyzing Writing Strategies, and encourage students to try the “way in” closest in nature to the strategy just discussed (if applicable).
• After discussing the audience and purpose of one of the readings, jump to the Defining Your Purpose section of the Guide to Writing while the concept is still fresh in student minds.
• After students finish the Testing Your Choice activity, bounce back to examine the writing strategies of one of the readings closely, focusing on basic features with which students indicate they’re having difficulty.

**Teaching Tip: Choosing an Appropriate Subject**  
Matt McGraw

Since class time is always at a premium, it can be difficult to check on the progress of each student individually as they search for an appropriate topic. Discussion boards, if they are available, are particularly well suited for further work on this crucial part of the process outside of class. Students can present possible topics for their essays and receive feedback from you and from other students about potential problems. They can also get a sense of alternative approaches to the essay from the descriptions of their classmates’ choices.

Using a discussion board can also allow students to be more thoughtful and reflective in their work on this kind of complex issue than they can during in-class discussions, and this medium can encourage (and require) participation from students who might not feel comfortable with sharing their ideas verbally in class.

In any case, though, it is worth setting a deadline for students to identify the subjects of their essays. Having this requirement can help students avoid running out of time to do a sufficient amount of research for their topic. I always emphasize to my students that they will almost certainly discover that they need additional information as they work through their draft and that therefore they need to allow time for that eventuality.

**Planning and Drafting**

This section helps students organize their invention material—the size of which can sometimes be intimidating if students have done a lot of invention and research. It also launches drafting. Planning includes two activities:

• Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals
• Outlining Your Draft

Drafting includes one activity and two demonstrations:

• Writing the Opening Sentences
• A Sentence Strategy
• Working with Sources

Sometimes the invention activities generate so much writing that students begin writing a rough or zero draft before they have completed the invention and planning activities. You may want to encourage students who become motivated in this way to push ahead with the draft. Later, they can determine which Basic Features their draft lacks and return to the invention activities they skipped, layering into their draft additional writing.
We like to be flexible, but we also want students to take full advantage of the invention and planning materials available in the Guide to Writing.

The planning activities can be especially useful for students who have generated a lot of invention writing. Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals provides a way for them to recenter themselves by reconsidering their rhetorical situation—who they are writing for and how they want their essay to affect those particular readers. The Outlining activity is one that students may be tempted to cut short or skip altogether, but it can help them see how all the bits and pieces of invention material can work together to accomplish their purpose.

**Teaching Tips**

- As we suggested earlier, students can benefit from revisiting the readings to see how they are organized. They can do a quick scratch outline of one of the readings and use it to plan their own draft.
- You could encourage students to try quick drafting, focusing more on trying to get their ideas down rather than on grammar or even clarity at this point.
- Students might find they can use parts of their invention writing in a rough draft, cutting and pasting passages into an outline.

**Connecting Planning and Drafting to Other Sections**

- Many students have little or no training in the creation of outlines and could use help. Chapter 12 has a sample outline of a reading (p. 548) that could be used as the basis of an outlining lesson both for analyzing the readings and for planning student essays.
- The Sentence Strategy and Working with Sources sections take students back to the readings for examples and thus provide a natural transition to their own planning and drafting. But you can also use these demonstrations after students have written a rough draft to help them refine their writing.

**Critical Reading Guide**

This peer review worksheet, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features. It asks students to give both positive and critical feedback as well as to summarize the essay’s main point. The quality of this feedback is likely to depend in part on the students’ understanding of how the basic features work in the readings. They are likely to make comparisons and to rely on the ability to compare what other authors have done with what their peers have done. While this sort of comparison can be abused (with students objecting to a move simply because it wasn’t performed by one of the models), it is the primary way people make sense of new concepts and one you should expect. Generally, the better the class discussions of the basic features and readings have been, the better the critical readings by peers will be.
We recommend that students complete these reviews as written analyses, either in-class or as homework. Writing up the analysis gives the writer notes to use when revising the draft. We like to have students get more than one critical reading from their peers. You could have students post their drafts on a shared blackboard or simply do an e-mail exchange of drafts.

**Teaching Tip**

- Students often require training to give productive feedback. Without training, they tend to say very little, and what they say is often vaguely positive but not very helpful. Another typical untutored response is to point out grammatical errors (often mistakenly). One good way to train students is to have them practice first, using one of the assigned readings (probably the annotated student essay), and then to review the generated comments in class. You can also use former students’ papers (with permission), essays from the companion collection *Sticks and Stones*, or drafts from volunteers in the class. Projecting the draft on an overhead and walking students through the Critical Reading Guide can be a good way to model constructive peer review.

- Students also benefit from feedback on their peer review. It’s especially useful to have writers comment on which parts of the critical reading helped them in revising. These comments could be e-mailed both to the peer reviewer and to you.

- You can also reinforce the peer review process by saying something in your end comment on the final paper about a helpful suggestion by the peer reviewer that the writer wisely followed or should have followed.

**Teaching Tip: Highlight the Draft**

Highlighted by Kim Palmore

Highlighting the basic features in an essay can help students analyze and evaluate it. The highlighting could be done by the author preparing a draft for review, or a peer reviewer could do it at the beginning of a critical reading activity. Students can use color highlighting to match the colors in *The Guide*. If they are doing the peer review online, they can easily use the highlighting function in a program like Word. If they are doing the activity in class, they could bring or you could supply color highlighters. Most students remember fondly playing with crayons and enjoy this more sophisticated play. You could ask them to highlight all basic features or only certain ones you want to focus on, depending on the writing assignment. For Writing Profiles, for example, you could ask them to highlight in different colors the material that seems to have come from interview, direct observation, and background research. For the Finding Common Ground essay, highlight each opposing position in a different color to help them see at a glance whether they have emphasized one side over another. For Position, highlight sources or kinds of support. For Evaluation, highlight examples or criteria. For any essay, they could highlight topic sentences, transitions, or other cueing devices.
Revising
This section — together with its accompanying chart, Troubleshooting Your Draft — urges students to think of revising as problem solving. The Troubleshooting chart, a new feature, helps students find help within the textbook based on common problems that they or their peers might have identified in the drafts.

Teaching Tip
You can train students in revision by having the class create a revision plan for a sample essay, based on the peer reviews they conducted of the essay. By doing so, you can emphasize — and demonstrate — that a good revision plan focuses on adding, moving, and removing content in the pursuit of the best possible effect on the reader rather than on editing. After this activity, you can have students come up with revision plans for their own papers and even go over the best plan in class, time permitting, as an example.

Teaching Tip: Analyzing a Draft’s Coherence
Here’s an easy exercise to test the overall coherence of the draft and to make sure that the main topics are clearly related to the thesis and forecasting statements. Copy the thesis and each topic sentence (generally the first sentence of each paragraph or group of related paragraphs), and paste all the sentences into a single paragraph. Then read the paragraph to see whether the ideas flow logically. If the sentences seem out of order, the paragraphs or sections of the draft are likely to be out of order or to need to be better connected to the thesis and preceding topics.

Thinking about Document Design
In this section, we focus on document design — specifically, incorporating visuals and pulling quotations — for one of the chapter-opening scenarios (In College Courses, In the Community, In the Workplace). If you plan to publish their essays, perhaps in a class anthology or on a Web site, or if the students themselves are thinking about taking their papers to a second, larger audience, this activity is especially important.

Teaching Tip
Because some students really get into document design, often more enthusiastically than they get into their writing, you might want to separate document design from the final revision activity. You could even treat it as an extra activity to be done after the paper has been graded, an activity that involves preparing the essay for publication.
Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre. You might ask them to edit and proofread outside of class. Some instructors take class time on the day the revision is due to have students work through this section, making corrections neatly on the final draft. This is an appropriate time to discuss grammar and mechanics, with individual students or the class as a whole, within the context of their own writing.

Teaching Tip: Creating an Error Checklist

We recommend having students keep records of the types of errors they habitually make and to check their writing for these errors. (In this manual, see Responding to Error in Chapter 33: Evaluation Practices.)

A Writer at Work

This section offers students a look at some aspect of the student writer’s process in composing the essay annotated earlier in each chapter. Your students can review the student author’s notes and see how the essays looked in their earlier incarnations—which is often encouraging to student writers. A good essay bears few, if any, traces of its genesis; its surface is polished, smooth, impenetrable. Student writers can find no evidence there that they could do such work. To see a flawed first draft or jumbled invention writing—the sort of thing they can do—may help them believe that they can write the polished version as well.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

Because we have found that students’ experience with each genre is made richer through retrospective metacognitive examination, each assignment chapter in The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing concludes with a pair of activities for guided reflection on students’ writing and reading experiences:

- Reflecting on Your Writing
- Considering the Social Dimensions

The first activity asks students to review their writing experience and draw some lessons from it. The questions here reinforce what students have learned and consolidate that learning—helping them remember and value their learning.

The second activity deserves special comment: We want students to understand that each genre has a social context, that writers and readers have certain assumptions about what a particular kind of writing can do as well as what it can say. We also want students to recognize that while genres generate certain kinds of thinking, they also may limit thinking. A good example is the Proposing a Solution genre, which stimulates problem solution but also tends to encourage people to address problems that have concrete, feasible solutions.
rather than ones that would require systemic changes. Because most students need coaching before they feel comfortable theorizing about writing and society, we position this activity at the end of the chapter, so that students will have the intensive experience of reading and writing in a genre to draw upon.

Students are likely to feel they have just come through an arduous writing process and might need a gentle nudge to give these reflective exercises a chance. But most instructors find that students later consider these metacognitive activities to be among the most important learning experiences in the class.

Teaching Tip

It’s a good idea to reinforce the value of these metacognitive activities by spending some class time discussing what students said in their reflections. You could also refer to them in your comments on their essays and during student conferences.
Introduction: Thinking about Writing

This chapter is designed to help you launch your composition course with a series of reflection activities that, taken together, constitute a literacy narrative. Many writing instructors have found that beginning with a literacy narrative captures students’ attention and engages them in the kind of metacognitive activity that supports and consolidates learning. By writing about something they know very well—their own experience as readers and writers—students begin doing serious intellectual work before they even realize the course has begun.

You can have students add to their literacy narrative as they work through the Part One Writing Assignment chapters. Each chapter includes an array of reflective writing activities specific to the genre the students are reading and writing. For the final project in the course, you can have students review their reflective writing and compose a concluding chapter in their literacy narrative. This culminating metacognitive activity could simply ask students to write an essay reflecting on what they have learned in the course. Or you could combine it with a portfolio, asking students to point out the strengths of their writing and identify areas they plan to continue working on in the future.

Student Learning Objectives

The activities in this chapter can teach students to

- Reflect on their literacy experiences
- Recognize the many ways that writing well matters
- Understand the role of reading in learning to write well
- See how The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing will help them learn to write well in different writing situations
- Learn important concepts such as metacognition, genre, literacy, invention, recursive writing strategies, and rhetorical situation

Teaching Suggestions

The six reflection activities in the chapter are designed to support and develop the discussion that precedes the activity. Nevertheless, you can choose among the activities or use them in any order you prefer. For example, you could use either Reflection 1, A Literacy
Story, or Reflection 6, Your Literacy Experience, Through Metaphor and Simile as an icebreaker at the beginning of the course. Reflection 1 works especially well to help students get to know one another’s names. You could have them write or tell a brief story about their literacy experience to a partner. Then go around the class, having students introduce their partner by retelling the story. An advantage of this activity is that it anticipates the Remembering an Event essay. In fact, you could substitute Reflection 1 for the Collaborative Activity in Chapter 2 (pp. 16–17). Reflection 6 invites students to be creative, which is a nice way to begin a writing course.

Note also that each reflection activity in the chapter offers several options, giving students a lot of choice. You may decide to narrow the choice or to widen it by offering additional possibilities.

The reflection activities ask students to do some writing. You can decide whether to allow students to revise one or more of these mini-essays or to treat them more informally—for example, as unrevised journal entries or discussion board posts. One possibility is to have students do one or two of the activities as quick-writes during the first or second class session and to have them complete some of the other activities as homework, either to be handed in or posted online. The advantage of using some of the activities in class is that they can jump-start class discussion. For example, you could use Reflection 2, Writing That Mattered, to introduce the Part One Writing Assignment chapters you will cover during the course. Some instructors even give students a choice regarding which kinds of essays they will write or the order in which they will write the essays. You could also use Reflection 5, Your Last Writing Project, to introduce the Guides to Writing in the Part One Writing Assignment chapters. After discussing how they approached their last writing project, you could walk them through one of the Guides to show them how it can help to scaffold their thinking and writing. Note that the Guides to Writing already have a lot of built-in flexibility and, of course, you may have your students use them as you see fit. Sometimes we use the Annie Dillard quote at the top of page 11 about breaking a complex writing task into “tiny little” — and we would add, doable — tasks to introduce the activities in the Guides to Writing.

The writers’ quotations in Chapter 1 and the inside front cover can also be used to stimulate class discussion about how and why we write. For example, the Tom Robbins and Madeleine L’Engle quotes raise the topic of inspiration, and the Ernest Hemingway quote undermines the old canard that writers are born, not made. Several of the quotes—such as those by Margaret Mead and Stephen King—address the question of whether writing can be learned and, if so, how. King’s quote, along with those of William Faulkner and Mary Oliver, offers an opportunity to discuss the connection between reading and writing. And, of course, the quotes by Toni Morrison, John Updike, and William Stafford emphasize the fundamental understanding that writing, as Garrison Keillor puts it, is “a means of discovery, always” (p. 9).
Remembering an Event

The Writing Assignment

Write an essay about an event in your life that will engage readers and that will, at the same time, help them understand the significance of the event. Tell your story dramatically and vividly.

Student Learning Objectives

This assignment can teach students to

- Write a meaningful narrative
- Appreciate the rhetorical impact of narrative writing
- Consider purpose and audience when selecting and presenting details
- Be aware of how they present themselves in a text
- Seek topics and subjects on which they have some authority once they see how much of a difference writing from personal authority makes in this essay
- Sequence action chronologically
- Shape the structure of narratives meaningfully
- Use a consistent point of view
- Convey significance or a theme through word choice and the creation of a dominant impression
- Invoke specific details to reinforce a point of view
- Develop a basic understanding of quotation through practice at dialogue
- Be open to using narrative as a persuasive tool within other genres, such as Explaining a Concept or Arguing a Position
- Read texts analytically
- Make their writing process more analytical and recursive
- Reflect metacognitively on what they have learned

Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment

The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.
## Challenges

### An Appropriate Topic
- Topics are not events.
- Topics lack conflict.
- Authors appear too close to their subjects and have difficulty seeing their complexity.
- Significance of topics is too obvious or predictable.

### A Well-Told Story
- Essays start slowly, opening with general introductions.
- Essays have generic, moral-of-the-story conclusions.
- Essays are so cluttered with incidental details and tangents that they confuse reader expectations and undercut the impact of the story.

## Teaching Suggestion

- Back up and conduct Choosing an Event to Write About (p. 42) in class, putting topic ideas on the board and discussing their merits.
- Point out how the Types of Events to Consider on p. 42 emphasize ways events may be significant.
- Review the Criteria for Choosing an Event (p. 42).
- Have the class analyze the introductions and conclusions of the readings in the chapter to analyze the writing strategies writers use in these remembered event essays.
- Compare the actual essays to students’ expectations.
- In class, go over Working with Sources: Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing (pp. 50–52) and A Writer at Work. Have students focus on Brandt’s decisions about which conversations to dramatize and which to summarize. Then have them chart the dramatized and summarized moments in their own drafts and determine whether they should try other approaches in each case.
- Have students outline their drafts (see Chapter 12: A Catalog of Reading Strategies, pp. 583–586), and then discuss the outlines in class, comparing them to the dramatic pyramid in this chapter (p. 31). Focus on identifying the key moments that are important to the story of the structure. Once students have identified rising action, climax, and falling action, they’ll have a better sense of which elements of their papers are distracting.

(Continued)
Challenges | Teaching Suggestion
--- | ---
Vivid Description of People and Places | ✓ Try the Ways In invention activities related to description (p. 44), and discuss them.
X People and places are hard to visualize.
✓ Try to nudge students into thinking of the best nouns and verbs for their descriptions, with less emphasis on adjectives and adverbs.
X Some details distract from or undermine the dominant impression.
✓ Have students consider whether the details point to greater complexity in the significance than they first thought.
✓ Try the Analyzing Writing Strategies activity following Ellis’s reading (pp. 31–33).
✓ If students have already done this, review it; then extend the exercise to a new reading, either from the book or a student draft.
Autobiographical Significance | ✓ Have the class analyze the impact of showing versus telling strategies to the autobiographical significance in Dillard’s essay by doing the activity on p. 26.
X Students are having difficulty indicating significance effectively.
✓ Have the class analyze the impact of remembered feelings and thoughts and present perspective in Ellis’s essay (see the activity on p. 33).
✓ Have the class analyze the use of dominant impressions in Shah’s essay, following the activity on p. 37.
✓ Apply in class any of these exercises to Brandt’s essay or to a student’s draft if you have already covered the original three exercises in class.
✓ Have students complete the Ways In: Reflecting on the Event’s Autobiographical Significance invention exercise (p. 46) in class, and go over at least one student’s results in class if you can.
Introductory Materials

Scenarios: Discussion Questions

If you have students read and discuss the scenarios that start the chapter, consider the following questions—organized by scenario—as possible tools to spur discussion. The second scenario is keyed to the Thinking About Document Design section (p. 55).

In College Courses

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• To give examples of such assignments and to discuss these examples using their personal experience with high school or college assignments
• To discuss the significance of the story about the writer’s talk with her brother and how her study of Tannen’s theory helps her explain the significance. Note that the writer discovers that her frustration may be partly due to cultural differences as opposed to a lack of caring on her brother’s part
• How trying to reconstruct the dialogue and then analyzing it helped the writer gain insight into what happened

In the Community

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• To speculate about the rancher’s purposes in telling the story. For whom is he telling the story? How might his purpose and audience differ from the historian’s?
• To consider how valuable the information contained within the rancher’s story might be to other historians, climatologists, disaster preparedness officials, or other experts
• To think of examples of events or controversial issues for which our knowledge has been shaped in large part by stories told by people who were there. Some examples include 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the Solomon Islands tsunami, and the Watergate scandal.
• To examine the process that went into the creation of this story and to consider how the writers’ process corresponds to their own
• To consider how writers select photos and pull-quotes. Have your students read and discuss the Thinking about Document Design section for this chapter (p. 55).

In the Workplace

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• To consider the purpose of the story the manager tells and how it fits into his larger presentation. Follow up by discussing the use of stories or anecdotes (personal or not) to support an argument.
• To analyze the photo that accompanies the scenario. For example, ask which person in the photo is the manager and which is the employee—and what clues led to their answers.
A Collaborative Activity: Practice Remembering an Event

This collaborative activity invites students to practice telling a story about an event they’ve been through and prepares them to think seriously about the genre.

Teaching Tip: Icebreaker

At the beginning of the term, this exercise can also make a nice icebreaker that helps students learn about each other and become comfortable working collaboratively in small groups.

Reading Remembered Event Essays: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

• To introduce the basic features, have students apply them to an essay, such as the opening essay by student Jean Brandt, which has already been annotated with color-coded comments to help students see each of the basic features at a glance.

• You might want to discuss the various purposes autobiographers have for writing about their own experiences. One way to begin is by asking students about their own choices during the Collaborative Activity:
  • Why are they willing to share some memories and not others?
  • How much is their choice affected by their assumptions about readers?

• Explore the purposes described here—trying to understand an event, reliving it, and justifying one’s actions. As the class discusses each reading in the chapter, consider asking which of these (if any) best captures the author’s goals, as well as which of the assumptions about the audience listed in this section seem relevant. For instance:
  • Brandt seems to be working through an emotional experience.
  • Dillard might be said to be making a kind of argument through her narrative.
  • Both Ellis and Shah (indeed, all four authors sampled here) seem to assume their audiences are mature and forgiving of old missteps, willing to listen to a present voice speak of past stumbles.

Readings

The first two readings focus on childhood experiences, while the third and fourth focus on experiences the authors had while young adults. The writers in this chapter choose a significant moment that changes, in part, how they respond to the world around them, as well as their sense of who they are:

• Jean Brandt, the student author in the collection, comes to understand herself and her relationship with her parents after shoplifting an inexpensive toy.

• Annie Dillard relives a moment when she felt completely alive and reflects on the vitality and passion of that moment.
• Trey Ellis describes the pain of losing his father combined with the happiness as the intimacy between them grew.
• Saira Shah recalls the moment she decided she could not bear to reclaim her ethnic roots through marriage and had to be rescued from an arranged match.

Other themes are suggested in the Making Connections and Considering Topics for Your Own Essay sections following each professional reading, and you will undoubtedly see still other thematic connections worth making.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

For your convenience, we list below basic features and specific writing strategies addressed in each of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections following the readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student’s attention to a question that addresses an area the student needs to work on in composing or revising the draft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzing Writing Strategies</th>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Dillard</th>
<th>Ellis</th>
<th>Shah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Well-Told Story</td>
<td>Specific narrative action</td>
<td>Dramatic organization</td>
<td>Dramatized dialogue</td>
<td>Summarized dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional phrases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivid Description of People and Places</td>
<td>Naming Detailing Dominant impression</td>
<td>Describing people Comparing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Significance</td>
<td>Showing Telling</td>
<td>Remembered thoughts and feelings Dominant impression</td>
<td>Present perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headnote:** The “As you read” activity asks students to look for places in the essay where Brandt discloses her feelings at the time the event occurred. These are what we call remembered thoughts and feelings, and they play a central role in conveying significance. The annotations ask pointedly about the remembered thoughts and feelings in paragraphs 5–8, but students should be able to identify this writing strategy from the first paragraph to the last. In fact, the annotation in paragraph 1 that asks how Brandt tries to get readers to identify with her should lead students to recognize that when she tells us in the very first sentence “I knew it was going to be a fabulous day,” she is sharing her remembered feelings and thoughts—feelings that may resonate in the holiday excitement experienced by many readers.

**Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay**

*Annotations: A Well-Told Story*

• You can use the annotated essay to point out how active verbs enliven a text. (You’ll notice that, though we point out Brandt’s use of verbs only in paragraphs 3–5, she uses active verbs throughout her essay.)
• In paragraphs 21–24, we indicate direct (or dramatized) dialogue, a feature that can enhance remembered event essays, especially their climactic moments. Brandt, for instance, uses direct quotation whenever a close family member learns or acknowledges she stole the button—not just in paragraphs 21–24 but in paragraphs 7–15 (with her sister) and 26–34 (with her mother) as well. Note that once a writer clearly establishes who the speakers are, it is not necessary to include speaker tags (e.g., “she said”). Note also that the Working with Sources section of *The Guide* (pp. 50–52) walks students through quotation, summary, and paraphrasing in a narrative—a skill that will be useful again when writing profiles (see Chapter 3: Writing Profiles). Although we have not marked them, Brandt also summarizes remembered conversations at several points (pars. 2, 5, and 6), a technique that allows her to recount less emotionally significant but necessary moments in the event without slowing the narrative down.

• Brandt’s description also uses calendar time, noting that the event took place around Christmas. The Sentence Strategy section of *The Guide* (pp. 49–50) discusses the use of calendar and clock time. And Chapter 14: Narrating begins with a section about calendar and clock time.

• You might want to show students the outline of Brandt’s story (Guide to Writing, p. 48) and follow the same dramatic pyramid described after Trey Ellis’s essay (p. 31).

*Annotations: Vivid Description of People and Places*

• We have annotated descriptive details in paragraph 2, which sets the scene for Brandt’s shoplifting experience. Two key strategies are at work here: naming and detailing. She names the sorts of items carried by the store and details some of them, in one case noting that the Snoopy button costs 75 cents.

• Brandt’s description in paragraph 35 focuses on visceral details—physiological symptoms of her emotional distress. In this way, her descriptions help to highlight the autobiographical significance of the story.

*Annotations: Autobiographical Significance*

• By focusing on what she felt at the time of the event, Brandt avoids the predictable moral that “crime doesn’t pay.” She boldly presents her changing feelings: naïve optimism, humiliation, excitement, shame, worry, relief.

• In paragraphs 16–18, her remembered feelings focus heavily on her sense of fear and shame.

• The annotation on paragraph 35 focuses on Brandt’s remembered thoughts and feelings about the climactic phone conversation between Brandt and her parents in paragraphs 19–34. You could point out how little Brandt tells readers about her feelings as she relates what was said and demonstrate how a dialogue could convey more of the speakers’ feelings by describing their tone of voice, hesitations, gasps, pauses, and so on.
Teaching Tip: Dialogue Exercise

Gray Scott

After going over this dialogue in Brandt’s essay, I like to have students in pairs practice rewriting a bit of Brandt’s dialogue to make it more dramatic and revelatory. Then, they compare the effectiveness of the alternatives—the spare dialogue Brandt composed and their more descriptive dialogues. Next, I may ask students to write a page of their own dialogue. This new dialogue can be—though it does not have to be—used as invention material for their own essays (see Ways In: Constructing a Well-Told Story, in the Invention section [p. 44], similar to Brandt’s own invention work [pp. 57–60]).

I take extra time with these exercises, even if I do not grade them, because doing so helps pave the way for quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing other sorts of sources in subsequent essays. If students become comfortable punctuating, paragraphing, and integrating quotations while writing narratives, they have an easier time learning how to add citations to the mix later when they start working with library and Internet sources.

Cross-Reference to A Writer at Work

The Learn about Brandt’s Writing Process section following the annotated student essay can be used to introduce the Guide to Writing. Students can see part of Brandt’s invention writing and see how she used the process to gain a greater understanding of the event’s significance. The Writer at Work section is particularly interesting in regard to how Brandt used dialogue to explore the event’s meaning. (See the discussion of teaching A Writer at Work below on pp. 46–47).

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to think about the paradox Dillard uses to convey the significance of the event. The paradox is that she was at once terrified and happier than she had ever been before or since. The idea that one could experience such contradictory and seemingly incompatible emotions more or less at the same time may be surprising to students. And given the dangers some students have experienced or been warned about, the image of an adult chasing kids may seem quite alarming to readers, at least initially. But the point is that many good autobiographical stories tap into contradictions like these. They avoid oversimplifying or sentimentalizing by letting readers see the complexity or ambiguity, indeed the paradoxical quality of some of our most memorable experiences.

If your students read Jean Brandt’s essay, you could ask them about the contradictions they found in her story—for example, in paragraph 16 she tells us she was terrified at the thought of going to jail, but then when she recalls her experience at the police station in paragraph 18, she admits it “somehow seemed to be exciting.” You might also suggest that in exploring possible events for their own essay they try to recall experiences that they had mixed or ambivalent feelings about, either at the time or in retrospect.
Making Connections: Acting Fearlessly

This activity is designed to help students begin thinking deeply about the autobiographical and cultural significance of remembered events. The activity has two parts: (1) practice telling a brief story and (2) critical thinking both about the impression of the storyteller that their story conveys and about the cultural values implied in the behavior and attitudes displayed in the students’ various stories.

Our questions urge students to go beyond merely acknowledging fearless behavior. A deeper level of understanding emerges when students begin to consider not only the action but also its consequences: What have I learned about myself and those around me? Such understanding can ultimately lead to a remembered event essay that exhibits far greater critical insight than one in which the writer focuses on the event itself.

After the discussion, encourage students to consider why Dillard wrote “An American Childhood” and what she wanted readers to think of her after reading it. And what were their goals in telling their own stories? There are three good reasons to try this:

• The issue of self-presentation goes to the heart of writing autobiography.
• Self-presentation may be relevant to the very act of writing itself.
• Self-presentation is especially pertinent for students concerned about exposing themselves to their classmates and their instructor.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Told Story

For this assignment, students often choose to write stories about events (such as automobile accidents, fights, or sports) that call for intense dramatic action, but they seldom know how to write action sequences. This activity helps them learn about two valuable narrating strategies: specific narrative action and prepositional phrases.

Follow-up Analysis

• Continue analyzing paragraphs 11–13 by shifting the focus to the next activity—Vivid Description of People and Places—that focuses on Dillard’s use of the describing strategies of naming specific details in the passing scene.
• Introduce the concept of significance and show students how Dillard’s mention of remembered thoughts and feelings (especially in paragraph 13) enhances the drama of this particular sequence.
• Point out in these paragraphs how Dillard uses other writing strategies, such as punctuation (comma, semicolon, and colon) and varying the sentence length.
• Turn to the sections in Chapter 14: Narrating on Specific Narrative Action (pp. 620–621) and Verb Tense (pp. 619–620), and consider assigning the exercises.
• Highlight Dillard’s use of framing, a strategy in which an element from the beginning of the essay is echoed near the end. Just before the chase begins, in paragraph 7, Dillard describes the man’s Buick, and she closes paragraph 21 by mentioning it again.
When students begin and end traditional essays with variations on their thesis, they do the same thing—the echo provides a sense of closure, of coming full circle. Because students often have trouble figuring out how to begin and end a remembered event essay—tending to begin with a too-broad context rather than with the action itself and to end with a tagged-on moral—discussing strategies like framing can make students more aware of their options.

**Teaching Tip: Using Movies to Teach Narrating Strategies**

Gray Scott

Students often have more familiarity with dramatic narrative than they first think. I find it useful to point out how films create tension and to discuss how similar strategies might be used in writing. For example, we might discuss how to accomplish in writing effects similar to cinematic fast cutting and close-ups.

Films can also be used to illustrate strategies like framing. Two very different 2008 films use framing, for instance:

- *Wanted* opens and closes with a long-range (indeed, impossible) rifle shot by a sniper;
- *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* opens and closes with women walking in on the male protagonist while he’s undressed.

I may bring up or even illustrate one or two examples from films, but I also often enlist the students in helping me come up with examples.

Once students begin to think about and notice narrating strategies used in cinema, television, and video games, they often become more willing to experiment with the strategies in their own writing.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Take some class time to have the students do the Explore a Revealing or Pivotal Moment activity on p. 44.

**Vivid Description of People and Places**

This activity attempts to draw students’ attention to Dillard’s use of naming and detailing as ways of making descriptive writing specific and vivid.

- Paragraph 10 shows that Dillard’s description of people in this essay is spare but pointed. The way the man is dressed—“in city clothes: a suit and tie, street shoes”—tells readers a lot about him and emphasizes the incongruity of his leaving the car in the middle of the street to chase the kids.
- Paragraph 12 shows how Dillard uses the same describing strategies in the chase sequence. The rapid succession of named objects helps add to our sense of speed as we read about the chase.
**Follow-up Analysis**

- Compare the description of the man in paragraph 10 with the description of him at the end of the chase in paragraphs 16 and 21.
- Find places in this essay where other people are described (in paragraph 4, for example) and analyze the impressions created by Dillard’s naming and detailing strategies there as well.
- Compare Dillard’s and the other writers’ ways of describing people—for example, Brandt’s use of naming and detailing to describe the store detective in paragraph 5.
- Turn to the sections in Chapter 15: Describing on Naming and Detailing on pp. 628–631, where you will find additional explanation and illustration of these strategies.
- Segue to the Vivid Description of People activity following Trey Ellis’s essay (p. 32) to see how he uses descriptive strategies to create a dominant impression.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- If students are in the middle of invention for their own essays, you could take some class time to have them do the Reimagine the Place or the Describe People activity in the Guide to Writing on p. 44.
- If they have already done exploratory descriptive writing, you could focus on the Creating a Dominant Impression activity (pp. 44–45) to help students select important details and shape their descriptions of people and places.

**Autobiographical Significance**

One of the benefits of writing narrative is that it introduces students to the idea that significance—any key point—can be implied or shown, instead of (or in addition to) being stated outright. Until students attempt a narrative essay, most of them will be familiar only with blunt statements of significance and, unless coached well about the alternatives, will tend to end with statements along the lines of “The moral of my story is . . .” or “I learned from this experience that . . . .” Dillard uses both showing and telling to make her point, and this activity gives your class an opportunity to discuss these strategies, as well as how and why they are used.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- After discussing Dillard, consider having students look back at Brandt’s essay, “Calling Home,” in which the significance is shown rather than told. Comparison leads to some potentially useful discussion questions:
  - Why does Brandt use only showing?
  - And why does Dillard use both strategies?

One possible answer is that good writers are only as blunt as they have to be—Brandt’s point is clear enough with showing alone, but Dillard’s is unexpected and counterintuitive enough that it needs the added help of an explanation.
Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

This exercise can lead students to viable, rich topics because it asks them to think about events that, almost invariably, will have complexities built into them in ways that put those complexities front and center. As they consider events in which adults did something unexpected, they will find it an easy transition to then think about the conflict between expectation and reality that underlies such events.

**Headnote:** Because Trey Ellis is a skilled writer and is telling a story likely to speak to a common, unvoiced fear among college students—fear of the death of their parents—this story is likely to hit students hard. That said, it describes a period of recent history with which few current students are likely to be familiar: the early days of AIDS, when the disease killed far more quickly than it does with today’s treatments (in North America and Europe, at any rate) and when homosexuality had a far greater stigma attached to it than it does today. Ellis, assuming perhaps an older audience, touches on these contours with some subtlety, but pointing them out can help students navigate through one of the more powerful readings they are likely to encounter.

The “As you read” question focuses students’ attention on the photograph of his father that Ellis includes in the essay. The question here is rather general: What does it add to your reading of the story? Notice that the Analyzing Visuals box (p. 33) focuses more specifically on the photograph and its role in the essay, providing students with analytical tools keyed to the new Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals. You could use the opening “As you read” question to get first impressions from students and to raise the possibility that they could consider including visuals in their essay as well.

**Making Connections: Intimacy**

Discussing intimacy in the ways proposed here involves, or at least encourages, greater intimacy among the students. However, the purpose of the exercise is not group therapy but rather to discuss what intimacy is and how it develops, based on the evidence of personal experience. To limit the embarrassment that Ellis argues is a barrier to intimacy, consider the following activities:

- Break students into small groups for these discussions.
- Give them some time to brainstorm about what they might be willing to share.
- Remind them, as the text does, that they need not share details or anything they are uncomfortable sharing.

The section closes with a question about other reasons, aside from embarrassment, why Ellis and his father might not have been intimate before. This question asks students to do the following:

- Read between the lines of the text.
- Think critically about what Ellis has said.
- Contemplate alternatives.
All three are useful moves in thinking about their own experiences and in the sort of argumentative writing they are likely to attempt later. If students have trouble with this question, encourage them to think about other emotions that might look like (or become entangled with) embarrassment:

- Fear of judgment
- A desire to spare one’s child the pain of dealing with possible character attacks on an ill or dying parent
- A general reluctance to discuss the relationships that followed after the death of Ellis’s mother because those relationships might look like betrayals

A host of explanations are possible—the point is not to identify any particular idea as “right” but to help students become comfortable speculating about human emotions and human reactions

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

**A Well-Told Story**

The dramatic pyramid described here can not only help students analyze the writing strategies of others but (as mentioned in the text) help them to organize their own narratives.

- Let students “warm up” by applying the pyramid to Brandt and Dillard, with help from the textbook, before turning to the structure of Ellis’s essay. It’s generally easiest to start at the outsides of the pyramid and work one’s way in toward the middle: Ask the students first to identify the exposition and resolution, then the rising and falling action, and finally the climax. (If you ask students to identify the climax first, as might be tempting, those who have not had much practice with dramatic structure will often venture many guesses about different moments in the story and can become confused when told that some of them are not climaxes. It’s usually easier to figure out what the climaxes are by process of elimination.)

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Other story models that students might use to analyze these narratives or build their own include the three-act structures typical of Hollywood films and television programs: Act I introduces the characters (usually including a protagonist and antagonist[s]) and establishes the problem; Act II complicates the problem and engages the actors in trying to address this more difficult, dangerous problem; and Act III resolves the problem.

- However the story is structured, stress that every scene should advance the story and also develop the characters and their relationships.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Help students use the dramatic pyramid as a useful planning and heuristic tool to outline their own papers. Consider asking a volunteer to share his or her story (or a story he or she is contemplating). Then, as a class, plot out the exposition, rising action, climax,
falling action, and resolution for that story on the board. Involve the class in strategizing, talking about which elements will need the most development and which should be dealt with briefly.

Vivid Description of People and Places

The instructions in this section ask students to apply previous concepts—brief descriptions of people, naming, detailing, and dominant impression—to two blocks of text from Ellis’s essay.

Follow-up Analysis

• You might also encourage students to look again at the photo of the father, from three years before the encounter in Paris. One impression that might emerge from this discussion is that the disease is rendering his father increasingly unrecognizable. Others, of course, are possible.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Turn to the Recalling Key People activities in the Guide to Writing on p. 44. Ask your students to choose a key person from their event and do the Describe People activity.
• Variation on Describe People activity: Have your students focus on how the appearance and mannerisms of the character changed over the course of the event.
• Use the Research People activity: Ask students to try drafting a few sentences about a photograph or about correspondence with the person.

Autobiographical Significance

A few students will also want to write about deaths in the family—often very powerful memories that, like Ellis’s, have clear significance. In some ways, the clear significance makes these sorts of narratives tougher to write, for it is hard to convey obvious significance without seeming heavy-handed or dependent on clichés. For these reasons, a thorough discussion of how Ellis handled his significance can be very helpful to student writers.

Follow-up Analysis

• To help students apply the lessons they learned reading Brandt and Dillard to Ellis’s narrative, quickly review the distinction between present perspective and remembered thoughts and feelings. Analyzing Ellis’s paragraphs 6–10, students may notice that by describing his initial fears, and then his false hopes and forced optimism, he makes the inevitable hit harder because we feel those hopes shatter at the same time that he describes his father’s death. For this reason, we might not notice how simply he describes the death itself.
• Point out how Ellis uses an inner voice (as in pars. 6–10, 15, and 16) to describe his earlier hopes and fears, but shifts to a more external, objective perspective as reality intrudes. Paragraphs 21 and 22 are almost straight, factual reporting. One effect of this shift to a present, blunter perspective is that the reality of the death hits like a thrown bucket of ice water.
Focus particularly on the final paragraph where Ellis presents his unexpected, possibly surprising reaction. Many students, when they attempt to write their own remembered event essays, will find they also have multiple, often conflicting feelings about their events. Encourage them to pursue complicated or surprising thoughts that they might otherwise be tempted to suppress because they don’t fit with perceived formulas.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Have students brainstorm a list of emotions they remember having had during an important moment in the event (such as the climax or resolution). Encourage them to list as many emotions as come to mind. Once they have the list, have them attempt to describe the complexity of what they felt (even if they already did this for Recalling Your Remembered Feelings and Thoughts) in ways that might help readers understand their state of mind.

- If they have not already done the Reflect on the Conflict and Its Significance activity on p. 44, have them do it now. Ellis portrays the conflict in his essay as both external (between himself and his father) and internal (about his own contradictory feelings).

**Analyzing Visuals: Photograph of Trey Ellis’s Father**

This exercise draws on ideas presented in Chapter 20 and provides students with an opportunity to practice a skill that is increasingly useful in an age of visual and mixed media—“reading” images. Even if you do not have students write paragraphs about the photo individually, your students might find discussing the photo in class both easy and rewarding. (One other note: You might also prompt students to look closely at the photo’s caption, which also emphasizes the father’s profession as a doctor but didn’t have to do so.)

**Considering Topics for Your Own Essay**

As noted earlier, many students might already be thinking about tragic events as topics for their essays. Some of the topics students are already considering might have the quality described here (unexpected, positive side effects) in ways the writer has not yet considered. Obviously, not all of such narratives will have silver linings, but it can be useful to look for surprising side effects anyway—or, alternatively, to look for unexpected negative side effects in otherwise positive stories.

**Headnote:** The “As you read” activity invites students to focus on the significance of Shah’s essay: anxiety about her cultural identity. Obviously, readers do not have to share Shah’s position to understand the anxiety she writes about. Most students will have comparable experience trying to figure out where they fit in, as they may discover in doing the Making Connections activity.

**Making Connections: Search for Identity**

Because Shah’s report emphasizes exotic details such as eating habits and marriage customs, students might initially think they have no experiences like the one she reports. Few
of us have been fed pre-chewed food. However, reading the instructions aloud (or having students read them aloud) can help bring into sharper focus the ways that this story connects with common human experiences students are likely to share: researching one’s family history or reinventing oneself to be accepted by another group.

Some students might also be inclined to answer the final question with easy clichés at first: “You should be yourself and not try to change who you are to please other people.” You can gently urge students to go past these initial responses by asking for elaboration about who they are and how they define themselves.

Many students will define themselves in relation to groups or cultures to which they belong. Asking students why they joined those communities or why they stay in them can help complicate the discussion in useful, thoughtful ways. Again, the goal of the exercise is not to shatter a student’s sense of self but to get students to start thinking in complicated ways about the dominant theme of the essay they have read.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Told Story

This activity focuses on identifying two ways to present dialogue: dramatized (or direct/quoted) or summarized (paraphrased). Like previous exercises, it asks students to look back at previous essays in the chapter to get a handle on the ideas and then to apply those ideas to the new Shah essay. We note that Brandt eschews speaker tags. However, most students will need to use such tags for clarity and also to embed remembered thoughts and feelings into their dialogues, so pointing out instances in the other essays where speaker tags are used (and how they are used) can be a helpful move.

Follow-up Analysis

• Ask your students to speculate about why Shah dramatizes Aunt Amina’s dialogue in paragraphs 6–10.
• Point out the summarized dialogue in paragraph 3 regarding Shah’s intended: “I was told breathlessly that he was a fighter pilot in the Pakistani Air Force” and “the women cooed their admiration.”
• Notice also in paragraph 6 where Shah writes: “When she had heard me out . . . .” This summary leaves Shah’s reasons for her change of heart implied rather than directly stated: Why, for instance, did her intended’s “love match” comment constitute the last straw?
• Warn students that passages that may look at first glance like summarized dialogue might be better labeled as description because they have little stated or implied content—for example, in paragraph 4 where the groom was “permitted to laugh and chat.”
• To illustrate summarized and dramatized dialogue in Dillard’s essay, note that the man’s comment, “You stupid kids,” is dramatized but the remainder of his speech is less-than-summarized—it’s bypassed, or at best implied, even though we know it happened. The only indication of its content is “normal righteous anger and the usual common sense” (par. 20). Dillard’s reason for this strategy may be that to tell us what he said would contradict her assertion that it was “beside the point” (19).
• Consider having students take another look at paragraphs 6 through 15 of Ellis’s essay. Have them identify the dramatized dialogue (pars. 6, 8, 10, 11, 12), the summarized dialogue (13 and 14), and the dramatized representations of Ellis’s own thoughts during the conversation (7, 9, and 15). Ask your students to consider what purposes these three moves serve in this part of the paper and what their combined effect is.

• Note that a few students might oversimplify the definition of dramatized dialogue to include anything that appears in quotation marks. Showing them examples of “scare quotes” or article titles appearing in quotation marks and talking about the differences can mitigate confusion.

Teaching Tip: Dialogue in Other Languages

Gray Scott

I teach at a very diverse campus, one with many students who speak more than one language. A common question arises about how to deal with dialogue in other tongues, particularly if the author wants to include the original language for authenticity, along with a translation in English. Shah’s essay doesn’t specify whether the dialogue was originally in English or is being presented in translation (likely the latter), so it doesn’t quite address this sort of question. Models must be sought elsewhere. The Traveler’s Notebook, a Web site for travel writing, offers several suggestions: http://thetravelersnotebook.com/photography-q-a/4-techniques-for-writing-bilingual-dialogue/.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have students Create a Dialogue (the Guide to Writing, p. 44) or, if they have already created a dialogue, ask them to revise it—this time looking for lines or exchanges that might be better summarized and moments when the addition of dramatized thoughts (like those that Ellis relates in paragraphs 7, 9, and 15) might make the story more effective or its autobiographical significance clearer.

• Look at Jean Brandt’s Creating a Dialogue section in the Writer at Work on p. 58.

A Vivid Description of People and Places

This activity asks students to identify a metaphor and simile Shah uses in paragraph 2.

Follow-up Analysis

• Note that some students might stumble a bit at first, homing in initially on single-word metaphors that have become common expressions, like branch of my family, starved, and cut off.

• Shift the focus to the two original, longer comparisons in this paragraph that not only are related to each other but that help set up the rest of Shah’s story.

• The first is a simile: She feels “like a princess in a fairy tale […] cut off from my origins.”

• The second is the metaphor: “simply by walking through a magical door, I could recover my gardens and palaces.”
• Have the students consider what these figures of speech convey to readers about Shah’s feelings at the time and her frame of mind. Students are likely to use adjectives like feminine, childlike, romantic, and fantasy.

• Relate her figurative language to what she says in paragraph 5 about her father’s storytelling.

• Have students look again at Ellis’s essay, in paragraphs 4, 18, and 25, to find instances of verbs that are metaphors. (Students are often unaware of how often we use metaphors for verbs. In paragraph 4, Ellis uses the word shepherding; in paragraph 18, he uses supercharging; in paragraph 25, he uses the expression come out.) You might ask them what effect these metaphors have on readers or why your students think he chose them.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

• Ask students to add one or more metaphors and similes to their invention writing describing the place and people, or conveying how they felt at the time or how they feel now as they look back on the experience.

• Have students complete an invention activity like Recalling Key People or Describing the Place, or have them quickly draft a key scene involving action. When they’re done, or if they have already done this, invite them to revisit the descriptions or action sequences. Invite them to think of any metaphors or similes that would enable them to say the same things but more effectively or more efficiently. (Many students choose to write about car crashes or automotive experiences, so it might be useful to give them some examples of metaphors frequently used in the writing of car and motorcycle scenes: fishtail, weave, shoulder, peel out, bucket, crotch-rocket, donut.)

**Autobiographical Significance**

This activity follows up on the preceding one, inviting students to contemplate the dominant impression Shah creates in her essay.

**Follow-up Analysis**

• Compare paragraphs 4 and 5 to paragraph 2. Students should see that both passages refer to fairy tales and both suggest that the author remains interested in her roots even when she sees how women are treated. Yet we can feel her disillusionment as the fairy-tale fantasy is replaced by awareness and the path that once looked attractive becomes repulsive. The struggle between her “longing to belong” and her need for sovereignty isn’t fully resolved by the end of the essay, and this lack of easy resolution conveys the significance—in particular, the staggering difficulty of living with her sometimes conflicting desires.

• Go through paragraphs 4 and 5, listing on the board the points and observations that Shah presents and noting some of the rhetorically loaded language like permitted and required in paragraph 4. Students should quickly notice that Shah is unhappy with the lack of power that women have in the society she is courting.
• Have the class look again at the first paragraph of Dillard’s story, in which she describes football and two different approaches to the game. Ask the students what they think is the dominant impression of those approaches and why.

*Move from Reading to Writing*

• Turn to Creating a Dominant Impression in the Guide to Writing on pp. 44–45.

• Encourage students to use all three descriptive strategies discussed in this chapter (naming, detailing, and comparing) in their efforts to sculpt a dominant impression. They can always select, edit, and refine their favorite parts of this invention material later, but for now, practicing all three approaches should give them a healthy range of options.

*Considering Topics for Your Own Essay*

As noted above, students often are interested in writing about cultural or family-oriented events, and Shah’s essay can provide an example of one way an author has done this. The Considering Topics section on p. 38 encourages students to look at some other possible events, such as times of disappointment or surprise, or incidents in which they changed their mind about a group to which they wanted to belong. There are a lot of possible starting points in the paragraph that students might miss while skimming, which makes this one another good chunk to read aloud (or to have students read aloud).

However, the essay might also encourage experimentation with trickier, more problematic subjects. For instance, students who are eager to write about failed or successful romantic relationships and see Shah’s essay as somehow endorsing that topic might become frustrated, not only because Shah isn’t really writing about romance but also because stories about real-world romantic relationships are very difficult to write effectively. Unless the author has some emotional distance from the event, such stories tend either to lack conflict or to feel like venting. It might be helpful to students to address these sorts of challenges directly, as well as the differences between Shah’s subject and most stories about romantic relationships.

*Guide to Writing*

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of The Guide in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Remembering an Event.

*Connecting with Additional Resources*

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

• Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader for help with cohesion, flow, or transitions

• Chapter 14: Narrating for help constructing a well-told story

• Chapter 15: Describing for aid with vivid presentation
Starting Points: Remembering an Event

This feature helps students find the strategies in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address the concerns they have. The most common issues that students have, from this list, are coming up with a topic, organizing their story, and helping readers grasp the significance of the story.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Refer students to the “How should I organize my story?” question on the table if they say they’re having trouble deciding what to include in their stories and what to leave out.

Invention and Research

The invention and research section offers students several strategies for coming up with topics, details, and more. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Choosing an Event to Write About

The first activity of Invention and Research helps students identify prospective topics. Encourage them to come up with many ideas initially; then walk them through the checklist of Criteria for Choosing an Event. Many topics initially considered by students turn out to be problematic, so the writers should keep using the checklist until they find a topic that holds up well against it.

Analyzing the Guide to Writing Activity

Help students analyze Types of Events to Consider. What they should eventually notice is that all of the topic suggestions deal in some way with internal conflicts: the clash between expectation and reality, the sorting out of conflicting priorities when making a decision, and so forth. These sorts of topics tend to encourage the complexity and ambivalence that make for rich and interesting event essays.

Looking Back to the Readings

Consider discussing with students the ways that many of the topic suggestions connect with the broad themes raised in the readings and the Considering Topics for Your Own Essay prompts: fearlessness, intimacy, and identity. For instance, the third, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth items in the list all can be connected back to issues of identity.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Warn students who use the final subsection (Using the Web to Find and Explore an Event) not to plagiarize from the storytelling Web sites they find. The presence of ready stories online will prove tempting to some students as their deadlines crawl closer, but such warnings have been shown in some studies to be effective in reducing the number of students who give in to those temptations.
Ways In: Constructing a Well-Told Story

Encourage students to start anywhere on this map that they'd like but to finish all of the exercises eventually.

Looking Back

Consider using the Sketch the Story prompt as a follow-up to the initial Collaborative Activity or as a follow-up to the Analyzing Writing Strategies structural activity after Ellis’s essay.

Creating a Dominant Impression

Ensure that students have generated a lot of material during Ways In: Constructing a Well-Told Story before they try to build the dominant impression so critical to effectively implied significance.

Demonstrating the Activity

Consider demonstrating for students how to sift through many notes and answers to questions, looking for key words, themes, patterns, and complexities or contradictions, to identify what needs to be said and to identify the trickiest, most significant remaining questions or mysteries left to puzzle over. You can do this by modeling the writing process yourself (by working on your own essay and then bringing your own invention materials to class) or by asking for a volunteer willing to share such material with the class.

Testing Your Choice

Consider conducting this activity in class. Students often want to settle on a topic quickly and then skip all of the other topic-selection-related activities. This checklist might seem redundant to them at first, but it gives students another chance to check the viability of their topic, this time focusing on the strengths of their memories and their willingness to write about the event.

A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

As a final check of their topics, students are asked to run their stories orally by an audience of peers to gauge interest and reactions.

Analyzing The Guide

Consider asking students, following this activity, to discuss possible reasons for the textbook’s inclusion of so many topic checks. A point they might glean is that topic selection—like song selection on American Idol—matters a great deal.

Exploring Memorabilia

Unique to this chapter, the Memorabilia activity asks students to handle or interact with relics from the past as another research activity. Just as an old song or photo can bring back memories, so can these tools help students with their memory-based research.
Students may also consider including memorabilia in the essay. If students wish to include photos, video, film clips, or music, you could allow them to post their essays online as Web pages.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
Consider giving students permission to include some of these materials with the essay itself—even sound files might be included if the essay is posted on a Web page rather than on paper.

Ways In: Reflecting on the Event’s Autobiographical Significance
These questions prompt students to think not about what happened (they should have already done that) but about what they were thinking when it happened and what they think about the event and their actions now.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
Try posing the following challenge if students seem to have trouble coming up with contradictory or ambivalent feelings: Have them write two paragraphs, each describing the same key moment of their story. Their goal is to have each paragraph give a completely different impression or perspective of the event without changing the facts of the event. Doing this exercise forces students to try to see the event differently and can help unlock complexities previously hidden to them.

Defining Your Purpose and Audience
To shift students away from thinking of you as their sole audience and their sole purpose as getting a grade, urge them to start thinking about another audience with whom they might share their work. Once students have identified a potential audience, the next question becomes: Why are you telling your audience about this? The purpose-oriented prompts in this section can help students with answering that question.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
Help students who say they cannot think of an audience by referring them to the Using the Web to Find and Explore an Event section on page 43, which refers to several Web sites that collect and present narratives. Students could also write about their events for class reunion Web pages, readers of their personal blog, or other avenues of noncompetitive publication.

Considering Your Thesis
This activity helps students develop a thesis based on the invention materials, audience, and purpose.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
Consider having students read this section aloud in class. Doing so will bring more attention to its central point, which topples one of their usual expectations about essays—many
students will assume not only that an overt thesis statement must be included but that one must figure prominently in an introduction.

Another warning: Once students are told an overt statement is not necessary in a narrative, the next danger to watch for is the lack of any guiding thesis at all. Class discussion about this issue, and discussion of the implied theses of the readings earlier in the chapter, can help students adjust to what is initially likely to be a foreign concept.

Planning and Drafting

The next major section of the Guide to Writing helps students organize the invention materials they have created, plan an approach to the paper, and develop a first draft. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Direct students who, during the outlining activity, request guidance on scratch outlines to Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 562–574).

Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals

Previous questions about purpose asked students what they wanted to achieve. These questions ask them to think about how they might achieve it.

Teaching Tip: Conferencing

You might in addition help students plan their essays by conferencing with them about the goals they’ve set for the essay. In this conference, the student would do most of the talking. Your role would be primarily to help students clarify their global goals—those dealing with purpose and audience. You could make these brief two-to-three-minute conferences that take place during class time while students are busy with another activity. For general advice on holding conferences, see Chapter 32: Teaching Practices.

Outlining Your Draft

This activity advises students to create either a scratch outline or a chart that follows the dramatic pyramid discussed after Ellis’s narrative. An example chart, for Brandt’s essay, is provided here.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider encouraging or requiring students to create a formal sentence outline (see Chapter 11, pp 564–568), perhaps as an intermediate activity between the scratch outline and drafting. For many students, the natural instinct is to treat outlining as a ritualistic rather than purposeful activity. They jot down a series of key words in a rough order, some of them being vague references like “Introduction” or “Conclusion,” and then move on to drafting, which they consider a better use of their time. Their initial outlines are
anorexic as a result, and their papers meandering. Requiring students at least once to develop a sentence-level outline and then discussing the activity afterward can help clarify for students precisely how outlining can be useful.

Looking Back
Have students, working in teams, create scratch or formal sentence outlines for a hypothetical revision of Brandt’s essay, if you would like to give them a more intensive introduction to planning and outlining. Start by having them identify a new purpose for the essay. You might also have students read Brandt’s rough draft (pp. 60–61), which has additional material they might decide to work back into the story. Encourage students to use the new Brandt outline to introduce flashbacks, flashforwards, or other nonlinear features.

Drafting
This section offers students advice on devising opening sentences, making event chronology clear, and working with quotes and other source material. Many of these quotation and source-handling tips will be helpful to students in later assignments as they begin to work with sources and other texts, so it might be worthwhile to go over this section in class.

Looking Back
Have the class, or teams of students, practice punctuating dialogue and working with speaker tags by asking them to convert Brandt’s script-styled dialogue from A Writer at Work (p. 58) into an essay-styled dialogue that might be inserted back into her narrative. (Give them permission to make up missing details, such as where and when Brandt’s conversation with her sister takes place.)

Critical Reading Guide
The Critical Reading Guide, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features of the Remembered Event essay. The better the class discussions of the basic features and readings have been, the better the critical readings by peers will be. Many students will have only those lessons to guide their feedback.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
Consider having authors brainstorm a list of issues or questions for peer reviewers, then pick the top one or two concerns they have, so that when the peer reviewers get to question 4 (which asks them to respond to such concerns), they have something to respond to.

Looking Back
Train students as peer reviewers by having them practice applying the Critical Reading Guide, in teams, to either Brandt’s final draft or to her rough draft (pp. 60–61). Ask each team to present its feedback to the class, and discuss the merits of the comments. Alternatively, you could ask for two volunteer students to model peer review for the class: They could meet in front of the classroom, and after everyone in the class has read both essays, they could take turns reporting on the comments they came up with, using the Critical Reading Guide.
Revising

This section urges students to think of revising as problem solving.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

- Urge students to complete the outlining activity, which some might be tempted to skip: It encourages them to see their papers in a nutshell, which makes it easier to assess the impacts of changes they're considering.
- Consider warning students, before using the Critical Reading Guide, to look for slow openings and pat conclusions since these tend to be among the most common problems on the Troubleshooting Your Draft chart. After students have completed the reviews, use the two issues as examples as you walk them through how to use the Troubleshooting chart.

Thinking about Document Design

In this section, we focus on document design — specifically, incorporating visuals and pulling quotations — for the rancher’s scenario at the start of the chapter (p. 15).

If you plan to publish student essays, perhaps in a class anthology or on a Web site, or if the students themselves are thinking about taking their papers to a second, larger audience, this activity can help.

Teaching Tip: A Caution about Graphics

Some students are more enthusiastic about document design than they are about writing. This can have some drawbacks:

- Student writers can become so caught up in gloss that they think too little about the text.
- Peer reviewers can be so happily distracted by document design that they neglect to read very carefully.

When students receive grades based on the writing later, the shock can be severe. I find it helpful to emphasize document design as an activity that occurs after drafting, peer review, and revision have already occurred. Frequently, I allow such design only during separate revision assignments after the first attempt at the essay has been graded.

Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre. You can

- Ask students to edit and proofread outside of class
- Have students work through the tips in this section a class session or two before the due date
- Or, on the day the revision is due, have students work through this section, making corrections neatly on the final draft
Troubleshooting Student Problems

Try having students edit just their dialogue (if any) for the first pass through their papers. For many students, dialogue is where the vast majority of their errors will appear, in part because students read dialogue more quickly but also because they tend to assume that dialogue, being speechlike, is informal enough that it’s okay for it to have errors. As a result, fused sentences (and comma splices, a cousin error) are particularly common in these parts of event essays.

Other blind spots that students might check more carefully include titles, subheads, captions for photos, footnotes, and citations (if any).

A Writer at Work

Since this is the first writing assignment in The Guide, this Writer at Work section gives an overview of Jean Brandt’s writing process, from invention through drafting to revising.

Looking Back

Have students read Brandt’s Writer at Work before or after they’ve studied her completed essay. You might also refer to it as a way of introducing the Guide to Writing since it shows how Brandt used the same strategies.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

The pair of writing activities described here asks students to reflect on their writing experience—much in the same way that they just reflected on another, much earlier experience. Many students later consider these reflective activities among the most important learning experiences in this chapter, for it isn’t until they try to put into words what happened, what they thought at the time, and what they think now that experiences transform into lessons.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Students do not have to answer every question.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider shortening the list of available options here or directing students to answer specific questions if you’re worried that fatigued students might pick the “advice to a friend” question and dash off obvious simple responses like “always proofread.” Another option is to require that students answer questions with enough depth to fill one or more pages of double-spaced text.

Considering the Social Dimensions: Autobiography and Self-Discovery

These questions demand some real analysis from students and some fairly deep thinking that goes beyond what they wrote in their essays.
Looking Back

Help students think through their answers to these questions by

- Raising these same questions earlier in the term, while discussing the chapter’s readings (such as Brandt’s essay, which is mentioned here). Shah’s essay, so focused on identity, is rich fodder for such discussions. For instance, do students think Shah believes in an essential self or in playing roles—or does she, perhaps, start off subscribing to one belief and then change her mind? What sorts of roles do the characters in her story play, and do we see evidence that they change roles depending on situation and audience? (Aunt Amina’s role-switching behavior in paragraphs 6 through 9 might be worth analyzing specifically.)
- Covering the two views of the self in class, before this activity in the writing process, and then having students write for 10 to 15 minutes about which perspective they hold about the “self” and why.

Responding to Essays about Remembered Events

Here are some of the kinds of problems you can expect to find in students’ writing about remembered events:

**Subject**

- The essay does not meet the criteria for an event essay, but seems more like a person essay, reflection essay, or some other type of writing.
- The topic is too broad (“my childhood,” “our championship season”).
- The event does not seem important to the writer.
- The essay either trivializes a major event or overstates a minor one (this second case can be effective if handled humorously).

**A Well-Told Story: Narrative Structure**

- The event sprawls over too much time or space.
- The event is not clearly framed for the reader; it should begin or end at another point.
- The narrative drags in places or skips over important episodes too quickly.
- The narrative lacks dramatic tension or suspense.
- The dialogue is undramatic and uninteresting; it does not move the action forward.
- Anecdotes or scenes are either too brief or much too extended.
- Anecdotes or scenes do not seem to relate well to the event or are poorly chosen or badly framed.

**Vivid Description of People and Places**

- The essay lacks telling details to build a dominant impression.
- The writer has not selected relevant details or includes too many trivial, irrelevant ones.
- People do not seem believable in their actions or dialogue.
Autobiographical Significance

- There is no apparent significance, stated or implied.
- The significance is heavy-handed, inflated, oversimplified, or sentimentalized; the writer moralizes about the event.
- The essay is not very thoughtful in exploring the event’s significance; the writer may come off as a hero or a blameless victim.
- The essay does not give the reader a vivid impression of the writer.

Preparing for Conferences

If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the following form.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 2

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. What event are you writing about? Why did you choose it? Why is it important to your life?

2. List the places and people in your essay. Be prepared to talk about which ones are most vividly presented and which might need less or more detail.

3. Explain briefly how you organized your story. What other possibilities could you consider for beginning, ending, and organizing the essay?

4. Event essays involve both self-discovery and self-presentation. What, if anything, has writing this draft led you to discover about yourself? What kind of self does your draft now present to readers?

5. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

6. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft as well as any that have been pointed out by other readers. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes. (If you have completed the text’s revision checklist, you can bring it with you to the conference instead of answering this question.)
Writing Profiles

**The Writing Assignment**

Write an essay about an intriguing person, group of people, place, or activity in your community. Observe your subject closely, and then present what you have learned in a way that both informs and engages readers.

**Student Learning Objectives**

This assignment can teach students to

- Interpret and develop a perspective on a subject
- Choose an appropriate way to represent themselves in a text
- Perform field research, including observations and interviews
- Organize information gathered in field research
- Select details and information that contribute to a dominant impression
- Choose the appropriate size and scope for a research project
- Use description, details, dialogue, and anecdotes to inform
- Entertain readers while informing them
- Structure an essay narratively and topically
- Integrate quoted material into an essay
- Use absolute phrases to convey vivid images to readers
- Read texts analytically
- Make their writing process more analytical and recursive
- Reflect metacognitively on what they have learned

**Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment**

The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.
Choosing an Appropriate Topic

✘ The subject of the profile is already familiar to most readers and is not presented in a new or interesting way.

xac

Students are having difficulty scheduling and conducting field research.

Detailed Information about the Subject

✘ There is too much information given in the essay; it is not clear which details are important.

xac

✔ Review Purpose and Audience (pp. 68–69), discussing what kinds of subjects fulfill audience expectations for a profile.

✔ As a class, list subjects in response to Choosing a Subject to Profile (pp. 101–103) and discuss the potential and problems of each subject.

✔ In groups, have students complete A Collaborative Activity (p. 104), asking them to provide feedback on each writer’s choice of subject.

✔ Clarify expectations by reviewing A Writer at Work (pp. 120–124).

✔ Have students set up and submit for approval a research schedule like the one modeled in the Guide to Writing (p. 105).

✔ Review the process given in the Guide to Writing for getting the most out of field research (pp. 106–107)

✔ Conduct practice interviews in class. See the collaborative activity recommended on pages 66–67.

✔ In class, go over the techniques of quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing (discussed on pp. 87–88 and in Chapter 24: Using Sources). Use “Show Dog” to discuss Susan Orlean’s decisions about which conversations to dramatize through quoting and which conversations to cover more quickly with summary and paraphrase.

✔ Look back at the Detailed Information about the Subject section that follows John T. Edge’s essay, “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing.” Then, have students revisit Clarifying the Dominant Impression in the Guide to Writing (p. 109).

(Continued)
## Challenge Teaching Suggestion

| Detailed Information about the Subject (Continued) | ✓ People and places are hard to visualize.  
| A Clear Organizational Plan | ✓ Review the concepts of naming, detailing, and comparing on pp. 67 and 78. Then, assign some of the exercises in Chapter 15: Describing.  
| | ✓ Conduct a planning workshop in class, in which students outline their essays and then receive feedback on their outlines from their peers.  
| | ✓ As a class, construct outlines of Susan Orlean’s “Show Dog” and Amanda Coyne’s “The Long Good-Bye” to analyze how these essays are effectively structured.  
| | ✓ Review the dramatic pyramid from Chapter 2: Remembering an Event. Ask students to plot their narratively organized essays according to the pyramid and to emphasize or excise parts of the essays accordingly.  
| | ✓ Refer students to the Mapping section of Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies, and encourage them to use clustering, listing, or outlining to help organize their information into topics.  
| A Role for the Writer | ✓ Return to Using Your Role in the Guide to Writing (p. 110). Ask students to list ways they can communicate their chosen role to their readers, and then suggest that they use those strategies in their essays.  
| | ✓ If students choose to use both roles, require them to keep the two roles separate, as Edge and Coyne do in their profiles. See the Role for the Writer sections following “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing” and “The Long Good-Bye.” (Continued)  

<table>
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Challenge Teaching Suggestion

A Perspective on the Subject

✗ The essay primarily tells rather than shows the perspective.
✓ Look back at the Perspective on the Subject annotations for Brian Cable’s essay, “The Last Stop,” discussing how Cable indicates his perspective through the details he presents. Then have students review their field research notes to find details that correspond to their perspectives.
✓ Using the Perspective on the Subject exercises on p. 96, analyze how Coyne shows rather than tells her perspective.
✓ Ask students to complete the Ways In: Reflecting on Your Purpose and the Profile’s Perspective and Considering Your Thesis invention exercises (p. 108), and go over the results of at least one student in class.
✓ Have students complete the activities listed for Clarifying the Dominant Impression (p. 109).
✓ Discuss how Edge, Coyne, and Orlean reinforce their perspectives through the introductions and conclusions of their essays. Suggest that students strengthen their essays’ focus by emphasizing their perspectives in the opening and closing sections of the essays.

✗ The perspective is not the controlling and coordinating idea of the profile.

Introductory Materials

Scenarios: Discussion Questions

If you have students read and discuss the scenarios that start the chapter, consider the following prompts—organized by scenario—as possible tools to spur discussion. The first scenario is keyed to the Thinking about Document Design section (p. 118).

In College Courses

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• To identify the challenges of such assignments and brainstorm strategies for approaching these challenges
How the writer makes decisions about the essay’s construction. Note that the writer makes deliberate, informed choices about which organizational plan to use and which role for the writer to assume.

- What readers are likely to gain from such an essay, discussing the purposes of profiles in academic settings
- What the writer might gain from making multiple visits to the classes
- To consider the advantages and disadvantages of online publishing; have your students read and discuss the Thinking about Document Design section for this chapter (p. 118).

**In the Community**

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To generate a list of other profile subjects that might be well suited for a participant-observer role for the writer
- What other topics might have been included in the reporter’s profile on the mural project, considering the profile’s perspective (the “civic spirit that pervades the entire project”)
- How visuals such as photographs can add to a profile’s effectiveness (see Analyzing Visuals on p. 80)
- To consider the social dimensions of this profile. More specifically, because the mural project is most likely funded by the city, how will a positive report on the project influence public opinion? What ethical considerations must be made by the reporter?

**In the Workplace**

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To reflect on the writer’s invention process. What activities does he take to ensure that he gathers sufficient material for the profile?
- To identify the advantages of observing a profile subject in more than one environment. Note how the multiple observations lead directly to the essay’s perspective (that the CEO shows ease and confidence both at work and at home).
- To imagine the kinds of information and description that will best support the essay’s perspective

**A Collaborative Activity: Practice Conducting an Interview**

This collaborative activity prepares students to conduct the kind of goal-directed field research required for this essay assignment. Part 2 of the exercise asks students to reflect on how they would use the interview if they were to write a profile based on it. We expect that your students, like ours, will enjoy the process of interviewing. Perhaps the greatest challenge is in taking notes, deciding which parts of the interview to quote and how to describe the interviewee’s appearance, attitude, and tone of voice.

- This activity can also be used in conjunction with the Guide to Writing. Consider using it to prepare students for the actual interviews they will conduct in their field research (see pp. 106–107).
Reading Profiles Essays: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

- To introduce the basic features, have students use them to analyze an essay, such as the opening essay by student Brian Cable, which has already been annotated with color-coded comments to help students see each of the basic features at a glance.

- You might want to discuss the various purposes journalists have for using profiles to introduce readers to unfamiliar subjects.

- Explore the purposes listed in this section: to inform readers about everyday life, to give readers a behind-the-scenes look at a subject, to surprise readers, and to give readers a new perspective on a subject. As the class discusses each reading in the chapter, consider asking which (if any) of these listed purposes best captures the author’s goals, as well as which of the assumptions about the audience listed in this section seem relevant. For instance,

  - Brian Cable seems to be correcting a common misconception about the purpose of a funeral home.
  - John T. Edge is presenting an in-depth look at what is probably an unfamiliar subject to his readers.
  - Susan Orlean might be trying to inform her readers about a particular subject in a humorous and entertaining way.
  - Amanda Coyne seems to be interpreting her subject in the light of its cultural and social significance.

Teaching Tip: Using Television to Teach the Profile

In general, the profile essay is difficult for students to conceptualize. Many students will be unfamiliar with the genre. To help students scaffold their understanding of what a profile is and what it does, I appeal to their pop-culture literacy. Using YouTube, I show a fifteen-minute segment of Discovery Channel’s Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe, and as a class, we analyze and discuss the video clip.

Students love Dirty Jobs, largely because it is disgusting but also because it does what a profile is supposed to do — it highlights an unusual subject or gives a behind-the-scenes look at an everyday subject. In other words, it both entertains and informs the audience.

In analyzing the television show, students get an idea of what a profile looks like. However, the show’s relevance to the instruction in this chapter does not stop there. Dirty Jobs also gives students a model for the following aspects of the profile writing process: choosing a topic, developing a perspective, conducting field research, and using a participant-observer role for the writer. I find that I often refer back to the Dirty Jobs example when my class discusses the chapter readings and works through the Guide to Writing.
Readings

In a certain sense, all four readings in this chapter have a similar purpose: They all attempt to offer their readers something new, either an unfamiliar subject or a new angle on a familiar subject. Each essay challenges readers to interpret the world around them differently—to confront a new aspect of life or to take on a new perspective.

- Brian Cable, the student author in the collection, demonstrates that death, a tragic and frightening part of the human experience, can also be treated in a matter-of-fact and businesslike way.
- John T. Edge enthusiastically introduces readers to a strange, if not completely foreign, experience: the making and tasting of pickled pig lips.
- Susan Orlean presents readers with a behind-the-scenes look at the world of dog shows.
- Amanda Coyne reconstructs visiting day at a women’s prison, emphasizing the pain and bitterness that characterize the scene.

Other themes are suggested in the Making Connections and Considering Topics for Your Own Essay sections following the latter three readings, and you will undoubtedly see still other thematic connections worth making.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

For your convenience, we list below the specific writing strategies (organized according to the basic features) addressed in the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections following readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student to places in the chapter that provide instruction on his or her particular problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzing Writing Strategies</th>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Edge</th>
<th>Orlean</th>
<th>Coyne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed Information about the Subject</td>
<td>Naming</td>
<td>Quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing</td>
<td>Anecdotes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Detailing</td>
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<td>Comparing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dominant impression</td>
<td>Speaker tags</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Clear Organizational Plan</td>
<td>Using both organizational plans</td>
<td>Topical organization</td>
<td>Narrative organization</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Role for the Writer</td>
<td>Using both roles</td>
<td>Detached-observer role</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Perspective on the Subject</td>
<td>Implied perspective</td>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>Showing vs. telling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Headnote: The “As you read” activity for “The Last Stop” asks students to observe how Brian Cable uses humor to lighten the mood of his profile. While students may be able to identify the overall humorous tone of the essay, they will probably need assistance in identifying the source—the individual instances—of this tone.
In many cases, the humor comes from Cable’s witty metaphors or uninhibited authorial interjections. For example, see the comparison of caskets and new cars in paragraph 18 and Cable’s “What the hell?” comment in paragraph 3. Productive discussions about the tone of the essay could follow two trajectories. First, students can speculate as to why Cable chose to take such a light-hearted and often scathingly honest tone:

- What does this tone bring to the essay that it would otherwise have lacked?
- What effect was he trying to create?

Second, students can discuss how the humor in the essay affects its basic features:

- How does the humor work with the perspective Cable establishes?
- What does his authorial voice contribute to the role the writer adopts?

Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay

Annotations: Detailed Information about the Subject

- We begin the Detailed Information about the Subject annotations by indicating three points in the essay where Cable describes his subject. Paragraph 2 uses the technique of comparing; paragraph 3 makes use of naming; and paragraph 5 contains an example of detailing. These strategies are discussed throughout the chapter and in Chapter 15: Describing.

- In paragraphs 6, 22, 23, and 25, Cable includes information that he collected during his field research. The questions in the margin ask students to identify the sources of some of this information. Some of the information is clearly derived from Cable’s interviews, while other information may come from background library or Internet research. Refer to the Writer at Work section (pp. 120–124), which features Cable’s field research notes and write-up, to see how Cable used information from his field research in his finished essay.

- In paragraph 6, Cable summarizes the funeral director’s comments. In other places, he uses paraphrasing (par. 23) or direct quoting (10). The margin questions encourage students to speculate about Cable’s reasons for deciding to quote some conversations while summarizing or paraphrasing others. Chapter 24: Using Sources covers using source material in depth.

- You can use the highlighted sentence in paragraph 18 to discuss how Cable’s selection of details shows his perspective.

Annotations: A Clear Organizational Plan

- Cable uses specific narrative action (see Chapter 2: Remembering an Event and Chapter 14: Narrating for more information on specific narrative action) to add intensity to his story. Although we have highlighted specific narrative action in paragraphs 5 and 15–18, you can find this feature in other parts of the essay as well.

- In paragraph 22, we point out in the annotation how the rhetorical question helps Cable transition from information he obtained by interviewing Howard to summarized dialogue with Tim the mortician. In addition, the annotations for paragraphs 15–18 show how Cable uses specific narrative action to transition from topic to topic. Transitions are an important part of all profile essays, as they smooth the connections among information, description, anecdotes, and other profile elements.
Annotations: A Role for the Writer

- While Cable is an important character in his own profile essay, he usually takes the role of a spectator. The Writer’s Role annotations indicate that, for the most part, Cable restricts his activities to asking questions, listening, and observing. There are moments, however, when the writer dabbles with a participant-observer role, such as in paragraph 28, when after getting permission he touches one of the bodies. Because Cable opens with a first-person narrative account of his arrival and occasionally describes himself asking questions, this moment is not jarring or startling, and seems to fit well with the rest of the essay. Consider asking students how disorienting it would have been had Cable’s first use of first-person perspective appeared only at this moment in the essay and the rest of the essay had been written with no sense of the author’s presence or involvement.

Annotations: A Perspective on the Subject

- In the opening paragraphs of the essay, Cable foregrounds his perspective by discussing his own preconceptions about his subject. As the chapter will discuss later, many profile writers most fully develop their perspectives in the opening and closing sections of their profiles.
- Cable does not directly state his perspective; instead, he shows it through his selection of details. Annotations point out some of these details in paragraphs 9 and 18–21, but they can be found throughout the essay.
- The annotation on paragraph 11 focuses on the dominant impression of Cable’s essay. You could point out to your class that the ordinariness of the mortuary contributes to how Cable’s preconceptions were proved inaccurate. In other words, the hotel-like appearance of the mortuary demonstrates Cable’s perspective—that the Goodbody mortuary is primarily a business.

Learn about Cable’s Writing Process

Many times students are not sure what kind of material should be generated by their field research. A Writer at Work (pp. 120–124) is helpful in that it documents Cable’s research process and provides an example of field research notes. It also demonstrates how writing up an observation or interview can help students generate ideas about their essays’ perspectives, organizational plans, and roles for the writer. After students read Cable’s essay, you may want to cover A Writer at Work and discuss Ways In: Collecting Information from Field Research from the Guide to Writing (pp. 106–107). Point out that Cable’s two-column approach enables him to keep careful track of which notes are observations and which are his own thoughts, and that by putting quotation marks around direct quotes from his interviews, he ensures he can later remember accurately which parts of his notes were direct quotations.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity for “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing” asks students to think about the dual purpose of the profile essay: to entertain and to inform. Edge’s rendering of his subject is so engaging and vivid that readers often don’t notice that the essay
is packed with information about Farm Fresh Food Supplier and its staple product, pickled pig lips. In fact, in a very entertaining part of the essay, the introduction that details Edge’s own experience with pickled pig lips, we learn something very important about the product—the environment in which pickled pig lips are consumed and the culture in which pickled pig lips are not an exotic delicacy but a common bar snack.

Edge’s profile is a good example of the balance that a profile essay should strike between being informative and being entertaining. Many students’ essays tend toward one extreme and end up either boring or lacking substance. Noting how Edge makes his profile both entertaining (through anecdotes and a participant-observer role for the writer) and informative (through detailed descriptions, quotations, and summaries) will help students in their attempts to achieve balance in their own essays.

Making Connections: Aversion to New Foods

Profile essays should introduce readers to a new experience, and this Making Connections activity asks students to deconstruct the anxiety that tends to accompany new experiences. While this particular exercise requires students to look at their aversions to new foods, you can easily adapt it to include fears surrounding other new experiences. The goals of this exercise are, then, for students to confront their own fears about researching a subject with which they are unfamiliar and to imagine their readers’ feelings and preconceptions about the subject.

This activity has two parts: (1) students tell a group about aversions they have to certain food items, and (2) they discuss the significance of these aversions and use their discussion to further explore the significance of Edge’s reluctance to eat pickled pig lips. The first part eases students into the conversation by asking them to recount an event in their lives, while the second asks them to apply critical thinking to their experiences. To make sure that this activity is productive for the students’ writing process, be sure that they do the activity’s second part.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

Detailed Information about the Subject

In general, when writing a profile, students need assistance managing details. In other words, they don’t usually know how to choose details that contribute to the overall direction of the profile, and they struggle to render the details in a vivid and descriptive way. This activity on description and dominant impression will help them with that challenge.

Follow-up Analysis

- Have students use dictionaries to look up any new vocabulary in paragraphs 5–7, 14, and 16–18 (words like flaccid, porcine, and unfurrows from paragraph 18), and discuss whether these words are appropriate to the dominant impression Edge seems to be trying to create.
- Introduce the concept of perspective, and show students how the essay’s dominant impression works with the perspective Edge is constructing. (The details suggest the
outlandish quality of the food, which coordinates with Edge’s perspective on the cultural significance of pickled pig lips.)

- Turn to another reading in the chapter, and have students identify and discuss instances of naming, detailing, metaphors, and similes.
- Refer students to Chapter 15: Describing, which fully discusses description techniques, including naming, detailing, comparing, using sensory description, and creating a dominant impression. Consider assigning exercises from this chapter.
- Refer back to Chapter 2: Remembering an Event to emphasize the importance of creating a dominant impression.

A Clear Organizational Plan

Organizing the profile is often the trickiest part of the writing process. Students sometimes begin using narrative organization, because narrative comes naturally to them after writing the Remembering an Event essay, but then slide into topical organization. This activity is important because it shows that Edge moves from a narrative plan to a topical plan strategically, through the use of framing.

Follow-up Analysis

- Ask students to identify how the other basic features of the profile are affected by the shift from a narrative to a topical plan. For example, the role for the writer switches from that of a participant to that of a spectator. Also, the kinds of information presented vary between the two sections. Take the opportunity to list with the class the possible advantages and disadvantages of using a narrative or topical plan.
- Point out the action verbs used in the narrative portions of the essay. For example, paragraph 1 contains the following verbs: hacks, spits, seeps, drain, and stare.
- Compare and contrast Edge’s organizational plan with those of Orlean and Coyne. What does Edge gain by using both plans? What does he forgo by using both plans?
- Transition to the Organizational Plan activity following “Show Dog,” which also asks students to examine a topically organized essay that makes use of narrative. Ask students to discuss the differences between the two essays in the ways that they make use of both narrative and topical plans.
- Refer back to Chapter 2: Remembering an Event, and ask students to identify the features of a remembered event essay that appear in the narrative portions of Edge’s profile.

A Role for the Writer

Like a profile’s organizational plan, a consistent role for the writer is difficult for students to sustain. While Edge uses both roles, he keeps them separate by aligning them with his shifting organizational plan. When he uses a narrative organizational plan, he takes the role of a participant, and when he uses a topical organizational plan, he takes the role of a spectator. When doing this activity, encourage students to see Edge’s shifting role as a strategic decision, not an accident.
Follow-up Analysis
• Ask students to analyze how Edge indicates his two different roles to the reader. What words and phrases tell the reader what role Edge is taking? How does the way he portrays himself change?
• To help students see the benefits of using a participant-observer role, discuss what Edge’s experience of eating a pickled pig lip adds to the profile’s perspective.

A Perspective on the Subject
The activity in this section guides students in discerning Edge’s perspective, which is implied, not directly stated. This section suggests that the perspective in this essay is related to its cultural significance. Specifically, Edge seems to show that class differences are evident in the ways people respond to food. You may need to give students a brief introduction to the concept of class and discuss why class differences are worth noting in a piece like this.

Follow-up Analysis
• Have students point out the places where Edge gives his readers clues to his perspective. Use the Perspective on the Subject annotations in Cable’s essay as a model.
• Segue to the Perspective on the Subject section following Amanda Coyne’s essay (p. 96), and discuss the differences between showing and telling a perspective.
• Have students do the Making Connections activity following this essay to ensure that they fully grasp the cultural significance of “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing.”

Move from Reading to Writing
• Have students list as many profile subjects as possible in response to Choosing a Subject to Profile in the Guide to Writing (pp. 101–103). Encourage students not to settle on one subject at this time. Instead, recommend that they list all interesting possibilities.

Analyzing Visuals: Photograph of a Pig
This activity asks students to evaluate the photograph included with Edge’s essay by using a chart given in Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals. The goal of this activity is for students to think about how visuals are selected when they are included with a written text. In other words, it encourages them to be strategic about the choices they make in regard to the visual elements of an essay. As students choose visuals for their profiles, direct them to Designing Your Document in the Guide to Writing (pp. 108–109).

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay
As noted above, a profile’s goal is to introduce readers to a new experience by either profiling an unusual subject or presenting an everyday subject from a new perspective. Edge does the former, and this section lists a number of other unusual subjects that students might be interested in profiling. Consider covering this Considering Topics activity along with the Making Connections exercise related to Edge’s essay (p. 77). Both sections encourage students to explore something new as part of their profile writing process.
Show Dog
Susan Orlean

Headnote: The “As you read” activity for “Show Dog” asks students to observe and consider the tone of the profile, beginning with the essay’s opening sentence. Overall, the tone of the essay is playful: Throughout the essay Orlean toys with the human-animal divide. The first few paragraphs actually lead the reader to believe that the profile subject is a human, and the last paragraph describes humans using animal-related verbs: stayed, fetched, and curled up. In between, “Show Dog” explores the human aspects of Biff—his profession, his physical appearance, his personality, even his luggage. However, as the headnote to the essay points out, Orlean varies the tone of the profile, moving from witty descriptions and snatches of dialogue to chunks of information. Asking students to identify the flow of the essay’s tone and helping them to see how Orlean constructs the movements of the essay will eventually help them to write snappy, engaging profiles.

Making Connections: Attitudes toward Animals
This Making Connections activity leads students to consider the contradictions in the ways that people interact with animals. As the text points out, many people have cats as pets but treat cows as food. “Show Dog” also begs the question as to whether Biff is being exploited by his owners. If he were a human, his showing responsibilities would be considered at least questionable, if not a violation of his civil rights. All of these observations lead back to a core question: What separates animals from humans?

This activity will likely lead students to analyze their own experiences and those of their peers. The treatment of animals tends to arouse strong emotions in many students. To keep discussions constructive, try to focus students on analyzing experiences for their significance, not in judgment of any person’s ethics. In fact, asking students to formulate their responses like a remembered event essay—with emphasis on the deeper significance of an experience—may be what the class needs to stay focused.

Analyzing Writing Strategies
Detailed Information about the Subject
This section discusses how profile writers present the information they have gathered in their field research. In order to do most of the activities prescribed by this section, students will need to be familiar with what field research entails. If you have not yet done so, direct students to the Writer at Work section (pp. 120–124), which details Brian Cable’s research process.

Follow-up Analysis
• To discuss the differences between information that comes from an interview and information that comes from observation, have students read the first part of Chapter 22: Field Research.
• Consider introducing your students to library or Internet background research. Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research has several introductory sections that may prove helpful here.
To help your students understand the differences among quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing, refer them to the first part of Chapter 24: Using and Sources. Pages 759–762 of this section also address how to correctly integrate and punctuate quotations.

Ask students to identify the quotations, paraphrases, and summaries in another reading in the chapter and to discuss that author’s choices.

Have students turn to pages 112–113 and read about speaker tags. For practice, ask them to try some of the different ways to integrate quotations modeled in the section.

Move from Reading to Writing

If students have already chosen their profile subjects, you can move from this section to asking them to formulate a research plan. Have students complete Setting Up a Tentative Schedule in the Guide to Writing (p. 105). If you haven’t already introduced Ways In: Collecting Information from Field Research (pp. 106–107), this may be a good time to do so.

A Clear Organizational Plan

Students tend to assume that if they choose to use a topical organizational plan, then they must write a “boring” profile. Actually, a topically organized profile should include as much description, as many quotations, and almost as much action as a narrative profile. Note that while Orlean’s essay is organized topically, each topic’s section contains factual information, descriptions derived from observations, quotations from interviews, and action-filled anecdotes.

Follow-up Analysis

Compare Orlean’s essay to Edge’s “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing.” Both essays are organized topically. Ask students to discuss how both authors weave the elements of information, descriptions, quotations, and anecdotes into their topically organized structure.

Prompt students to identify the topic sentences that signal to readers that Orlean is moving on to a new topic. Direct students to the section on paragraphing in Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader for more information on topic sentences.

A Role for the Writer

As this section points out, taking the role of a spectator does not mean that a writer must exclude himself or herself from the profile. Instead, the role for the writer has to do with the distance between the writer and the profile subject. In this case, while Orlean herself is a character in the profile, she does not involve herself in the activities that are taking place in the essay.

Follow-up Analysis

The spectator role works especially well for essays on subjects with which readers are likely to be unfamiliar. A spectator role suggests that the writer is not presenting behind-the-scenes information on a well-known subject (such as a participant observer.
would obtain) but is surveying a subject that readers don’t know much about. Ask students to discuss how “Show Dog” would change if it were presented from the point of view of a participant observer. Would it change other aspects of the essay besides the role of the writer?

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- After discussing the writer’s role in “Show Dog,” ask students to consider their roles for their essays. The first activity in doing this is having them examine their own preliminary ideas on their subjects; assign Exploring Your Preconceptions from the Guide to Writing (p. 104).

**A Perspective on the Subject**

As the Guide to Writing for this chapter points out, perspectives in profiles are generally implied or developed rather than stated. However, like essays that have a thesis statement or stated main idea, profile essays tend to suggest a perspective in the introduction and confirm it in the conclusion. This Perspective on the Subject section goes over how perspectives are framed in profile essays.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- While most of the anthropomorphizing of Biff takes place in the beginning and end of the essay, Orlean does not abandon this thread during the rest of the essay. Have students look at paragraphs 3, 5, 11–14, 16–19, and 23 to find places where Orlean writes about Biff as though he were a human.
- Read the Mark Twain quotation at the opening of Brian Cable’s essay, and discuss how it foregrounds the perspective Cable takes on his subject.
- Discuss how framing develops the perspective in “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing.”
- Ask students to characterize the dominant impression created by the details in Orlean’s profile of Biff. As a class, discuss how the dominant impression (and the selection of details that creates it) works to support the perspective.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- If students have done their field research, they are ready to move on to identifying their perspective. The sections in the Guide to Writing that offer instruction on this part of the writing process are Ways In: Reflecting on Your Purpose and the Profile’s Perspective and Considering Your Thesis (p. 108).

**Considering Topics for Your Own Essay**

One of the advantages of having students write a profile on a subject with which they are not familiar is that they have the opportunity to research a subject that they have an interest in but that they have never before had a chance to explore. This is especially true with profiles that center on a person with an interesting profession. Many students use this essay to learn more about a career or major they are interested in pursuing.
You might increase the relevance of this essay assignment for your students by pointing this out to them.

**Teaching Tip: Job Profiles in Students’ Own Backyard**

Gray Scott

Students are often unaware of the many jobs that people do on campus, aside from teaching, so they miss out on great profile options close by. For this reason, when I have access to a computer and projector in the classroom, I take students on a quick virtual tour of the university’s directory and press releases to give them some idea of what is happening on campus. As a result, I’ve had some great profiles of curators for unusual exhibits and collections (an insect collection, a collection of old printing presses, a massive wing of the library devoted to science-fiction and comic-book archives), the librarian for a map library, the campus ombudsperson, the director of the botanic gardens, several university researchers, and even custodial staff at the dorms.

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**Headnote:** The “As you read” questions for this profile essay ask students to contemplate the meaning of this essay, unlike the other “As you read” activities in this chapter, which ask students to identify and discuss strategy. It is tempting for students to jump to the essay’s most obvious meaning—that the women in prison are suffering an unfair punishment—without focusing on the nuances that complicate this meaning. In the end, Coyne’s profile is complex: It is about how the unfair punishments these women are suffering negatively affect parent-child relationships and, as a result, the children’s characters. These “As you read” questions urge students to think about the subtleties of the perspective in “The Long Good-Bye.”

**Making Connections: Unfair Punishment**

This activity asks students to recall a time when they were unfairly punished and identify why they thought (and perhaps still think) the punishment was excessive. Once the small groups have identified and discussed specific experiences, you may want to address the bulleted questions in a whole-class environment. Small groups are typically able to address concrete questions without assistance, but generalizing from their responses sometimes needs an instructor’s guidance. In any case, you will want to move the discussions from specific circumstances to a conversation about ethics. What is the purpose of punishment? Is there something wrong with the rules or the punishments associated with them? How can we decide what is fair?

Students may need some context in discussing the specifics of Coyne’s essay. Many of them will be too young to remember the “war on drugs” and the overwhelming public concern (perhaps paranoia) about drug use. While the topic is still relevant, the political climate at the time was different. Reconstructing the historical moment of this essay for your students may help them to better understand some of the issues that it addresses.
Analyzing Writing Strategies

Detailed Information about the Subject

In this section, instruction is given on how profile writers use anecdotes in their essays. You can point out to your students that anecdotes are one of the elements that are woven together in a profile, along with facts, descriptions, and details.

Follow-up Analysis

• Extend students’ responses to the questions in this section by asking them what specifically the anecdotes in paragraphs 13 and 26 add to the profile’s perspective that it would otherwise lack.

• Identify the places in Cable’s, Edge’s, and Orlean’s essays where anecdotes are integrated into the profile. Discuss what the overall effects of using anecdotes are and what these short narratives bring to each profile.

• Compare the use of anecdotes in a topically organized essay, like Orlean’s or Edge’s, to the use of anecdotes in a narratively organized essay, like Coyne’s or Cable’s. Consider using this discussion as a way to segue into talking about the strategies profile writers use to integrate anecdotes (and other profile elements) into the structures of their essays (whether topical or narrative).

• Invite students to think about how anecdotes are constructed. Do the anecdotes you see in these profiles fit the dramatic pyramid structure presented in Chapter 2: Remembering an Event? What kinds of details in these anecdotes are included, and what kinds of details are left out?

Move from Reading to Writing

• If your students have completed the invention activities in the Guide to Writing, direct them now to the planning and drafting exercises. Clarifying the Dominant Impression (p. 109) and “Presenting the Information” (pp. 109-110) are the two planning exercises that relate to this basic feature, Detailed Information about the Subject.

A Clear Organizational Plan

Coyne clearly derives many benefits from using a narrative rather than a topical plan. First, this organizational plan keeps the focus on the mothers and their sons. Second, it gives Coyne the opportunity to provide details that may not contribute to specific points but do rouse readers’ sympathy and make Coyne’s argument seem heartfelt. Third, the narrative plan allows Coyne to juxtapose scenes that build the comparison between Jennifer and Stephanie. Finally, this plan makes the essay particularly engaging and easy to follow.

Follow-up Analysis

• Ask students to identify the action verbs that push the narrative forward (specific narrative action). The narrative begins with hand and gravitate in paragraph 3, continues with verbs like shaking (par. 6) and chasing (10), and ends with walks, look back, and stares in paragraph 26.
Students tend to have a difficult time integrating information from their field research into a single narrative. With the class, discuss places in the essay where Coyne seems to use information she gained in visits previous to the one narrated here. For example, paragraph 1 is narrated in a way that suggests that Coyne has seen this scene before. And in paragraph 3, Coyne writes, “I know from previous visits . . . .”

Turn back to Cable’s essay and have students find the places where Cable indicates the chronology of his narrative with words, phrases, or sentences.

Evaluate Coyne’s narrative by the Basic Features of the Remembering an Event essay given in Chapter 2: Remembering an Event. Does Coyne’s narrative follow the structure of the dramatic pyramid? Does she present people and places vividly?

Refer students to Chapter 14: Narrating for specific instructions on composing an engaging narrative. Consider assigning some of the exercises from the chapter.

Move from Reading to Writing

Have students structure their profile in Outlining Your Draft (pp. 110–111). You may want to review Susan Orlean’s topically organized essay “Show Dog” with the class before doing this activity.

Teaching Tip: Interweaving Profile Elements

Elissa Weeks

The beginning of this chapter tells students, “profile writers interweave bits of information into a tapestry that includes vivid descriptions, lively anecdotes, and arresting quotations” (p. 67). Of course, however, this “tapestry” must have an overall picture—the narrative or topical structure that governs the essay. For students, interweaving bits of information (or facts), descriptions, anecdotes, and quotations into a set structure is very difficult. To help them see how this is accomplished, I conduct an in-class activity in which students use colored pencils or highlighters to mark up and analyze one of the model essays. We choose one color for the essay’s skeleton—either its narrative or its topical structure. Then, we choose another color for facts, a third for anecdotes, a fourth for description, and so on. This activity helps students visualize the “interweaving” that the chapter recommends and how this is accomplished by experienced writers.

To extend this exercise, discuss with students the different strategies that writers use to transition in and out of the different elements. How, for example, does Coyne move from her narrative into an anecdote? How does Orlean move from presenting a piece of information to reproducing a quotation? Once students have identified these strategies in the chapter readings, using them in their own essays will be easier.

A Role for the Writer

The shifting roles for the writer in “A Long Good-Bye” emphasize both Coyne’s personal closeness to the subject and her critical distance from the mother-child relationships she observes. Students should note that this is a strategic decision; Coyne removes herself from the activities of the narrative when she wants the reader to focus elsewhere.
**Follow-up Analysis**

- After students have identified the points in Coyne’s essay where she is a participant observer, ask them to connect these moments to the essay’s perspective. What would the essay lack in terms of perspective if Coyne took a spectator’s role throughout the whole essay?
- Compare Coyne’s use of both roles for the writer to Edge’s use of both roles. Demonstrate to students that both essays clearly separate their uses of the two roles. Discuss the reasons these writers seem to have for switching roles at certain points in their essays.
- Sometimes students allow their own participation to overshadow the subject of their profiles. With your class, discuss how Coyne prevents her participation from dominating the essay.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Ask students to consider which role they might wish to take in their essays. Using Your Role in the Guide to Writing (p. 110) prompts students to think strategically about the role for the writer.

**A Perspective on the Subject**

Coyne presents a twofold perspective on her subject. She implicitly argues that the punishment these incarcerated women have received is too severe, but she also implies that the justice system perpetuates criminal behavior by depriving young children of their mothers for too long. Both perspectives are primarily conveyed through showing (details, description, dialogue) rather than telling (commentary).

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Have students identify the places in Coyne’s essay where the author uses details, descriptions, anecdotes, and dialogue to show the effects of these women’s incarceration on their children.
- Discuss what the dominant impression in this essay is and how it contributes to the essay’s perspective.
- All of the readings in this chapter avoid directly stating their perspectives. Review the profiles by Cable, Edge, and Orlean, and go over how these writers show rather than tell their perspectives. In Cable’s essay, the annotations help model this process. Edge’s perspective is conveyed primarily through the narrative framing of the profile. Look at paragraphs 1–2 and 25–27 for the perspective in Orlean’s essay.

**Considering Topics for Your Own Essay**

Sometimes, when students choose to profile a place, they get caught up in their research, and their essays end up focusing on a person, group of people, or activity instead of the place. When they discover their mistake, it can be very disheartening for students, especially when it occurs after they have already drafted their profiles. To sidestep this problem, try
addressing it here, in the Considering Topics section that focuses on places as profile subjects. Asking the following questions can be helpful:

- What kinds of information would be important in a profile about a place?
- What details will indicate to your reader that the place is your profile subject?
- In what ways can people and activities be described that will enhance rather than overshadow your presentation of the place?

**Beyond the Traditional Essay: Writing Profiles**

Beyond the Traditional Essay has many uses in teaching the profile essay. For one, it can be used to introduce the genre; allowing students to identify the commonalities between the texts that we commonly label as “profiles” will eventually lead to a discussion about the basic features of profiles. Inductive or “discovery” learning like this has been shown to foster learning more than direct instruction.

In addition, as this section in the textbook points out, students can turn to other kinds of profiles as a means of inspiration. Much like the sample readings in the chapter, other profile texts can give students ideas about what they’d like to attempt in their own essays. Also, these other kinds of profiles might resonate more strongly with students who are visual or kinesthetic learners.

**Guide to Writing**

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of *The Guide* in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Writing Profiles.

**Connecting with Additional Resources**

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

- Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader for help with cohesion, flow, or transitions
- Chapter 14: Narrating for help constructing a well-told story
- Chapter 15: Describing for aid with vivid presentation
- Chapter 22: Field Research for additional advice on making observations and conducting interviews

**Starting Points: Writing a Profile**

This feature helps students find the sections in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address their questions. The most common problem areas are gathering information on a subject, using an organizational plan, and developing and expressing a perspective.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

This opening section gives students permission to use the Guide to Writing flexibly. However, as an instructor, you should be aware that skipping activities can lead to problems.
Some students might attempt to conduct the planning and drafting activities of the writing process — drawing, usually, on Internet research or background knowledge — before they have completed their field research. Obviously, this will be of little benefit to them. Give students as much time as possible to conduct their field research, and check to see that their research has been done before moving from invention to planning and drafting.

**Invention and Research**

The invention and research section offers students instruction on choosing a subject, conducting field research, and more. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

**Choosing a Subject to Profile**

The first invention activity helps students identify prospective profile subjects. Encourage them to come up with many ideas initially, and then walk them through the Criteria for Choosing a Profile Subject. Some subjects that students initially choose turn out to be unfeasible for the assignment boundaries (especially in regard to time management), so students should keep using the checklist until they find a topic that meets the criteria.

**Analyzing the Guide to Writing**

Ask students to discuss what the suggested topics (both in the Guide to Writing and in the Considering Topics sections) have in common. In other words, they should explore the reasons why the Guide recommends these topics. The goal of this activity is for your students to understand what makes a good profile subject before they choose theirs.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

The subject selection process may pose problems for students. Some subjects are not feasible in that students do not have the transportation necessary to conduct field research. Some subjects that sound exciting in theory may not be accessible to students (science labs, military installations, etc.), and some subjects are potentially dangerous (county jail, public places in dangerous neighborhoods, etc.). Students are often unable to foresee potential problems with a subject, so it’s a good idea for instructors to check and approve students’ subject choices.

**Teaching Tip: Creating a Fall-Back Topic**

One way to deal with the subject-selection challenges of the profile assignment is to dedicate a class period, early in the profile lesson cycle, to the conducting of interviews or observations in class or on campus. Have students interview each other or go out on to the campus to make detailed observations, and then write up their interview or observation
notes and bring them to class for discussion. After using those notes as material for lessons that day in class, let students know that if their plans to interview the police chief or animation professor or movie star don’t work out, they’re permitted to write papers based on the observations or interviews they conducted that day (or to conduct new ones). This move has two effects, one obvious and one subtle. The obvious one is that students have a backup plan. The subtle one is that students tend to choose their primary subjects more carefully—the creation of a backup plan says, more powerfully and persuasively than a mere warning, that subjects often fall through.

Ways In: Finalizing Your Choice
As noted above, sometimes students choose profile subjects that will not be accessible to them, and so it is important that they check to see that they can conduct field research on the profile subjects that they have chosen. This activity walks them through the process of getting the necessary permission and access to conduct their research.

Connecting with Additional Resources
Chapter 22: Field Research includes a section that instructs students on how to initially approach their subjects. It gives them guidelines for asking for interviews and for conducting themselves professionally during field research.

Exploring Your Preconceptions
Exploring Your Preconceptions helps students see what they already know or think about the subject. Sometimes these preconceptions are later woven into the profile itself; sometimes they help the writer frame the essay as a contrast to common perceptions of their subject. In any event, you might discuss with students the way their preconceptions about a subject determine not only their starting point but also their approach, their selection of details, and even their ability to make sense of what they observe.

Looking Back
Brian Cable’s perspective (and therefore the bulk of his essay) deals with how his preconceptions were proved wrong by his experiences with his subject. See “The Last Stop” (pp. 69–73) and A Writer at Work (pp. 120–124).

Testing Your Choice
These questions are designed to help students decide if they have chosen an appropriate subject for their profile. You can ask students to discuss these questions in groups or to write in response to them.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
Consider conducting this activity in class. Students often want to settle on a profile subject quickly and then skip all of the other activities related to topic selection. However,
encouraging them to deliberate on their selection has its benefits: They are less likely to settle on overly safe, predictable subjects; they feel more comfortable with their subject once they have settled on it; and they learn about the recursive nature of the writing process.

A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

This activity gives students the chance to test their selection on an audience. It is often valuable for them to see that the profile subjects that appeal to writers are sometimes different from those that appeal to readers. Consider having your students take notes on their audience’s feedback and use those notes in the formulation of field research questions and preparation of drafts.

Setting Up a Tentative Schedule

For students, scheduling field research is usually the most difficult part of writing the profile essay. Out of habit, many students put off their research until the day before the essay is due, and sometimes interviews and observations are canceled at the last minute. This can lead to essays that are based on five-minute visits, papers that are based almost entirely on Internet research (rather than field research), or essays that have been plagiarized. To avoid this kind of situation, students should schedule their field research as far in advance as possible. Checking periodically on the status of their interviews, issuing frequent reminders to schedule field research, and emphasizing the possible consequences of last-minute work can often snap students out of their usual habits and spur them to earlier action.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

You can help students with their time management by setting up due dates for parts of their research. Ask to see their observation notes and write-up a week or so after the essay has been assigned and their interview notes and write-up one week later.

Ways In: Collecting Information from Field Research

Students who do their research thoroughly tend to write stronger profile essays. Unfortunately, the process of researching a profile is a bit unwieldy. This section provides a flow chart that guides students through the necessary activities. You will most likely need to go over these activities in class with your students to ensure that they are followed. Emphasize that what happens before and after the observation/interview is just as important as the observation/interview itself. Preparing ahead of time and reflecting afterward are essential parts of successful field research.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Students generally find it helpful to read and discuss Chapter 22: Field Research. This chapter is basically a longer, more fully explained version of the chart on pp. 106–107. It walks students through the process of preparing for, conducting, and using field research.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students often find it difficult to extract useful information from their field research because they are not familiar with the process. We recommend two activities that they
might be likely to skip. First, students should reflect on their observation and interview visits immediately after they end and fill in their notes with their insights and impressions. Second, students should write up their notes in paragraph form; this acts as a transition from notes to essay, in which students identify the important parts of their notes but don’t have to formulate them into an engaging essay. For modeling of both of these activities, see how Brian Cable conducted his field research in A Writer at Work (pp. 120–124).

**Teaching Tip: A Demonstration about Note-Taking**

Gray Scott

In any arena or field, advice, however well-informed and well-intended, is more often ignored than heeded. Classrooms are no different. Students are more apt to recognize things in hindsight than through warnings. You can generate such a learning experience before they write their profiles by conducting a demonstrative classroom experiment: Have students interview each other when they first start studying the profile genre. Have half of the students write up their interview notes immediately, but wait a class session or two (or a week) before asking the rest of the students to write up theirs. Then compare how the write-ups turned out, and ask the writers to speak about their confidence levels as they attempted to translate their notes. Ask the subjects to evaluate the accuracy of what was written about them. Usually, the differences will be obvious enough to make an impression.

**Ways In: Reflecting on Your Purpose and the Profile’s Perspective**

These two exercises prompt students to develop their purpose and the profile’s perspective. To help students derive the most benefit from these activities, wait until they have completed their field research before assigning them. Your students will not be able to develop a perspective until they have conducted their research and reflected on it. In addition, give students ample time to complete this activity. It usually takes some time for students to push past more obvious aspects of their subject’s significance, and more extensive writing on these questions often produces more generative ideas about perspective and purpose.

**Looking Back**

To help students find a meaningful perspective, review the perspectives that are developed in the chapter readings and highlighted in the Making Connections sections.

**Considering Your Thesis**

After completing the previous Ways In activity, students are ready to firm up their perspective, which like a thesis is the governing idea behind a profile essay. While this section instructs students to summarize their perspective in a couple of sentences, you may want to remind students that this is for their benefit as writers. These sentences will most likely not appear in the finished essay, as the perspective of a profile is usually implied rather than directly stated.
Designing Your Document

This section encourages students to think about visual or audio materials that might accompany and enhance their profiles. You might want to take time now to preview the Thinking about Document Design section, which appears later in the Guide to Writing (p. 118).

Connecting with Additional Resources

Chapter 21: Designing Documents provides additional, elaborate guidance on visual and document design issues. It answers many of the sorts of questions that students ask about integrating nontext elements — such as, for instance, how or where to cite sources of images.

Planning and Drafting

If students have worked through the invention activities thoughtfully and have revisited their subject several times, taking notes on each visit, they will be surprised at how much material they have collected. Sometimes students are overwhelmed by the task of turning this mountain of observations, impressions, and reflections into a coherent essay. The activities in this section are especially designed to help students absorb and analyze the material they have and set goals for organizing, outlining, and drafting the profile.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider conducting a planning workshop in class, where students in small groups can try out alternatives for organizing their material and, by discussing tentative plans with their peers, explore readers’ interest in certain aspects of their invention material. Invite them to have an open and wide-ranging discussion about their plans and questions for drafting.

Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals

Previous questions about purpose asked students what they wanted to achieve. These questions ask them to think about how they might achieve it. Specifically, students are asked to make decisions about the dominant impression, the selection of information, and the role for the writer. You will most likely want students to review all of their invention materials before beginning this activity.

Looking Back

As students work on these activities, remind them of the strategic decisions that Cable, Edge, Orlean, and Coyne made in composing their essays. The Analyzing Writing Strategies sections point out how these authors conscientiously chose particular kinds of information, methods of presentation, and roles for the writer.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

If students find themselves struggling at this point in the writing process, or if the material they’ve collected seems thin and unpromising, the following are some suggestions you might make to them:

- Review the invention activities to see where they could be developed further.
- Revisit subjects to gather more information.
• Do some library or Internet research to find background material on the subject.
• Discuss the subject with other students as a way of generating more ideas.
• Review the reading selections for ideas about organizing invention material.

Outlining Your Draft

Outlining is particularly crucial for the profile essay. This section provides sample outlines for both narratively and topically organized essays.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students who are unsure about which organizational plan to use might want to consider making two outlines, one for each organizational plan. Then, ask them to identify the relative advantages and disadvantages of each plan before they decide which to use. (This is the approach used by the college student in the first scenario at the start of the chapter. Discussing the advantages of this slower, more methodical approach as they pertain to her profile of sixth graders can help some students see the wisdom of this approach.)

Connecting with Additional Resources

Instructions on outlining can be found in the first part of Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies.

Drafting

This section offers students advice on writing opening sentences, using absolute phrases, and integrating quotations into an essay. All three of these skills will be useful for students as they work through The Guide, so you may want to go over these sections in class. Consider teaching these sections intermittently as you and your students work through the chapter’s readings.

Looking Back

In the Detailed Information about the Subject section following Susan Orlean’s “Show Dog,” students are asked to identify the proper punctuation and formatting of quotations. Refer back to this reading as needed when covering Working with Sources.

Critical Reading Guide

The Critical Reading Guide, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features of the profile essay. Make sure that your students are familiar enough with the basic features to answer the questions.

Demonstrating the Activity

Typically, students need to be coached on how to participate in a peer review. Consider modeling the process by using the Critical Reading Guide to evaluate a sample essay (try using a past student’s essay). Give each student a copy of the essay, and as a class, work through the questions in the Critical Reading Guide.
Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students are likely to question or skip the “summarize” sections of the Critical Reading Guide. These prompts are designed to generate a point of comparison between the reader and writer. In other words, the writer and reader should come up with the same answers to these prompts. If they don’t, the writer has not achieved his or her desired result. The previous tip, Demonstrating the Activity, can help reveal how beneficial summarizing can be and encourage authors to ask for it from their reviewers.

Revising

The Revising section in this Guide to Writing is focused on troubleshooting. Students should find the Troubleshooting Your Draft chart easy to use and helpful in pinpointing and solving problems in their drafts.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

While the Guide to Writing approaches revision as problem solving, students should also be encouraged to look holistically at revision. After students have identified their problems and possible solutions, ask them to write a revision plan, which should include both a statement of their revision goals and a list of the activities they intend to take to achieve those goals.

Thinking about Document Design

This section not only invites students to incorporate visual and audio elements but also goes over Web-based publication of profile essays, linking the discussion to the chapter’s opening scenario about the education student who profiled a sixth-grade class.

Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students often perform editing and proofreading too early in the writing process. Then they end up making more changes to the essay and needing to proofread again. Emphasize to your students that editing and proofreading are most useful when they are performed on an otherwise finished draft.

Looking Back

Using the Detailed Information about the Subject section following “Show Dog” (pp. 87–88), the Working with Sources section in the Guide to Writing (pp. 112–113), and Checking the Punctuation of Quotations here (pp. 118–119), have students focus specifically on proofreading the quotations and dialogue in their profiles.
A Writer at Work

The profile is an extremely ambitious project for any writer. So much legwork is involved — observing, conducting interviews, writing up notes — that the prospect of controlling and shaping the mass of information into a cohesive, focused essay may seem a bit overwhelming. By looking at Cable’s accumulated field research, students can see how specific details (the personal traits of the funeral director, unusual features of the mortuary) quickly establish themselves in the writer’s mind. Cable’s observation and interview notes, along with his write-ups, provide a useful overlay of invention for the profile draft.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

The pair of writing activities described here asks students to reflect on their experience writing a profile. This part of the writing process is extremely important in that it solidifies student learning by requiring them to articulate what they have learned.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Students are instructed to answer one of the provided questions. Each asks students to reflect on their writing experience and to discuss how they negotiated the process.

Considering the Social Dimensions: Entertaining Readers or Showing the Whole Picture?

This section asks students to contemplate some of the theoretical questions that accompany profile writing. It is intended to broaden students’ thinking about the essay they have written.

Responding to Profile Essays

Here are some of the kinds of problems you can expect to find in students’ profile essays:

Detailed Information about the Subject

- The essay includes too much information that’s irrelevant to the author’s perspective.
- The essay tells rather than shows what happened during the observation or in an interview.
- Details and descriptions do not paint a vivid picture of the subject.
- The elements of the essay (facts, details, descriptions, anecdotes, and dialogue) are not smoothly interwoven.

A Clear Organizational Plan

- The narrative rushes over places where the reader would like more information.
- The organization is problematic: Narrative structure breaks down, topical structure is unpredictable, or organization is lacking altogether.
• The essay does not use an organizational plan consistently; it switches between narrative and topical plans unpredictably and without apparent purpose.

• The essay lacks continuity; it seems as though the research write-ups have simply been “stapled” together.

_A Role for the Writer_

• The role for writer is not appropriate to the profile’s subject or structure.

• The author uses roles for the writer inconsistently; the writer switches between the spectator and participant role unpredictably and without apparent purpose.

• Too much of the essay is concerned with the writer’s process.

_A Perspective on the Subject_

• The essay simply reports information and does not take a perspective on the subject.

• The perspective is too pat and predictable and offers the reader little new about the subject.

• The perspective is not the controlling and coordinating idea of the essay.

■ _Preparing for Conferences_

If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the following form.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 3

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. What subject are you profiling? Why did you choose it? What is the single most surprising thing you’ve learned about it?

2. Who are your readers? How did your awareness of them influence the way you wrote this draft? Be specific.

3. Explain briefly the plan of your essay—your beginning, ending, and sequencing of observations and comments. Why is this plan especially appropriate for your readers? Note one or two changes to the plan that you have been considering.

4. What is your perspective? How did you discover it, and how has it helped you focus and unify your draft?

5. If you were to return for one more visit, what would you like to find out? To whom would you try to talk? What information do you still need about the subject?

6. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

7. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft as well as any that have been pointed out by other readers. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes. (If you have completed the text’s Revising plan, bring it with you to the conference instead of answering this question.)
Explaining a Concept

The Writing Assignment

Write an essay about a concept that interests you and that you want to study further. When you have a good understanding of the concept, explain it to your readers, considering carefully what they already know about it and how your essay might add to what they know.

Student Learning Objectives

This assignment can teach students to

- Explain ideas clearly
- Research topics in order to explain them to others
- Consider the breadth of a subject and the depth to which they can discuss an idea effectively in an essay of a given length
- Think analytically about their chosen concept so that they can see the categories and aspects of their subject that their audience will find interesting and useful
- Use expository strategies like defining, classifying, comparing and contrasting, describing, illustrating, narrating processes, and reporting established causes and effects
- Understand how audiences respond to a variety of rhetorical strategies, including the narrative and descriptive approaches they practiced in earlier chapters
- Be aware of their audience and consider the need to adapt their explanations and strategies to match the experiences and prior knowledge of that audience
- Develop a readable plan by considering the organization of their material and the effect of a variety of cueing strategies (e.g., topic sentences, transitions, summaries) on their audience
- Develop a deeper understanding of quotation and paraphrasing through the use of cited source material
- Read texts critically and analytically
- Make their writing process more analytical and recursive
- Reflect metacognitively on what they have learned
### Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment

The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A Focused Explanation    | ✗ The subject is not interesting or appropriate for the essay.  
                           | ✗ The subject is overly broad.  
                           | ✗ The subject is overly narrow.  
                           | ✓ Use the introductory scenarios (or, later in the process, the sample essays) to lead a discussion about the types of subjects that the authors have chosen. Model the process of choosing a subject, rejecting overly broad or vague topics and developing a tentative outline so that the students can understand the process that an experienced writer uses to find a topic.  
                           | ✓ Refer to Choosing a Concept to Write About (pp. 162–163) and Ways In: Focusing the Concept (p. 165) for a further explanation of some techniques for finding and narrowing down a topic.  
                           | ✓ Use the Collaborative Activity: Practice Explaining a Concept (p. 129) and the Testing Your Choice activity (pp. 165–166) to help students generate ideas, to determine whether they have an interesting subject, and to discover the subtopics they will need to research.  
                           | ✓ Have the students work through the activities in Ways In: Focusing the Concept (p. 165).  
                           | ✓ Review the sample essays with students, calling attention to the structures that the authors use, from the way they develop theses to the way they move between topics with engaging transitions. The activities for developing A Readable Plan on pp. 141 and 156 can help the students to see Toufexis’s and Kluger’s essays as models for these kinds of strategies.  
                           | (Continued)                                                                                                                                                    |
82  CHAPTER 4: EXPLAINING A CONCEPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Readable Plan</td>
<td>Students who are having particular trouble either with the organization of the essay or with the transitions could benefit from developing an outline and writing a brief explanation of the connections between the topics in each paragraph so they articulate their reasons for organizing their ideas as they have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Continued)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Explanatory Strategies</td>
<td>These problems can be most easily uncovered through peer feedback, using the Critical Reading Guide. Encourage students to critique each other’s explanations as they work through the drafts and to have at least one person outside of the class read their essay to point out areas that are less than clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information is unclear.</td>
<td>Help the students to recognize poor definitions by presenting a bland, overly general explanation to the class and having them use the explanatory strategies listed in the chapter to refine it. Those strategies are listed on p. 161.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is insufficient information.</td>
<td>Refer the students to techniques listed on pp. 147, 157–158, and 172 and to the explanations and strategies described on pp. 170–172. Practice integrating quotes with the students by having them rephrase some of the writing in one of the sample essays and introduce some of the quotes in a different fashion than the author does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definitions are imprecise or are generic.</td>
<td>Have students practice paraphrasing by asking them to describe one of the Basic Features of a concept explanation in their own words. Have them cite the paraphrases, to emphasize that paraphrased material should still be cited. Then have students share their paraphrases in class and note when the wording is too close to the original text’s. (One secondary effect of this exercise is that students learn the Basic Features of the genre, too.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth Integration of Sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The essay presents quotes without introduction or explanation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have difficulty paraphrasing sources properly, without plagiarizing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A related problem with this genre is that many students will want to write about things they think they already know well—often subjects they have already written about before. Sometimes they do so because they are afraid a new topic will be too hard to understand, but the more common reason is that they simply aren’t aware of other possibilities or how to find them, so they write about the topics they’ve heard of. One unfortunate side effect is that they often are uninspired by their own subjects, and their lack of engagement hurts both their papers and their learning process as a result.

I deal with this by exposing my classes periodically to intriguing news about discoveries or ideas being discussed in disciplines they might be pursuing, and I start doing this before we even start talking about concept papers. I have also had some success taking classes to the library to browse magazines and library sections devoted to their areas of interest. Many students find something intriguing to write about, and their enthusiasm for the new discovery propels them through the learning and writing process. One of my students this last term, for instance, stumbled across an article about using entomophagy—the eating of insects—to feed explorers of outer space and decided to write a concept paper exploring the global history of entomophagy, with that article contributing just one subtopic. Another student, after seeing an article about Japanese businessmen suffering from blowfish poisoning, wrote about several ways that humans use the highly poisonous pufferfish, which has no known predators other than us. In both these cases and many others like them, the students became highly engaged by these previously unfamiliar topics, enjoyed their status as the sole experts in the room on those subjects, and saw substantial improvements in their work.
• How they would need to change their definitions and explanations to meet the needs of an audience other than a college professor. You might ask them to describe how they would explain their concept to their fellow students or their families, for example.

• To think about how they would engage their readers’ interest if they were writing for one of those other audiences

In the Community

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• To think about or list possible topics that might make similar use of process narration—describing how to do something

• How they might try to present the same kind of information—information about a process, approach, or methodological concept—in a paper. What strategies used by the manager might a student be able to adapt to an essay? How so?

• How they would design surveys and PowerPoint slides for a fifth-grade audience. You might have them look at the images on the wall behind the teacher in the photo for inspiration. Once they have answered, you could then have them turn to Thinking about Document Design (pp. 178–179) to see whether the manager followed their suggestions.

• To discuss—later on, after they have already picked topics and started working on them—ways they might use similar visuals, charts, or graphics in explanations of their own concepts.

In the Workplace

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• What they imagine the purpose of the explanation was in this case. Why did the CEO feel the employees needed to know about the issues he was describing, and what might they do with that information? How might these considerations have shaped his presentation?

• To consider other topics that might be explored using a similar causal analysis—explaining the possible effects that a new or potential technology, trend, or development might have

• To think about the way they might translate the CEO’s use of PowerPoint slides into the design of their own document (see p. 159)

• To consider the kinds of explanatory writing projects they might need to do in their future work. Memoranda about particular projects, some parts of grant proposals, and explanations of service agreements are examples of this kind of writing, but students may find more interesting possibilities.

A Collaborative Activity: Practice Explaining a Concept

The collaborative activity invites students to practice developing an idea and explaining it to their classmates. This exercise can be particularly useful for getting students to consider the kinds of background information and the types of definitions they might need to present and develop for an audience that may not be familiar with the subject they are describing.
Reading Explaining a Concept Essays: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

• To introduce the basic features, have the students apply them to an essay, such as Linh Kieu Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists,” which has already been annotated with color-coded comments to help students see each of the basic features at a glance.
• Once they have done so, you could have students apply some of those basic features to one of the potential essay topics they developed during the collaborative activity. This can help them figure out how to approach the initial stages of working on the essay, such as focusing an overly broad essay subject, identifying the kinds of topics they need to cover, and identifying terms they might need to define.
• While it might seem difficult to talk about the integration of sources in the abstract, you can certainly discuss the kinds of things they might need to research and the sources they could consult. After doing so, you can then point out the ways in which Ngo uses outside information to support his essay.
• Ask students to consider which of the purposes listed on p. 131 they had in mind during the collaborative activity; then ask them to imagine a different purpose from that list: What changes might they make to their approach as their purpose shifts? As they discuss these approaches, highlight the assumptions they make about their audiences, drawing on the list of audience assumptions from p. 131.

Readings

The four essays in this chapter focus the explanation of a concept instead of trying to cover everything that is known about it.

• Linh Kieu Ngo, a student, writes about the concept of cannibalism, focusing on the three kinds of cannibalism that have been studied by anthropologists.
• Anastasia Toufexis, a journalist, puts aside the concept of romantic love to focus on a scientific explanation of love, specifically the evolution, biology, and neurochemistry of love.
• Richard A. Friedman, an M.D. and professor of clinical psychiatry, explains a concept most readers are likely to unfamiliar with, focusing on the characteristics of the hyperthymic temperament and how it differs from the more familiar dysthymic or depressive personality.
• Jeffrey Kluger, a science writer, explains the concept of morality, focusing on what recent research tells us about how we develop a moral code and follow it inconsistently.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

For your convenience, we list below basic features and specific writing strategies addressed in each of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections following the readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student’s attention to a question that addresses an area the student needs to work on in composing or revising the draft.
Analyzing Writing Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Toufexis</th>
<th>Friedman</th>
<th>Kluger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Focused Explanation of the Concept</td>
<td>Highlighting a particular perspective on the subject</td>
<td>Presenting examples of the concept</td>
<td>Using apparent paradox to define the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Readable Plan</td>
<td>Thesis statements</td>
<td>Rhetorical questions</td>
<td>Topic sentences and headings, word repetition and synonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Explanatory Strategies</td>
<td>Classifying and dividing, comparing and contrasting, and reporting causes and effects</td>
<td>Defining, comparing and contrasting (particularly with synonyms and antonyms)</td>
<td>Using examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth Integration of Sources</td>
<td>Giving credentials of sources</td>
<td>Summary and paraphrasing</td>
<td>Quotation, summary, and paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to notice how Ngo uses examples to define his terms. The first annotation draws attention to the introductory anecdote as an introduction to the concept, and students will almost certainly point this out as an example of his subject. However, the strategy can be found in most of the paragraphs of the essay. The annotations point out the examples specifically in paragraph 7, 9, and 10–13.

Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay

Annotations: A Focused Explanation of the Concept

- Ngo’s use of an anecdote to introduce his subject is useful for beginning a discussion of the different ways that students can define the subjects of their essays. Have them pay attention to the second annotation. If they begin with a set of descriptions or narrations, the transition to a more direct explanatory style is a critical element of the essay, and it is a shift that students sometimes do not manage well.
  The Considering Explanatory Strategies section (p. 166) has a list of strategies that students might want to consider using to introduce their concepts in a concise and interesting fashion. (A similar list appears on p. 130, in the Basic Features description.) In addition to pointing out where Ngo uses those strategies, you might also consider asking them to think of the way that Ngo could have started his essay using one of the other forms of explanation.

- In paragraph 6, Ngo presents categories for his topic. You might talk about this technique both in analytical terms (as a means of distinguishing among related concepts and topics within a concept) and as an organizational strategy.
• You might point out to students that classification is both an organizational and an explanatory strategy, and ask them whether they can think of ways the other explanatory strategies might have been used to focus an essay on cannibalism. (Process narration, for instance, might have produced a rather grisly cookbook, while an essay focused through comparison and contrast might have explored whether other animal species practice cannibalism as well.)

Annotations: A Readable Plan

• The annotation for paragraph 6 introduces the idea of thesis and forecasting, and the note for paragraph 8 elaborates on the way that Ngo uses topic sentences. The questions that the annotations pose about the effectiveness of these sentences are useful, but students may not be able to describe the effect that they create. In order to help them see the role that these elements play in directing the reader’s attention, you might consider reading part of the essay without those sentences. For example, you could read paragraphs 5 through 8, skipping paragraph 6 and the opening transition at the beginning of paragraph 8 (so that you would begin that paragraph with “in dietary cannibalism”). That would then allow students to begin to talk about the importance of transitions and forecasting and to think about some alternative strategies Ngo could have used.

• It is worth pointing out the way that Ngo uses the repetition of terms and the contrast between ideas at the beginning of paragraph 8 to create a smooth transition between the topics of survival and dietary cannibalism, even if you have already discussed that sentence in terms of the need for topic sentences. The A Readable Plan section (p. 156) contains a discussion of some strategies for creating transitions, and Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader offers additional support.

Annotations: Appropriate Explanatory Strategies

• After having the students respond to the questions in the annotations about Ngo’s use of anecdotes and examples, you might consider having them point out the other strategies he employs and describe the way that Ngo integrates the different types of explanation.

The second annotation in paragraph 9, for example, points out a section in which Ngo uses multiple strategies to present a definition and a set of classifications in an interesting way. Students will probably find the use of the anecdotes entertaining, and you could talk about the different effects that Ngo could have produced by introducing these definitions and categories in a variety of ways.

Annotations: Smooth Integration of Sources

• Since this is the first essay that relies extensively on cited material from outside sources, it is important to stress the need to acknowledge the contributions of other authors. The annotations point out the in-text citations and the effect produced by the works-cited list. However, you should also talk about the requirements for citation while using another author’s words or ideas in greater depth. Chapter 24: Using Sources provides valuable guidance on this subject.
Students are often particularly confused about the differences among quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing; you can begin to introduce these concepts by using examples from Ngo’s essay, particularly those places where Ngo cites the material that he summarizes and paraphrases. (See the Writer at Work section in this chapter.)

Cross-Reference to A Writer at Work

Do not assume that students know that the paraphrased material in Ngo’s essay is paraphrased—many will think that it is direct quotation because they see citations after those sentences. In addition, because some students believe that only quotations are supposed to be cited, they will often assume those are quotes—and, as a result, start to leave out quotation marks in their own quotations. For these reasons, consider taking the class on a detour to A Writer at Work (pp. 181–182), which describes how Ngo paraphrased and quoted material in paragraph 9 and shows what one of the original source’s sentences looks like. Comparing the original sentence with Ngo’s rewording can help dispel confusion over how to paraphrase, a skill that many students find challenging.

Teaching Tip: Helping Students with Paraphrasing

Once students understand what paraphrasing is, they still have to do it. But when they look at a source’s sentences and then try to write their own, they frequently have trouble thinking of new ways to say what is sitting before them and imagine that is because there must only be one or two ways to express the idea. Word substitution, rather than paraphrasing, often results.

One tip I give students struggling with this paraphrasing is prefaced by an analogy to a common experience: If you are walking somewhere and music is being played, you probably find it difficult not to walk to the beat of the music and can only find your own beat again when the music ends or is out of earshot. The paraphraser faces a similar situation: To paraphrase properly—to find one’s own beat on paper—one really has to tune out the source. One can always go back and review for accuracy once the paraphrase is written. Most students who are having trouble thinking of new ways to say things are pleased and surprised when they try this approach and discover they have, in fact, found a new way to say something.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity suggested in the last sentence asks students to think about the variety of sources that Toufexis uses to support her presentation of her subject. This question supports the section on the Smooth Integration of Sources following the essay. You might ask students to consider the impression that Toufexis’s introduction of each of her sources makes on them as they read.
Making Connections: Love Maps

This activity is designed to help students begin thinking about the kinds of definitions that Toufexis uses in her essay and the way that she presents the various scientific explanations of love. The activity asks students to consider how well Toufexis's depiction of the effect produced by the environments in which people are raised explains their choice of partners. By getting the students to re-create Toufexis's analysis (by asking them to draw on their own lives for examples) and then posing the question about whether the explanation is convincing, the activity invites students to create an explanation of the concept of love through a response to Toufexis.

This is an excellent subject to use as the basis for a class discussion, both because the author narrows down a broad subject into a focused explanation quite effectively and because it is a subject that the students would probably have a great deal of difficulty handling in their own essays. As a result, it can serve as a model for dealing with a complex issue. Encourage students to use all of the explanatory strategies you have discussed at this point in the chapter in order to explore the ways they might have approached the discussion if they were trying to create an explanation of the role that family, friends, and the community play in the way that people fall in love.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Focused Explanation of the Concept

This section asks students to pay attention both to the way Toufexis focuses her subject and how she captures her reader’s attention.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Since this is such a broad subject, have the students pay particular attention to the techniques that Toufexis uses to focus her essay. Discuss how her use of the epigraph and her opening sentence narrow the categories of her discussion. Examine the way Toufexis casually invokes the authority of the Ph.D. at the beginning of the second paragraph to limit her discussion to “evolution, biology and chemistry” and her use in paragraph 17 of environmental effects as an extension of that discussion. It might be worth pointing out the way Toufexis anticipates a counterargument by classifying the influence of nurturing as a biological effect, with those experiences “imprinted in the brain’s circuitry” (par. 18).
- Have them consider, too, the way the author eliminates the romantic conception of love as an alternative lens through which to view her subject. She introduces the idea of romance in paragraph 3, but then sets it aside in favor of her own argument in paragraph 5. Point out that this strategy allows her to deal with competing definitions without distracting her readers from her thesis.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Take some class time to have the students think about the categories of their own subject and to think about the ways that they will handle alternative and competing interpretations. By doing so, you begin to introduce the idea of counterarguments, which will be of considerable concern in Chapter 6, while emphasizing the importance of focusing the students’ approaches to their subjects for this assignment.
A Readable Plan

While many students are familiar with thesis statements and topic sentences, their ability to manage both effectively can become strained while explaining a complex idea. Explaining their central argument and showing how their supporting topics relate to that argument are skills that will be critical to their success in the later analytical essays in this book.

This activity attempts to draw students’ attention to Toufexis’s use of the thesis statement and forecasting, both of which can serve as models for their own techniques. The final instruction to “add another sentence explaining how Toufexis connects the topic” can help students reflect on how her methods work.

Follow-up Analysis

• Point out the way paragraph 2 introduces Toufexis’s thesis that “love rests firmly on the foundations of evolution, biology and chemistry.”

• Draw attention to the way paragraph 6 uses a contrasting, fictional example (Bram Stoker’s Dracula) to introduce the biological impulses that cause love to be short-lived.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students are in the middle of invention for their own essays, you could take some class time to have them list the topics of their essays, write a brief explanation of the connection of each the thesis, and use Toufexis’s techniques as models for ways that they might introduce their ideas.

Appropriate Explanatory Strategies

This section asks the students to consider how the author uses classification, comparison, and reporting to explain her ideas.

Follow-up Analysis

• Note how Toufexis moves the sensation of euphoria from its traditional location as a product of romance to the effect of neurochemicals in paragraph 9. You might ask students to discuss how Toufexis couches her argument to anticipate her readers’ expectations and beliefs.

• Have students find other places where Toufexis contrasts the commonly accepted romance-based definition of what love is with her thesis that it is a biological reaction. Then have them explain how Toufexis’s presentation and explanation of her materials serve to make her argument more or less credible.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Take some time to have the students read Chapter 16: Defining, and then discuss how Toufexis uses those strategies. If they have already selected subjects for their essays, then have them create similar kinds of definitions of their subjects and the topics they are likely to discuss. If they have not picked subjects yet, you might have them do Exercise 16.1, which asks them to use the sentence-level strategies for presenting definitions of a given set of words.
Smooth Integration of Sources

As the text points out, Toufexis does not use the MLA style because she is not writing for an academic audience. However, she does introduce her sources quite effectively. Having the students work on identifying the methods that Toufexis uses can help them to develop a wider variety of techniques for introducing authors.

Follow-up Analysis

• Compare Toufexis’s introductions of Michael Mills (par. 2) and Helen Fisher (5–8) with Ngo’s references to Sagan. Ask the class what effect Toufexis’s extended introductions, her references to texts that her authorities have written, and her descriptions of the positions they hold have on the way they respond to her arguments and to the material she uses from each author. Have them consider how the tone of Toufexis’s argument would have changed if she had used Ngo’s methods and how each essay might be responding to the needs and expectations of its audience.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have students practice introducing their sources in the journalistic fashion that Toufexis uses if they have started doing research on their subjects. Even when one is citing in MLA or APA format, it is still sometimes a useful move to introduce a source in the more elaborated manner shown here, too. You might, as students share what they have come up with, ask them to speculate about what types of sources or situations might call for these sorts of introductions. When might they be useful in an academic paper?

Analyzing Visuals: Using a Flowchart

This exercise draws on ideas presented in Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals and on p. 159 of this chapter. It provides students with an opportunity to practice a skill that is increasingly useful in an age of visual and mixed media—“reading” images.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to consider the ways Friedman makes his concept accessible to his readers. Students may notice a number of approaches, such as the way the anecdotes relate the abstruse concept of hyperthymia to the commonplace experiences of the two women the paragraphs describe and invite readers to think about people they know who display similar ebullient qualities. They may remark on the way that Friedman uses his authorities and introduces his statistics. In the latter case, they may note that Friedman explains his topics in familiar terms and uses related concepts with which the reader may be more familiar before referring to his supporting authority, as he does in paragraph 5 or, in a way, in paragraphs 3–4.

In either case, it would be worth discussing the way that students might use such strategies in their own writing. A Focused Explanation takes up this issue by asking them to consider the way that audience might have shaped Friedman’s presentation of his material.
Making Connections: Temperament

This exercise asks students to consider the basis of Friedman’s argument, to understand his conclusions, and to take a stance on the question of whether attitudes are governed by genetics or by environment (or by a combination of these factors).

The first question asks students to consider the nature-nurture debate as it applies to temperament. By directing students to consider the subject in terms of their own experiences with their families, the exercise can help draw them into the reading as much as the first two anecdotes do.

The second question directs students to consider some of Friedman’s assumptions about happiness by asking them to question what he means by “being happy takes work” (par. 9). You might follow up on those questions by asking how his beliefs about happiness affect his depiction of his subject.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Focused Explanation of the Concept

The prompt for this section calls attention to the way that Friedman introduces his subject and asks students to write a few sentences about both the effect that the opening anecdotes have on the presentation of the material and the way the venue of the essay could have shaped that choice. This section offers the opportunity to discuss different strategies for introducing a subject and to talk about the need for explanatory and analytical writing to take audience into account.

Follow-up Analysis

- While the questions direct attention to the anecdotes, there are other places where Friedman’s focus is dictated by the fact that he is writing for the general readership of the New York Times. Students may note that Friedman does not go into a great deal of neurological detail or make particularly fine distinctions between types of illnesses, as he would have needed to do in essays for the sorts of professional journals referenced in the headnote. Instead, Friedman limits his discussion to the kinds of behaviors that would be commonly seen by his audience and to a description of pharmacology that could be followed by anyone with a reasonable degree of common knowledge. This, too, leads to a set of questions that students ought to be asking themselves as they write—namely, “How much do readers need to know to understand the subject?” and “How much detail can I go into before I lose readers’ interest and begin to alienate them?”

Move from Reading to Writing

- To help students understand the opportunities they have to engage in different styles of writing and the need to be able to alter their style to write effectively for different audiences and different subjects, you might want to have them write a few tentative introductions for a subject. Each introduction could present the idea in a different fashion for a different audience. If students have selected the subjects for their essays, this would be a useful device for getting them to consider the tone and scope of their explanations.
A Readable Plan

This section focuses on the use of rhetorical questions to guide the reader through the author’s argument. It calls attention to examples drawn from all of the authors in this chapter, though the directions for the assignment refer to Friedman’s essay. Those directions ask students to consider how and why the rhetorical questions work as topic sentences.

Follow-up Analysis

- One problem that students often have while working with rhetorical questions in their own essays is that they neglect to answer them as fully as they need to, as if they were relying instead on the reader to supply the missing analysis. Showing how Friedman provides answers to the questions he asks could help students see the rhetorical question more clearly as a device to engage reader interest and could help them avoid those problems.
- The ending of paragraph 4 provides an interesting opportunity to talk about transitions and the use of rhetorical questions to maintain an audience’s attention.

Move from Reading to Writing

- To help students think about the kinds of rhetorical questions they might use in their essays, you could have them think of questions they have about their subjects before they do a great deal of research. The questions that they have and find interesting are likely to be those that their audience would have, particularly if they are writing for their peers.
- This process works well as a group activity. Group members could point out which questions they found most interesting, indicate which answers they found satisfying, and ask additional questions. If you do use this as a group activity, though, remind the authors that they are not obliged to answer all of the questions their group might have while still maintaining an effective focus in their essay.

Appropriate Explanatory Strategies

This activity focuses on the use of synonyms and antonyms in creating definitions. The prompts ask students to highlight the synonyms and antonyms that Friedman uses in paragraphs 1–3 and to identify a few of those that they found helpful.

Follow-up Analysis

- The first few sentences of paragraph 3 present some subtle distinctions, one of which could be considered an antonym. Friedman states that hyperthymics are “often the envy of all who know them because they don’t even have to work at it.” In describing them in this way, he presents the implied states of normalcy and of labor as antithetical to being perennially cheerful. It could be useful to point that out to students as a strategy for integrating antonymic terms into their own writing. One does not need to call attention to the term itself or even define it for the contrast to help illuminate the subject.
Move from Reading to Writing

- While using synonyms and antonyms is an effective strategy for creating definitions, students may resist taking it seriously, in part because their understanding of definition is based on descriptions of the thing itself. You might remind them that part of defining a thing is describing what it is not and how it relates to other, similar things.

Have the students create a list of synonyms and antonyms of the main terms and ideas for a given subject, perhaps that of their essays, along with an explanation of the ways these terms are similar to and different from the main subject. Then talk about the ways these terms could be integrated into essays for different audiences. If students are having trouble with this exercise, refer them to Friedman’s essay, which provides some good models for this kind of integration.

Smooth Integration of Sources

The directions for this section emphasize the importance of citing paraphrased and summarized material. The activities direct students to consider why the author does not provide any information about the women described in the first two paragraphs or sources for the statistics he uses in paragraphs 3 and 4. (The first two are personal interviews and anonymous. The statistics are, to his field, probably considered common knowledge.)

Follow-up Analysis

- As in Toufexis’s essay, Friedman does not use MLA format to cite his sources, but the way he introduces them does lend credibility to his argument while maintaining a style that is more relaxed than formal academic citation would create. You might have students talk about the way his use of authorities matches the informal mode of the rest of his presentation and the audience of his essay.

Move from Reading to Writing

- Have students brainstorm types of information and circumstances, possibly related to their subjects, that they believe do not require citation. This could form the basis for a class discussion about the rules governing plagiarism and the fuzzy nature of common knowledge.

Teaching Tip: Revealing Problems with “Common Knowledge”

If you have students list content they think would not require citation, and if you have Internet capability in your classroom, consider this additional activity: Fact-check some of the “common knowledge” that students generate. Often the common knowledge that students bring up (and later use in papers) is factually wrong or incomplete, and revealing this danger can draw attention to another good reason to cite sources: To cite something, one has to check it out, and checking common knowledge improves the accuracy of a writer’s statements as well as his or her credibility.
Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

The directions suggest several possible topics that students may want to pursue, particularly if they are or are considering becoming psychology majors. The Making Connections: Temperament section also invites students to respond to Friedman’s ideas, perhaps by presenting an alternative explanation. Encourage students who are interested to pursue the idea, but remind them that they need to write an explanatory, not an argumentative, essay.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity suggested by the last sentence invites students to consider the ways that the visual elements of the essay contribute to the presentation of the subject. (See p. 159 and Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals.)

Making Connections: Community Morality

This section asks small groups of students to discuss the ways in which codes of moral conduct are enforced. It directs students to consider their personal experiences with the issues and, in particular, their feelings about shunning—banishment from a group—which may enable them to find a deeper personal connection with the issue. The students will have experienced the process of excluding people from groups of friends throughout their teenage years.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Focused Explanation of the Concept

Paradox is presented as a potential organizing strategy in this section. The directions ask students to analyze the oppositions that Kluger presents in the first seven paragraphs and to evaluate his rhetorical strategy.

This is a particularly useful process for students to go through because it provides them with a model for detailed analysis and incisive comparison and then asks them to figure out how and why it works. The third point in the directions is critical to that process.

Follow-up Analysis

- Students may be tempted to answer the third point in a shallow fashion, simply because it can be difficult to parse. Following up on the way that this section of Kluger’s essay works with a class discussion might be helpful. (Kluger, in essence, uses the paradox to raise a question in the reader’s mind: How can humans be so instinctively aware of morality yet so inconsistent in its application? That mystery drives the essay and helps draw the reader through it. Kluger could have explained classifications of moral principles but focused instead on setting up and then trying to answer the above question.)
- Kluger continues the strategy of presenting dilemmas throughout the essay. Have the students talk about the way that this technique maintains the focus on the concept of morality throughout the essay.
Move from Reading to Writing

- Have students explore a similar kind of paradox. Take suggestions from the class about the kinds of situations they might write about, but be prepared to suggest a few of your own. One apparent paradox worth exploring is the apparent contradiction involved in procrastination (i.e., we do not want to do a particular bit of work, so we put it off; in doing so, we are forced to live with the presence of that work in our lives for a longer period of time). Another might be the set of attitudes that cause people to despise criminals while justifying their own (usually minor) violations of the law (speeding, for example). Have the students explain both sides of the issue, perhaps in small groups, to try to explain the reason for this behavior.

A Readable Plan

Students sometimes have trouble managing the coherence and coordination of their topic sentences in complex essays. Kluger’s essay provides an excellent model for some effective strategies. This section calls attention to his use of topic sentences and headings and the way he uses them to reinforce his organization strategy and to the sense of continuity among ideas he creates through word repetition and synonyms.

Follow-up Analysis

- The directions for the first activity indicate that students should explain why Kluger uses the heading “The Moral Ape.” You might extend that discussion by speculating about how Kluger came up with that phrase (i.e., to try to reconstruct Kluger’s metacognitive processes) and those for the other headings. The class discussion will probably revolve around an examination of the phrases in each section of the essay that best capture Kluger’s ideas in a succinct and pithy fashion. Going through this process will help the students to think about the kinds of phrases that they could use as headings in their own essays.

- Essays are not the only venues where such topic headings are used. The 1990s sitcom Frasier used them to engage audience expectations before each scene and to make wry commentaries on the actions of the characters. Some popular novels use epigraphs, epigrams, and other chapter headings to produce a similar effect. (Robert Asprin’s Myth series contains examples of the humorous use of this technique, though there are many others.) You might consider showing a few scenes from a television show or examples from a novel in order to talk about the effect of this technique and to compare the use of headings in a fictional genre and in an explanatory one.

- The second set of directions focuses on the use of synonyms and word repetitions in Kluger’s essay. To help students understand how much that technique improves the quality of his writing, you may want to consider having them alter a few paragraphs to eliminate the repetitions and to eliminate the synonyms or reduce them to a single repeated term. This kind of exercise could easily be done verbally and could be quite humorous while still serving to reinforce the necessity of the careful use of repetition and synonyms.

- Have students revise one of the earlier essays in the chapter to reflect Kluger’s use of headings. Have them find the most significant words or phrases from a section of
those essays (even, perhaps, having them choose how the essays might be divided) and then talk about their choices and the effects produced in each essay. They may discover that the technique is better suited to some styles of writing than to others; you could then use that as a starting point for talking about when the use of breaks and topic headings is most useful in an essay.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have students come up with possible section headings for their own topics, if they have already picked subjects. One way to do this is to have students freewrite—write for five or ten minutes about their subject without worrying about editing or grades, just to generate ideas. Then have them go through what they wrote looking for phrases that might (perhaps with modification) be useful as titles or section headings. (Of course, the freewriting activity might create more topic ideas and help them develop their papers, as well.)

Appropriate Explanatory Strategies

The directions call for students to examine Kluger’s use of examples and the way he employs summary to support his explanation. The final sentence of the main body of the directions calls attention to the choices that Kluger makes in quoting Kohts (par. 10), while the written activity asks students to explain how each of the examples relates to the presentation of Kluger’s subject.

Follow-up Analysis

• It is probably best to have the students focus first on how Kluger uses the summaries as appropriate explanatory strategies before starting any other discussion. Students principally need to master the presentation of their subject matter. However, the comment about the choices Kluger makes in quoting Kohts opens the possibility of examining the way that he presents the summaries and the way that presentation affects the reader’s understanding of both the authority and the subject. Kluger makes a similar kind of decision in paragraph 14 when quoting Greene, so the class can compare the depictions of both of these other authors and discuss the ways the presentations support Kluger’s thesis.

• One of the conclusions students may reach is that Kluger is calling attention to the problematic elements of the attitudes and analyses that even respected authorities have when dealing with this subject—an issue that reinforces Kluger’s central contention that we, as a species, are still struggling to resolve this paradox in our attitudes toward morality. In a way, then, Kluger may be undermining his authorities, to an extent, in order to further his argument.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Consider having students come up with summarized examples based on research for their essays, if they have already picked subjects. While many students might be able to find studies, like those cited by Kluger, that could call for an explanation of methodology, leave the door open for students to find and summarize other sorts of examples, including anecdotes, news stories, and the like.
Smooth Integration of Sources

This section provides a model for the analysis of Kluger’s use of quoted and cited material. The directions ask the students to choose one of several paragraphs, to analyze the way that Kluger presents the material based on what they learned from the model, and then to explain that analysis. (All of the paragraphs listed here follow the pattern set by the model: a topic sentence, summarized content, and a quote that’s earthy or human enough for us to identify with it.)

Follow-up Analysis

• If you want to extend this analytical work, you could have students summarize and quote Kluger, as though they were presenting a similar explanation of his subject.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students have already started research on their subjects, have them (either at home or in class) circle the material they think ought to be summarized and highlight or underline the material they think will make an interesting quote.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

The discussion in this section suggests that students might want to consider writing about sociological, anthropological, or philosophical concepts.

Beyond the Traditional Essay: Explaining a Concept

Calling attention to the way that visual components of a paper are particularly useful for explanatory essays, this section makes suggestions about the kinds of elements students might want to include in their work. Because so many nonwritten genres are well-suited for explanatory work, students might be interested in developing an explanation in a non-essay format, such as a streaming video or interactive graphic. If you’re willing to let them do that, Chapter 21: Designing Documents extends these ideas and offers additional support for students. You might additionally require a written proposal, script, or transcript as a written component associated with the project, so that you can evaluate the writing that went into it.

Guide to Writing

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of The Guide in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Explaining a Concept.

Connecting with Additional Resources

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book — for example:

• Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader to facilitate the use of orienting statements, paragraphing, cohesion, flow, and transitions
• Chapter 14: Narrating to assist students in presenting anecdotes and examples
Starting Points: Explaining a Concept

This table serves as a reference guide for students, helping them find the strategies in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address their concerns. The most common problems getting started on the concept essay are choosing a concept and deciding how to focus it.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

You could go around the class having students identify concepts they are considering and asking the rest of the class to tell the writer what they are most interested in or what their major questions are about the concept.

Invention and Research

The invention and research section offers students a variety of heuristic strategies for choosing and developing a concept. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Choosing a Concept to Write About

This section prompts students to list concept ideas and provides a checklist of criteria that can lead to successful concept essays. It also provides some suggestions for possible topics if they are struggling to develop an idea for their subject.

Ways in: Gaining an Overview of a Concept

Leading students through the process of beginning to think about their approach to their subject, this section provides a model for the kind of metacognitive processes that students ought to go through whenever they begin the process of explanatory writing. It also suggests the practical activities they ought to undertake to begin to research and develop their initial idea, from the processes of using the library and the Internet (with references to Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research, where they can find additional support for these activities) to the consideration of their audience and the ways they ought to present their ideas to make them most appealing to their readers.

Testing Your Choice

Again, this is a model for a process that guides students through the activities they should undertake when considering the kinds of writing they are doing. Even if students are not...
having difficulties, it can help them become aware of their own writing strategies, so it may be helpful for students to develop metacognitive awareness of these activities as well as serving as a guide for students who encounter difficulties.

**A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice**

This is an activity similar to the one presented on p. 129. However, it is specifically geared to the development of the essay that the students will be writing. It can be useful for students to go through this process, even if they did the earlier activity with the issue they are going to be writing about. There is nothing quite as useful as having an audience listen to an explanation; the attempt to explicate a subject for others and the feedback from the audience will help the author find the areas that need additional work and research.

**Doing In-Depth Research on Your Focused Concept**

This section makes valuable suggestions for the research process, particularly in its comments about the need to save materials by making photocopies or saving copies of electronic media. It is worth reminding students that there is nothing more frustrating than being unable to find material that one has already discovered during the early stages of research. Refer students to Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research for additional help with finding sources, and to Chapter 24: Using Sources for help coming up with proper citations. Finally, consider having students create a tentative works cited list, or even an annotated reference list. This way they will figure out how to cite their sources before they start drafting their papers and will be more likely to cite correctly and less likely to leave material unsourced (or mis-cited). Chapter 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews walks students through the creation of such a document.

**Considering Explanatory Strategies**

Referenced in numerous other places throughout this section of this manual, this section provides a list of potential methods for explaining the subject of the essay. It can guide students through the process of developing a wider range of strategies for explaining their ideas. Even if students are adept at using certain of these elements, they will benefit from thinking about alternative methods.

**Teaching Tip: Rethinking Expository Strategies**

To encourage students to explore more expository options and also to emphasize the recursive nature of writing, consider having students come back to this activity after their first draft: Have them pick a strategy they are not using yet and try to apply it to their subjects during a ten-minute brainstorming or freewriting session. Because writers often see their problems more clearly and are more likely to spot solutions _after_ they have written a draft, this approach has the potential to help students stumble across solutions or options they might not otherwise have considered.
Designing Your Document

This section reiterates the need to consider the visual appeal of the essay. The supporting discussions following Kluger’s essay would also be quite helpful for students who are trying to develop their abilities in this area.

- You may want to consider providing students with additional examples of this kind of work. Articles from popular magazines such as Time or Newsweek could provide models for students.
- Stress the need to make sure that all of the visual elements are necessary and helpful to the development of the essays. Students will often create materials that do not really support their arguments. Although this most frequently happens with PowerPoint presentations, it is also a concern in essays that use visual materials.
- Finally, reinforce the rule that artwork—like any quote—must be cited properly, unless, of course, it is original artwork created by the student.

Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers

This exercise takes students through the process of thinking about their approach to the subject, both in terms of the audience’s needs, and (more implicitly) in terms of the goal that the student has as an author (the effect that he or she wishes to produce).

This section could be quite helpful for students who are having trouble narrowing the focus of their essay. Choosing a clear purpose and goal can help them to exclude extraneous material.

Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement

Here, too, The Guide takes students through the activities that they ought to take when thinking about crafting their explanation. It is worth pointing out the last sentence to students, which reminds them that the purpose of an explanatory essay is to explain, not to argue a position.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

If students have trouble refraining from argumentation, it sometimes helps to give them a way to vent those arguments: Permit argumentation in a reflective or metacognitive statement attached to the essay, or ask them to argue a position as a freewriting exercise, or (if true) inform them that they will have a chance to argue about the subject in a later essay assignment.

Planning and Drafting

This section provides support for students as they begin writing their draft.

Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals

The questions in this section prompt students to think about the kinds of things that experienced writers consider when they are writing. You may want to go through this section with students to help them become more aware of the processes they use and so they can gain better control over them.
Troubleshooting Student Problems

More than with most other genres, students like to rely on models or examples of concept essays while writing their own explanations—the assignment calls on students to do many hard things at once, and one common result is that they are not sure how to organize their work. For this reason, many students find it helpful to think about the ways their paper might use strategies that the example authors used, and instructors should make sure students take this activity seriously, possibly by completing it in class.

Outlining Your Draft

While students are sometimes resistant to creating outlines, this section can help them use the outlines more effectively, as can the outlining section of Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–568).

- You may want to remind them that it is relatively easy to keep all of the elements of a short essay in order but that they will need to develop their ability to produce and employ effective outlines as they begin writing longer and more complex essays in their college careers.
- Outlines can also serve a useful function in short essays by allowing the students to consider the placement and effect of all of the elements of their writing in ways that reading through a draft cannot.
- You can help students become more comfortable creating an outline to plan their draft by working together in class on an example.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Direct students who, during the outlining activity, request guidance on scratch outlines to Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–565).

Drafting

This section provides crucial advice and supporting strategies for students. The comments about beginning to write a paper will almost certainly be helpful, and the strategies for introducing ideas will help them develop a greater variety of techniques for presenting information about their concept.

Writing the Opening Sentences

One of the most frequent complains that students have is that they do not know how to start their essays. The advice in this section, including the list of potential starting points and the references to the models throughout the chapter, can help them get past that sticking point.

Perhaps the best bit of advice here is that they can always change their opening later—sometimes, in fact, it’s best to deliberately start with a simple or weak opening and then come back to it after most of the rest of the essay has been written. If nothing else, it can help to remind students that everyone has trouble getting started at some point. Introducing sources into their writing is an essential skill for this assignment and
one many students are unfamiliar with, so doing these activities in class can prove an extremely valuable use of class time; moreover, many of these tips will be helpful to students in later assignments.

**Connecting with Additional Resources**

You can expand the sentence strategy demonstration by reviewing the other strategies in Chapter 16: Defining.

**Critical Reading Guide**

This peer critique guide uses the basic features of Explaining a Concept and is also keyed to the Troubleshooting Your Draft table in Revising (pp. 174–177). For general advice on conducting draft workshops, see Chapter 32: Teaching Practices in this manual.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Consider warning students, before the Critical Reading activity, to look for difficulty following the information and awkward or confusing presentation of material from sources, since these tend to be among the most common problems with this kind of writing.

**Revising**

The Troubleshooting guide plus the suggestions about reviewing comments from peers and creating an outline in order to examine the draft analytically should help students gain some distance so that they can look at their own writing analytically and revise it.

**Teaching Tips**

- To help students do a substantive revision, you could spend some time in class modeling ways of changing words and sentences or adding material to fix problems in the drafts.
- Also consider returning to the readings to show your students how other writers solved similar problems.

**Thinking about Document Design**

This section can be helpful for students who are considering including visual materials.

**Editing and Proofreading**

This section of the Guide to Writing can help students identify common errors in their writing. Separated from and located after the revision process, it guides students through the correction of errors in punctuation. Since many students have difficulty with the proper use of commas, you may want to consider designing an activity around this section in conjunction with the final review of their essays.
A Writer at Work

Designed to help students to understand the process that Ngo used to integrate his sources into his essay, this section discusses Ngo’s use of paraphrasing. Although it could be used during the initial reading of Ngo’s work, it could also be used during the revision process to remind students of the kinds of models for integrating source materials into their writing that they have encountered throughout the chapter.

Considering the Social Dimensions: Concept Explanations and the Nature of Knowledge

This section raises questions about the way that explanatory writing is used, particularly about the assumption that explanations are unbiased and are established fact. This could serve as the basis for some reflective writing on the part of students, after they have written their essays, about their responses to explanatory writing and the kinds of assumptions that they made as they were crafting their essays.

Responding to Essays Explaining Concepts

Here are some typical problems you might find with students’ concept explanations:

**Concept**
- The essay is unfocused. It is not clear what point the writer is trying to make about this concept.
- The writer apparently has not mastered the concept; he or she relies too much on sources and jargon and lacks authority.
- The explanation seems inappropriate for the audience—telling readers too much or too little.

**Plan**
- The essay is hard to follow.
- The writer neglects to forecast the plan and provide transitions.
- The information needs to be rearranged to make more sense.

**Definitions and Other Writing Strategies**
- Definitions of terms likely to be unfamiliar to readers are inadequate.
- The writer has not made use of clearly relevant strategies of presenting information—for example, comparison and contrast, classification, cause and effect.
- Examples don’t seem to have a clear purpose or point.
- The writer concentrates on recent developments when readers need background information or historical information.
- Instead of reporting on a concept, the writer takes a position on an issue related to the concept.
Sources
- The citations and sources reveal a superficial or incomplete search for information.
- Certain sources are inappropriate, dated, or peripheral.
- The essay relies too much or too little on quoted material.
- Quoted material is not integrated smoothly into the writer’s text.
- Sources cited are not in the reference list.
- Citations and references do not consistently follow an accepted documentation style.

Preparing for Conferences
If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the following form.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 4

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. What concept are you explaining? Why did you choose it?

2. Who are your readers? What do you assume they already know about your concept? How did these assumptions influence how you decided to focus your explanation?

3. What main point do you make about your concept?

4. Explain briefly what writing strategies you decided to use—defining, classifying, comparing and contrasting, examining cause and effect, narrating a process—and why they seem appropriate.

5. Describe your organizational plan. How does the essay begin and end? How is the body of information presented?

6. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

7. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft or any that have been pointed out by other readers. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes. (If you have completed the text’s revision checklist, bring it with you to the conference instead of answering this question.)
Finding Common Ground

The Writing Assignment
Write an essay analyzing two or more essays taking different positions on an issue. Your purpose is to analyze the essays to understand their authors’ main points of disagreement and to suggest ways to build common ground on shared values, concerns, needs, and interests.

Student Learning Objectives
This assignment can teach students to

- Read closely and analyze essays arguing differing viewpoints
- Identify and understand the motivating factors and reasoning underlying fundamental disagreements
- Find common values, concerns, and beliefs among the opposing sides and use those commonalities to suggest potential compromises and solutions to complex issues
- Read and annotate texts analytically to synthesize the arguments representing different points of view
- Summarize opposing positions in a fair and impartial way
- Formulate a clear and specific thesis statement
- Write effective forecasting statements
- Represent other authors’ points of view by presenting carefully selected information from secondary texts
- Develop a more complex understanding of quotation through incorporating other voices into essays
- Make their writing process more analytical and recursive
- Reflect metacognitively on what they have learned
### Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment

The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Informative Introduction to the Issue and Opposing Positions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Essay introductions are too long because students spend more time than necessary summarizing the authors’ positions.</td>
<td>✓ Have the class analyze the introductions of the readings in the chapter as examples of ways to introduce the position essays and their points of view clearly and concisely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Introductions fail to present the essays they will analyze clearly.</td>
<td>✓ Go over the set of questions under the Introducing the Issue and Opposing Positions heading on p. 221 of the Planning and Drafting section of the Guide to Writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Essays introduce the topic in a way that is too broad, vague, or general.</td>
<td>✓ Refer students to the Writing the Opening Sentences section (pp. 224–225 of the Drafting section of the Guide to Writing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Probing Analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Students have difficulty identifying viable points of comparison within the essays they choose to analyze.</td>
<td>✓ Have students annotate the position essays following the instructions on p. 216. Go over the terms in the boxed text (pp. 216–217), and have the students fill in a copy of the Annotations Chart on p. 218 of the Guide to Writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Students mistake summary of the writers’ positions for analysis.</td>
<td>✓ Direct the students to the information on Exploring Points of Agreement and Disagreement (p. 219).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Students focus exclusively on the differences between positions without gesturing toward common ground.</td>
<td>✓ Go over the students’ Annotation Charts with them and help them to recognize possible shared values, concerns, needs, or interests between the opposing views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Fair and Impartial Presentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Students have difficulty refraining from including or implying their own opinion on the issue.</td>
<td>✓ Have the students review the relevant material in the Analyzing Writing Strategies section (pp. 199, 207).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>× Students evaluate the quality of the essays instead of analyzing the positions.</td>
<td>✓ Direct the students to Analyzing Writing Strategies (pp. 199, 208).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Remind students that this is not an evaluation of the essays but a chance to analyze the points of view the essays express.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Allow students to write a separate essay in class about their feelings on the issue and the essays they are analyzing, and have them turn it in as part of a metacognitive statement with the final draft of the essay.</td>
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</table>

(Continued)
Introductory Materials

Scenarios: Discussion Questions

If you have students read and discuss the scenarios that start the chapter, consider the following questions — organized by scenario — as possible tools to spur discussion. The third scenario is keyed to the Thinking about Document Design section (pp. 228–229).

In College Courses

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- For examples of such assignments that ask students to highlight common ground and to discuss these examples using personal experience in high school or college assignments
- To discuss the value of seeking common ground in this situation when, despite the fact that the Catholic and evangelical Christian leaders and the NIH have found common ground on which to build, there are still those on both sides who oppose the compromise
- To discuss the value of being able at write such an essay in the context of other academic disciplines

In the Community

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To think of situations in their own communities when finding common ground is necessary for reaching a solution
• To discuss the relationship between finding common ground and reaching a compromise, and to examine whether or not finding common ground must necessarily lead to compromise
• To consider what either side lost in the compromise reached by the PTA and whether or not compromise is always a worthy goal
• To examine what was gained as a result of the compromise outlined in this scenario that neither of the opposing sides’ solutions offered on its own and to discuss the potential benefits of compromise
• To point out the values and concerns that those on each side of the school uniform debate shared and to discuss the role those shared values and concerns played in reaching the eventual compromise

In the Workplace

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• To consider the kinds of businesses and professions, in addition to the developers, county planners, and consultants mentioned in this example, in which finding and working from common ground is essential
• To discuss the eventual response to the plan that the consulting firm came up with and the advantages it provided, and to consider why some people were skeptical toward such a seemingly well-conceived plan and to reflect on why some people seem unwilling or unable to accept compromise
• To see how the presenters used PowerPoint slides to explain the alternative views; you could then have students turn to Thinking about Document Design (pp. 228–229).

A Collaborative Activity: Practice Finding Common Ground

The collaborative activity invites students to practice analyzing opposing positions on a controversial issue and trying to imagine potential points of agreement as well as the more obvious points of disagreement.

• If you have student groups report their findings to the class at large, you and the other students might be able to suggest additional possible shared values, needs, and concerns that students may have missed in their original discussions.

Teaching Tip: Most Challenging Aspects of the Task

Gray Scott

After the collaborative activity, I have my students read and discuss the Bernard essay, and then I pose this question for small-group discussion: Imagine yourself writing this type of paper. What do you think are the two most challenging aspects of this assignment? Students come up with one first answer quickly: staying neutral. After some discussion, someone eventually concludes that finding common ground is likely to be difficult, too. I use this moment to evangelize a bit, telling students that the task of finding common ground is in
fact the hardest part of the assignment because it requires students to talk about things not stated directly in the readings. I then have the class flip back to Mae's completed annotations chart (pp. 239–240) and the blank annotations chart on p. 218, and we discuss the ways those tools might help writers deal with the analytical challenge this assignment poses. After this introduction to the analytical tools, students seem to take them much more seriously.

Reading Essays That Seek Common Ground: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

- To introduce the basic features, have students apply them to an essay, such as the opening essay by student Jeremy Bernard, which has already been annotated with color-coded comments to help students see each of the basic features at a glance.
- You might want to discuss the various purposes people have for seeking common ground. A way to begin is by asking students about the issues mentioned in the collaborative activity:
  - Why is it important for people to reach common ground on some of the issues mentioned above?
  - Is it possible to find points of agreement while still disagreeing on important aspects of the issue?
- You might also want to discuss the students’ perceptions of the value of seeking common ground by asking questions like
  - How is it possible to get people who disagree to reach a compromise?
  - Why do people accept compromises?
  - On what kinds of fundamental differences would it be unwise to seek compromise?
- Explore the purpose for each of essays in the readings included here. As the class discusses each reading in the chapter, consider asking what the relevance or practical use of these essays might be. For instance,
  - Bernard seems to be informing baseball fans about two differing views on an issue that fans care deeply about and debate hotly among themselves: steroids.
  - Like the other writers of the essays in this chapter, Mae wrote this essay as a student in an English class, but the essay treats an issue, torture, that is at the heart of a global debate on human rights and the nature of warfare in the twenty-first century.

Readings

Each of the readings analyzes a pair of position essays arguing different views on a controversial issue: steroids in baseball, torture, and No Child Left Behind. The writers look for potential common ground as well as pointing out differences between the opposing views that may prove to be too great to overcome:

- Jeremy Bernard, a student, writes that though the Mitchell Report and baseball authority Eric Walker disagree about whether or not steroids should be permitted
in baseball, each writer values fairness and recognizes some health risks involved in steroid use.

- Melissa Mae, also a student, points out that though Mirko Bagaric and his co-author Julie Clarke do not see eye to eye with Kermit D. Johnson about whether torture is ever permissible, each essay emphasizes the shared goal of saving innocent lives and the belief in the importance of morality.

- Athena Alexander, another student, describes what she believes is the more superficial difference that Rod Paige and Reg Weaver have over standardized testing in order to expose the political nature of their disagreement, which Alexander contends is at the heart of their differences.

Each of these essays provides useful strategies to help students develop their own thesis statements and readable plans. Note that, while the Bernard and Mae essays do focus more time on analyzing common ground, Alexander has chosen instead to focus on crucial differences that must be recognized before any compromise can be built through finding common ground. This is an acceptable approach to this essay, although it often proves a more difficult plan to execute than many students anticipate.

### Teaching Tip: Keeping the Terminology Straight

Gray Scott

A problem I have sometimes encountered with this assignment is that sometimes there is confusion about whether the term *essay* refers to the finding common ground essay that the student is writing, one of the sample readings, or one of the position essays being analyzed. I have found it useful to refer to each student’s work as the *essay*, the sample student essays in the chapter as *readings* or *examples*, and the argumentative essays being analyzed as *position papers*. Doing so has made class discussions less confusing.

### Analyzing Writing Strategies

For your convenience, we list below basic features and specific writing strategies addressed in each of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections following the readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student’s attention to a question that addresses an area the student needs to work on in composing or revising the draft. Both of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections also treat the Bernard essay; the section after the Alexander essay also treats the Mae essay.

#### Analyzing Writing Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Mae</th>
<th>Alexander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>An Informative Introduction to the Issue and Opposing Positions</em></td>
<td>Situating the issue Engaging readers Introducing the essays to be analyzed</td>
<td>Using outside sources to introduce readers to the issue and its importance Reframing the issue</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*(Continued)*
**Basic Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mae</th>
<th>Alexander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Probing Analysis</td>
<td>Identifying points of disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarifying the argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reframing the argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Fair and Impartial Presentation</td>
<td>Quoting an authority to critique an argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using neutral and unbiased language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Readable Plan</td>
<td>Clear and direct thesis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Forecasting statements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headnote:** The “As you read” activity asks students to consider whether or not Bernard successfully kept his opinion to himself. One of the difficulties student writers have with this essay is refraining from sharing their own opinion.

At the end of the essay, you may want to discuss whether or not students were able to determine Bernard’s opinion, and if so, point to any passages that they believe may be betraying his leanings. This passage also points out that the Finding Common Ground essay can be great preparation for the Arguing a Position essay (Chapter 6 in The Guide). In Bernard’s case, he chose to write each of the essays about the same issue: steroids in baseball.

**Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay**

**Annotations: An Informative Introduction to the Issue and Opposing Positions**

- You can use the annotated essay to point out how beginning an essay by using quotations on the broader topic can draw readers in.
- You can also use the annotations to point out to students the way Bernard introduces the authors of the position essays and their points of view on the issue.

**Annotations: A Probing Analysis**

- We have annotated Bernard’s inclusion of the Fost quote in his essay. You may want to direct your students’ attention to the importance of examining the sources cited in each of the essays they choose to analyze. Often the evidence position writers choose to include to support their opinion provides valuable clues to their underlying values, beliefs, and concerns.
- Have students examine the way that Bernard explores a value that both of the authors share: fairness. While the highlighted text makes it clear that each writer values fairness, Bernard also points out that the writers have a fundamental difference in the way they define this value—at least as it pertains to baseball.

**Annotations: A Fair and Impartial Presentation**

- In paragraphs 2 and 3, the annotations highlight how Bernard is able to introduce the authors’ positions without giving his own opinion. Have the students look carefully at these introductions for strategies they could use in their own essays.
• Use the highlighted text and annotations to look at the ways that Bernard gives his opinion on potential common ground between the essays without giving his opinion on the issue itself.

Annotations: A Readable Plan
• Have students look carefully at the forecasting statement in paragraph 3 and focus on the extent to which this statement reflects the content of the rest of the essay (see, for example, the highlighted text in paragraph 10).
• Use the highlighted text and annotations to point out to students the way that Bernard is able to consistently label the position essays he is discussing.
• Point out to students the important role transitional words and phrases play in this kind of essay.

Teaching Tip: Thesis Statements and Forecasting
It is especially important in beginning this writing assignment for students to understand the importance of thesis statements and forecasting. After going over the Bernard essay and the accompanying annotations, I have the students read in groups a pair of short position essays—for example, the Barber and Quindlen essays (The Guide pp. 256–257 and 258–260). I then ask the groups to make two lists: values and concerns shared, and important differences between the two authors’ positions. I then give them the following two thesis templates:

• Although [AUTHOR] and [AUTHOR] disagree about _____________________, they share [list two or three concerns or values here]. (Optional addition) It is possible that if [authors’ names] built upon these common [concerns, values, ideals] they might be able to [name a positive result or compromise that could be achieved].
• While [AUTHOR] and [AUTHOR] both value [name shared ideal(s), value(s), concern(s)], their differences over/regarding [list a few important points of conflict] make it unlikely that they will find any productive common ground.

Students can add to these templates as they read the other sample essays by Melissa Mae and Athena Alexander and also as they plan their own essay. Be sure to make it clear that such templates are guides only and that students are welcome to alter them or devise their own.

Laying Claim to a Higher Morality
Melissa Mae

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to consider how well Mae succeeds at finding common ground between the authors she is analyzing. Many students begin this assignment believing that their goal is to completely resolve any tensions or disagreements that may exist between the authors whose essays they will be analyzing and that anything less than that constitutes a failure or a useless exercise. The Mae essay can provide an excellent chance to demonstrate to students that the goal of this kind of writing isn’t necessarily to help the parties to reach a compromise but to point out places from which productive conversations can spring.
Learn about Mae’s Writing Process

This section, following Mae’s essay, can be used to introduce the Guide to Writing. Students can see part of her invention writing and see how she annotated her essays and used the Annotations Chart (see p. 218) to help her plan and draft her essay. The Writer at Work sections is particularly helpful to review before students begin annotating their own essays and filling in their own Annotations Chart.

Making Connections: Hollywood and the Ticking Time Bomb Scenario

This activity is designed to help students realize the complexity of any given issue and the forces that shape our perceptions of such issues; the focus of this activity is torture. To help students explore the issue, the activity asks them to consider the depiction of torture in Hollywood. The activity has three parts: (1) a small-group discussion of each of the group members’ views on torture, (2) a discussion of films or television shows that depict torture and the ways in which they do so, and (3) a discussion about the degree to which the group members’ perceptions of torture have been influenced by the media and how torture should be portrayed in the media, or whether it should be portrayed at all.

You may wish to emphasize to students that many different forces shape people’s views on any given issue and encourage them to think thoughtfully about the forces that have shaped the opinions of the authors whose works they are analyzing. This activity can also help students to investigate the reasons for their own opinions, a useful activity for the Arguing a Position essay (Chapter 6).

Teaching Tip: Torture in the Media

Sometimes students have difficulty coming up with examples of torture in movies or television that make for good discussion. (Many students first think of the recent series of Saw movies, although the scenes of torture in those horror films do not apply well to the points being debated by torture supporters and critics.) I find it helpful to show at least two clips in class to provide material for the students to discuss. The Good Shepherd (2006), The Bourne Ultimatum (2007), Slumdog Millionaire (2008), and The Men Who Stare at Goats (2009) depict torture in various ways and provide students a chance to discuss different ways torture is depicted in Hollywood.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

An Informative Introduction to the Issue and Opposing Positions

In drafting this essay, students have difficulty writing a succinct introduction to the issue. Mae’s introduction to the issue is both engaging and concise. Allow students to discuss the bulleted questions about Mae’s introduction on pp. 198–199.
Follow-up Analysis

• Discuss other strategies for writing an engaging introduction, referring to p. 221 of the Guide to Writing and having students consider the merits of the strategies outlined in the Introducing the Issue and Opposing Positions section.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students are still in the invention process, take some class time to have the students answer the Starting Points questions on p. 213 of the Guide to Writing under the Informative Introduction to the Issue and Opposing Positions heading.

• If students have begun the drafting process, encourage them to use the strategies you’ve discussed to help them engage readers in their introductions.

A Probing Analysis

This section emphasizes the importance of choosing one or two important areas of agreement or disagreement to analyze. It also emphasizes that while Finding Common Ground essays may not necessarily resolve problems through pointing out fundamental disagreements, reframing and clarifying the argument through highlighting disagreements can result in fruitful discussion. As you look over paragraphs 4–9 of Mae’s essay with your students, focus their attention on how Mae’s presentation of the authors’ differing views may help readers to consider the issue from new perspectives. The writing activity listed next to the second bullet in this section can help students understand how merely reframing a debate can produce valuable results.

Follow-up Analysis

• Look at Mae’s source essays (pp. 233–238) and her Annotations Chart (pp. 239–240), and point out to students that Mae could have taken this essay in any number of directions. Emphasize the importance of focusing the analysis on two or three promising points of agreement or disagreement.

• Depending on how far along students are in their own invention and drafting process, this could be a good time to introduce the activities in the Guide to Writing (pp. 216–218) and to encourage students to begin annotating their own essays.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students are in the middle of invention for their own essays, you could ask them to try to narrow the focus of their own analysis by choosing two or three points of agreement or disagreement and giving them some time in class to write about them.

• If they have begun drafting their essays, you could consider having the students do the activity Try Out an Analysis (p. 219) under the Exploring Points of Agreement and Disagreement heading.

A Fair and Impartial Presentation

As mentioned before, one of the major challenges of this essay for students is to present the information in a fair and impartial way. This section focuses on the value of quoting
outside authorities to help writers make their points. It also asks students to examine Mae’s approach more generally, reviewing the entire essay to assess how well she avoids betraying a bias.

**Follow-up Analysis**
- Consider looking at activity 3 in the Critical Reading Guide (p. 227), and have students critique either the Mae or Bernard essay (or both) to prepare them for critically reading their own essays.

**Move from Reading to Writing**
- Consider having students look at the questions under Striving for Fairness (p. 222), and have them reflect in writing on the questions listed there.
- For students who are further into the writing process, you may wish to suggest or assign to students the task of finding other articles or essays on their topic so that they have the option of quoting authorities in their own essays.
- Review ways that students can incorporate quotes into their own essays by referring the students to Working with Sources: Weaving Quoted Materials into Your Own Sentences in the Guide to Writing (pp. 225–226), and have them practice the techniques demonstrated in class.

**A Readable Plan**
This section discusses the importance of thesis and forecasting statements, pointing out how they help writers organize their essays. The activity here asks students to identify Mae’s thesis and forecasting statements and to track the appearance of the values and concerns mentioned in the thesis throughout the essay. This activity can be especially helpful for visual learners or for students who have difficulty organizing their own essays.

**Follow-up Analysis**
- As noted above, many students benefit from techniques that help them to visualize the organization of the essay. In addition to having students highlight the thesis, forecasting statements, and topic sentences or passages in Mae’s essay that refer back to the thesis, you may also want students to underline (perhaps in a different color) transitional phrases or other features of the essay you want to point out to your students.

**Move from Reading to Writing**
- To help students develop their own thesis statements, you may find the Teaching Tip: Thesis Statements and Forecasting (under Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay above) a helpful writing activity for students who are just beginning the invention process for this essay. You can adapt the activity to allow students to work with the position essays they have chosen for their own analysis.
- Use the information in A Sentence Strategy: Introducing a Quotation with a Colon (on p. 225 of the Guide to Writing) to help students learn a technique for consistently
labeling positions. This activity can also be helpful for students who are learning to weave quoted material into their own sentences (see pp. 225–226 of the Guide to Writing).

Analyzing Visuals: Graphical Presentation of Data

This section allows students to assess the impact of presenting data visually by writing a few sentences about their response to Mae’s use of a graph in paragraph 6 of her essay. If students wish to include visual information in their own essays (p. 220), Designing Your Document and Thinking about Document Design: Helping Readers Visualize a Solution (pp. 228–229) may prove very helpful, and you might want to refer your students to these pages or spend some time in class discussing them.

Teaching Tip: Practice Integrating Visuals

Gray Scott

Students are often eager to include visuals in their documents and may be excited when instructors give them permission to do so. Common problems that result include visual overkill (a paper on torture might end up with two to three movie stills depicting torture per page), missing citations of visuals, and poor discussion of visuals within the text. If you think your students are likely to integrate visuals, consider giving them some practice in or out of class: Give them a link to a chart or table online, and ask them to create a page in which the image is included and cited, along with a paragraph that discusses it. Such an exercise need not be graded, but it should be discussed. (A final note: Students are often unsure how to set up a visual and source line so that the components fit well on a page, without causing page-design problems. I have my students create one-column, two-row tables in Word. They can put the image in the top cell and the source line in the bottom cell, then turn the gridlines invisible. This ensures the chart and source line stay together if the chart is moved later and results in a clean-looking page.)

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

This exercise asks students to reflect more deeply on the issue of torture and to consider writing about torture for their own Finding Common Ground essays. This issue can prove a good choice for students, as the Appendix at the end of this chapter (pp. 243–263) includes several excellent essays on the subject. More information about the Appendix, as well as the options students may want to consider as they determine a debate they wish to write about, will appear at the end of this chapter.

Headnote: Review of this essay provides the opportunity to emphasize the importance of background research. In order to find productive common ground on any issue, writers need to be informed about the issues they will discuss. The “As you read” activity asks students to pay especially close attention to the opening paragraphs and the background information Alexander cites. Students should
be encouraged to conduct research and to cite information from sources other than the essays they analyze, helping readers to better understand the issue and its relevance.

**Making Connections: Improving Schools**

This activity can help students understand why differences of opinion can emerge and how to interrogate and discover the common values and concerns that may underlie those disagreements. The activity consists of two parts: (1) in small groups, students discuss what they believe is the most pressing problem facing the public schools and propose what they believe is the best solution to the problem, and (2) once the group discovers whether there is a consensus, students should discuss the reasons why they agreed or disagreed on the problem and its solution. Be sure that students complete both parts of the activity.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

**An Informative Introduction to the Issue and Opposing Positions**

This section makes the point that although many Finding Common Ground essays will treat issues with which readers may be familiar, writers tend to explain the issue again anyway because they wish to reframe it. Students will sometimes take this as license to write lengthy introductions, providing much more detail than is strictly necessary, often in an attempt to meet the instructor’s minimum page or word-count requirements. However, this section makes it clear that the value of explaining the issue is in the opportunity it affords the writer to reframe it.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Focus the students’ attention on how compact Alexander’s introduction is, presenting a lot of information to readers in a relatively small amount of space. You may also want to review the introductions for the Bernard and Mae essays with students.
- It might be worth noting that Alexander’s background information is longer and more substantial than those of Mae and Bernard. You might ask students why this is. One reason is that readers are likely to be less conversant on education policy than on baseball or torture, and many of the details about her issue are obscure. Students who write about complicated or obscure issues like the health care debate might similarly find that they need to explain more background information than do students who decide to write about, say, animal experimentation.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Encourage students to think of ways they might use their own introductions to reframe the issues they are writing about.
- If students have already drafted an introduction, consider having them review each other’s introductions, and have them discuss the ways they are reframing the issue or possible ways they might reframe the issue.
- After discussing the use of background information, you might ask students to bring background research to class and write sample background sections based on that
material, as an ungraded exercise. Assemble the students into teams to review the background statements, looking for backgrounds that are unclear or too detailed. One of the challenges to background information is that some writers will let it take over the paper (because it is easier to report background than to analyze text), so giving students a chance to practice this work in a group environment can help them navigate this tricky part of the process.

A Probing Analysis

The instructions in this section ask students to consider irreconcilable differences between people with differing views. The section mentions the differing perspectives on morality as it relates to torture that the Mae essay highlighted as an example. The students are also asked to identify the values that may underlie some of the differences that Alexander writes about in her essay. Students are then prompted to consider Alexander’s use of Wikipedia as a source for her paper.

Follow-up Analysis

• You may want to use this opportunity for a lengthier discussion about the benefits and drawbacks of using Wikipedia. Students are often shocked by how easy it is to alter an entry in Wikipedia, and if you teach in a room with access to the Internet, demonstrating the ease with which anyone can change most Wikipedia pages is often effective. It is also important to point out that there are people who monitor Wikipedia and try their best to remove spurious information where they find it; however, you should also point out that it often takes hours or even days to remove false information, and sometimes such information is never removed.

• Following such a discussion, it can be helpful to have the class brainstorm a list of reasonable ways to use Wikipedia and a list of circumstances in which it might be better to look elsewhere. (For instance, if the writer is talking about Wikipedia, referring to its articles can be useful. If the writer is analyzing the ways that people write about an issue, rather than relying on the source for information, Wikipedia might be useful as a subject of that analysis. If the writer is calling into question or contradicting something said on Wikipedia, by juxtaposing it with material from a more reputable source, that might also be reasonable. If a paper talks about a pop culture topic, like a television show, Wikipedia might be one of the better online authorities about it, in part because the fans tend to weed out errors.)

Move from Reading to Writing

• This discussion provides another good opportunity for students to review the essays they have chosen to write about and begin or continue to annotate them. Here again, the activities on pp. 216–218 can prove quite helpful.

A Fair and Impartial Presentation

Students are asked to consider the importance of neutral and respectful language. The instructions point to the way that Alexander presents the credentials of the authors whose essays she analyzes simply and without bias. The instructions also emphasize the impor-
tance of descriptive language, directing the students to look back at the way Alexander describes the authors’ writing.

**Follow-up Analysis**
- Provide time in class to review the Bernard and Mae essays, highlighting each writer’s use of neutral, unbiased language, particularly when introducing the authors of the essays and their credentials. Discuss your findings and any potential strategies students might use in their own essays.

**Move from Reading to Writing**
- Using some of the strategies that students have learned from their analysis of the Alexander essay and/or other essays you may have looked at in class, have students practice writing sentences that introduce the authors of the essays they have chosen for this assignment.
- Have students practice introducing quotations descriptively. You may find it helpful to refer them to pp. 225–226 of the Guide to Writing for this activity.

**A Readable Plan**

The instructions in this section ask students to focus on comparative transitions within the essays they have read in this chapter. This section provides detail on transitions indicating similarity as well as transitions indicating difference, with many examples of each kind of comparative transition. The section also focuses on the importance of labeling positions clearly.

**Follow-up Analysis**
- Have students go back through the previous essays in this chapter and highlight other examples of comparative transitions.
- Students could review the previous essays to look for examples of clear labeling as well.

**Move from Reading to Writing**
- Encourage students to use some of the comparative transitions listed in this section to write some sentences of their own. You could, for instance, have students pick a single key topic or area of disagreement from each of their chosen debates and write a paragraph about it in which both sources’ perspectives on that topic are introduced.

**Considering Topics for Your Own Essay**

This section allows students to reflect on issues related to education that can prove productive debates to analyze in Finding Common Ground essays. However, you may want to seek out other debates for your students to analyze. Our experience has been that finding a well-matched pair (or group) of essays taking opposing positions on the same issue is not easy. Because students must carry out a thorough, challenging, time-consuming analysis, the opposing essays must be relatively brief. Students should be aware that they may, if you allow it, choose to write on any number of issues, so long as the issue they choose meets the criteria on the checklist on p. 214 of the Guide to Writing.
Beyond the Traditional Essay: Finding Common Ground

This section of the chapter discusses another venue where the search for common ground is evident: television. You may want to show clips in class of some of the television shows mentioned in this section of the chapter, such as the The View or Real Time with Bill Maher. Certain episodes and segments of The Daily Show with Jon Stewart or the “Formidable Opponent” segment of The Colbert Report can also help students to understand how prevalent the search for and need for finding common ground is, as well as humorously highlighting the difficulties with such an undertaking. You may want to discuss with students how the basic features of the Finding Common Ground essay are evident or absent in the clips you watch in class.

Appendix: Two Debates (pp. 243–263)

The Appendix at the end of the Guide to Writing contains two clusters of essays on two controversial issues, torture and same-sex marriage. Although, if you permit it, students may write essays on any controversial issue that meets the criteria spelled out on pp. 214–215 of the Guide to Writing, students will often choose to analyze two or more of the essays in the Appendix because these essays are included in their textbook. (Additional clusters of essays are available online at bedfordstmartins.com/theguide.)

Following is a list of the position essays in the Appendix, with a brief summary of each and suggestions for various ways to group the essays. It is worth noting that while the assignment can work quite well if a student chooses to analyze more than two essays, our experience has been that most students choose to analyze a pair of essays, and this understandably simplifies the process of annotating, organizing, and analyzing the essays and often simplifies the writing process as well.

Debate 1: Torture

“Thinking about Torture” by Ross Douthat (pp. 245–248)

“Committing War Crimes for the ‘Right Reasons’” by Glenn Greenwald (pp. 248–251)

“An End to Torture” by Maryann Cusimano Love (pp. 251–255)

See also:

“A Case for Torture” by Mirko Bagaric and Julie Clarke (pp. 233–234)

“Inhuman Behavior” by Kermit D. Johnson (pp. 235–238)

Summaries

Douthat’s essay, “Thinking about Torture,” attempts to express the “muddiness” around what Douthat feels is a very complex issue. The essay begins by discussing what he feels are reprehensible tactics sanctioned by the Bush administration. Although he feels these tactics are worthy of condemnation, he feels that “while the Bush Administration’s policies clearly failed a just-war test, they didn’t fail it in quite so new a way as some of their critics suppose . . . and moreover, had I been in their shoes I might have failed the test as well . . .”
The essay goes on to compare torture to other actions committed in wartime that he believes are similarly complex. While Douthat believes that those who authorized and performed torture are guilty, he is not sure of the degree to which they ought to be held culpable. He also believes that they were, in a way, carrying out the will of the American people, who wanted retribution for 9/11.

Greenwald’s essay, “Committing War Crimes for the ‘Right Reasons,’” analyzes Douthat’s argument and contends that it does not go far enough. While Douthat implies that torture, in some ways, may have been tacitly sanctioned by the citizens of the United States, Greenwald claims that the fact that the United States government allowed torture is evidence of nothing more than “standard American exceptionalism” if not “blinding American narcissism” (par. 4). Nothing, Greenwald argues, excuses or mitigates the immorality of using torture. “There are virtually always,” he argues, “good reasons’ that can be and are cited to justify war crimes and acts of aggression.” But, he continues, as we don’t accept them from others, we cannot and should not accept them to pardon ourselves.

Cusimano Love’s essay, “An End to Torture,” argues that “[p]rotecting human rights and prohibiting torture is practical and advances U.S. interests, especially security interests. By contrast, using torture undermines security” (par. 2). Cusimano Love takes the position that torture should not be permitted because, first, it violates human rights and, second, it is impractical and ineffective and as such undermines our security interests.

Bagaric and Clarke argue in “A Case for Torture” that under certain circumstances, when innocent lives are at risk and other culpable individuals possess information that might save innocent lives, torture of those culpable individuals is not only permissible; it is moral.

Johnson argues in “Inhuman Behavior” that torture is never moral and should not occur because it is fundamentally and unequivocally wrong. He argues, moreover, that torture creates a perception of the torturers that ultimately fosters hatred and resentment, ultimately making societies that attempt to protect themselves through torture less safe.

**Suggested Groupings of Position Essays on Torture**

Because the Douthat essay is at pains to see many different sides of the torture debate, it can be successfully paired or grouped with many of the essays included in this cluster. The most obvious pairing is with the Greenwald essay, which is a direct response; however, pairing or grouping the Douthat essay with the Johnson essay can be helpful because Johnson sees the issue of torture in absolute terms, whereas the issue is less clear for Douthat, making it easier for students to draw distinctions. The Bagaric and Clarke essay can also prove a useful essay to group with the Douthat and Greenwald essays, as they represent a kind of continuum, with Bagaric and Clarke representing the most permissive attitude toward torture and the Greenwald essay representing the most outspoken argument against it.

Pairing the Johnson essay with the Bagaric and Clarke essay can work well, as demonstrated in Melissa Mae’s essay, “Laying Claim to a Higher Morality” (pp. 195–197). Grouping the Cusimano Love essay with the Johnson essay and the Bagaric and Clarke essay can also prove to be an interesting approach.
Debate 2: Same-Sex Marriage

“Interracial Marriage: Slippery Slope?” by La Shawn Barber (pp. 256–257)

“The Loving Decision” by Anna Quindlen (pp. 258–260)

“The Future of Marriage,” Editorial from National Review (pp. 260–261)

“The Right’s Contempt for Gay Lives” by Andrew Sullivan (pp. 262–263)

**Summaries**

Barber’s essay “Interracial Marriage: Slippery Slope?” argues that the comparison many gay rights activists draw between racial discrimination and discrimination based on sexual orientation is specious. She contends that the fight to extend marriage rights to the homosexual community should not be equated with the earlier fight to recognize marriage across racial lines. “Marriage,” she argues, “is a legal union and social institution recognized by the states as serving fundamental purposes: providing structure for family formation and rearing children, and acting as a stabilizing influence that benefits the whole society” (par. 9) and as such, she argues, should be limited to heterosexual couples.

Quindlen’s essay, “The Loving Decision,” like Barber’s, spends some time discussing the landmark Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia*, which extended marriage rights across racial lines, making it legal for individuals of different races to marry. Unlike Barber, Quindlen argues that today’s homosexual Americans suffer the same injustice that Mildred Jeter and Richard Loving faced in the mid-1960s. Quindlen contends that “[t]he world only spins forward” (par. 10) and quotes David Buckel, proclaiming, “the day will come when the lesbian and gay community will have its own *Loving v. Virginia*” (11).

The *National Review* editorial argues that “marriage is by nature the union of a man and a woman” (par. 1). The editorial also argues that the public is not increasingly more in favor of gay marriage; that is merely what the gay rights movement wants the public to believe. Marriage, the editorial contends, stabilizes society through channeling sexual desire (par. 5); marriage, the *National Review* editorial concludes, must also be connected with parenthood, and thus limited to a man and woman, for both the good of society and the good of individuals.

Sullivan’s essay, “The Right’s Contempt for Gay Lives,” is a direct reply to the *National Review* editorial. In it, Sullivan contends that it is unjust and illogical to limit marriage to only those biologically capable of producing offspring together. Such limits, he argues, end up hurting society. Sullivan agrees with the *National Review* that marriage is a way to “channel (heterosexual) desire into civilized patterns of living” (par. 2) and states that this is the reason he wishes to extend the opportunity to marry to the homosexual community.

**Suggested Groupings of Position Essays on Same-Sex Marriage**

The Barber and Quindlen essays work exceptionally well together for the purposes of this assignment.

The *National Review* and Quindlen essays can also work quite well together.

The *National Review* and Sullivan essays also work very well together.
Guide to Writing

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of The Guide in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Finding Common Ground.

Connecting with Additional Resources

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

- Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader to facilitate the use of orienting statements, paragraphing, cohesion, flow, and transitions
- Chapter 16: Defining to aid with crafting effective definitions of key terms
- Chapter 17: Classifying for help categorizing and organizing the information
- Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting to assist in presenting similarities and differences between the position essays’ arguments
- Chapter 19: Arguing to help analyze the position papers’ arguments
- Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research for help with locating appropriate information and source material
- Chapter 24: Using Sources for help incorporating source material

Starting Points: Finding Common Ground

This feature helps students find the strategies in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address the concerns they have. The most common issues students have, from this list, are finding points to analyze and analyzing them, and avoiding entering the debate. Students also often have difficulty creating a readable plan.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

For students who are having a particularly difficult time finding points to analyze, refer them to pp. 216–218 of the Guide to Writing. The chart on p. 218 is a very valuable tool, but it is important to remind students that good essays analyze only a few points and that they will not write about every feature on the chart. For students who are having difficulty analyzing the points they have chosen, refer them to Exploring Points of Agreement or Disagreement (p. 219).

Invention and Research

The invention and research section offers students several strategies for coming up with topics, details, and more. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Choosing a Set of Argument Essays to Write About

Remember, you may assign students a debate from the Appendix or from the companion Web site (bedfordstmartins.com/theguide); often, however, students will want to choose a
debate of their own, and this section contains important information for helping students choose essays that will work well for this assignment.

**Teaching Tip: Finding Position Essays to Analyze**

Good possibilities for usable debates can be found in magazines and journals that feature pro-con pairings where each debater is aware of the other’s position and arguments on an issue. These are surprisingly rare, however. The best examples we have seen are in the British magazine *The Ecologist* and newspaper *The Guardian* and the U.S. magazine *The American Prospect*. Very brief debates appear regularly in *USA Today* and other newspapers. Several book series of debates may be available in college libraries, such as *Taking Sides: Clashing Views* [on some issue], *Opposing Viewpoints, Current Controversies*. You might also consider CQ Researcher, an electronic database that examines current controversial issues. Students could search Editorials on File or Lexis/Nexis for published position papers on controversial topics. Alternatively, if you’re willing to let students analyze transcripts or recordings of actual in-person debates, they can find many such debates at Intelligence Squared (www.intelligencesquared.com). (If you discover other good sources of well-balanced position essays, please let us know by writing to Rise Axelrod, c/o Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.)

**Getting an Overview**

This section encourages students to make notes as they read through the essays for the first time. The students are prompted to make notes on points where the authors agree and disagree; values, ideals, interests, and concerns that the authors appear to have in common; and any ideas that occur to the students as to how these authors might be able to come together based on shared values, ideals, interests, and concerns.

**Teaching Tip**

If multiple students are writing on the same essays, consider having the students do this activity in small groups.

**Criteria for Choosing a Set of Arguments to Analyze**

This checklist is very helpful for students if you plan to allow them to find their own essays to analyze. Even with the help of this checklist, students may not always pick essays that are well-matched for the purposes of this assignment, so you may still wish to review their choices.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

One of the more common problems with student-picked pairings is that one of the position essays will clearly be stronger than the other — often with the stronger source sharing
the student's own personal viewpoint. We have seen students try to pit a well-known expert on one side of a debate against a student paper from an essay mill on the other side, for instance. Alternatively, you can assign a set of essays to the whole class or allow students to choose only from debates in the Appendix or on the Web site.

**Using the Web to Find or Explore a Set of Arguments on an Issue**

This section is particularly helpful for students who are trying to track down their own essays to analyze. In addition to this section, be sure that students who are finding their own essays to analyze refer to the checklist on p. 214.

**Looking Back**

Review the Teaching Tip: Finding Position Essays to Analyze above to help you and your students locate potential position essays debating a controversial issue.

**Teaching Tip: Research Paper**

Leona Fisher

While this chapter is designed to focus students' analysis on just a few position essays, some instructors may prefer to teach it as a more traditional research paper assignment in which students draw material (quotes, summaries, and paraphrases) from an array of sources. The research paper version of the assignment has the advantage of enabling students to make more accurate generalizations about how people argue various sides of a controversial issue. But it tends not to help students learn close reading and analysis skills. If you want students to do traditional research for this assignment, we recommend that you have them focus their analysis on a couple of main texts and use the others to enrich their analysis. One way to do this might be to split the assignment into two related papers: a short, close analysis of two articles, followed by a lengthier, more traditional research paper incorporating a revision of the previous analysis as a key part of the discussion.

**Testing Your Choice**

While at first this activity seems to be most useful for the students who are selecting their own essays, most of the questions posed in this section are helpful for students who have been assigned essays or who have chosen them from the Appendix or Web site. The questions in this section make a good in-class follow-up activity to the initial reading and annotation described in Getting an Overview (p. 214).

**A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice**

Once again, this activity is helpful for all students, whether or not they are choosing the essays to analyze. The goal of this activity is to get students to articulate to each other the main arguments in the essays they will analyze and to begin to understand each author's motivating values, concerns, and interests. Help the students recognize that understanding the argument and the author's concerns, values, and interests is essential to finding common ground.
Analyzing The Guide

Consider asking students why *The Guide* would prompt students to thoroughly understand the authors’ positions and their motivations before prompting them to begin seeking common ground between the essays.

Analyzing the Essays

The activities described in this section of *The Guide* are invention and research heuristic strategies that will pay dividends later as students begin drafting their essays.

Teaching Tip: The Writer at Work

To help students understand the value of doing this kind of intensive analysis of the position papers they plan to write about, take some class time to discuss the Writer at Work (pp. 232–241). This material shows students how one of the student writers, Melissa Mae, analyzed essays debating torture. You may already have discussed Mae’s essay, which appears in the Readings section (pp. 195–197). Here, students can read the two position papers on which her essay is based and see an example of her annotations along with her complete Annotations Chart. The brief discussion on pp. 240–241 following the chart enables students to understand how crucial the annotating and charting activities were for Mae in planning and writing her essay.

Annotate the Essays

This section contains two separate lists of criteria that will help students analyze their position essays. Be sure to remind students that they need not locate an example of every item. The objective is not to be exhaustive in their analysis, and some items may not even apply. What’s most important is that they use these criteria to gain a deep understanding of the arguments being made on each side of the debate.

Criteria for Analyzing the Essays

The criteria are divided into two lists. The first list, Features of the Argument, focuses students’ attention on important features of the essay that should be fairly apparent, such as the stated position of the author. The second list, Motivating Factors, asks students to look beyond what may be immediately visible on a first reading of the essays and to make some inferences. For example, while the author may share some concerns overtly, others may be implied, and it is up to the student to determine what those concerns might be.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Finding motivating factors can prove challenging for some students, so it may be advisable to practice annotating a sample essay as a class and possibly also to have the students work in groups to identify motivating factors such as values, morals, concerns, and needs. Working with the class as a whole enables you to model this kind of close analysis—for
example, showing them how certain word choices, examples, and sources relied on as authorities may signal the writer’s values, priorities, or ideology. Remember also that your students may not have been paying attention to public debates and discussions about some of the issues they are now trying to understand. They may need to do a little background research on the issue, as we suggest on p. 219, and then return—a little better informed—to their analysis of the position essays.

**Fill in the Chart**

A sample chart can be found on p. 218. This chart can help students organize their annotations and reference them easily as they plan and draft their essay. You may want to remind students once again that they need not fill in each box on the chart, since not every feature or motivating factor will necessarily be present in the position essays they analyze.

**Teaching Tips**

- We find it helpful to spend some class time reviewing the students’ Annotation Charts. A good way to do this is by having students who are working on the same debate exchange charts. Students whose charting is meager will see what they could have accomplished.
- Alternatively, you could have students begin filling in the chart together during class and finish independently at home. There is little danger of plagiarism when students work together in this way, charting or even annotating in pairs or small groups. In fact, after they have written a draft, it’s interesting to point out to them how their essays differ because of decisions they make as they choose and explore points of agreement and disagreement.

**Thinking about Your Readers**

Having students answer the questions in this section can be especially helpful as they try to imagine explaining the issue and opposing views to their readers.

**Teaching Tips**

- To help students answer the second question about what their readers are likely to know and think about the issue, you might urge them to interview one or two potential readers. If the primary audience is their classmates, you can have students spend five minutes interviewing one another.
- The last question asks students what terms are used in the position essays they should look up and what kinds of background information would help them understand the debate. This is another activity that could profitably be done by a group of students working together on a debate.
Exploring Points of Agreement and Disagreement

The activities here are especially helpful once students have organized their annotations. As The Guide points out, some of these activities lead naturally to drafting, and this may be a good place to point out to your students the often nonlinear, recursive nature of the writing process.

List Promising Points

This activity asks students to make a substantial list of possible points of agreement and disagreement between the essays they are analyzing. It instructs them to look back at the invention work they’ve already done to generate the list.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Although generating a substantial list allows students many options to choose from for their final essays, be sure to reemphasize that, in their final essays, they should explore only two or three points of agreement or disagreement, as two or three points is all that a detailed analysis will allow.

Teaching Tips

• You could have students share their list with a small group or with the whole class in order to help them choose the most promising and interesting points of agreement and disagreement to explore further in the next activity.
• Remind them to consider their audience in choosing promising points.

Try Out an Analysis

This section encourages students to select one point of disagreement or agreement and explore it in detail.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

• Beginning this activity in class and having students discuss their work with each other or with you can make for a very helpful head start on drafting the essays.
• You can also use this activity to help students understand how analyzing a single point of agreement or disagreement can be borne out over several paragraphs.

Researching the Issue

To strengthen their understanding of the essays they are analyzing, students should be alerted to the value of conducting some background research into the issue their essays address. This section suggests ways students might approach this research.
Troubleshooting Student Problems

While researching the issue can be very beneficial to students and help them improve the depth of their analysis, students often pad their essays by including a lengthy summary of the history of the particular issue they are writing about. They often do this because they feel uncomfortable with analysis or unable to analyze the essays. While some background information to reframe the issue is necessary and even desirable, warn students against letting the background information take over the paper, and be sure to emphasize the central importance of analysis to this assignment. Consider looking specifically for this issue in rough drafts, or having students look for it during peer review sessions. If you find students are having difficulty analyzing their essays, consider spending more class time on the Try Out an Analysis activity.

Designing Your Document

There are many visual tools students can use to enhance their analysis, point to potential common ground, and organize their essays clearly. You may want to encourage your students to consider some of the techniques listed here.

Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers

In addition to shifting students away from thinking of you as their sole audience and their sole purpose as getting a grade, the prompts in this section can also help students who are having difficulty deciding what information and how much information to include in their introductions.

Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement

To help students formulate a thesis statement for their own essays, consider using the Teaching Tip: Thesis Statements and Forecasting under Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay (p. 114). If you have already tried it, you might want to remind students about what they discovered. Make sure they understand that the thesis statement they write is tentative: it can still be revised.

Planning and Drafting

This section provides support for students as they begin writing their draft.

Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals

Previous questions about purpose asked students what they wanted to achieve. These questions ask them to think about how they might achieve it.

Troubleshooting Student Problems: Striving for Fairness

Often students have difficulty writing this assignment without giving their own opinions on the issues. These questions give students some strategies they can use to avoid making a biased presentation.
Outlining Your Draft

This activity advises students to create an outline to plan their draft. The Annotations Chart and the Exploring Points of Disagreement and Agreement activity should help them identify the points they want to include in their outline. Outlines for both the Bernard essay and the Mae essay are provided and may be used as templates for the students’ own scratch outline (pp. 222–224).

Teaching Tip

You can help students become more comfortable creating an outline to plan their draft by working together in class on an example.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Direct students who, during the outlining activity, request guidance on scratch outlines to Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–565).

Drafting

This section offers students advice on devising opening sentences, introducing sentences with colons, and working with quotes and other source material. Integrating source material is an essential skill for this assignment and one many students are unfamiliar with, so doing these activities in class can prove an extremely valuable use of class time; moreover, many of these quotation and source-handling tips will be helpful to students in later assignments.

Looking Back

As students are finishing the drafting process, it’s often a good idea for them to look back at their outlines and annotation charts to help them appreciate the benefits of such activities in the writing process. Ask them to discuss with each other or as a class how they were able to use their charts and outlines to help guide their drafting process.

Critical Reading Guide

The Critical Reading Guide, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features of the Finding Common Ground essay. It is also keyed to the Troubleshooting Your Draft table in Revising (p. 230). For general advice on conducting draft workshops, see Chapter 32: Teaching Practices in this manual.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider warning students, before the Critical Reading activity, to look for analysis that seems more like summary and for biased presentation, since these tend to be among the most common problems with this kind of writing.
Revising

The Troubleshooting guide plus the suggestions about reviewing comments from peers and creating an outline in order to examine the draft analytically should help students gain some distance so that they can look at their own writing analytically and revise it.

Teaching Tips

• To help students do a substantive revision, you could spend some time in class modeling ways of changing words and sentences or adding material to fix problems in the drafts.
• Also consider returning to the readings to show your students how other writers solved similar problems.

Thinking about Document Design

This passage discusses the process of converting an essay that seeks common ground into a visual presentation. While the Finding Common Ground essay is just that, an essay, this section can help students consider other media and venues to apply the skills they have learned from this assignment.

Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre. You can

• Ask students to edit and proofread outside of class
• Have students work through the tips in this section a class session or two before the due date
• Or, on the day the revision is due, have students work through this section, making corrections neatly on their final drafts

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Try having students edit just their quotes and citations for the first pass through their papers. For many students, integrating quotes and citing their work is where the vast majority of their errors will appear, often because they may be unfamiliar with the process of integrating quotes into their own writing. Consider referring students back to the Working with Sources activity on pp. 225–226 for help in revising any errors they discover.

■ A Writer at Work

This Writer at Work section gives an overview of Melissa Mae’s writing process, from invention through drafting to revising.
Looking Back

Have students read Mae’s Writer at Work before or after they’ve studied her completed essay. You might also refer to it as a way of introducing the Guide to Writing, since it shows how Mae used the same strategies.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

The writing activities described here ask students to reflect on their writing experience. Because the Finding Common Ground essay represents a genre that is new to many of our students, this reflection can prove a valuable opportunity for students to articulate the skills they have honed or learned as a result of the process of writing the Finding Common Ground essay.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Students do not have to answer every question.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider shortening the list of available options here or directing students to answer specific questions. Another option is to require that students answer questions with enough depth to fill one or more pages of double-spaced text.

Responding to Finding Common Ground Essays

Here are some of the kinds of problems you can expect to find in students’ writing as they seek to find common ground:

The Subject

• If the topic has been assigned, you may see signs in the essay that students are uninterested in the topic.
• If students have found their own essays to analyze, the essays may not be appropriate for this particular writing assignment.

An Informative Introduction to the Issue and Opposing Positions

• Students do not clearly and effectively introduce the essays they will analyze, the authors of the essays, and their credentials.
• The introduction is too long, providing more background information than is needed to frame the issue.
• Students include their own opinions on the issue in their introductions.

A Probing Analysis

• Initially, students may have difficulty finding points of agreement or disagreement for analysis.
• Students attempt to “analyze” too many points of agreement or disagreement and end up with a list of points and no real analysis.

• Students mistake summary for analysis.

**A Fair and Impartial Presentation**

• The essay gives the student’s own opinion on the issue. This can happen at any point in an essay, but students seem especially prone to betray a bias in the introductions and conclusions of their essays.

• The essay might make the student’s perspective on the issue clear without directly stating it through loaded language, framing, or lopsided presentation.

**A Readable Plan**

• Thesis statements are absent or unclear.

• Transitions are awkward or unclear.

• Authors’ positions are not clearly labeled or identified as such.

• Students have difficulty integrating quoted material.

■ **Preparing for Conferences**

If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the form on the following page.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 5

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. Briefly describe the issue you are writing about. Why is the issue important? Why should your readers care about being informed?

2. What information do you feel is necessary to include in your introduction and why?

3. Explain briefly how you organized your essay. What is your thesis statement, and what points of agreement or disagreement do you analyze? How do you feel about the quality of your analysis and why?

4. Do you feel that you have successfully written about this debate without entering it yourself? If so, how were you able to keep from sharing your own opinion on the issue? If not, what passages of your essay do you feel show a bias?

5. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

6. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft or problems that another reader has pointed out. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes.
Arguing a Position

The Writing Assignment
Write an essay on a controversial issue. Learn more about the issue, and take a position on it. Present the issue to readers, and develop a well-supported argument for the purpose of confirming, challenging, or changing your readers’ views on the issue.

Student Learning Objectives
This assignment can teach students to
- Write about controversial subjects and respect the complexity of these subjects
- Use argumentative strategies that reflect their purposes and are appropriate to the audiences being addressed
- Understand opposing viewpoints
- Anticipate and counter opposing arguments
- Evaluate the pros and cons of a particular issue and develop an informed position on that issue
- Critically examine their own underlying assumptions about an issue, as well as those of their opponents
- Support assertions with evidence and reasoned argument
- Use and document evidence appropriately
- Establish a credible tone
- Avoid logical fallacies
- Reflect metacognitively on their writing processes

Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment
The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.
### Challenge Teaching Solution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An Appropriate Topic</th>
<th>Teaching Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Student picks a subject that is not arguable (e.g., “vanilla tastes better than chocolate”).</td>
<td>✔ Review the Criteria for Choosing an Issue (p. 295) in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Author takes a position on a subject that is not really controversial—it would be tough to find someone who would take the other side (e.g., “murder is bad”).</td>
<td>✔ In class, brainstorm a list of controversies with which students have direct experience or for which the research might be relatively straightforward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Author chooses a complicated subject that requires more expertise or familiarity than student can muster on deadline.</td>
<td>✔ Discuss the Going Local section on p. 296. Encourage students to think about small, local topics (like whether an old building downtown should be razed and replaced with a parking lot) rather than global, eternal issues like world hunger. A good list of issues appears in the Collaborative Activity on p. 267.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Review the Criteria for Choosing an Issue (p. 295) in class.</td>
<td>✔ Have students dig up a pair of opposing articles on their issue—as they may have done for Chapter 5: Finding Common Ground—and take a position on that debate, responding to either or both articles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Well-Presented Issue</th>
<th>Teaching Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ The issue is not adequately described.</td>
<td>✔ Pick one of the issues from the readings in this chapter or one of the issues from Chapter 5: Finding Common Ground. With that issue in mind, take the class on a “dry run” through the Ways In: Bringing the Issue and Your Audience into Focus activities (p. 297). Afterward, discuss the advantages to this activity of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ The writer fails to convince readers the issue deserves attention.</td>
<td>✔ Consider creating an early “spin-off” assignment in which students must orally present arguments to the class contending that their issues are significant enough to be worth debating. (Making this a separate argument at first can help students think of it as a point that must be made and might be arguable.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Well-Supported Position</th>
<th>Teaching Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Author has not provided a clearly stated position.</td>
<td>✔ Direct your students to the Framing exercise (p. 298).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Position is supported by poor reasoning or insufficient evidence.</td>
<td>✔ Have students complete the Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement activity, if they haven’t already. Then collect and discuss in class the sets of alternative thesis statements that students came up with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Direct your students to the Framing exercise (p. 298).</td>
<td>✔ Consider having students complete the Developing Your Argument and Counterargument exercises (pp. 299–300) in class.</td>
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(Continued)
THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Solution</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Well-Supported Position (Continued)</strong></td>
<td>✓ Before students start the Researching Your Argument (p. 301) exercise, consider giving them a lesson on library research (perhaps based on Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research) or even schedule a class in the library, so that students can try finding sources while you are there to give pointers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Have the class engage in group brainstorming, with other students suggesting possible arguments and supporting sources.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **An Effective Counter-argument** | ✓ Conduct the following activities in class, or else have students bring their invention work from these activities to class and then discuss them:  
  • Counterarguing Readers’ Objections (pp. 299–300)  
  • A Sentence Strategy: Concession Followed by Refutation (pp. 306–307)  
  • Working with Sources: Fairly and Accurately Quoting Opposing Positions (pp. 307–308)  
  ✓ Conduct a devil’s advocate exercise: Split the class into two halves; then list the positions that authors are taking on the board in two columns, one for each half of the class. Have each student volunteer to argue against someone from the other column. For the first half of class, those in the left-hand column argue for their own positions while the right-hand column students play devil’s advocate. Halfway through class, have them switch. |
| **A Readable Plan** | ✓ Have students read Jessica Statsky’s essay and identify the major ideas in each paragraph, and then sketch an outline. |
| ✓ Review the use of forecasting statements discussed in Chapter 19. |
| ✓ Have students create outlines using the Outlining Your Draft section (pp. 304–305); then have them pass their outlines around the room, with each student commenting or asking questions on several outlines. |
Teaching Tip: Debate and Switch  
Gray Scott

One way to help students work past some of the difficulties mentioned above (particularly the challenge of imagining or dealing with opposing viewpoints) is to borrow a characteristic from organized debate: Require them to write from both sides of a debate, first arguing from one position, then from the other, in two graded assignments. You might have them write two brief position papers, the second opposed to the first. Or you might actually have online or oral debates. In the latter case, you might have the class choose a common subject and then require students to prepare materials so that they can argue effectively for either side. After they have completed the invention stages, preparing for either side of the debate, have them draw randomly to determine which side of the debate they will argue from, using their prepared materials, for either oral, in-class debates; a timed, in-class response; or an online, discussion-board debate with a tight deadline. Once the first round of the debate is completed, have students switch sides and repeat the experience from the other perspective.

Introductory Materials

Scenarios: Discussion Questions

If you have students read and discuss the scenarios that start the chapter, consider the following questions — organized by scenario — as possible tools to spur discussion. The first scenario is keyed to the Thinking about Document Design section (pp. 311–312).

In College Courses

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To discuss the pros and cons of secret ballots in the formation of an organized labor union and the place of the secret ballot in a democratic society
- To think about the persuasive effect of the statistics included by the author to support her argument in favor of the EFCA. Consider each statistic separately — are some more persuasive or relevant than others?
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the argument-in-brief, and (if possible) to explain why they do or do not find the argument persuasive
- To practice arguing against her position: How might her opposition respond to what she has said?
- To consider how visuals can make numerical information more understandable and possibly also more persuasive; have your students read and discuss the Thinking about Document Design section for this chapter (pp. 311–312).

In the Community

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To consider how the petition’s authors address themselves to their target audience (the school board), and how this helps in framing their argument
To discuss the way the letter frames opposing arguments as misunderstandings—Why might this framework make their letter more persuasive? How else might the letter have framed the opposing viewpoints?

To identify the persuasive strategies used in the scenario by the authors of the petition

To imagine, based on their own experience, the challenges that the described Peace-makers program would have to meet in order to be successful and consider how a rebuttal to the petition might be framed

To speculate on how the implementation of such a program would be received by students. Point out that both sides of the debate claim to be arguing in the best interests of the children but that the students themselves are not participants in the discussion.

To analyze the photograph accompanying the text. What does the photograph say, and how might it support the letter’s argument (or opposing arguments)? What sort of conflict is implied by the photograph, and what does the resolution appear to have been? Students might talk about the different races of the subjects and the implied concern about racial or cultural conflict; about the fact that both subjects are boys and the implication that, when parents are talking about conflict at a junior high school, they have in mind conflict among boys; or about the possibility and ramifications of the photograph being posed or taken of two voluntary participants in a program who are likely to get along anyway.

In the Workplace

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

To consider whether the author’s qualifications aid or hinder his position (or both)

To identify the author’s intended audience

To speculate on the author’s purpose in writing this article. You may also ask them to propose possible explanations for the negative (and unexpected) reactions that the article provoked from readers. Were his arguments invalid or incomplete, or is there another reason?

To practice arguing against his position. What do students imagine the blog responses might have said? (The scenario’s description paints some of the broad strokes, but students might practice coming up with the specifics. As an alternative or follow-up, students might practice responding to the imagined responses—how might the executive’s argument be improved?)

To analyze the photograph accompanying the scenario. What does the photograph suggest about the relationship between speaker and audience? (One aspect of the photograph that might be analyzed is the clothing. In rhetoric and politics, it’s a common strategy to dress and carry oneself as much like the target audience as possible—to try to fit in. Neither audience nor speaker in the photograph appears to be doing this, however. What does this suggest about their interest in communicating or their understanding of the other side?)
A Collaborative Activity: Practice Arguing a Position

The collaborative activity asks students to select a controversial issue from the provided list (or any more familiar or timely issue you and your students think of) and to then split into pro and con groups to practice reasoned debate with one another.

- Make sure your students complete Part 2 of the exercise. It asks them to analyze the effect of audience on how their arguments are framed and to identify their own implicit assumptions about what is persuasive.

Reading Essays Arguing a Position: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

- To introduce the basic features, have students apply them to an essay, such as the opening essay by student Jessica Statsky, which has already been annotated with color-coded comments to help students see each of the basic features at a glance.

- You may want to speak with your students about the context in which these authors write. Hotly debated or occasional subjects often require little contextual development from an author at the time of writing because the audience can be assumed to already know the basic parameters of the debate. Subjects that are less known or less current (such as Richard Estrada’s article on p. 275), however, may require that the authors provide additional information that can help frame the subject for new audiences.

- You may want to have students evaluate the success or failure of these essays in terms of their persuasive power. If you do so, require that they justify their evaluations and provide specific reasons for their decisions. If possible, ask them to identify specifically the arguments, evidence, or reasoning that they find persuasive (or unpersuasive) and discuss how the rhetorical devices they encounter could be incorporated into their own work.

- For each argument encountered in this chapter, discussed in class, or presented by a student, revisit the list of purposes and audience assumptions on p. 269. This is particularly important for argumentative genres because very often students have awareness of only one type of argument: one that aims to confirm or enflame passionately held beliefs of the audience and possibly move them to action. When students use the strategies they see in that type of rhetoric in their attempts to persuade those who might disagree or to interest those who are unconcerned, they often end up alienating those audiences. By revisiting the issues of purpose and audience with each analyzed argument, you can help them to see that different rhetorical situations call for great differences in tone and strategy.

Readings

When examining each of these essays in class, consider discussing how the authors frame their subjects for readers to achieve particular goals. Note that all of these authors are reframing issues for audiences they assume do not already agree with them in hopes of changing their readers’ minds:
• Jessica Statsky is arguing against what she sees as an inappropriate application of adult standards of competition to childhood sports. She suggests instead that these activities should be valued as developmental aids and that an overly competitive atmosphere undermines this goal.

• Richard Estrada is arguing that racially charged sports team names and their associated mascots are demeaning and should be changed.

• Amitai Etzioni is arguing that the usual reasons young people are encouraged to work in fast-food jobs no longer apply because that work environment does not actually help them develop the skills and discipline that they need. He argues that teenagers would be better off focusing their time and energies on school.

• Amy Goldwasser contends that recent concerns about electronic media creating an illiterate generation of young people are misguided. She instead argues that this generation is actually highly literate and tech-savvy, and suggests that it is lack of familiarity with this new information technology on the part of older adults that has led to this misapprehension.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

For your convenience, we list below basic features and specific writing strategies addressed in each of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections following the readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student’s attention to a question that addresses an area the student needs to work on in composing or revising the draft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzing Writing Strategies</th>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Estrada</th>
<th>Etzioni</th>
<th>Goldwasser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Well-Presented Issue</td>
<td>Framing the issue</td>
<td>Reframing by challenging a popular comparison</td>
<td>Reframing the cause of the audience’s fears Using inclusive language (“we”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Well-Supported Position</td>
<td>Clear statement of position</td>
<td>Qualifying supporting statements Statistics</td>
<td>Facts Statistics Examples and anecdotes Quotes from authorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample comparisons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Effective Counterargument</td>
<td>Anticipating and refuting opposing arguments</td>
<td>Refuting opposing evidence Co-opting and reinterpreting sources Concessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Readable Plan</td>
<td>Announcing possible objections</td>
<td>Thesis statements Forecasting</td>
<td>Repeated/recurring ideas or language</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to consider the questions in the margins. These questions are designed to encourage them to think critically about
Statsky’s writing processes. This can be challenging to students who are not accustomed to careful analysis and can be especially difficult to those who might be easily distracted by the subject matter. Students may have played competitive sports as children, and some may still have vivid memories and equally strong opinions on the subject. Some may even be student athletes now, while others may never have played competitive sports and will approach the subject with an outside perspective. If you are using an online discussion board, you may wish to have students post their responses in the classroom message board and then use these to begin a classroom discussion of Statsky’s methods. Then, ask students how they might have done things differently were they writing this essay. You may want to ask your students who they think Statsky’s audience is or how their own experiences with competitive sports have shaped their responses to her arguments.

Annotations: A Well-Presented Issue

• One of the chief elements that students should learn about in this chapter is framing, and many of the suggestions offered in The Guide are designed to help them understand both what framing (and reframing) is and how it is useful and important to reasoned argument. If students are having difficulty understanding the concept or why it is useful, you can direct them to the first paragraph of Statsky’s essay and point out how she phrases her first sentence. She defines the parameters of her argument in terms of time (“Over the past three decades”), location (“in the United States”), subject matter (“organized sports for children”), and values (“beneficial to children”). By doing so, Statsky creates a context into which she can assert a clear statement of position, which she does in the third sentence of the first paragraph, in a statement that serves as her thesis. By clearly stating the parameters of the discussion, Statsky focuses her audience’s attention on the elements of the debate that she is interested in discussing and sets up the supporting arguments she will develop later in the essay.

Annotations: A Well-Supported Position

• We have annotated the various sources that Statsky draws on to support her arguments. Students will almost certainly want to know what kinds of sources are appropriate for the writing they will be expected to do. It might be worth emphasizing that most of Statsky’s sources are from professional publications, including books. However, students may be confused by some of Statsky’s choices, such as her use of the Little League Web pages. Emphasize that sources need to be both appropriate to the subject and credible in order to be effective in an argument.

• It might also be worthwhile to point out how Statsky handles two pages from the same Web site in her citations: Each is cited separately and has a unique in-text citation. Students will often want to use more than one page from an organization’s Web site, but seldom see good examples of how to do it, so focusing on this aspect of her citation work can help them.

• Statsky uses anecdotal evidence to support her argument that an overly competitive atmosphere can be physically and emotionally damaging to children. While anecdotes
are effective persuasive tools because they allow an author to illustrate abstract arguments with narrative events that readers can easily relate to, some students may have difficulty understanding how an emotional appeal can be appropriate to use in an assignment based on reasoned argument. You can point out that in this case it is appropriate because part of Statsky’s strategy is to show how competitive sports can be frightening for young children, and the anecdotes effectively support that line of argument.

• The annotation on p. 274 calls attention to the importance of the works-cited page. Students will often consider this part of the essay an afterthought or “optional” since it may not be counted in length requirements of their assignments. Many students may also believe they have already “cited” their research through in-text citations and see the works-cited page as redundant or unnecessary. Remind them that without the reference information the works-cited page provides, their citations are incomplete. One way to do this is to call out in-text citations from the essay, such as “Smith, Smith, and Smoll 9,” aloud, in-class. Ask the class to tell you more about that source: What kind of source is it? How would someone find it? Most students will flip to the works-cited list, find the source alphabetically, and tell you the title. Ask them then how they would know this if the works-cited page were missing, and use their answers to fuel a discussion of the ways that the in-text citations and reference list connect. This sort of discussion can help students see the two types of citations as mutually dependent rather than redundant.

Annotations: An Effective Counterargument

• In the annotation on p. 272, Statsky anticipates and refutes the likely counterargument that “winning and losing may be an inevitable part of adult life” by reminding her reader that this essay is not about adult life; it is about the effects of sports on young children.

• In the annotations on p. 273, Statsky accommodates the counterargument that children should be acclimated to competition early by first acknowledging the circumstances in which children are often required to compete. By doing so she demonstrates that she understands and respects the opposing position. She then qualifies the position by pointing out that cooperation is as important as competition and that an overemphasis on the second all too often comes at the expense of the first.

Annotations: A Readable Plan

• The second paragraph of Statsky’s essay forecasts her major arguments. Note that she uses strong, forceful language at this stage of her argument. Readers should have no doubts about what her opinion is on the subject at this point, but may be curious to learn why she believes the way she does.

• Forecasting can be a useful way of dealing with students’ tendency to mistake assertion for argument. You can point out that Statsky is forcefully asserting her positions and beliefs in paragraph 2, but that her argument does not begin and end there. Instead, she sets up reader expectations that she will develop and support these beliefs
later in the essay. When she then does so, it validates her early assertions and gives the whole essay coherence.

**Cross-Reference to A Writer at Work**

The Learn About Statsky’s Writing Process section following the annotated essay can be used to introduce the Guide to Writing for this chapter. Students can see part of her invention writing, which shows how she used the process to gain a greater understanding of opposing arguments and used this understanding to skillfully anticipate, accommodate, and refute likely counterarguments. (See the discussion of teaching A Writer at Work below on p. 165).

**Headnote:** The “As you read” activity asks students to think about Estrada’s purpose in writing this essay and how his rhetorical strategy is designed to establish a common ground with his readers rather than to emphasize differences. Since Estrada’s essay takes on the subject of racial and ethnic insensitivity, this can be an emotionally charged assignment for many students. Some will have strong opinions and will want to discuss them, while others may be reluctant to voice their thoughts in front of the class. You may wish to keep the discussion focused on Estrada’s argumentative strategy. One possibility would be to have students imagine how Estrada’s essay might have looked had he chosen to pursue a different strategy, one that emphasized a politics of grievance and injustice rather than of common experience. Then have them consider whether such a strategy would be more or less successful, given his purpose in writing the essay.

**Making Connections: Name-Calling**

This activity is designed to help students think about the power of words to convey complex cultural meanings as well as simple “dictionary” meanings. Most (if not all) students will be familiar with the use of language to create social hierarchies and to classify individuals or groups, but many will be unaccustomed to talking about it. Students who oppose Estrada’s position and defend the naming of sports teams after ethnic groups might see discussion of connotations as an attempt to force agreement with Estrada, in which case you might discuss the ways one could agree that a term is hurtful while still arguing that it should be used in a particular instance. As the textbook points out, it might also be useful to discuss context for names: Some ethnic and cultural groups may allow members to call each other names that they would consider offensive and derogatory when used by someone outside the group.

There are good reasons to conduct this activity in class: By helping students become more aware of the myriad connotations that a seemingly simple word or phrase can carry, we can help them develop a keener awareness of how their choice of language affects the impact of their writing. It is worth noting that this can be an uncomfortable activity for students, as they may become aware of hurtful words or phrases that they are accustomed to using innocently. Since this is in large part the purpose of Estrada’s essay, it can offer a useful way to launch into a class discussion of the reading.
Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Presented Issue

Estrada’s essay gives students an example of reframing—a move that requires rather sophisticated audience analysis: Estrada is writing to the politically conservative readers of the Dallas Morning News. Nevertheless, approximately 35 percent of the Dallas population considers itself Hispanic or Latino; approximately 26 percent considers itself black or African American.

Estrada recognizes that his largely conservative (yet diverse) readership might see the issue differently than he does and redraws the picture to try to help them see it from his perspective. He starts his reframing right in the title, which appears initially to be ill-advised: The “sticks and stones” saying he invokes is normally used to diminish the importance of name-calling. But he uses it to put sports team names in the same category as sticks and stones—that is, to suggest that sports team names may belong in the category of things that can hurt even if that is not the intention. At the same time, he associates the names with bullying, helping him to reframe the issue according to the victim’s perspective rather than the perspective of sports fans. His examples, particularly the one of the father whose son was being forced to participate in activities he thought demeaning, reinforce this new frame. Near the end of his article, he asks readers to consider the impact of calling a team the Cleveland Banditos, a move calculated to resonate not only with Hispanic readers but with readers used to living in a city where a third of the citizens are Hispanic.

Follow-up Analysis

• Have students imagine they are writing a rebuttal to Estrada for the readers of their own campus newspaper. As a class, go through the audience analysis together and discuss ways the issue might be reframed for this particular rhetorical situation.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Reframing requires a solid understanding of audience and therefore careful audience analysis. If students have already picked issues to write about, you may follow up the previous analysis by having them complete the Identifying Your Possible Readers activity on p. 297. If they have not yet picked topics, consider giving them practice at audience analysis: Have them pick issues from the list on p. 267 and then do the audience analysis from p. 297 based on those issues.

A Well-Supported Position

In a move that might seem to students like a violation of composition rules, Estrada presents his thesis in the third paragraph, after two paragraphs in which he attempts to establish some common ground with a readership that might otherwise reject his view outright. Following his thesis statement, he once again establishes some common ground (he grants that the team names are meant to honor, not to hurt) and makes some counterarguments before finally getting around to his reasons for his own position, which ultimately come into focus in paragraphs 11–13: He thinks the team-naming policy picks on minorities that are too small to defend themselves. His closing examples try to show readers who are
already highly sensitive to black, Jewish, and Hispanic slurs how the Native American team names should be viewed.

Follow-up Analysis

• Like Statsky, Estrada clearly states his position early in the essay, but he locates it in paragraph 3 instead of in the first paragraph. Ask students to evaluate whether the information he provides in the first two paragraphs helps make the thesis potentially more acceptable to skeptical readers than it would be otherwise.

• Ask students what functions the example of the World Series between the Cleveland Indians and the Atlanta Braves serves. It enables him to mention two potentially offensive team names in active voice, rather than in a simple list, but it also helps him define the issue as one that is of not local but national importance and therefore one that is worthy of his readers’ attention.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students have already picked issues and completed an audience analysis for their own essay, have them brainstorm or collect examples and evidence and then sift through that material looking for support that might resonate with the audiences they’re addressing.

An Effective Counterargument

Estrada anticipates that readers might think the call to abolish Native American team names is motivated either by too much concern for political correctness or by leaders of minority groups “too inclined to cry wolf in alleging racial insensitivity” (par. 7). He deals with these arguments mostly by accommodating them—he grants that these claims may sometimes or often be true. However, he maintains that there are other reasons to support the abolition of Native American mascots.

Follow-up Analysis

• Ask students to discuss whether Estrada’s definition of political correctness is the same as the one used by his opposition, and if not, why not. This question reveals another way that framing or reframing can work: Estrada appears to have implicitly redefined the term so it excludes any cause that can be shown to have merit. If readers agree with his implied definition, it becomes harder to disagree with his argument.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students have picked issues to write about and have completed audience analysis, have them turn to pp. 299–300 to complete the counterargument activities in the section called Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument.

A Readable Plan

Estrada makes use of cueing language to draw his readers’ attention to his arguments. Frequently, he opens sentences and paragraphs with phrases designed to help his readers place the subsequent arguments in relation to the rest of the essay. The exercise calls for students to look at paragraphs 6 and 7:
• Paragraph 6: “The defenders of team names that use variations on the Indian theme argue that” introduces the first anticipated objection, identifying clearly and specifically the people who make the argument and suggesting, at the same time, that Estrada does not count himself among those defenders.

• Paragraph 7: “Another argument is that . . .” indicates to readers that Estrada is introducing a second opposing argument, which like the previous one (hence “another”) is one with which he does not entirely agree.

**Follow-up Analysis**

• Have students look in the rest of Estrada’s article for other cueing phrases that help readers follow his argument. Other examples include:

  • Paragraph 10: “Against this backdrop . . .” introduces news about several publications refusing to use the Native American team names in their articles, but connects that news to the argument Estrada has been making (which is the “backdrop” he refers to).

  • Paragraph 11: “What makes naming teams after ethnic groups, especially minorities, reprehensible is . . .” reminds the reader of Estrada’s thesis, while indicating he intends to sum up his objections in a succinct fashion. This kind of transition is appropriate for a conclusion paragraph or for the final, most significant point in a series.

  • Paragraph 13: “It seems to me that . . .” cues the reader that what follows will be an opinion or an interpretation of outside data. (In this case, Estrada is stating an opinion.)

**Move from Reading to Writing**

• Have students complete the Outlining activity (p. 304); then, as an in-class writing exercise, have them plan out their cues and transitions to each point and each counterargument.

**Considering Topics for Your Own Essay**

This exercise asks students to consider topics and issues that are both controversial and likely to be relatively familiar to them. Remind them when they are selecting possible topics to write about that they will need to be able to consider the opposing position as well as the one that they intend to argue in favor of and that they will need to provide reasons for their position. Many students may lack the knowledge about a subject to list supporting arguments off the cuff. While this does not need to become a full-fledged research project, you should encourage students to do some background reading on subjects they are interested in before choosing one.

**Headnote:** The “As you read” activity asks students to think about what they have learned from the various summer and school-year jobs they have held. By doing so, they may be more prepared to usefully reply to Etzioni’s closing instruction to “go back to school.” You can easily turn this into a discussion about what kinds of valuable skills, if any, students have acquired
from the various jobs they have held and what reasons drove them to work in those positions in the first place. Etzioni’s closing instruction can lead to an interesting conversation about audience as well. The article was originally published in the *Miami Herald*, a major southern Florida newspaper. While the article is ostensibly written for adult readers of the *Herald* (e.g., the opening line reads, “McDonald’s is bad for your kids”), its closing line suggests that Etzioni’s target audience is students. The author’s seeming appeal to parents may be a conscious misdirection, a subtle way of engaging students in the dialogue by having them “eavesdrop” on the conversation.

**Making Connections: Job Skills**

Once students have discussed their answers to the questions in this section, bring the class back together and ask for volunteers to relate their experiences. How similar are students’ experiences to one another and to those described by Etzioni? An alternative would be to call on students one by one, strategically bringing male and female, young and old into the discussion to provide a variety of perspectives.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

**A Well-Presented Issue**

Etzioni’s strategy here, as mentioned in this section of *The Guide*, involves reframing an issue that has already been framed for his readers by their own experiences. Since this means that Etzioni’s is a more subtle argument than those advanced by Statsky and Estrada, some students may struggle to grasp the precise argument that Etzioni is making and may attempt to oversimplify it by assuming that he is arguing against the value of all work for teenagers. It may be helpful to call out this difference in class and clarify that Etzioni is arguing instead that it is not work in general that is “bad for your kids” but only certain kinds of work. You may then want to go back to the essay and ask students to look for the characteristics that Etzioni attaches to the kind of work that he approves of and the kind that he doesn’t. Students may find it easier to appreciate the difference if it is presented to them as a comparison between opposing kinds of work rather than between work and school.

Below are two observations students might make about the first seven paragraphs of the essay, during the Analyzing Writing Strategies activity:

- In paragraphs 2 and 3, Etzioni describes popularly held beliefs about the value of teenagers’ working at paying jobs. Since the essay is essentially a refutation of an opposing position, Etzioni has to clarify the position he is arguing against before he can begin to support his own argument.
- In paragraphs 5 and 6, Etzioni sets up a widely held perception of the value of work in developing job skills and work ethic and then argues that he does not believe the kind of work offered by fast-food jobs actually provides these things.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Have students look at Etzioni’s points carefully: What common ground does he try to establish with his readers, and how does he use that common ground to frame his arguments? (He attempts to build on a shared goal of giving young people meaningful,
skill-building work experiences—he frames his objections to fast-food work by showing how they do not achieve those shared goals.)

**Move from Reading to Writing**
- If your students have not already done so, have them complete the Framing the Issue for Your Readers activity (p. 298).

**A Well-Supported Position**

Etzioni here makes use of statistics to support his position. You may want to bring up some of the special challenges of using statistics as a form of support. Students sometimes will cite surveys or statistics drawn from a variety of sources without including an interpretation or analysis of what the statistics mean. Remind them that the numbers themselves mean very little unless they explain to their audience the significance of the statistics and some assurance that the source is reliable. Otherwise, readers may casually dismiss such support as unsubstantiated or hollow. In this case, Etzioni cites a survey demonstrating that high school seniors often work long hours and then argues that such schedules must necessarily interfere with school work, citing a second (informal) survey supporting that conclusion.

Students should also notice that some of the statistics Etzioni presents appear to support the other side: He reports, for instance, that students who are fast-food employees are less likely to be unemployed four years later than students who studied full-time. However, he treats these statistics just like any other opposing viewpoint—he accommodates or refutes them. Discussing the ways in which he does this can help students become comfortable dealing with opposition statistics: They do not necessarily have to argue that the statistics are incorrect—they can argue instead, as Etzioni does, that a statistic doesn’t show the whole picture or is being misinterpreted.

In short, all statistics are susceptible to framing—they can be framed to support a position, or they can be challenged by reframing them to show their weaknesses.

**Follow-up Analysis**
- Ask students why they think Etzioni relies on statistics to help support his position. Are statistics a persuasive tool? Why or why not? It may be useful to have students interrogate their reasons for trusting (or distrusting) scientific-appearing or numerical data.
- Have students look, in teams, at the statistics in another article (possibly from this chapter or another chapter in this textbook) and analyze them: Can the teams frame the statistics to support a particular point of view and then turn around to challenge that frame, or reframe them, to show how they might not support the point of view just expressed?

**Move from Reading to Writing**
- Have students analyze the evidence or research they have collected for their own essays and examine the different frameworks through which that evidence might be analyzed or presented: How might the evidence that seems to support their positions be reframed by an opponent to reveal blind spots or weaknesses? How might the evidence that seems to support their opposition be repositioned to expose flaws?
An Effective Counterargument

Since Etzioni’s essay is attempting to refute what he sees as prevailing assumptions about the usefulness of fast-food jobs, much of his essay is counterargument.

He mentions that there are few studies on his subject, but describes two that appear—at least in part—to disagree with him. Students might think this is an odd move: Shouldn’t you look for studies that support what you want to say? However, Etzioni presents the studies so that he can challenge them, drawing on commonplace experiences and familiar observations to reveal their limitations. Right from the first mention of the studies, in paragraph 8, he questions a study’s methodology for relying on questionnaires rather than direct observations and then proceeds to complicate its findings. Yes, the jobs seem to promote “skills,” “teamwork” and “working under supervision.” However, Etzioni argues, the skills aren’t very useful and don’t take a lot of discipline, while the workplace working-with-others skill developed there isn’t the sort that’s useful outside of the fast-food environment.

Follow-up Analysis

• Identify a study referenced in another essay (from this chapter or another), and ask the class to practice arguing against any claims made in the essay based on that study.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students have written drafts of their own papers, have them post those drafts on a discussion board online. Then ask them to argue against two essays by fellow students and to respond to any arguments posted as replies to their own work.

A Readable Plan

Etzioni forecasts his arguments in the long final sentence of paragraph 3.

Follow-up Analysis

• Ask students whether they can detect a pattern to Etzioni’s arguments that makes following the structure of his essay easier. Etzioni makes repeated use of a simple structure—he repeatedly draws attention to what he believes is a popularly held idea of the value of work to teenagers, acknowledges that it is valid, and then argues that the kinds of work offered by the types of jobs typified by fast-food preparation do not actually perform this instructive role. This pattern typically spans several paragraphs, with each one performing a discrete function within the overall structure.

• Ask students to skim the essay and circle, bracket, or otherwise mark the essay to show the repeated use of the structure mentioned above, or you can do so in front of the class using a blackboard or white board (for example: paragraphs 4–6 constitute one iteration of this pattern, 11–13 another, 14–16 another, and so on).

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have students complete the Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals activity from p. 303 if they have not done so already.
• Have students try several iterations of the Writing the Opening Sentences activity from p. 305, so that they end up with several possible sets of thesis and forecasting statements. Then have them form groups with other students to discuss which options from the lists created seem strongest.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

This exercise suggests that students can select issues for their paper similar to Etzioni’s and encourages them to draw on their own personal experience with such work or on the experiences of those around them. One benefit of writing on a subject that students have direct experience in (such as participating in sports) is that they are more likely to understand and appreciate multiple perspectives on the issue and to arrive at complicated positions about those activities.

Headnote: This can be a challenging essay for instructors as well as students because it asks us to examine critically some of our assumptions about what kinds of information and knowledge are valued and what kinds are not. The “As you read” activity asks students to consider how Goldwasser’s use of the we and they pronouns affects her argument. Since her framing strategy is to redefine the narrative of the generation (and technology) gap, Goldwasser’s decision to align herself with her older audience allows her to approach the assumptions she wants to challenge from the role of thoughtful reformer rather than defensive reactionary. It also allows her to lay claim to the authority of age—she recognizes that her audience (epitomized by Lessing) has already demonstrated a tendency to dismiss teenagers as ignorant and uninformed, and so Goldwasser does not try to situate herself in the younger generation’s camp.

One of the advantages of teaching this essay is that many students are very familiar with some of the communication tools invoked by Goldwasser, think of high-tech connectivity as a hallmark of their generation, and willingly spend large amounts of their free time text-messaging or updating social network pages. One way you can get students actively engaged in discussing this topic is to ask them to think about how much time they typically spend in a day using the kinds of tools that Goldwasser talks about: e-mail, text messaging, social networking Web sites, search engines, blogs, YouTube, Wikipedia, etc. For many of them the answer may be between three and six hours a day (or more). If you try to break this amount down, to uncover which activities are being pursued, however, you will probably find—as we have found—that relatively few students are spending time on blogs, wikis, Twitter, or even e-mail. Some might surprise you by thinking of a blog as something that older people maintain or by saying they have never used Twitter (which tends to be favored by young professionals, not students). Most of the students we encounter spend their electronic time texting and updating social network pages. Breaking down their time in this way enables the class to evaluate her argument and raises interesting questions: If her description of what young people do with technology isn’t quite right, does that necessarily mean her argument is also wrong?

Students are not typically encouraged to think of time spent this way as informative or useful or to think of themselves as experts in any field—even though they may be
extremely adept at processing and manipulating certain aspects of information media—and so some may find Goldwasser’s argument that such activities are valuable very exciting. Others may surprise you by disagreeing strongly with her, even as they continue to rely on the tools she describes. If disagreements occur, take advantage of them to fuel class discussion, and be alert to teaching moments about the makings of arguments, use of evidence, and the ways that students frame what they are saying. Be sure also to point out that Goldwasser qualifies her argument to acknowledge the shortcomings of such activity.

**Making Connections: The Information Age**

Once students have discussed their answers to the questions in this section, ask them to discuss what kinds of knowledge and what kinds of skills their experience with information technology has made them value. Is a knowledge of trivia more or less important than a knowledge of how to employ search engines quickly and efficiently to locate the answers to questions? How much trivia does one need to have to be skilled at searching for facts—is Goldwasser’s “trivia” entirely unnecessary? What kinds of skills have students had to develop in order to use these tools effectively? One topic of interest may be that of the reliability of sources: How likely are they to believe information that is presented on the Internet without an accompanying link to the source (and that is, therefore, unverified)? How much confidence do they have in sources of information such as WebMD? Wikipedia? A private blog? This can be used to lead into a discussion about the importance of documented research and citing sources in the students’ own academic work.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

**A Well-Presented Issue**

Much like Etzioni, Goldwasser is attempting to reframe the issue for her audience, and like Etzioni she does so in part by reinterpreting data cited by defenders of the opposing position. Her decision to draw her title from lyrics in the late-1950s musical *Bye Bye Birdie* suggests that her intended audience is an older generation, as they presumably would be familiar with the reference while younger readers likely would not. Her use of *we* and *us* in paragraph 7 reinforces her identification with older readers and helps to frame *her* as a source that might be credible to them.

*Follow-up Analysis*

- Have students look again at paragraphs 12 and 16 with an eye toward how Goldwasser uses the inclusive term *we* to address her audience in her calls to action. How effective would these paragraphs be if she said *you* instead of *we*?

*Move from Reading to Writing*

- Have students brainstorm strategies for reframing themselves as people who share backgrounds or key characteristics with their audiences.
- This discussion can be used as a starting point for work on any of the following activities from the Guide to Writing:
A Well-Supported Position

This section introduces five classifications of evidence to students and provides guidelines for how each ought to be used and what their advantages and disadvantages are. The activity asks students to analyze Goldwasser’s use of evidence. In categorizing her evidence, students might focus their discussion on the following points:

- The descriptions of the Common Core survey, mostly in paragraph 1 (how many people were surveyed, when the results were released, the multiple-choice format of the questions) are facts, not statistics.
- The statement in paragraph 11 about there not being an Internet twenty years earlier is a fact.
- Many of the remaining bits of evidence are statistical — and therefore might be questioned, reinterpreted, challenged due to methodology, or reframed. Students might discuss whether they think Goldwasser is interpreting the statistical evidence correctly. For instance, there might be 33 million young Americans in the population, but are they all fluent in blogging (par. 5)?
- Students might not be sure initially how to categorize Goldwasser’s lines about fifteen-year-old boys sharing online (par. 4), “texting at the dinner table” (7), and how to find season 2 of Heroes (8). These are examples — they might be made up, for purposes of illustration, or drawn from experience; but they cannot be proven, so they are not facts, and they are not statistical.

Follow-up Analysis

- Have students go back and skim the essays by Etzioni or Statsky and locate arguments where the author employs supporting evidence and then label each instance according to the type of evidence he or she uses (i.e., facts, statistics, anecdote, etc). Afterward, ask if they find certain types of evidence more persuasive than others, and have them explain why.

Move from Reading to Writing

- Use this activity as a springboard to any of the following parts of the Guide to Writing:
  - Developing Your Argument (pp. 299–300)
  - Researching Your Argument (p. 301)
  - Making Your Argument and Counterargument (pp. 303–304)

An Effective Counterargument

Much like Etzioni, Goldwasser organizes her argument fundamentally as a rebuttal to a position she sees as popular — the “bashing” of teenagers and the information media often associated with this generation. Like him, Goldwasser attempts to reframe the issue for her
audience. To do so, she co-opts and reinterprets the data produced by the Common Core survey. This is a particularly efficient and effective strategy: It’s often difficult or impossible to argue with statistics but relatively easy to argue in favor of a different interpretation of them, and reinterpreting statistics rather than challenging them outright enables her to make a strategic concession and build credibility.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Direct students to paragraph 12, where — following her concession that the survey’s findings about teens’ knowledge of Hitler are “disturbing” — Goldwasser refutes the claim that modern technology is at fault for that ignorance by putting the onus back on their parents and teachers (“we”). Is this an effective strategy? If so, why?

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- It can often be helpful to have an argument to refute — it can spark ideas that might otherwise not have emerged. Consider having students dig up arguments that oppose their positions and spend a class session freewriting a response to those opposing arguments. Encourage them to think about ways they can turn the opposition’s evidence around and reinterpret or reframe it. When they are done, have them reflect on the ways their freewritten material might help them with their essays.

**A Readable Plan**

This activity asks students to identify repeated ideas, phrases, or arguments in the essay’s introduction and conclusion, and to evaluate how this repetition can help make argumentative essays more readable. In this case, her conclusion brings back the idea from the introduction that society is “bashing” an undeserving victim, but this time the entity she is defending is the Internet, not youth. She reminds us again that the attack is based on an assumption that we are losing a connection to history, literature, and knowledge. Finally, she refers again to Doris Lessing and the Nobel Prize, this time turning the tables and painting a picture of one of the young people Lessing criticized following in Lessing’s footsteps. Put together, her conclusion invokes many of the same entities and issues as the introduction and thus gives us a sense of coming full circle; but it might be worth pointing out that Goldwasser never recycles sentences or propositions — just terms and concepts.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Have students look for repetition in other parts of the essay — but encourage them to look not just for repeated words and phrases but also ideas that she reiterates throughout the essay. Her frequent use of *we* and *they* is one way that she reinforces the idea of a cultural generation gap, but she also achieves this by sprinkling her essay liberally with products, fads, and examples of popular media that are associated strongly with the younger generation and that may seem strange or alien to older readers — forcing her audience to confront their discomfort with a culture that is catering to someone other than themselves.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Following the above analysis, consider having students turn to pp. 303–304 of the Guide to Writing to try the Presenting the Issue and The Ending activities.
Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

This exercise offers particularly tech-savvy students the opportunity to write on subjects that they may be both passionate and knowledgeable about. Subjects such as Internet privacy and censorship are ones students may be familiar with and that are subject to current debate. (Fewer students may be familiar with other hot tech-related subjects like net neutrality or fair use, but posting a few articles about them on a class Web site can expose students to them, and sometimes a few students will become excited by one of these issues.) While this makes such subjects attractive to students because they can draw on an existing body of knowledge rather than relying entirely on outside research, you may wish to remind them that they should not assume that their audience is necessarily as familiar with these subjects. While framing the issue or discussing the intricacies of the subject, students may wish to present themselves as authorities on the issue or draw on what they think is commonly held knowledge about the issue. As a result, some might be tempted to skip or take shortcuts with research, resulting in unsourced information that is not necessarily common knowledge or hurting their credibility by failing to document their work. Worse, many students may mistakenly assume that they know more than they do about an issue and unintentionally misrepresent it in their essays. Remind them that fact-checking is as important (or more so) for their academic work as it is when scouring the Internet for the latest news.

Beyond the Traditional Essay: Arguing a Position

This section of The Guide directs students to examples of reasoned argument that they can find outside the classroom. In particular, examples drawn from visual media can illustrate how the elements of reasoned debate are used outside academic circles. One example, an ad, is provided in the textbook on p. 292. Encourage students to analyze it closely, using both the basic features of the Arguing a Position essay and possibly the pointers from Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals.

Below are some additional possible classroom activities in this vein:

- Review the basic features of the assignment, then play a clip of closing arguments from a popular television courtroom drama. (This is a staple of the genre, so some of your students may be familiar with the form.) Ask your students to identify (in writing) where and how the characters in the show employ these features. Is the position they are arguing for clear? Is it stated explicitly or implied? How do the characters anticipate and respond to counterarguments?

- Consider showing students a political ad. The Museum of the Moving Image hosts a free online database of old political campaign ads at LivingRoomCandidate.org. Steer clear of the candidate ads, which tend not to stake out positions. Instead, try the issue ads, which feature arguments on issues ranging from taxes to welfare to war. The virtue of such ads is that they are short, leaving plenty of class time for discussions and even repeated viewings for follow-up analysis.

- You could also have students watch a portion of a political debate. (These are often easily found online, particularly on YouTube.) Focus student attention on just one complete, single-issue argument made by one speaker during the debate and maybe a response to it from the opponent. Discussion can focus on the basic features or the impact of the debate format on the message being delivered.
Guide to Writing

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of The Guide in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Arguing a Position.

Connecting with Additional Resources

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

- Chapter 16: Defining or Chapter 4: Explaining a Concept for help explaining unfamiliar concepts to the reader
- Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting for help clarifying the differences between positions
- Chapter 19: Arguing for help with organization, support, and rhetorical strategies

Starting Points: Arguing a Position

This feature helps students find the strategies in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address the concerns they have. The most common issues that students have, from this list, are coming up with a debatable issue, constructing an argument in support of their position, and anticipating possible opposing arguments.

Invention and Research

The invention and research section offers students several strategies for coming up with topics, details, and more. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Choosing an Issue to Write About

The first activity of Invention and Research helps students identify prospective subjects to write about. Encourage them to come up with many ideas initially; then walk them through the checklist of Criteria for Choosing an Issue. Many issues initially considered by students turn out to be problematic, so writers should keep using the checklist until they find a subject that holds up well against it.

We have found that there is no simple rule for prejudging the promise of subjects for position papers. Many experienced instructors feel differently. For example, they may eliminate from consideration issues having to do with matters of faith (such as abortion or creationism). We find, however, that students can often handle issues such as these if they take seriously other points of view. When evaluating proposals for paper topics, you may want to take special care to point out that the issue must be one on which some debate can exist. Similarly, students should be as specific as possible when defining the issue. Issues like school uniforms and illegal immigration are largely defined along preexisting and widely familiar lines of debate, but something like “Net Neutrality” will require more effort to define the controversy for readers, who may not know anything about it. You can refer them to Jessica Statsky’s essay (particularly the first and second paragraphs) to use as a model for how to frame an unfamiliar issue.
Analyzing The Guide

Help students analyze the sample issues under the School, Community, and Work headings. While these issues span a wide range, students should recognize that they all spring from underlying assumptions of what principles or outcomes are desirable — i.e., whether a school board has the power to ban books from school libraries raises questions about free speech, while the question of whether people ought to select jobs based on pay or personal fulfillment asks us to consider how we define the purpose of work. Good topics for this assignment frequently use the surface issue to lead into a discussion of fundamental differences in values like these.

Looking Back

Consider discussing with students the ways that many of the topic suggestions here can interact with topics raised in the readings and the Considering Topics for Your Own Essay prompts. For example, Goldwasser’s argument about the power of the Internet and information media adds an interesting complication to the second question: With information so readily available to most students outside of school, would banning books or Web access from the school library actually accomplish anything?

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Some students may have difficulty thinking of an arguable issue on which to write. You can direct these students to this section of the Guide to Writing for help and/or suggest that they conduct some cursory research — like leafing through a newspaper or magazine and circling stories on topics of interest or searching through Google News for issues. Be aware that students will frequently select from among the first issues they find even if they are not interested in them because not having a topic for a paper makes many students anxious — they start to imagine having no paper to turn in. Alternatively, some students might pick subjects they find very interesting even though they don’t fully understand them. Either way, their resulting arguments may be undeveloped or their positions uninformed. Emphasizing the brainstorming or researching of multiple topic possibilities and encouraging students to research the issues they choose thoroughly can help with these issues, but having students turn in their brainstormed topic lists or background research before the final essay’s due date can help more.

Many other students may choose to write on issues that they are both passionate and knowledgeable about. In this case, the danger is that they may dismiss or ignore counterarguments and opposing positions, leading to a presentation of the issue that seems one-sided or incomplete. Any activity that forces students to research and present the arguments of an opposing side can help to defuse this problem: You could have students introduce their topics to the class by summarizing or paraphrasing the arguments they plan to refute before they ever write their responses to those arguments, for instance.

Ways In: Bringing the Issue and Your Audience into Focus

Encourage students to start anywhere on this map that they’d like but to finish all of the exercises eventually.
Connecting to Additional Resources

Point your students to the Writer at Work section on p. 315 for an example of how to think about audience while drafting their essay. Statsky directs her arguments toward parents she believes she can convince and ignores those she feels are entirely unreachable. In their own audience analysis, you might have students think about which readers might be “persuadable” — not yet agreeing with the student but possibly receptive.

Framing the Issue for Your Readers

Ensure that students have generated a lot of material during Ways In: Bringing the Issue and Your Audience into Focus before they start this exercise. Students who have not yet settled on a topic, or who have not yet considered their audience, will have difficulty framing or reframing issues in a useful way.

Demonstrating the Activity

It may be useful to illustrate this activity in class, particularly if your students are having difficulty grasping the idea of framing. If you decide to do this, select an issue before class that you are confident the students are both knowledgeable about and interested in, and briefly describe a debate over it. (An informal survey of interests at the beginning of the course can be invaluable for exercises like this.) Ask students to take a position on the topic — a show of hands is fine, or they can write their responses down if they don’t feel comfortable voicing their opinions in class. Then walk through the exercise as a group, having the students suggest ways of reframing the issue to support their respective positions.

Testing Your Choice

Consider conducting this activity in class. Students often want to settle on a subject quickly and then skip all of the other topic-selection-related activities. This checklist might seem redundant to them at first, but it gives students another chance to check the viability of their subject, this time focusing on their preexisting knowledge of the issue, the practical challenges of researching and composing an essay on it, and its importance to their target audience.

A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

As a final check of their topics, students are asked to run their stories orally by an audience of peers to gauge interest and reactions.

Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument

These questions prompt students to find plausible reasons and evidence for their position and to anticipate readers’ objections to their argument. This should be a section that students return to (perhaps several times) as they continue to develop their essay, as new additions to their arguments introduce the possibility of new objections and counterarguments.
Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students may try to separate their supporting arguments from their efforts to deal with audience objections. While this can be a useful organizing device at times, it can also stymie the invention process by eliminating the debate aspect of the issue. Encourage students who are having trouble coming up with plausible arguments to engage in a mock debate with a friend, classmate, or family member who is willing to play devil’s advocate. Alternatively, point them toward Goldwasser’s essay, which is organized as a reaction to and refutation of an existing position.

Researching Your Argument

You may wish to point students to this section early, especially those students who have no difficulty thinking of a topic they wish to write about. Since they will not have to spend time settling on a subject, have them spend that time learning more about it.

Connecting to Additional Resources

If you would like to emphasize research for this assignment—or check your students’ research before they write papers based on it—consider requiring them to prepare an annotated bibliography on their subject. Chapter 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews can teach students how to do this and provide them with sample annotations. Make sure your students know which type of annotation (descriptive, summary, evaluative, or mixed) you would like to see. Finally, point out to your class that the chapter’s annotated reference examples use APA style. If you’re asking students to use MLA style instead, you might have them practice converting the APA examples to MLA, a move that can not only highlight the differences between the styles but ensure that they remember to think about citation style as they prepare their own documents.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students should be reminded that outside sources require careful documentation. Suggest that they keep a running list of the sources they consult during their research—ideally in the citation style you require for the paper. If they do a significant portion of their research online, they should either copy down the URLs of the sites they visit or create a dedicated folder of bookmarks for the project, so that they can easily find those Web pages if they have to look at them again. Also emphasize the value of citing as they write their rough drafts. Students who save citations for the editing stage often find themselves trying to tuck in citations at the last minute and uncertain about what the sources for each fact or quote might have been, and errors—sometimes critical academic integrity issues—develop as a result. Citing as they go saves them a great deal of grief later and increases the accuracy of their documentation.

Designing Your Document

Since many students will find statistical evidence compelling and some (especially the computer-savvy ones) may want to incorporate graphs or visuals into their essays, be sure to discuss how these aids should be used in the essay. Remind students that these should
be used to support and bolster an argument, not as an excuse to pad the page count of the assignment. (If your papers have length requirements, one way to head off the use of images as padding is to require that students include word counts at the tops of their papers, and then use the word counts to gauge length.)

**Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers**

This assignment asks students to describe specifically what audience they are writing toward and how they plan to approach it. This is especially important because most students assume that their primary audience is the instructor and will write to him or her without considering how their argument would change for a different audience.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Student writers are frequently inexperienced with writing to audiences that may react negatively (or even harshly) to their work beyond the possibility of a low grade. As such, they may simply assume that their audience is receptive to their opinion or (at worst) neutral. You may wish to have students choose a specific audience for themselves—either an existing population drawn from their research or an imagined one that nevertheless represents a clearly defined position—and write to that audience instead. It should be one that is persuadable but not friendly. This has the advantages of both forcing students to strengthen their arguments and providing them with practice writing to a nonacademic audience.

**Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement**

This activity asks students to concentrate their arguments into brief and direct statements. This can be challenging for students who have not yet sufficiently researched their issue, are wavering on their position, or are otherwise unprepared to begin writing. You should direct these students back to the preceding Invention and Research activities. Requiring students to generate a thesis statement is a way of ensuring that they clearly understand both the issue and their own position on it. It also offers direction to the writing process that follows. Students should not be made to feel as though the thesis statement is a straitjacket, however—as they write, their ideas and positions may change, and the thesis ought to be modified to reflect such changes as needed.

**Planning and Drafting**

The next major section of the Guide to Writing helps students organize the invention materials they have created, plan an approach to the paper, and develop a first draft. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

**Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals**

Previous questions about purpose asked students what they wanted to achieve. These questions ask them to think about how they might achieve it.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems: Collaboration**

Since this assignment asks students to write on hotly debated issues of interest to many, it is likely that some students will want to write on the same issue and may wish to share
information or collaborate on the essay. You may wish to lay down some clear boundaries on what is allowable and what is not in order to discourage plagiarism or the appearance of misconduct. If several students wish to work on a single issue, you may instead wish to organize one or more informal meetings during which the students can debate the issue and discuss argumentative strategies in a moderated environment. You may then provide suggestions on how to incorporate the results of these meetings into their work.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems: Conferencing**

As mentioned previously in this manual, some students may benefit from a conference with you in planning their outlines and writing strategy. In this conference, the student should do most of the talking. Your role would be primarily to help students clarify their global goals — those dealing with purpose and audience.

**Outlining Your Draft**

This activity advises students to create a scratch outline and provides several bare-bones organizational approaches that students might use, each one geared toward a different kind of rhetorical situation. Consider going over these outlines in class and discussing the reasons each one is recommended for a different situation to reduce the likelihood that students simply pick one at random without reading the commentary for context.

**Connecting to Additional Resources**

Direct students who request guidance on scratch outlines during the outlining activity to Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–568).

**Drafting**

This section offers students advice on devising opening sentences and a useful sentence strategy for counterarguing: the concession-followed-by-refutation.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

The concession-refutation strategy described in this section may confuse students at first because it can look to inexperienced readers as though the examples from Statsky are internally contradictory — they appear to some students like signs that the author cannot make up her mind rather than like rhetorical maneuvers that could be useful. Going over the sentences slowly can help, as can emphasizing the central importance of the word *value* in this lesson: Statsky is confirming that fun and competitive skills are important; she agrees with those *values*. However, she disagrees that competitive sports leads to these results. Etzioni confirms that work ethic and independence are *valuable*, but argues that employment in the fast food industry doesn’t provide these things.

Even with the above explanations, some students might remain baffled by the above strategy until they practice writing their own sentences using it and home in on how to do it properly. For this reason, consider giving students a chance to practice writing concession-refutation sentences by asking them in class to pick one of the sample essays from the chapter and argue with it, using that sentence strategy. (Or you might bring in an entirely new argument, such as an editorial from a recent newspaper.)
Working with Sources: Fairly and Accurately Quoting Opposing Positions

This section discusses the importance of correctly quoting those who disagree with your opinion. Many students think of citation protocols as a largely academic problem rather than a rhetorical one, so it may be useful to stress the importance of accuracy as a way of building credibility with their audiences. Students who misquote or who cite sources in a misleading fashion should be informed that doing so results in a less credible (and thus less persuasive) essay, as well as one with a lower grade. The final subsection here, Quoting Appropriately to Avoid Plagiarism, provides a great example of a common type of plagiarism and can help explode some common student assumptions about what plagiarism is: For instance, most students are surprised to learn that the failure to use quotation marks in Statsky’s earlier draft, even with correct citations, is considered plagiarism.

Critical Reading Guide

The Critical Reading Guide, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features of the Arguing a Position essay. The better the class discussions of the basic features and readings have been, the better the critical readings by peers will be. Many students will have only those lessons to guide their feedback.

Teaching Tip: Devil’s Advocate

Brian Frink

Students will frequently provide encouragement to one another in their feedback but be reluctant to provide specific details on what can be improved. While encouragement is valuable, it should not come at the expense of useful criticism. When having students review each other’s work for this assignment, you may wish to have them pretend to be a member of the audience their partners have chosen. Each reviewer should take the role of a skeptic—without being actively hostile to the writer’s position. This allows the reviewer to provide not only more focused and useful suggestions on what parts of the essay can be improved and what parts are successful; it may help free the students from feeling personally responsible for delivering the criticism if they feel they are merely playing a role.

Revising

This section urges students to think of revising as problem solving.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

• Urge students to complete the outlining activity, which some might be tempted to skip: It encourages them to see their papers in a nutshell, which makes it easier to assess the impacts of changes they’re considering.

Thinking about Document Design

In this section, we focus on document design work conducted by the student in the EFCA scenario at the start of the chapter (p. 264). What is particularly interesting about this
example of document design is that the student herself is analyzing visuals: She’s studying charts, graphs, and an ad from the opposition (see p. 312) and drawing useful conclusions for her paper. Since her paper is not reproduced here, students cannot see the arguments she came up with from her analysis of the visuals, but this provides the class with an opportunity: Using the strategies described in Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals, what arguments can they come up with about the advertisement on p. 312? What do they think she might have said about it?

**Editing and Proofreading**

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre. You can

- Ask students to edit and proofread outside of class
- Have students work through the tips in this section a class session or two before the due date
- On the day the revision is due, have students work through this section, making corrections neatly on the final draft

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Since argumentative writing often incorporates accommodations and qualifiers, this section makes specific mention of comma misuse before coordinating conjunctions and punctuation errors in sentences that use conjunctive adverbs. This can be a tenacious problem because students often consider comma misuse so common that it is a low-priority error and also because many students now rely on automated spell- and grammar-checking programs that commonly fail to correct the issue. If you have time, you may wish to spend a few minutes in class reviewing the examples in this section. This section also mentions the problem that many ESL students have when encountering or using words that carry subtle connotations—since argumentation is as much about what is implied as it is about what is stated, nonnative speakers can easily modify their arguments in unintended ways.

■ **A Writer at Work**

This section focuses mainly on how Statsky anticipates and accommodates or refutes opposing positions to her argument. Since Statsky’s intended audience is the chief determinant of their likely objections, she spends a significant amount of time thinking about who that audience is. You may wish to go over this section in class early in the invention process, after students have settled on their issues, to help them clearly identify who it is they wish to persuade and how.

■ **Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned**

The pair of writing activities described here asks students to reflect on their writing experience. This can be a valuable opportunity to have students consider how their opinions on an issue changed as they learned more about it.
Reflecting on Your Writing

Students do not have to answer every question.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider shortening the list of available options here or directing students to answer specific questions if you’re worried that fatigued students might pick the “advice to a friend” question and dash off obvious, simple responses like “always proofread.” Another option is to require that students answer questions with enough depth to fill one or more pages of double-spaced text.

Considering the Social Dimensions: Suppressing Dissent

These questions demand some real analysis from students and fairly deep thinking that goes beyond what they wrote in their essays. Since the issue introduced here actually questions the validity of the skills that students have just spent time and effort developing, many may wonder whether the entire assignment is a sham. Nevertheless, the issues raised here offer a rare opportunity for informed and energetic discussion on a subject that students will likely feel ready to talk about. For this reason, consider holding a class discussion after individual written responses to these questions are collected. During this discussion, you might refocus the class on a critical examination of whether these claims are true or — more likely — whether different styles of debate are privileged differently depending on audience and context; or else you might ask them to consider which style of argument from an opponent is most likely to cause them to rethink their positions: free and emotional expression or reasoned argument. These moves can help you keep the conversation productive and focused while still giving students an opportunity to weigh in, drawing from their recent writing experiences.

Teaching Tip: Double Assignment

I find the questions in this reflective activity compelling, and I like the fact that this activity essentially asks students to write a new argument — to take a position on a new issue, this time on a subject about which they are likely to have some surprising levels of expertise, since most participants will now have had experience with both styles of argument, both as writers and as readers. One way to make the most of this opportunity is to make this reflective activity a second, separately graded, equally weighted in-class or take-home essay.

Responding to Essays Arguing a Position

Here are some of the kinds of problems you can expect to find in students’ position essays:

Subject

- The issue the student is writing about is not really controversial — no one is debating it.
- The issue is not arguable.
A Well-Presented Issue

• The issue is not adequately described.
• The issue is ineffectively or inconsistently framed.
• The writer does not assert a position on the issue; he or she may waffle, agreeing with one point of view and then another but never taking a stand.
• The thesis is asserted too soon or too late.

A Well-Supported Position

• It is difficult to see exactly why the writer takes the position; the reasons would be difficult or impossible to list.
• Support is thin; there are relatively few examples, anecdotes, statistics, facts, or other forms of support.

An Effective Counterargument

• The writer merely reports opposing positions.
• The writer ignores readers, neither accommodating nor refuting objections or opposing arguments.
• The writer misrepresents or fails to respond to obvious counterarguments.

Preparing for Conferences

If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the following form.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 6

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. Which controversial issue are you writing about? How did you come to choose it? Why are people still debating it?

2. What is your position on the issue?

3. Who are your readers and how do you want to influence them?

4. For what reasons do you take this position? Be prepared to talk about their relation to each other, their sequence in your essay, and ways you might anticipate readers’ objections to them.

5. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

6. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft as well as any that have been pointed out by other readers. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes. (If you have completed the text’s revision checklist, you can bring it with you to the conference instead of answering this question.)
Proposing a Solution

The Writing Assignment

Write an essay proposing a solution to a problem. Choose a problem faced by a community or group to which you belong, and address your proposal to one or more members of the group or to outsiders who might help solve the problem.

Student Learning Objectives

This assignment can teach students to

- Devise creative solutions to a problem
- Evaluate a range of possible solutions
- Learn about contemporary problems
- Engage in reasoned argument
- Convince readers of a problem’s significance before proposing actions
- Define a problem concisely and effectively
- Analyze audiences to anticipate likely questions and alternative, preferred solutions
- Refute, accommodate, or acknowledge possible objections to the proposed solution
- Read texts analytically
- Reflect metacognitively on what they have learned

Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment

The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.
## Challenge Teaching Suggestion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Well-Defined Problem</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Problems are not focused enough.</td>
<td>✓ Work through Choosing a Problem to Write About on p. 358.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Problems are not solvable.</td>
<td>✓ Have students work through the Making a Chart activity on pp. 358–359 to develop a list of problems focused on personal experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Problems require subject-matter expertise not realistically possible to students.</td>
<td>✓ As a class, analyze the readings specifically to gauge what proportion of each is spent defining the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Defining the problem takes over the essay and solutions become secondary.</td>
<td>✓ Refer students to Defining the Problem (p. 361) for practice defining a problem succinctly.</td>
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<tr>
<th>A Well-Argued Solution</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Solutions are idealistic and not feasible.</td>
<td>✓ Have students complete the Ways In: Exploring Your Tentative Solution activities on p. 362 and discuss the results. You might have the class focus on one or two student proposals, highlighting the role of alternative perspectives and details about implementation in the credibility of the proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Solutions have already been tried and have failed.</td>
<td>✓ Have students review Matt Miller’s essay and discuss how he decided to test his solution with experts and school superintendents. Have students brainstorm people they might run their ideas by for similar checks.</td>
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<tr>
<th>An Effective Counterargument</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Essays fail to consider alternative perspectives.</td>
<td>✓ Refer students to p. 364 for Ways In: Counterarguing Alternative Solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Essays acknowledge other perspectives but struggle when trying to respond to them.</td>
<td>✓ Have students read Evaluating the Logic of an Argument in Chapter 12: A Catalog of Reading Strategies (pp. 594–596) and apply the approaches to the opposing viewpoints they must answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Remind students that nothing requires them to stick with the same solution until the bitter end — if their initial solution starts to look problematic, they can always change their thesis to something they find more defensible.</td>
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<tr>
<th>A Readable Plan</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Essays struggle with logical development and organization.</td>
<td>✓ Have students outline O’Malley’s essay and compare it with the other essays and/or with their own drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>✘</strong> Proposals remain unclear because authors have had trouble separating the features.</td>
<td>✓ Refer students to the Planning and Drafting section on pp. 366–371 and have them work through the sections to create outlines they can work from.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introductory Materials

Scenarios: Discussion Questions

If you have students read and discuss the scenarios that start the chapter, consider the following questions — organized by scenario — as possible tools to spur discussion. The second scenario is keyed to the Thinking about Document Design section (pp. 376–377).

In College Courses

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To discuss the way the student arrived at his subject. He did not start with his proposal — he started with an interest, which led him to research a subject, which made him aware of a possible problem. Since many students feel uncomfortable starting work on a paper without a clear idea at the outset of what they wish to say, it is worth discussing the advantages to such a more exploratory approach.

- To consider how the student learned which objections to address in his essay. What are the strengths of the student’s approach? What do the answers to these questions suggest for your students as potential writers of solutions?

- To speculate about the objections the television programming coordinator might have raised. The text says that the paper responds to uncited objections that the plan is “impractical,” but why might a reader (for instance, one in television) say this? Can your students think of other objections such a proposal would have to address? How might a writer respond to the objections your class has raised?

- To discuss the importance of *Sesame Street* to this argument, given that the television show is referenced twice, both in the photo above the scenario and in the last sentence

- For examples of things they would like to change in their community, school, clubs or organizations, or work. Because this kind of class brainstorming can jog individual creativity, it is an effective springboard to the Choosing a Problem to Write About activity on p. 358.

- To compare this genre to Arguing a Position. How are they alike and how are they different — in terms of constructing a readable plan and counterarguing, for example?

In the Community

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To consider the ways the administrator went about defining the problem. He started with a general impression, collected evidence at a local university library to verify it, and then examined the data he had collected to see what the trends were. By doing so, he learned that the problem was larger than it first appeared and getting worse. Emphasizing this approach can help students discover the importance of studying the problem (which they often think they already understand) and not just possible solutions.
• To discuss the administrator’s trip to the university library. Why would he make such a trip? How might the information he found there differ from what he could have found using the Internet?

• To focus on the words partial solution and their ramifications. Does his emphasis on a partial solution make this a stronger or weaker argument? Often students want to eliminate problems entirely, and when they can’t find a solution that will achieve that unrealistic goal, they become frustrated.

• To speculate about the amount of resistance to his proposal the administrator expects. There are signs in the framing of the argument that the administrator expects it to be a tough sell, including his opening with the detailed consequences of the status quo and his counterargument that the high cost of the solution might be offset by prison costs elsewhere.

• To consider the ways different audiences might react to his proposal. For instance, even if his plan reduces incarceration costs while diverting funds to social services and education programs, each of those agencies is separately funded. He is suggesting a plan that might cut the budget of one institution (possibly eliminating correctional jobs) while increasing the budgets of others. You might consider having students break up into teams for a role-playing debate, each team representing one affected group and making arguments for or against the plan accordingly. After the debate, review the reactions it encountered and discuss the ways the administrator’s argument might anticipate them.

• To analyze the photo accompanying the scenario. What does it say? Students might focus on the choice of subjects and the ways the ethnic identities of the subjects might be said to run counter to stereotype or expectation.

In the Workplace

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• To consider how many problems the truck driver is solving with this single proposal. One of the more remarkable aspects of this scenario is that the writer has devised a plan that could increase the range of employment opportunities for women, improve diversity in the industry, and add truck drivers for transportation companies that need them. Each of these, viewed separately, might seem a challenging problem, but careful consideration of all three problems together has, in this case, created a solution that might address all of them. Because students (like most adults) will tend to view their chosen problems in isolation, they might miss similar synergistic opportunities. For this reason, it might be worthwhile to revisit this point later when students start invention work on their papers: What other problems are faced by the groups or communities students are discussing? In what ways might problems be related to each other or suggest two-bird/one-stone solutions?

• To debate the suggestion in the last line of the scenario: Should the plan be made available to men, too? Why, or why not?

• To consider how the writer uses charts and graphics; have your students read and discuss the Thinking about Document Design section for this chapter (pp. 376–377).
A Collaborative Activity: Practice Proposing a Solution to a Problem

The collaborative activity invites students to practice proposing solutions to problems on their college campuses. The exercise gives students a chance to practice the genre on subjects they already know fairly well, without needing outside research or expertise on national problems. For this reason, the exercise also dovetails well with the actual assignment, which also asks them to write about problems affecting communities to which they belong.

- For most classes, the toughest part of the exercise is implementation. You may want to be ready to walk students through implementation in a campus environment. For instance, if you have access to a computer projector and an Internet connection, you could show students the campus Web site and help them find the offices of departments or administrators who could implement the solutions being discussed. This sort of discussion of implementation may take up class time, but it also encourages students to tackle subjects that are closer to home rather than complex social and political problems such as capital punishment that they otherwise tend to think of.

- During this activity, students are likely to discuss subjects that might be viable paper subjects. They may not realize this yet, so pointing it out to them and encouraging them to take notes on the topics that come up can help them remember those ideas later when they need them.

- Consider moving from the Collaborative Activity to the Choosing a Problem to Write About activity on p. 358.

Reading Proposing a Solution Essays: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

- To introduce the basic features, have students study them in the annotated essay by Patrick O’Malley. You can reinforce this lesson by having the class then annotate another essay, either collectively as a class activity or independently as an in-class or take-home assignment.

- You might want to have students discuss the sorts of assumptions authors can make about audience, drawing from their own experiences (with the Collaborative Activity, for instance, or from class discussions about the opening scenarios) or from the list in The Guide on p. 325. For each of the bullets in that list, you may also ask students to anticipate the sorts of rhetorical moves authors might make as a result. For instance, if the author thinks the audience will assume the problem has already been solved, the essay will have to show the problem remains unsolved or only partially solved before the author’s proposed solution can be offered.

Because proposals have to navigate several rhetorical activities (for instance, having to establish the existence or severity of the problem) and must accomplish each of them to be successful, audience analysis is a particularly important facet of this genre. Encourage students during each reading discussion to think about audience reactions...
and to find assumptions about the audience that are evident in the text. Here are some examples:

- Although O’Malley initially seems to be addressing students, the greater part of his essay is aimed at educators. Viewed in this light, his opening narrative might be interpreted as an attempt to remind professors of what it was like when they were students themselves. The bulk of his essay attempts to defuse anticipated objections and counterproposals by professors, and thus it clearly anticipates that they will be concerned about the burdens his solution might impose on them.

- Kornbluh spends a great deal of her time laying out evidence that her problem is serious enough to require a national mandate, suggesting that she assumes some members of the audience will not see flexible scheduling as a high priority.

- Miller’s care in seeking out perspectives from both sides of the political divide, and in describing these efforts to readers, is based on an awareness that his audience includes members of both major political parties in the United States and that his solution is not likely to be attempted unless both are agreeable to it.

- Kuttner appears to be addressing an audience he assumes may not think of low-wage service jobs as a problem, perhaps because they do not hold such jobs themselves. He seems to assume that such readers will be sympathetic to his cause and at least philosophically on his side (that is, he makes no allowances for free-market opposing arguments) but that they will be doubtful about the prospects for fixing the problem. Accordingly, he spends much of his time trying to convince the reader that his solution is viable.

### Readings

Two of the readings focus on problems in education, a subject that can generate thoughtful discussions among students because it directly relates to their current experience. The other two examples, dealing with social problems, show students proposals that go beyond the university campus and might inspire them to do the same. All four authors draw creatively on observations and research to devise their solutions:

- Patrick O’Malley’s proposal to replace high-stakes exams with more frequent low-stakes quizzes draws heavily on academic research and studies about the effects of various testing approaches.

- Karen Kornbluh’s plan to increase work-schedule flexibility for the changing American family (which she terms “the juggler family”) draws on the example of American businesses that have led the way on the problem. Details of her plan are inspired by historical precedents: a 1980s campaign to raise standards in the face of Japanese competition and an award for employers who meet the goals of the policy.

- Matt Miller’s plan to improve teacher salaries and teacher quality draws in part on the feedback of his sources to earlier versions of the same plan.

- Robert Kuttner’s plan for service workers in the United States draws heavily on both historical and contemporary comparisons—with the New Deal, with auto-worker unions, with Scandinavia, with Mexico.
Analyzing Writing Strategies

For your convenience, we list below basic features and specific writing strategies addressed in each of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections following the readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student’s attention to a question that addresses an area the student needs to work on in composing or revising the draft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzing Writing Strategies</th>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Kornbluh</th>
<th>Miller</th>
<th>Kuttner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Well-Defined Problem</td>
<td>Introducing the problem</td>
<td>Narrowing the focus of the proposal</td>
<td>Focusing on causes of the problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrating the seriousness of the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Well-Argued Solution</td>
<td>Addressing implementation</td>
<td>Testing feasibility</td>
<td>Demonstrating feasibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying additional benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Effective Counterargument</td>
<td>Responding to alternative solutions</td>
<td>Acknowledging, accommodating, and refuting</td>
<td>Announcing objections before addressing them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Readable Plan</td>
<td>Headings</td>
<td>Topic sentences</td>
<td>Transitional phrases</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Rhetorical questions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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More Testing, More Learning

Patrick O’Malley

Headnote: The “As you read” activity directs student attention to the questions in the margins of this annotated essay. The questions help illuminate the basic features of the essay: the ways it establishes the problem, the ways it uses sources or support, the refutation of alternative proposals and objections, and the ways O’Malley establishes cohesion.

Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay

Annotations: A Well-Defined Problem

- O’Malley opens the essay with an imagined scenario that puts readers in the shoes of a student struggling with the problem he wants to solve (par. 1). By opening with such imagined scenarios or anecdotes, students can reconnect with skills they may have learned in the Remembering an Event and Writing Profiles chapters while also learning the roles that narrative can play in arguments and proposals.
- In paragraph 2, O’Malley defines the problem in such a way (“infrequent, high-stakes exams” lead to poor learning) that the solution is implied well before it is stated outright.
- The list of negative consequences of high-stakes testing, also in paragraph 2, attempts to show that the problem just defined is severe and warrants attention.
Annotations: A Well-Argued Solution

- O’Malley switches from describing the problem to presenting a solution partway through paragraph 2. His thesis appears as the final, color-coded sentence of that paragraph and is presented in if–then structure. Note that the sentence also builds cohesion by presenting phrases that he uses throughout the essay, a facet we have highlighted with the color reserved for the Readable Plan basic feature.

- In paragraph 3, which starts with the word Ideally, O’Malley describes a new scenario, one markedly different from the opening “high-stakes exam” he imagined at the beginning. The new scenario encourages readers to juxtapose the two visions, helping them to imagine his solution in action.

- O’Malley supports his contentions by drawing on several research studies, including studies from Harvard and the University of Vermont (pars. 4, 5, and 6). Consider having students review the types of support listed in Chapter 19: Arguing (pp. 663–668) and attempt to classify the evidence that O’Malley has presented. This is trickier than it might seem. An argument can be made that O’Malley is relying more on the authority of the researchers than on their numbers and that his evidence is essentially authority-based. Nevertheless, O’Malley is summarizing statistical conclusions. The statistics are in his references to the relationship between procrastination and achievement, and to the fact that students who take weekly quizzes do better on final exams than students who don’t. A fruitful classroom discussion can be held on how he might strengthen his presentation of the evidence, depending on whether he wants to rely primarily on authority or statistics: Should he give the numbers? If not, could he do a better job of establishing the authority of Frederiksen, cited in paragraph 4?

- After discussing his use of evidence, you may want to have your students flip to Working with Sources (p. 371), which discusses O’Malley’s use of statistics and ways his argument could have been improved.

Annotations: An Effective Counterargument

- O’Malley responds to opposing viewpoints effectively at several points in the essay. For example, in paragraphs 8–9, he responds to objections that professors might raise: specifically, that his plan would take up precious class time and that the exams would take considerable time to grade. In both cases, his responses are blends of accommodation and refutation: He makes it clear that he understands the objections and lists possible adjustments to his plan that professors could make to accommodate them, but nevertheless argues that the quizzes would be “time . . . well spent” (par. 8). You may find it useful to have students debate whether O’Malley’s rebuttals are convincing—and whether they think the same arguments would be equally convincing to professors.

- O’Malley allots paragraphs 10–12 to descriptions and refutations of alternative solutions, none of which he finds as satisfying as his own idea. In each case, he explains how the alternative might work and why he thinks it fails to measure up to the one he is championing. One annotation asks students whether he presents the alternatives “effectively,” and this might be an interesting topic for debate: Some students may
argue that his transition to the alternative solutions is unclear and gives the impression he is abandoning his own plan to consider alternatives, while others will say they had no trouble following the change in direction. Discussing possible revisions to the beginning of paragraph 10 might be worthwhile.

Annotations: A Readable Plan

- In his thesis statement, O’Malley contends that students under his plan will “study more regularly,” “learn more,” “worry less,” and “perform better.” He then uses similar language throughout much of his argument, making its structure easier to follow and enhancing cohesion. For instance, the first sentence of paragraph 4 says that with frequent feedback in the form of graded quizzes “students learn more in the course and perform better on major exams.” The next paragraph extols the virtues of studying more regularly, while paragraph 6 describes the psychological benefit of the plan, saying students will be “virtually worry-free.” Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader (p. 607) discusses the use of word repetition as a cohesive device and might be worth reviewing with students.

- As a follow-up activity, you could have students complete Exercise 13.3 in Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader (p. 603), which asks them to analyze the paragraph structures of paragraphs 4–6.

Teaching Tip: Perspective-Switching Exercise

Liz Spies

After reviewing the structural components of O’Malley’s argumentation strategy, I divide students into groups and give each group one paragraph of O’Malley’s essay, choosing from among paragraphs 2–12. The students start by developing rebuttals against their assigned paragraphs from an instructor’s perspective. I then have each group attempt to refute, accommodate, or acknowledge the objections it raised, using the counterarguing strategies described in Chapter 19: Arguing. I encourage students to try to use this as an opportunity to make O’Malley’s argument stronger.

Later, after students have picked their own subjects and drafted (or even outlined) their essays, I have them perform a similar feat with their own arguments. Students pass their material to nearby peers, and each spends ten minutes writing objections on the drafts (or outlines) they have received. When they are done, they pass their papers to another reader and repeat the activity. In addition to raising new objections, the second reader can comment on the objections suggested by the first reader. After the second round of readers’ objections, authors collect their work, read the objections, and spend the rest of the class session attempting to respond to the objections their classmates’ raised. (You could allow them to ask the readers to clarify objections they do not understand.) Later, I have them reflect on the experience, either in class discussion or in journal writing, so they have a chance to think about what they have learned about making and refuting objections, and the impacts of these activities on the quality of an argument.

This activity can also be done outside of class online or even via e-mail.
Cross-Reference to A Writer at Work

The Learn about O’Malley’s Writing Process section following the annotated student essay can be used to introduce the Guide to Writing. Students can see part of an early draft by O’Malley on pp. 379–381, along with a detailed analysis of the differences between the draft and the final version. See the discussion of teaching the Writer at Work section below on p. 201.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to think about their own backgrounds as children or parents and how (or whether) they have been affected by the “juggler family” problems that Kornbluh describes. In classes with a mix of older working parents and younger students, that diversity of perspectives can lead to an engaged and fruitful discussion. However, even in a fairly homogeneous room of eighteen- and nineteen-year-old college freshmen, there are likely to be some students with strong opinions on this subject. By inviting students to voice their opinions, you can enable the class to see the problem and Kornbluh’s proposed solution from multiple vantage points and thus enrich the discussion and analysis of her writing strategies.

If students do not seem aware of the problem, or do not seem to think it applies to them, consider this option for putting a human face on the problem: Assign students who are not working parents themselves to interview someone who is—their own parents, for instance. Or, if you have parents in your class, have them describe the problems they have encountered. If you are a parent yourself, what insights can you offer?

Note that this headnote activity leads directly and naturally into the Making Connections activity that follows the reading.

Making Connections: The Problem of Child Care

This activity encourages students to make personal connections to the problem that Kornbluh describes. The activity has two parts: (1) a comparison of your students’ child-care experiences with those described by Kornbluh, and (2) an evaluation of those experiences and an attempt to identify the best child-care options available. Students are likely to analyze Kornbluh’s proposal more thoroughly and more competently if they are already thinking about aspects of the problem, its impacts, and possible solutions and if they have personal experiences on which to draw. In addition, some students may be inspired by the activity to tackle related subjects in their own papers.

As a follow-up activity, you could have teams of students informally develop possible solutions to the child-care problems they’ve discussed and present them to the class. Take notes on the board or on an overhead as the class brainstorms pros and cons for each proposal, and then have the class focus its attention on the solution that seems strongest: Why does it stand out? You may continue down this path by then having the class practice drafting a definition of the problem and a plan for the argument. Although this sort of activity can take up considerable class time, the advantage of such an exercise is that it models key parts of the writing process for the proposal genre, so they are not as alien when students attempt them independently.
Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Defined Problem

The exercise asks students to highlight each instance of the word flexibility in the first two sections of Kornbluh’s argument before writing about the ways she establishes the existence of her problem. She uses the term flexibility (or variants of it, like flexible) eleven times in the first section, seven times in the second section, and ten times in the third.

The highlighting activity draws attention to the fact that many readers who might otherwise be familiar with the problem she is describing might not think of it as a problem because they do not often express it or hear it expressed. Kornbluh repeats the word flexibility frequently in part to build cohesion but also in part as an attempt to get readers to think of flexibility as a thing that employees can receive and employers can (but don’t always) bestow. These sorts of nominalizations, particularly of abstract concepts, are powerful rhetorical devices and worth stressing to students: If there isn’t a term or phrase that describes their problem, they may need to coin one. Repeating that term can help raise awareness of the problem being identified.

The second part of this activity draws attention to the argument-within-an-argument structure of her essay — to the fact that, before she proposes a solution, she spends two-thirds of her essay making the argument that the problem exists and is severe enough to demand a national solution. Make sure students notice the different roles of the first two sections: The first establishes the key terms and thesis, while the second draws on research to demonstrate the need for a solution.

Follow-up Analysis

- The commentary on p. 336 points out that Kornbluh assumes readers may not already be concerned about the problem of flexibility but there are other sorts of assumptions that she makes about her audience. To unlock one of these, ask students what she assumes about the identity of her readers: Does she assume they are employees, policymakers, employers, or a mix of these? Have students point to textual evidence to support their analysis.
- Have students discuss how much of Kornbluh’s information serves to establish her credibility as an expert on the problem.

Teaching Tip: Using PowerPoint to Develop Business Proposals

Students often respond well to visual components of proposals: maps, diagrams, pie charts, visuals, photographs. In the modern business world and in many academic environments, the ability to present a successful proposal is an asset to modern college graduates. Because the first half of a proposal essay requires a successful definition of a problem, I often assign this part as a separate, initial assignment. However, sometimes I require the students or groups to present and convince the class that their problem

(Continued)
Teaching Tip: Using PowerPoint to Develop Business Proposals (continued)
demands attention. Often I require some type of visual component to go along with the proposal of the problem. Many students are familiar with Microsoft’s PowerPoint and other presentation software; though I do not require it, they often attempt PowerPoint presentations.

To show how visuals can improve definitions and proposals, I often show clips of contemporary proposals or calls to action:

• Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth*
• *A Day Without a Mexican*
• *Thank You for Smoking* (for a sardonic bent on the proposal genre)

Move from Reading to Writing

• You may follow up by having students complete the Ways In: Bringing the Problem and Your Audience into Focus and Defining the Problem, located in the Guide to Writing on p. 361.

A Well-Argued Solution

This activity highlights techniques that both Kornbluh and O’Malley use to convince readers to adopt their solutions. In Kornbluh’s case, the primary challenge is to show that her plan is feasible. By focusing on paragraph 5 and comparing its guidelines to the details in paragraphs 16–22, students can see more clearly how Kornbluh proposes to establish that feasibility.

Paragraph 5 asserts the need for balance between flexible staffing and competitiveness, between “economic security” and flexibility within our “work-lives,” and between morale and productivity. These pairings show that Kornbluh has considered the potential negative impacts unbridled flexibility might have and lay out a credible standard she must meet for feasibility.

Paragraphs 16–22 describe implementation of such a plan with details specifically designed to address the tough standards Kornbluh spelled out earlier in the essay: The plan attempts to educate the public about the need for flexibility and to give employees the right to ask for flexible work arrangements, but at the same time, it tries to mitigate potential abuses and negative impacts by “giving business an out if it would be costly to implement” (par. 16).

Whether her attempt to balance these often competing priorities is effective is another question listed here for student discussion. To prompt rich discussion of this problem, you may want to encourage role-playing by having some students volunteer to champion the perspective of employers and others represent employees.

The section finally asks students to focus on verbs of possibility, such as *would* and *should*, and consider why proposal authors would use such verb forms. Ask students to focus on tone in this section, how tone changes with verb tense, how possibility enters this section, and why the proposed solution ends the essay. Kornbluh begins by describing a staggering problem in society and, using past and present tense, presents a fairly negative
analysis of the situation to date. However, through modals, future tense, and active voice, Kornbluh changes her tone, and the effect is that she seems to rescue her audience from the realm of negativity established earlier and resettles them within a realm of possibility and hope, poised for action. In paragraph 16 she uses words like *might* to suggest that her plan is, itself, flexible and therefore might accommodate potential challenges not addressed in her essay. In her final paragraph, she uses the word *should,* rather than *would,* to describe several final details, which due to this shift in language emphasize the urgency of her plan.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Have students examine paragraph 4 and discuss the ways that Kornbluh reinforces her proposal with comparisons to similarly resolved situations, such as concessions made to accommodate disabilities and religious beliefs. Can they think of any other precedents, or, from a critic’s perspective, can they think of any counterexamples concerning other situations for which flexibility is not expected?
- Have students compare the organizational approaches of O’Malley and Kornbluh. While O’Malley discusses his solution throughout his essay, Kornbluh divides her essay into three distinct sections, saving her plan for the end. Ask students to consider reasons for the different approaches. The chief difference is that O’Malley is able to establish the existence of his problem fairly quickly, and therefore he can spend most of his time describing the solution and refuting objections. In contrast, Kornbluh needs to spend most of her time getting her reader to care about the problem and has relatively less space available for counterarguments.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- If students are in the middle of invention for their own essays, you could take some class time to have them work through Listing Possible Solutions and Ways In: Exploring Your Tentative Solution in the Guide to Writing on pp. 362–363.

**An Effective Counterargument**

Students may not initially recognize paragraphs 10–12 as counterarguments because Kornbluh (unlike O’Malley) does not specifically mention the opposing solutions she is refuting. They’re implied. In paragraph 10, she acknowledges that some employees have flexible work schedules, but she argues that these benefits exist mostly for “professional and managerial workers,” not for part-time or entry-level workers who are likely to need the most flexibility. In paragraph 11, she acknowledges the existence of a family leave law, but notes that many employees are not covered by that law. Finally, in paragraph 12, she acknowledges that employees can sometimes negotiate for or obtain the advantages she is describing, but contends they have to sacrifice other things (often job security) to do so.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Have students practice devising objections to Kornbluh’s plan and then responding to those objections. One way to do this might be to have a debate on the merits of her proposal, with students assigned to “affirmative” or “negative” sides. Follow up the debate with a discussion of ways Kornbluh, if she were to expand her essay, could anticipate and deal with potential objections.
Move from Reading to Writing

- Consider having your students work through Ways In: Exploring Your Tentative Solution’s counterargument prompts on pp. 362–363 (if they haven’t already) or having them complete Ways In: Counterarguing Alternative Solutions on p. 364.

A Readable Plan

This section asks students to review Kornbluh’s use of headings and to compare them to the headings used by Kuttner in his essay later in the chapter. If the essays are used in order of appearance, you might want to have the class revisit this activity later after they have read Kuttner. Kornbluh’s headings are fairly conventional, identifying common organizational elements (the introduction, the background section, the solution section), while Kuttner’s are more conversational, attempting in each case to anticipate the sorts of questions or thoughts the reader might have and then addressing them in the headings (e.g., “But How Much Money?”). As a result, Kornbluh’s proposal feels formal and is fairly clear, while Kuttner’s attempts to engage the reader in a kind of virtual dialogue.

Follow-up Analysis

- Invite the class to reread Kornbluh’s essay as though she had left out the headings. What impact does their absence have on the coherence and flow of the argument?
- Challenge the class to add headings to O’Malley’s essay. Where might they put them, and what might the headings say? How helpful would headings be?

Move from Reading to Writing

- For further instruction on the creation of headings and subheadings, refer students to the Heading Systems and Levels section of Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader, on p. 613.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

Students, as parents or as children, may have strong ties to this problem and may become interested in it. They might want to review the ideas listed in this section, which demonstrate ways the same problems might be addressed through solutions that focus on, for instance, preschools rather than employers. In a way, this activity invites students to come up with alternative solutions to Kornbluh’s problem. Students are not, of course, limited to the ideas presented here. You may want to have them turn to Choosing a Problem to Write About on p. 358 after briefly discussing these options and encourage them to think about other related problems or alternative solutions not yet mentioned. Another option, for students who have jobs, is for them to write a proposal specifically for their employers, in which they attempt to come up with a flexibility plan that has all of the qualities listed in paragraph 5 of Kornbluh’s argument.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity for this reading asks students to consider the quality and motivations of their former teachers, as well as whether they would be willing to become teachers themselves. Both of these problems...
are central to Miller’s argument, which attempts to fix a perceived problem related to teacher quality by ramping up teachers’ pay and professional status. If students feel that their teachers were fairly high quality, or if they would be uninterested in teaching even if it paid a lot more, those problems might suggest aspects of Miller’s approach that could be improved. (That is, perhaps, while polling conservatives and union leaders, he should have polled current students, too.) Note that this activity leads naturally into the Making Connections discussion below.

**Making Connections: Choosing to Become a Teacher**

This activity asks students to consider their current interest in teaching (or lack of it), to identify their own goals, and then, in light of those, to weigh in on Miller’s proposal. After students meet in small groups to discuss these points, hold a discussion with the whole class to consolidate their insights. At the end of the exercise, the class should have a new perspective on Miller’s proposal, one not surveyed by the author: a student’s perspective. This can lead naturally to follow-up discussions that are good practice for the sort of writing you’re asking them to do. For instance:

- The cost of the proposal is substantial. If many students indicate they would enter the teaching profession if it paid 40 percent more than the current starting salary, that raises the possibility that a cheaper plan would also meet Miller’s objective. You could then have the class study the effects of smaller increases—possibly by going beyond the classroom to find out whether a 10 percent, 20 percent, or 30 percent increase would have enough of an effect to meet Miller’s goals.

- On the other hand, if the pay increases are not enough to overcome student resistance to the teaching profession, this opens the door to other fine-tuning approaches. Your class could then attempt to find a variation or improvement on Miller’s solution that would better address their own concerns.

**A Well-Defined Problem**

Miller’s case that teacher quality trumps all other education problems rests mostly on the following four pillars:

1. The school system needs to hire many more teachers than it has (par. 2).
2. The best-trained, smartest teachers are either quitting (2) or will soon retire (4).
3. The tests that teachers must pass to enter the profession have low standards (3), and because of the shortage of applicants, those tests are often waived anyway (3).
4. The most competent people today—people who in the past might have gone into teaching—are now likely to pursue better-paying professions, partly because women and minorities now have more options available to them and partly because the differences between teacher pay and other pay have grown (4).

Along the way, he banks on several assumptions about his readers’ values. The most significant among these is the assumption that readers will care about the plight of poor residents in troubled school districts, where good teachers appear to be in shorter-than-average supply and the consequences appear to be severe. As the crisis deepens, these areas
and schools are the ones likely to be hardest hit, and he expects that his readers will care about this problem of "social justice" (par. 2).

Follow-up Analysis

- Have students discuss the quality of Miller’s support in paragraphs 2–4. The points he is supporting are critical, yet his support might seem weak to students expecting college-level citations. His evidence in this section is often summarized and credited to "research" that is never specifically cited or identified. Students should be aware he is not writing for an academic audience—he is following a journalistic style, in which sources are often identified narratively in the text, as he does with Albert Shanker (par. 3) and Sandra Feldman (4). Even so, he seldom does even that much, perhaps because he assumes that most of what he is drawing on is already conventional wisdom or common knowledge. In discussion with students, you might ask whether they believe the points that are simply attributed to "research." Which points, if any, would they have liked to see sources for? Why? Discussing their expectations for research by other writers can condition students to anticipate similar reader concerns when they are writing and researching their own work.

Move from Reading to Writing

- To achieve an effect similar to Miller’s, students first need to be informed about their subjects. If they have already picked subjects to write about, you may want to review the research strategies in Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research with them and coach them on how to take notes about their sources. You may also want to schedule a class trip to the library, so that students can find and consult with you and/or a librarian as they attempt (possibly for the first time) to use those resources. Encourage students to look for sources that describe the severity of their problems and possible causes. After students have researched the severity and causes of their problems, they should use brainstorming techniques to explore the points they need to make to establish the problems in their essays. Accordingly, you may want to refer them to Defining the Problem on p. 361.

A Well-Argued Solution

In paragraph 12, Miller identifies four categories of people that he approached with his idea: superintendents of school districts in large cities, leaders in teacher unions, experts on the subject, and teachers. He identifies the following sources in the paragraphs that follow, which collectively seem to fulfill his promise from paragraph 12:

- Day Higuchi, a union leader (par. 13)
- Arne Duncan, a CEO or superintendent of public schools in Chicago (13)
- Chester E. Finn Jr., an education reformer or expert (14)
- Sandra Feldman, union leader (19)
- "Other union and district leaders" (19)
- Joseph Olchefske, superintendent in Seattle (22)
- Adam Urbanski, union leader (23)
- Jene Galvin, teacher (24)
The sheer number of union leaders Miller quotes suggests he is greatly concerned about union opposition, an impression reinforced by his discussion of unions in paragraph 26, in which he argues that his plan would likely be backed by all affected parties and makes a special point of explaining why unions would be ill-advised to oppose the proposal. He makes a similar argument about the dangers of Republican opposition in paragraph 28, ultimately closing his article with an argument that Republicans would be hurting themselves if they opposed the plan.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- The feasibility test conducted here by Miller is unique among the readings for this chapter. Consider having students review another proposal from the chapter, or from another source, with these questions in mind:
  - How does the author of the other essay establish feasibility? O’Malley, for instance, attempts to show that his plan is feasible by addressing objections that it would take too much class time or require too much grading—by addressing these concerns, he hopes to show teachers reading his proposal that it is feasible.
  - Which approach is more persuasive, Miller’s or that of the author being compared to him? Most readers will tend to favor Miller’s approach, which leads to the next question.
  - If the students were tasked with improving the other argument by conducting a Miller-style feasibility test, whom would they survey or interview? For O’Malley’s argument, the testimony of professors—particularly ones with large lecture classes or without graders—would make a significant difference. By having students think about feasibility tests and the sorts of people they could interview, you encourage students to consider these options for their own papers and raise the likelihood they will do so.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- If you would like students to try Miller-style feasibility tests, have them turn to Chapter 22: Field Research, to either the interviewing guidelines starting on p. 719 or the questionnaire guidance on pp. 723–724. Ask them to come up with a list of people they might interview or survey as part of a feasibility test for their proposals and a series of questions either for an interview or for a questionnaire. You can have them complete these activities in class. Even if you do not require them to follow through on the interviews, this activity will increase the likelihood that some students will follow Miller’s lead. Once they have already thought about whom to interview and what to ask, and have thought about how the answers might help their papers, a few students will find it hard to resist taking the next activity.

**An Effective Counterargument**

Miller’s counterarguments are often easy for students to spot because he labels outside opinions clearly. For instance, he identifies conservatives and teacher unions as separate voices in sentences like these: “Conservatives rightly worry that pouring more money into the system will subsidize mediocrity rather than lure new talent . . .” (par. 7), and “‘It sounds tempting from a union point of view,’ Sandra Feldman told me of Finn’s parallel approach” (19). By showing he is concerned with both sides of the argument, Miller attempts to improve the odds that his solution will be received favorably by those sides.
What is remarkable about his counterargument strategy is the degree to which it depends on the strategy of accommodation: He starts by running his idea past a conservative observer, Chester E. Finn Jr., who proposes this adjustment: Teachers can choose to keep tenure and low pay, or trade those traditional aspects of the job for Miller’s alternative—higher pay and no tenure (pars. 16–18). Sandra Feldman, a union leader, admits the amended proposal sounds “tempting” (19), but raises several concerns: First, she worries about resentment between the two “tracks” of teachers created by the plan; second, she worries about how teacher performance will be evaluated.

Miller acknowledges the first objection (by quoting it) and seems to imply that the plan would eventually result in all teachers being on just one track anyway. After that, Miller spends most of the rest of his essay addressing the evaluation of teacher performance, eventually settling for an acknowledgement that it remains a challenge but could probably be overcome with enough work (par. 25).

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Have students analyze Chester E. Finn Jr.’s own proposal in the dialogue spanning paragraphs 16–18. What assumptions does he seem to be making about conservative voters and legislators and how they would view the proposal? What assumptions does he seem to be making about unions and how they would receive suggestions from the right that tenure be eliminated or phased out? In short, what rhetorical contexts seem to shape or affect the suggestion he ultimately makes? Finn’s suggestion is interesting to analyze in part because it is itself a sample of proposal rhetoric, complete with its own audience analysis, purposes, and often implied basic features. Like many conservatives, he sees tenure as part of the problem and tries to include some sort of tenure reform as part of the deal. However, he is also well aware that a call to eliminate tenure will not sit well with unions and therefore would not likely be implemented without some sort of modification. His suggestion, therefore, attempts to accommodate implied or assumed objections by union leaders.

- You might want to encourage students to reread Miller’s dialogue with Finn and discuss how and why he felt it was necessary to include the dialogue in full. Students might bring up the positive fact that the parties appear to be working together toward a common goal.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- When a student (or nearly anyone else) engages in argument, the natural tendency in dealing with objections or other perspectives is to refute them. It’s such a natural, honed reflex that Miller’s approach—accommodating objections and even appropriating them into his plan—may appear strange to students. For an in-class assignment designed to give students more practice with the art of accommodation, have them practice modifying their plans to accommodate objections. Clearly, they should only attempt this exercise after they have already brainstormed (or received, through peer feedback or interviews) objections and alternative solutions. Challenge them to modify their plans or adjust their arguments to accommodate as many of the objections or alternative solutions as they can. They do not have to use the modified plans, but many students—at least, those who take the exercise seriously—may be surprised at their argument’s effectiveness with readers with a range of perspectives.
A Readable Plan

After students have attempted to identify topic sentences from Miller’s essay, hold a plenary discussion to review what they have found. Students should be able to find topic sentences fairly easily because Miller often follows the traditional approach of putting his topic sentences at the top of his paragraphs, as evidenced by the examples below:

- “There are probably a hundred things these schools need, and ten things that could make a very big difference, but if we had to focus on only one thing, the most important would be improving teacher quality” (par. 2).
- “The obstacles to improving teacher quality are great” (3).
- “The situation may soon get even worse, because many of the teachers now reaching retirement age are among the best in the system” (4).

All three of these examples not only announce the topic of the paragraph, they also reinforce one of the key points in Miller’s argument: that declining teacher quality is a critical problem that requires a solution.

Follow-up Analysis

- Topic sentences do not always appear as the first sentences of paragraphs. Have students find several paragraphs in Miller’s essay (or in other essays) in which the topic sentences are delayed and discuss them. Why do they think the paragraphs are structured that way? (One way to shed light on this is to ask students to try to revise the paragraphs in question so that they open with topic sentences and then evaluate the impacts of these changes on the flow of the essay as a whole.) Some paragraphs that might be worth discussing in this vein are paragraphs 10 and 20.

Move from Reading to Writing

- If students have already completed most of their invention work and know the subjects of their papers, consider having them attempt the planning and outlining activities on pp. 366–368 while encouraging them to draft topic sentences for each of the paragraphs they are planning or outlining.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

This activity asks students to consider operational problems—problems that, like Miller’s, can be addressed by changes in procedure. It also encourages them to address problems related to groups to which they belong. That familiarity not only helps students understand the problems they’re addressing; it also means they are likely to have access to stakeholders, whom they can then interview for feasibility tests, as Miller did.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to consider whether any of Kuttner’s recommendations have been implemented, or proven effective, since he wrote the article in May 2008. Because students are often unaware of political developments, particularly in job markets in which they do not (at least, yet) participate, they may be unable to answer this question without some priming. If students seem to be in the dark,
you might have them look up some of the jobs Kuttner mentions in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, published electronically each year by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and available on the bureau’s Web site. Students can search for jobs by keyword and read about the projected hiring, training, and compensation trends for each job they research. Little progress had been made toward Kuttner’s goals as of January 2010.

**Making Connections: Professionalizing Service Jobs**

Comparing the different types of service jobs that students have participated in can help students better understand Kuttner’s argument. However, it’s important to make a clear distinction between the human-service jobs that Kuttner focuses on and the possible service-sector jobs that students may have participated in because students may base their initial reactions to Kuttner’s argument on part-time, student employment experience rather than an understanding of the challenges facing those who attempt to live on human-services wages.

It is also possible that in some classes—particularly those in which students have limited work experience and limited exposure to arguments on the subject—students might initially give simple, obvious answers to the questions posed here: No, they didn’t receive what Kuttner proposes; yes, they think they should have; yes, they think Taylorism is bad. Asking for elaboration may prove frustrating unless students have better grounding on the subject or an alternative perspective with which to wrestle. If you anticipate or experience such a reaction, consider assigning some of the discussion teams the role of devil’s advocate, explicitly tasked with thinking about the problem from the perspective of employers and customers, and present them with the following questions:

- If industries that are not supported by government spending—like the fast-food industry—were required to professionalize service staff and pay them the wages that Kuttner advocates, what impacts might that policy have on consumers or clients paying for those goods or services?
- What benefits might Taylorism have for people outside of the company or organization—say, for consumers or clients?
- If Kuttner has his way and Taylorism is eliminated, what happens to the phlebotomist, technician, and nurse’s aide jobs? Is one better-paying job worth the elimination of several low-paying jobs?

After the teams meet to discuss their respective questions, hold a plenary discussion involving both the teams that answered the questions in the textbook and the devil’s advocate teams, and note the arguments in favor of Kuttner’s plan, and those against, on the board or on an overhead. One advantage of this kind of perspective-switching is that it helps train students to see proposals from multiple points of view, which leaves them better able to anticipate objections or alternative solutions.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

**A Well-Defined Problem**

Kuttner’s essay introduces a new strategy for students to consider: Establish the causes of a problem, and then propose a plan that attacks those causes. Showing readers the causes of a problem is one effective option for fulfilling the Well-Defined Problem feature for this genre.
In Kuttner’s essay, paragraph 1 establishes the causes of the problem, contending that the number of good jobs is declining due to “globalization, deregulation, and weaker worker protections.” He assumes his readers understand these terms and how the concepts behind them have affected jobs. Students might not. It might be worthwhile to have them look up the terms, particularly globalization, which carries with it a host of associations. Students should understand, going forward, that he is talking in part about sweatshops—a point emphasized in paragraphs 5 and 7, in which he talks about outsourcing and cheap overseas labor more specifically.

Paragraph 2 describes what initially appears to be another problem: the explosion of service-sector jobs, which appear to be replacing the good jobs and which tend to be low-paying—but which, as he emphasizes later in paragraph 5, cannot be outsourced.

In paragraph 3, he weaves these two strands into a proposal: He suggests taking the bad jobs we still have and professionalizing them. The initial set-up, in which globalization is listed first among causes of the good-job shortage, proves critical to his argument because it is the one cause out of the three listed that cannot affect the human-services jobs he is trying to improve. The other two causes (deregulation and worker protections) may affect human-services jobs today, but Kuttner’s argument is based on a premise that those two causes are easier for us to control. Indeed, his plan essentially boils down to regulating the human-services jobs more and beefing up worker protection for them.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- In paragraphs 6 and 7, Kuttner tackles a fourth cause that is critical to his argument—but he refutes this one, saying that the low pay in human services is not due to the inherent value of that work. Have students analyze this part of the argument: How does it combine with his earlier causal argument to strengthen his overall case? It might help to revisit his earlier contention in paragraph 1 that there are three reasons for the loss of good jobs: globalization, deregulation, and poor worker protection. The first of these does not apply to service jobs, and he believes a policy change can transform the other two—so his next task is to convince us there are no other major causes to consider. If there aren’t any other important factors, then his plan will work. Paragraphs 6 and 7 attempt to show that the remaining cause readers are most likely to imagine does not actually apply and, therefore, that the quality of the jobs is under our control.

- A cause-based approach like Kuttner’s can be very persuasive: If we accept the causes he has listed, we are likely to accept the solution. The following questions can give students useful practice challenging such cause-based arguments:
  - Can students think of any important causes Kuttner has not listed for the decline in good factory jobs, any causes he has not considered for the low pay of human-service jobs, or any unmentioned factors that might keep human-service and manufacturing pay low?
  - Critics of Kuttner, presented with his plan, might respond that too much regulation and aggressive worker protections are the causes of the decline in good factory jobs, essentially forcing them overseas to keep prices low. If such claims were accurate, what would that mean for Kuttner’s argument as a whole? What sort of evidence might students seek if they wanted to determine whether Kuttner or his critics were right?
Are your students sure, in an age of robotics and telesurgery, that human-services jobs cannot be outsourced?

Move from Reading to Writing

For a brief, in-class writing activity, have students speculate about the causes of their problems, drawing on any research they have already done. Can they think of any solutions that might work by eliminating the causes? Then have students pass their work to their peers. Students should review the material passed to them and suggest other possible causes or solutions based on the causes, noting their suggestions in the margins.

A Well-Argued Solution

The two benefits alluded to in the instructions for this section address two groups of people indirectly affected by the proposal—groups that might not recognize themselves immediately as beneficiaries. First, in paragraph 4, Kuttner argues that the policy will benefit the children, the patients, and the elderly cared for by service workers. Then, in paragraph 5, he points out that “good” factory jobs are likely to continue eroding, enough that those who now hold them may later wish for a good service job. Kuttner assumes (probably correctly) that readers of the American Prospect are likely to care a great deal about factory jobs and people cared for by service workers, and to see these benefits as good reasons to support such a plan.

Follow-up Analysis

- Can students think of any beneficiaries Kuttner has left out?
- Proposals sometimes highlight benefits but omit negative side effects. Have students try to think of types of workers who might be negatively affected by Kuttner’s proposal: How might an opposing argument describe those side effects? How might Kuttner refute them?

Move from Reading to Writing

- Have students spend some time in class brainstorming about the possible side effects of their plans: What other effects, positive or negative, might their proposals have? Do any of the positive impacts seem worth trumpeting? Do any of the negative effects that seem possible need to be addressed or counterargued?

An Effective Counterargument

Kuttner tackles several objections in the paragraphs students are asked here to analyze:

- He refutes possible suspicions that there may be no suitable government precedent for the kind of action he is recommending by citing the Davis-Bacon Act (par. 11).
- He acknowledges a possible objection that Davis-Bacon has been problematic, but suggests that its past problems—if any actually existed—are no longer relevant in the current crisis (12).
• He refutes any assumption that the jobs he has in mind require no skill to perform well, contending that children and seniors do better under highly skilled care (16). Although he refers briefly to child-development research for his point about child care, he does not indicate whether any research supports his assertions about senior care.

• In paragraphs 20 and 21, he argues against Taylorism, contending that its supposed benefits in human services are “false economies.” By doing so, he anticipates and refutes objections that his plan would create market inefficiencies by rendering Taylorism infeasible.

**Follow-up Analysis**

• Have your students look closely at paragraphs 22–25 — what objection is Kuttner anticipating here? How effective is his response?

• Ask students to think of objections Kuttner has not addressed that might be raised by opponents. Once they have come up with several, have the class collaborate on some possible responses Kuttner could make to them.

• Kuttner does not really consider alternative solutions in his essay. Consider asking students what alternatives they can come up with. (Some students might even be inspired to write their papers as “counterplans” to Kuttner’s.)

**Move from Reading to Writing**

• Have students try the Ways In: Exploring Your Tentative Solution activities on pp. 362–363 — particularly the one dealing with counterarguments. If students have already done this activity, you may have them go through it again, this time looking for new objections that readers might raise to the most pivotal points of their papers.

**A Readable Plan**

The instructions ask students to find examples of transitional expressions or rhetorical questions in Kuttner’s essay. Transitional phrases abound and, given the list of expressions on p. 354, should be easy for students to spot. Likely candidates for rhetorical questions include

• “How do we know?” (par. 7), which sets up his argument that factory jobs are not inherently more lucrative than service jobs.

• All of paragraph 9, which uses several rhetorical questions collectively as a kind of forecast statement — each is answered in the section that follows.

• “How would such a transformation happen?” (14) sets up his description of the plan he’s proposing.

• “What of the argument that you don’t need much training to babysit kids or provide basic care to senescent old folks?” (16) sets up one of his counterarguments.

• “But How Much Money?” — the subheading above paragraph 22, which labels that entire section as an answer to that question.

• “Isn’t that a lot of money?” (23) sets up his counterargument to objections about the cost of his proposal.
Follow-up Analysis

• Have students analyze paragraph 16 specifically, identifying the transitional expressions and rhetorical questions at work in the paragraph and discussing their individual and combined effects. How does the paragraph read if they are removed? Paragraph 16 is a good section to analyze for two reasons. First, some students have had prior instruction on the use of transitions at the beginnings or ends of paragraphs, but remain unaware that they also appear between sentences until it is pointed out; second, paragraph 16 is rich in such devices:
  • It opens with a rhetorical question: “What of the argument that you don’t need much training to babysit kids or provide basic care to senescent old folks?”
  • Transitional phrases in this paragraph include “In fact,” “of course,” and “Likewise.”

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have students begin or continue the planning and drafting activities on pp. 366–368 of the Guide to Writing, but encourage them to plan their transitions from point to point, section to section: What rhetorical questions or transitional phrases might help readers follow the argument?

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

Students often have a fairly easy time thinking of people in their communities whose lives or work conditions could be improved—and if they don’t have any immediate ideas, a few minutes of brainstorming will often produce some. However, they may be reluctant to tackle such subjects because, almost as frequently, they cannot think of an immediate, obvious solution. Encourage them to play around with their ideas for a while before discarding them prematurely—sometimes a little brainstorming or research (or an interview or two) can help them come up with an idea, and once they have such an idea, patience often proves to have been worthwhile.

Guide to Writing

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment chapters of The Guide in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Proposing a Solution.

Connecting with Additional Resources

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

• Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader for help with orienting statements, connectives, and subheadings
• Chapter 19: Arguing for help with asserting a thesis, giving reasons and support, and counterarguing
• Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research for help locating helpful sources for statistics and defining problems
Starting Points: Proposing a Solution

This feature helps students find the strategies in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address the concerns they have. The most common challenges that students have are choosing a topic to write about, coming up with a plausible solution, and helping readers follow the argument.

Invention and Research

The invention and research section offers students several strategies for coming up with an argument and developing it for their particular rhetorical situation. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Choosing a Problem to Write About

The activity helps students identify prospective topics. Encourage them to come up with many ideas initially, and then walk them through the checklist of Criteria for Choosing a Problem. Many topics students initially consider turn out not to be productive, so they should keep using the checklist until they find a doable subject.

Making a Chart

For this exercise, give students fifteen to twenty minutes during class to create lists of organizations and problems within each of them. The chart can help them think of problems with which they have direct experience, which in turn tends to increase the odds that they will have real audiences in mind for their proposals and propose feasible solutions.

Teaching Tip: Practice Narrowing Abstract, National Topics

Joan Costello

The following exercise can encourage students to localize abstract problems: Each student writes down on a sheet of paper a national or international problem of concern and passes it to another student, who then writes down a local or personal version of the problem. Continue having them pass the papers until each has a handful of localized variations, and then return the papers to their originators. Finally, have students share their more focused ideas and discuss the ways in which participants made the topics less abstract.

Using the Web to Find or Explore a Problem

If your classroom is equipped with Internet access and a computer projector, consider demonstrating this activity using a volunteer’s subject matter as the subject of the search. Doing this activity gives you an opportunity to emphasize the importance of evaluating sources, especially online. Have students turn to Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research, the section on Evaluating Sources (pp. 752–754), and review the guidelines there. Then ask the class for advice on how to search for sites related to the volunteer’s subject, and lead the class in evaluating each site.
Troubleshooting Student Problems

Remind students who use the Web not to plagiarize from the sources they find. Because it is easy to cut and paste content into a Word document as “notes,” it is also easy for that borrowed material to find its way into a paper without quotation marks or citations, resulting (sometimes accidentally) in plagiarism. If you model Web browsing, as we suggest above, you might also want to model what to do with the information you find and how to document the sources. This can take up a fair amount of class time, but it is well worth it for the problems it prevents later.

Ways In: Bringing the Problem and Your Audience into Focus

Encourage students to start anywhere on this map that they’d like but to finish all of the exercises eventually.

Defining the Problem

After your students construct a preliminary document defining their problem, consider having them share their problem definitions with the class as another way to test their choice of topics and help each other invent possible solutions or anticipate potential objections.

Listing Possible Solutions

Consider having students complete this activity in class, and emphasize its seriousness before beginning the activity. Because students often gravitate toward problems for which they think they already have a good solution, you can expect some of them to treat this aspect of invention cursorily or to try to skip it entirely unless you bring it into class. You might explain its significance to the class this way: Just as it is important to brainstorm topic ideas, and not to latch onto the first that comes to mind, so it is important to take a similar approach to devising solutions. Encourage them to set aside the “obvious” solutions to their problems for a minute and to see what else they can come up with.

Demonstrating the Activity

Some of the suggestions for finding creative solutions might be confusing to students without a demonstration. Before conducting this activity in class (or having them complete it at home, if you choose to do it that way), ask for one or more volunteers to present their problems to the class. Then, on a board or overhead, work through the list of suggestions in Listing Possible Solutions, enlisting other members of the class to think of solutions that meet each suggestion. You may need to draw on several topics before each suggestion can be demonstrated, since some suggestions might not work well with some topics.

Making a Tentative Choice

You may want to encourage students to revisit this activity a few times, during class, as they continue their work. As they work through solutions and wrestle with counterarguments, they may come across good reasons to change their minds. But without revisiting this activity, students may feel locked into their initial plan. The activity need not be turned into homework or a formal assignment. A simple “microtheme” (one-
minute essay) that is discussed in class, or briefly read and returned but not graded, will often do the trick.

Teaching Tip: Online Mini-Proposals and Peer Reviews  Gray Scott

Proposing a solution seems to be the toughest genre in the book for many students, in part because of its many rhetorical subroutines: establishing a problem, proposing a solution, refuting objections, refuting alternative solutions, demonstrating feasibility, and explaining implementation. One way to help students navigate that maze is to give them more opportunities to practice evaluating each other’s work in the genre. For this reason, I sometimes have students post rough mini-proposals online once they have picked a problem and a tentative solution. The mini-proposals are just one page long and don’t count for much, grade-wise. They have three sections, each roughly a paragraph long: a description of the problem, a description of the tentative solution, and a brief prediction of the objections or alternative solutions each author is anticipating. The next requirement, immediately afterward, is that each student must use the Critical Reading Guide (pp. 373–374) to provide early online feedback to at least one mini-proposal (though sometimes I ask for two). An admitted snag with such online discussions is that sometimes one paper will receive several responses while a different paper receives none. To cut down on such problems, I have started having students sign up in advance to review specific proposals, using a sign-up sheet passed around during class. The sign-up sheet also increases the percentage of students who actually complete the online work, in part because they know they have committed in writing to doing it and in part because they know they will be letting down a specific classmate if they fail to contribute.

Ways In: Exploring Your Tentative Solution

The questions in this activity require students to begin thinking about the arguments they will make in support of their solutions: What will they say to likely objections? How will they show their solutions are feasible? Again, invite students to begin anywhere they like on this map, but encourage them to complete each activity by the end of the process.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider having students revisit the anticipating objections activity on this chart from time to time, recursively. Otherwise, they may later come up with new claims that go undefended by counterarguments, resulting in critical weaknesses or holes in the final argument.

Testing Your Choice

Consider conducting this activity in class. Students often want to settle on a topic quickly and then skip all of the other topic-selection-related activities. This checklist might seem redundant to them at first, but it gives students another chance to check the viability of their topic, this time focusing on the feasibility of their solution and the strength of their topic as a whole.
Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students often panic when they decide that the subject they initially chose to write about may not work. For Proposing a Solution, students may have already completed a great deal of work by this point in the process and may be reluctant to start over. If you hold office hours, consider passing around a sign-up sheet after the Testing Your Choice activities, recommending that anyone with second thoughts about their subject schedule a meeting with you. During the meeting, if indeed the problem appears unsolvable, help the student look for ways to modify it, narrow it, explore another facet of the problem, or explore a related problem in ways that might build on the work the student has already done. If the problem is beyond the student’s understanding, for instance, there may be a part of the problem that is within his or her range, and focusing the topic might help. If the student appears paralyzed by the objections he or she has anticipated, perhaps a change in the solution is called for.

A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

As a final check of their topics, students are asked to run their proposals orally by an audience of peers to gauge feasibility and hear objections or alternative preferred solutions.

Ways In: Counterarguing Alternative Solutions

As students collect and gain exposure to alternative solutions, they may begin to wonder how they will respond to them. The third column in this map, Developing Your Counterargument, provides a heuristic—a list of common problems with proposed solutions—that they can use to inspire their counterarguments. Going over this part of the Ways In map in class increases the likelihood students will try it and find it useful.

Teaching Tip: Cross-Referencing the Objection Lists

The Developing Your Counterargument list of challenges overlaps a bit with the Anticipate Objections list on p. 362, for good reasons. But they do not match completely. Encourage students to try the Developing Your Counterarguments list against their own proposed solutions as an additional test of its merits or source of possible objections. At the same time, if students say they are having trouble coming up with counterarguments for alternative solutions, remind them that the Anticipate Objections list on p. 362 might give them some new ideas for rebuttals.

Looking Back

Students are sometimes tempted to omit alternative solutions because they think the alternatives will weaken their arguments. If your students have this anxiety, consider revisiting the Effective Counterargument features of the readings in Chapter 7—particularly Miller’s strategy of accommodation—and discussing them in class. You might also remind students that counterarguing is a critical skill in all of the argumentative genres, including the assignments for the next three chapters.
Researching Your Proposal

Unlike many other argumentative genres, which often deal with newsworthy problems of national or international scope, the Proposing a Solution assignment encourages students to tackle local or group problems with which they have direct experience. Because of this characteristic, some students may have topics that are not readily conducive to library or Internet research. Point out that this activity includes another option that can work for those small, local topics: field research. Without such reminders, some students may forget that interviewing, questionnaires, and direct observation are research options and may panic when the library proves unhelpful. (Consider giving express permission in your assignment prompt or syllabus for students to use field research for this assignment.)

Connecting to Additional Resources

• Remind students that Chapter 22: Field Research and Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research may be worth consulting or reviewing during this activity. Chapter 24: Using Sources has sample MLA formats for many unusual source types starting on p. 776, and sample APA formats for unusual source types starting on p. 785.

• As we suggested for Chapter 6: Arguing a Position, you might want to have your students prepare annotated bibliographies on their subjects. This is a particularly useful move for Chapter 7: Proposing a Solution because students writing about problems in their communities or local organizations are likely to use unusual sources: letters; e-mails; personal interviews; minutes or agendas from meetings, which they have often found online; public addresses by group members; local government documents; and so forth. An annotated reference list assignment gives you the chance to provide feedback on these tricky sourcing issues separately, before they tackle the argument itself. Chapter 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews shows students how to annotate their source lists. Make sure your students know which type of annotation (descriptive, summary, evaluative, or mixed) you would like to see and which style (MLA or APA) the citations should follow.

• Consider introducing students to the literature review section of Chapter 25, particularly literature review types 2 and 3, which can help students write background sections that cover theories about the causes of their problems, describe previously proposed solutions to those problems, and lay the groundwork for their own solutions.

Designing Your Document

If you review invention materials or notes, keep an eye out for large sections devoted to statistics—often these can be converted to graphics or tables and then discussed in more reader-friendly ways. A quick note in the margins recommending that students look at the Designing Your Document activity for that part of the paper can alert them to that opportunity.

Connecting with Additional Resources

As an additional activity, you might encourage students to bring in research materials, related to their subject, that have graphic elements to them (tables, charts, photographs) and then analyze those images, using the questions on pp. 675–677 of Chapter 20: Analyzing
Visuals to help them understand the ways in which that information has been framed. This kind of analysis may be particularly useful to students who analyze charts and graphs from opposing viewpoints or alternative arguments that they hope to challenge.

**Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers**

Consider requiring students to answer each question listed in this section, including the follow-up questions within each bullet—they are likely to trigger some discoveries and possibly an urge to revisit some activities they have already tried out. For instance, thinking about whether to seek common ground with possible opponents or to “write them off” can trigger rethinking about how to counterargue imagined objections. The questions about incremental or phased-in solutions may lead students to revisit the implementation of their proposals.

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**Teaching Tip: Free Replays**

Gray Scott

To encourage students to take advantage of these recursive urges, consider dedicating some time in class to recursion. Ask students to pick a previously completed activity, and give them the time to redo it. You may end the activity by having students discuss the changes in thinking they experienced. Formalizing this activity and discussing it can encourage students to think of recursive work as normal rather than as a sign of error.

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**Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement**

This activity helps students develop a thesis based on the invention materials, audience, and purpose. Reviewing how the authors of the readings formulated their thesis statements can help students see options for constructing their own. They can use techniques of forecasting, for instance, like O’Malley. Or they can prompt an entire nation to action, like Kornbluh or Miller.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Students who have worked through the argumentation chapters will begin to see that there are many different ways to write a thesis statement (as outlined in Chapter 19: Arguing). Be sure that students focus the thesis statement on the solution, not the problem.

**Planning and Drafting**

The next major section of the Guide to Writing helps students organize the invention materials they have created, plan an approach to the paper, and develop a first draft. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

**Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals**

Previous questions about purpose asked students what they wanted to achieve. These questions ask them to think about how they might achieve it.
Teaching Tip: Conferencing

You might in addition help students plan their essays by conferencing with them about the goals they’ve set for the essay. In this conference, the student would do most of the talking. Your role would be primarily to help students clarify their global goals—those dealing with purpose and audience. For general advice on organizing conferences, see Chapter 32: Teaching Practices in this manual.

Outlining Your Draft

Organizing all of the features of the argument into a logical and coherent essay is challenging, so students should be urged to take outlining seriously. Note that we have provided a sample outline that students might want to use as a starting point or template. Although it is geared toward audiences unfamiliar with the problem (and therefore heavy on background), the parts can be moved around or reduced in scope, and students should be encouraged to use it in this way.

Teaching Tip: Outlining Workshop

Gray Scott

Studying the structure of an existing essay has some shortcomings. Chief among these is that students often sense the structure only vaguely as it is discussed because it is so well concealed by the text itself. Because of this vague, limited sense of structure, students do not always appreciate the rhetorical impacts that structural decisions have. To give students a better grounding in structure, I sometimes take a generic, starting outline for a proposal, like the one provided on p. 368, and have the class discuss its strengths, including the situations for which it is most apt. Then I have them experiment: They reorganize the outline’s points, and we discuss each new configuration’s strengths. The goal of the discussion is to get them to the point that they see the rhetorical difference between starting an essay with the proposed solution and saving it until the problem has been presented or even until alternative solutions have been discussed. Then, I set them loose on their own outlines, at which point, students have a better range of sample outlines to build from and a better awareness of their relative strengths and purposes.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Direct students who, during the outlining activity, request guidance on scratch outlines to Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–565).

Drafting

This section gives students tips for drafting opening sentences and for writing rhetorical questions. Because both types of sentences are key organizational elements (one hooks while the other transitions), and dealing with these activities one at a time can make them
less intimidating, you may want to have students add tentative versions of such sentences to their outlines first, before attempting to work from their outlines to a draft.

**Working with Sources: Establishing the Problem's Existence and Seriousness**

The Working with Sources section focuses primarily on statistics, drawing on the O’Malley and Kornbluh essays for examples. Several critical lessons about the presentation of statistics appear here:

- That percentages need to be accompanied by some indication of raw numbers before they have any real meaning
- That any discussion of change needs to include a clear identification of the time periods involved
- That sources of statistics need to be clearly identified and credible

Note that the points in this section and the statistics discussion in Chapter 19: Arguing (p. 664) are good material for quizzes or exercises in which students analyze or critique statistical presentations. Alternatively, you could have students complete Exercise 19.5 (p. 665), which prompts students to look at the use of statistics in Jessica Statsky’s essay from Chapter 6.

**Critical Reading Guide**

The Critical Reading Guide, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features of the Proposing a Solution essay. The better the class discussions of the basic features and readings have been, the better the critical readings by peers will be. Many students will have only those lessons to guide their feedback.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

You may want to ask authors to brainstorm a list of questions for peer reviewers and then pick the top one or two concerns they have, so that when the peer reviewers get to question 5 (which asks them to respond to such concerns), they have something to respond to.

**Revising**

This section urges students to think of revising as problem solving.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Urge students to complete the outlining activity, which some might be tempted to skip: It encourages them to see their papers in a nutshell, which makes it easier to assess the impacts of changes they’re considering.

**Thinking about Document Design**

Before discussing this section in class, or assigning it as take-home reading, consider having a volunteer read aloud the In the Workplace scenario (p. 321) so it is fresh in everyone’s
mind. Perhaps the most important lesson in this section is the narrative that describes how the authors of the report learned what to include in their proposal: They studied examples of similar reports. This sort of model-based approach is how many successful authors learn to master new genres and is, in fact, a key strategy in *The Guide*.

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### Teaching Tip: Chart Design Exercise

On p. 377, the text describes some tables and lists that are not presented here in the book, which leaves students free to imagine how they might have handled those elements. If you anticipate that many students will want to include design elements like tables, consider using some class time to work with mock data about the differences between truck-driver pay and pay for other jobs more conventionally held by women. (If you would rather use real data, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site provides salary data for all professions.) As a class, go over the different ways those numbers might be presented: bar charts, line graphs showing change in compensation for several professions over time, statistical tables, and so forth. Prompt students to think about the advantages to each design.

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### Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre. The two error patterns described here—confusing use of *this* and *that*, and sentences that lack clear agents—are particularly common in proposal rough drafts, in which there are so many elements and involved parties that crystal-clear articulation is essential. You can

- Practice editing for these problems, initially, in their invention or planning work, so they can see how common the errors are likely to be and become alert to them
- Ask students to edit and proofread for these problems outside of class
- Have students work through the tips in this section during a class meeting one or two sessions before the due date

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### A Writer at Work

This section gives students a chance to compare part of O’Malley’s rough draft with the final version of his essay. The commentary that follows the excerpt highlights several differences worth reviewing with students as examples of solid revision:

- He reorganizes the points so that the reason most likely to have an impact on his audience (professors) comes first.
- He tightens the unity and focus of each paragraph.
- He replaces quotes based on the discovery of better material.
- He eliminates padding from his paragraphs and replaces it with counterarguments, assertions, and support more relevant to the purpose of each paragraph.
This section could be discussed after the annotated essay by O’Malley is analyzed in class, early in the lesson sequence, or else it might be saved until students are about to start work on their revisions, since it illustrates several types of competent revision and might give students a more clear idea of what is expected from them when they revise.

■ Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

As with the other genre chapters in *The Guide*, this one closes by giving students a chance to reflect on their experiences with the assignment. Evidence shows that these metacognitive activities can help students transform experiences into learning, so they are worth including, either as an in-class exercise the day the essay is turned in or else as an attachment submitted with the paper itself.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Students do not have to answer every question, but you might want to have them answer more than one, or else ask them to write to a minimum length (such as one double-spaced page).

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Consider discussing some of these questions in class first, before students write responses to them. Give members of the class a chance to think aloud, to answer some of the questions orally. One reason to do this is that there are so many disparate activities involved in the Proposing a Solution essay that students may otherwise very well forget to reflect on problems that might have otherwise been fruitful. A class discussion helps refresh stressed and exhausted memories and can help students see problems they faced from multiple perspectives.

Considering the Social Dimensions: The Frustrations of Effecting Real Change

The final set of questions invites students to think about one of the greatest challenges to proposal writing: getting results. The commentary highlights some common reasons that proposals for large national or international problems may never be attempted, and the questions that follow explore the students’ feelings about the feasibility of the proposals they have read in the chapter. You may want to discuss some of these problems in class or use one or more of them as in-class essay assignments or essay exams.

■ Responding to Essays Proposing a Solution

Here are common types of problems you can expect to find in students’ proposals:

A Well-Defined Problem

- The problem is too large or complex for the student writer to enter the debate on it authoritatively: poverty in America, terrorism.
• The problem is too insignificant or temporary to matter to readers (noise in the dorms, lack of school spirit, poorly stocked vending machines).
• The problem shifts in mid-essay to something different, usually a result of the student’s not framing the problem clearly enough in the beginning.
• The essay lacks authority or seems confused or unclear about the problem.

**A Well-Argued Solution**
• The writer complains about the problem at length and expresses a demand that it be solved rather than presenting a feasible solution.
• The essay offers too many solutions without arguing effectively for any one of them or for a two-pronged or three-pronged attack on the problem.
• The essay focuses on causes or effects of the problem rather than proposing a solution.
• The essay naïvely proposes an entirely inadequate solution to a large complex problem or proposes a solution that does not seem workable (e.g., it may be frivolous, too complex, or costly).
• The essay does not argue effectively for the proposed solution; the proposed solution may lack reasons or evidence, or there may be logical fallacies in the argument.
• The solution doesn’t match the problem (solving the problem of children’s excessive TV watching by having teachers assign a weekly environmental project), or the essay proposes a solution that has been tried unsuccessfully in the past (without showing why it could work this time).

**An Effective Counterargument**
• The essay ignores obvious or major obstacles or objections to the proposed solution.
• Alternative solutions are not presented even though there are obvious alternatives.
• Alternative solutions are not presented fairly.
• Alternative solutions are not effectively refuted or accommodated.
• The essay denounces those seen as causing the problem, possibly turning off people who need to be persuaded to adopt the plan.

**A Readable Plan**
• It is not clear to whom the proposal is being presented and what the writer expects readers to do about it.

### Preparing for Conferences

If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the following form.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 7

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. What problem are you trying to solve? Why is it significant? Who is affected by the problem, and how much do they know about it?

2. What solution are you proposing to solve the problem?

3. Who are your readers? (An individual, committee, group?) Be very specific in identifying your readers. What action do you want them to take?

4. Which of your reasons do you think would be most convincing to these readers? Briefly explain why. How have you anticipated readers’ objections to your proposed solutions? What else could you do?

5. What alternative solutions do you think your readers might be considering? How have you handled these alternatives? What else could you do?

6. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

7. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft as well as any that have been pointed out by other readers. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes. (If you have completed the text’s revision checklist, you can bring it with you to the conference instead of answering this question.)
Justifying an Evaluation

The Writing Assignment

Write an essay evaluating a specific subject. Examine your subject closely, and make a judgment about it. Give reasons for your judgment that are based on widely recognized criteria or standards for evaluating a subject like yours. Support your reasons with examples and other details primarily from your subject.

Student Learning Objectives

This assignment can teach students to

- Write a well-supported evaluation
- Practice presenting a subject by gauging audience knowledge of the subject and putting it in context
- Identify appropriate criteria by which to evaluate a subject
- Support their judgment of a subject using examples, facts, statistics, textual evidence, expert testimony, and research studies
- Consider alternative evaluations and provide effective counterarguments to support their judgment
- Critically approach topics with which they are familiar
- Consider the audience they are writing to and how best to convince that audience of their judgments
- Influence readers’ judgments and possibly their actions
- Examine the values they use as criteria for judging subjects of this kind
- Reinforce their ability to integrate source material into an essay to support their arguments
- Structure their essays with readable plans, which may include forecasting the argument, introducing key words, transitioning, and using headings
- Reflect metacognitively on what they have learned
Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment

The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Well-Presented Subject</strong></td>
<td>✗ Subjects are not identified or are vague.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✗ It is not clear what kind of subject is being evaluated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✗ Students have difficulty figuring out how much background detail to use in their essays.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Well-Supported Judgment</strong></td>
<td>✓ Back up and conduct Choosing a Subject to Write About (pp. 421–423) in class, putting topic ideas on the board and discussing their merits.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Give an example of a vague topic in class, and discuss how this topic could become more specific. (For instance, you could begin with a James Bond movie as your subject and ask students to suggest a specific Bond film like <em>Quantum of Solace.</em>)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Ask students to identify their subjects by genre or category in class. A discussion of genre can be particularly helpful if you find that students are unable to categorize their subjects when asked.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Review Rosen’s definition of multitasking in her essay “The Myth of Multitasking.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Review the Exploring What Your Readers Know about the Subject portion of Ways In: Bringing the Subject and Your Audience into Focus (pp. 423–424).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Direct students to give a quick “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” to their subjects. Then discuss how these simple judgments can be made more nuanced.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Review the Consider Your Criteria activity (p. 424) in the section Ways In: Bringing the Subject and Your Audience into Focus.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Have students locate and bring in an online review. In class, have them identify the overall evaluations and the criteria used to support the evaluations of the reviews.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ In class, ask students to review the specific details Ann Hulbert uses from <em>Juno</em> in her essay “<em>Juno</em> and the Culture Wars.” Ask the students to identify when she uses summary, details from the film, description of a scene, and direct quotation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Review the research strategies discussed in Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research, and refer students to Researching Your Argument in the Guide to Writing (p. 427).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Effective Counter-argument</td>
<td>✓ Have students locate counterarguments in Kim’s essay “Grading Professors.” Ask them to classify the counterarguments as concession, accommodation, or refutation. (Chapter 19: Arguing describes each of these types of counterargument.)&lt;br&gt;✓ Have students brainstorm objections to their arguments. After the brainstorming, ask them to categorize these objections as major concerns that must be addressed and minor concerns that may be ignored or dismissed.&lt;br&gt;✓ If alternative judgments are not readily available to the students, have the students spend some time taking the other side and imagining how an alternative judgment might be supported.&lt;br&gt; ✓ Review how Hulbert includes alternative judgments in her essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Readable Plan</td>
<td>✓ Have students outline their drafts using the Outlining Your Draft section in the Guide to Writing (pp. 431–432). In class, discuss how the ways students expect the audience to respond can affect their organization. Ask students to identify how they expect their audiences to respond to their judgments.&lt;br&gt; ✓ Discuss the importance of forecasting, and review the way Romano’s essay, “‘Children Need to Play, Not Compete,’ by Jessica Statsky: An Evaluation,” uses this strategy.&lt;br&gt; ✓ Have students identify and define the key terms they will be using in their essays. Have them check whether they define these terms in their essays.&lt;br&gt; ✓ Spend some time in class working on the students’ topic sentences. Ask students to identify their topic sentences and evaluate whether these sentences are argumentative and relevant. (You might have students turn to Chapter 19: Arguing, pp. 660–661, to discuss the benefits of arguable assertions, since many students assume arguability would be a bad thing.)&lt;br&gt; ✓ Review strategies from Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader.&lt;br&gt; ✓ Review the annotations regarding transitions in Kim’s essay.</td>
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Introductory Materials

Scenarios: Discussion Questions

If you have students read and discuss the scenarios that start the chapter, consider the following questions — organized by scenario — as possible tools to spur discussion. The first scenario is keyed to the Document Design section (pp. 439–441).

In College Courses

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- For examples of similar assignments that members of the class encountered in high school or college
- For examples of other pairs of adaptations from novel to film and discuss which adaptations are the most effective. Discussing the merits of historically accurate films and loose adaptations can also generate discussion.
- What the advantages might be to making comparisons—comparing two restaurants in a restaurant evaluation, comparing two video games in a video game review—in an evaluation essay
- What his essay would have been like if he had stuck only with what he knew when he first decided to evaluate Clueless. (In writing this assignment, the student reads a novel, does Internet research, and watches a second film—but some students are intimidated by the prospect of writing about things they have not yet learned and will try to carve out assignments in such a way that they can rely entirely on what they already know. Discussing the advantages to a more investigative, inquisitive approach can sometimes inspire them to do more digging.)
- To consider how using stills helped the writer support his evaluation of the films; have your students read and discuss the Thinking about Document Design section for this chapter (pp. 439–441)

In the Community

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- How blogging provides a public forum for reviews and evaluation, and whether the blogs they have read tend to be well-supported and well-reasoned
- To consider the audience of the motorcycle enthusiast’s review. What purpose would his audience have in reading this review? What information and details would they be interested in?
- To identify the reasons the motorcycle enthusiast uses to support his evaluation and to speculate about whether these reasons will be convincing to his audience
- To look at some blogs, using an overhead projector, for more examples of Justifying an Evaluation writing. (Students might bring in suggestions, based on what they find at home; the instructor might have several examples in mind; or the class might just browse. Much of the writing on blogs is evaluative, even when it doesn’t take the form of film or exhibit reviews.)
In the Workplace

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

• What the teacher’s overall judgment of Schoolhouse Rock! is and how she supports this judgment. You can also ask your students what other reasons could be given to support her judgment. (The way each song deals with a specific grammar or mathematical topic would be one example.)

• Whether they have encountered the Schoolhouse Rock! series in school. You can ask those who are familiar with the series whether they found it to help with learning grammar (or multiplication or how a bill becomes a law). If students disagree with its effectiveness as a teaching tool, you can ask them to give reasons for their alternative judgment.

• To consider the role of field research in the teacher’s argument. How does this research make the teacher’s argument more convincing? How does the teacher balance her classroom experiment to get accurate data?

• How the motorcycle enthusiast or film-reviewing student from the previous two scenarios could have used field research in their evaluations

• To consider the two audiences for the teacher’s judgment: schoolteachers and developers of multimedia educational software. How might having two audiences complicate her argument? What would the advantages be of focusing on just one of those audiences?

A Collaborative Activity: Practice Evaluating a Subject

The collaborative activity invites students to practice making a judgment of a familiar subject (e.g., a film Web site, a sports event) to prepare them to consider the positive and negative aspects of their subjects. This activity also helps students realize that evaluations are subjective and that not everyone will agree on the merit of a subject. It encourages students to think deeply about why evaluations differ, whether because of different criteria or different judgments based on the same criteria.

• If students agree overall, you may find it useful to ask them to play devil’s advocate or role-play different types of readers to explore different criteria people might prefer and generate alternative judgments of the subject.

Teaching Tip: Revisiting Finding Common Ground

Gray Scott

A great way to illuminate the role of personal values in evaluative arguments is to compare two reviews of the same film. I like to draw on RottenTomatoes.com, which enables me to find both positive and negative reviews of recent popular films that students might have seen. I then have the class revisit the analytical approaches of Chapter 5: Finding Common Ground—the annotations and topic charts—to discover what the common ground and key differences are between the two reviews. One of the interesting conclusions that invariably emerge is that the positive and negative reviews often make the same observations, point for point, but weight them differently: Both David Edelstein and Jenna Busch, (Continued)
Teaching Tip: Revisiting Finding Common Ground (continued)

for instance, seem impressed by the special effects of Avatar (2009) but underwhelmed by its dialogue and characters. But Edelstein thinks the spectacle outweighs the writing, while Busch’s final rating weights their shared complaints about the script more heavily. Using the analytical Finding Common Ground approaches in this way can help students appreciate the ways evaluations are often heavily based on the ways details are framed.

Reading Essays Justifying Evaluations: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

- To introduce the basic features, have students apply them to an essay, such as the opening essay by student Wendy Kim, which has already been annotated with color-coded comments to help students see each of the basic features at a glance.

- You might want to discuss the various purposes reviewers have for writing an evaluation. A way to begin is by asking students about their own choices during the collaborative activity:
  - Why did they choose the subjects they chose? What subjects would not have worked as well to evaluate?
  - How did they choose criteria by which to judge their subject? How do criteria relate to the type of subject they are working with?

- Explore the purposes described here: to convince readers that the writer’s judgment is correct, to influence readers’ judgments and actions, to encourage readers to examine the values they use as criteria, to get readers to look at the subject in a new way, and to stimulate readers’ interest in the subject. As the class discusses each reading in the chapter, consider asking which of these (if any) best captures the author’s goals, as well as which of the assumptions about the audience listed in this section seem relevant. For instance,
  - Hulbert seems interested in encouraging readers to examine the values they use as criteria when approaching films dealing with fraught cultural issues like teen pregnancy.
  - Romano seems to be interested in getting her readers to look at Statsky’s essay, which her readers will have read, in a new way by focusing on logic rather than on the basic features as a way to evaluate the argument.
  - Rosen assumes that her readers will be resistant to her evaluation of multitasking, so she reframes the issue.

Readings

The first three readings focus on evaluating textual subjects—a Web site, a film, and an essay. The final essay evaluates a phenomenon (which makes this essay a nice bridge to Chapter 9, in which students will speculate about the causes of a phenomenon or trend).

- Wendy Kim, one of two student authors in the collection, argues that the Web site RateMyProfessors.com is an effective site because it is well designed, useful to students, and amusing.
• Ann Hulbert writes about the way the movie *Juno* successfully navigates the culture wars surroundings its controversial portrayal of the teen pregnancy by critiquing both sides of the family-values debate.

• Christine Romano, the second student author, evaluates Jessica Statsky’s essay “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” (found in Chapter 6: Arguing a Position), writing that Statsky’s support is appropriate, believable, and consistent but is not complete.

• Christine Rosen takes a very different subject—the way we organize our time—and evaluates the effectiveness of multitasking, charting its rise, its social causes, and the critiques launched against it. Though she seems to withhold final judgment, her sustained interest in the drawbacks of multitasking is clear.

Other subjects are suggested in the Making Connections and Considering Topics for Your Own Essay sections following the last three readings, and you will undoubtedly have other subjects (music videos, video games, sports, courses) to suggest to the students. Together, these four essays illustrate the breadth of this genre and provide a variety of topics that should not only appeal to your students but also generate discussion and provide ideas for their own papers.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

For your convenience, we list below the basic features and specific writing strategies addressed in each of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections that follow the readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student’s attention to a question that addresses an area the student needs to work on in composing or revising the draft.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Hulbert</th>
<th>Romano</th>
<th>Rosen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Well-Presented Subject</strong></td>
<td>Summarizing Rhetorical situation</td>
<td>Academic rhetorical situation</td>
<td>Defining Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Well-Supported Judgment</strong></td>
<td>Criteria Reasons Comparison</td>
<td>Quotation, paraphrase, and summary</td>
<td>Examples Authorities and research studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Effective Counterargument</strong></td>
<td>Acknowledging alternative judgments</td>
<td>Anticipating readers’ possible objections</td>
<td>Refuting alternative judgments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Readable Plan</strong></td>
<td>Transitions and signposts</td>
<td>Thesis Forecasting Topic sentences and transitional words</td>
<td>Reframing the argument Headings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading Professors
Wendy Kim

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to evaluate whether they think Kim’s judgment is sound by using their knowledge of the Web site. This activity directs students to begin thinking in terms of evaluation. The annotations clearly direct students’ attention to the effectiveness of Kim’s counterarguments in paragraphs 6 and 9 as well as her response to readers’ objections in paragraph 8. The annotations also prompt students to evaluate her opening and ending, but the students should also be able to evaluate the reasons she gives in support of her judgment.

Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay

Annotations: A Well-Presented Subject

• You may use the annotated essay to discuss the role of essay openings to catch the reader’s attention and describe a subject. The first annotation question can push students to make a judgment of Kim’s opening. By asking students whether the opening is effective, you can discuss the role of openings and the criteria we use to evaluate them, such as generating reader interest and providing readers with relevant information.

• In paragraph 1, we highlight the statistics Kim uses to set her argument in context. You may discuss the different roles that statistics can play in an argument. In this case, Kim uses statistics mainly to show how important her subject is and lay out its scope for the reader. She draws on statistics again in paragraphs 10–11 when she compares RateMyProfessors.com to other professor evaluation sites, claiming that only the user base of RateMyProfessors.com has enough data to be reliable. This argument draws on the background she set up early in her essay.

• You may want to discuss the assumptions Kim makes about her audience and how that influences her explanation of her subject. She assumes that her audience is familiar with standard Web site interfaces but that they may not be familiar with how a professor evaluation site works, so she provides a quick walkthrough. She also gives background on the site as she explains her reasons in her body paragraph, occasionally letting her reader know to wait for further explanation in one of the following paragraphs.

Annotations: A Well-Supported Judgment

• One aspect of Kim’s support is that it also draws on the visual. You may want to point out how Kim effectively incorporates the visual of the Web site into her argument by referring to it in the text and using a caption letting readers know it is the home page.

• One of the strategies Kim uses throughout her essay is speaking from her own experience, which increases her credibility or ethos. In her thesis, she connects to the students who use RMP by including the phrase “like me,” and this shows that she is speaking as part of the site’s target audience. She also uses personal experience to position herself as a credible source for this type of evaluation, citing the class on Web site design she took in high school in the second paragraph. Later, Kim backs up her argument that it is an effective Web site by saying it took her no more than two seconds to load a page, a move that enables her to show that she is trying to be precise in
discussing a factor that could be important to readers (par. 4). The connection she draws between the questions asked on RMP and on a campus evaluation form is also supported with her experience. You may want to add a note of caution—that while personal experience can help support an argument, personal experience alone will not be enough evidence to convince an audience.

- You may want to direct your students’ attention to the value terms Kim uses to support her argument. Overall, she uses strong and specific language to clarify her position. For instance, she describes the layout as “smart” (par. 2), the page as “neatly organized and uncluttered” (2), and the navigation system as “smooth and fast” (4). These are more specific than the terms “good,” “interesting,” and “nice” that some students may be inclined to use.

- You may also discuss the importance of using specific textual evidence to support a judgment by analyzing the quotations from the Web site in paragraph 7. You may ask your students to discuss whether they find the specific examples (e.g., “he wrote a personal whole-page to each of my papers”) more convincing than the general comment categories (e.g., “highly positive”).

- Kim uses statistical evidence when comparing RMP to other similar Web sites in paragraphs 10–11.

**Annotations: An Effective Counterargument**

- In paragraph 6, Kim responds to possible reader objections to her argument by counterarguing in the case of professor easiness as a criterion. This portion of the argument would be a great place to discuss the assumptions Kim is making about her audience, in this case that they will be concerned with students choosing classes based on professor easiness. You may want to ask your students whether they think Kim has successfully counterargued this point.

- Perhaps the most important reader objection Kim anticipates is doubt about the site’s credibility. She responds to this in her discussion of the “hot” category and of whether the ratings are statistically valid (par. 9). For the latter of these two objections, Kim makes the concession that the site is only listing opinions, but she ends this concession by pointing out how the data are frequently very accurate despite their origin in opinion.

**Annotations: A Readable Plan**

- One of the important strategies Kim uses is forecasting her reasons that support her judgment. Making an outline of Kim’s argument can help students see how forecasting helps structure the essay. Paragraphs 2–4 deal with design, paragraphs 5–7 deal with how the site is helpful, and paragraphs 8–9 are about how she finds the site amusing.

- You may want to discuss Kim’s use of transitional words and phrases in the essay. Many of these are highlighted throughout the essay. You may wish to discuss the points at which Kim builds on the arguments she has made already by using words and phrases like *in addition to* (par. 6), *another* (6), or *also* (9) and those in which she is contrasting her argument with reader expectations using words and phrases like *however* (6), *nevertheless* (9), and *although* (11).
Teaching Tip: Reader Objections

Gretchen Bartels

One element of Kim’s argument that doesn’t sit well with me is the way she easily writes off the way RateMyProfessors.com encourages students to objectify their professors—by evaluating them based on physical appearance—as merely amusing. This concern with the essay can springboard a classroom discussion about whether or not the RMP chili peppers and comments such as “this chick [the professor] totally blew my mind. She was sooo hot. I’m serious take this class just to check her out. SEXY!!!!” (par. 8) are appropriate for a teacher-rating Web site. Asking the students whether this part of Kim’s argument strengthens or weakens her overall argument can also be productive.

You can pair this discussion with a writing activity in which the students write either a response challenging Kim’s judgment of the hotness rating on RMP as amusing, a response challenging the instructor’s perspective on “hotness” as a rating, or a paragraph that struggles more deeply with the problems of objectification of professors in this rating system. One of the benefits to this activity is that it requires students to engage with an opposing position.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students who have seen Juno to think of alternative judgments of the film, and it asks students who have not seen the film to consider whether the review is a convincing argument making them want to watch Juno. Many students who have seen the film will likely not have thought of it in terms of the way it navigates the culture wars surrounding the hot topic of teenage pregnancy, so this activity could also help them form a stronger opinion of their own.

Making Connections: Defusing “Hot-Button Issues”

This activity is designed to help students begin thinking deeply about how finding common ground—a skill your students might have developed previously, through Chapter 5: Finding Common Ground—can be an element of evaluation. The activity has two parts: (1) connecting to defusing tense situations by telling a personal narrative of finding common ground and (2) critical thinking about the value of breaking down polarized thinking and what strategies are effective to find common ground. Our questions urge students to think through the potential role of finding common ground in evaluative work. The first of these questions also challenges students to think beyond binary systems and stereotypes.

After the discussion, encourage students to consider why Hulbert wrote “Juno and the Culture Wars.” Hulbert is not only evaluating Juno; she is also making an argument that the cultural work Juno is doing—by challenging stereotypes and challenging both sides of a “hot-button issue”—is worthwhile. You may ask the students to consider the implications of evaluating something from a particular perspective. How does evaluating a subject legitimize the subject?
Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Presented Subject

Frequently for this assignment, students choose to write evaluations of films, and one of the dangers they face with this topic is the temptation to write a film summary rather than a film review. By pointing out how Hulbert introduces *Juno* and how much detail she reveals about the plot, you can help students avoid oversummarizing. The activities in this section help students become aware of the rhetorical situation and learn how to effectively include plot details.

Follow-up Analysis

- Continue analyzing paragraphs 8–9 by shifting the focus to the next activity—A Well-Supported Judgment—by asking students to consider how the plot details in these paragraphs help support her judgment.
- Discuss how Hulbert anticipates reader objections (i.e., that the film supports a “who-needs-men-when-we-can-go-it-alone ethos of progressives”) in paragraph 9.
- Turn to Chapter 17: Classifying to supplement your discussion of how Hulbert classifies the film *Juno*.
- Highlight Hulbert’s attention to the rhetorical situation in which she is writing by asking students what she assumes about reader expectations.

Teaching Tip: Using Film Trailers

Gretchen Bartels

to Understand Genre

Most students have strong media literacy, but this literacy is frequently not as critical as it needs to be to effectively meet the demands of the college writing classroom. If your students are working with films, you may find it useful to spend a bit of classroom time discussing film genre. By having a deeper understanding of genre and a genre’s conventions, they will be able to more effectively present their subjects in their essays, and they may use more appropriate criteria to judge their subjects.

Giving a definition of *genre* and examples of specific film genres and their conventions can be especially productive when combined with an exercise asking the students to identify genre based on a film’s trailer. I find it most productive to stop the trailer a few times while showing it to ask students for their impressions, and I’ve found that a few notes of music without any visuals is enough for students to start identifying genre. One strategy you might use is asking them to identify a broad genre at the beginning of the trailer (e.g., comedy) and make that genre categorization more specific later on (e.g., romantic comedy). Using trailers of movies the students are likely to be unfamiliar with can be effective because they will actually have to guess at the categorization, but if you choose a film they are likely familiar with, the students will be able to compare the trailer to the film and discuss whether the trailer accurately represents the film.
216  CHAPTER 8: JUSTIFYING AN EVALUATION

Move from Reading to Writing

- Take some class time to have the students do the Presenting the Subject activity, located under the Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals section of the Guide to Writing on pp. 429–430.

A Well-Supported Judgment

This section focuses on establishing appropriate criteria for judgment, and it discusses both Hulbert and Kim’s essays. Many students find it difficult to establish criteria because the standards for judging a particular subject are not firmly fixed, so focusing on criteria early on can be very productive. The strategy of comparison is one effective way for students to establish criteria, and examples of this can be found in Kim’s paragraphs 10–11 and in Hulbert’s paragraph 9.

Follow-up Analysis

- Have your students compare Hulbert’s strategy of relying on one criterion to Kim’s strategy of using multiple criteria. If you are expecting students to use an array of criteria to support their judgment, this would be a good time for you to remind them of that and to point out the difference in rhetorical situation between Kim’s writing and Hulbert’s writing.

- Taking time in class to brainstorm what criteria might be used to judge films (e.g., quality of cinematography, character development and depth, quality of screenplay and acting, plot, musical score, quality of special effects and stunts, treatment of source material, portrayal of women or minorities) can be very beneficial to students. This can tie nicely into a discussion of film genre, as some criteria will be appropriate for different genres.

- You may want to ask your students to formulate the question that Hulbert is implicitly answering in her essay—Is Juno a good movie dealing with a “hot-button issue”? Then ask them to formulate a specific question they want to answer about their own subjects.

- If your students are going to compare two different examples of their subject or if they plan on using a comparison to establish criteria, have them turn to Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting (pp. 653–655), where they will find additional explanation and illustration of this strategy.

Move from Reading to Writing

- Following discussion of Hulbert’s criteria, have your students do the Consider Your Criteria and Consider Your Readers’ Likely Criteria activities on p. 424 of the Guide to Writing section.

- You may take some class time to have your students do the Developing Your Argument activity on p. 426 of the Guide to Writing section to give them a chance to think of reasons for their views, in addition to the criteria above.

An Effective Counterargument

As with the previous two essays, Arguing a Position and Proposing a Solution, evaluations are substantially more convincing when they contain effective counterarguments. The activities in this section focus on acknowledging alternative judgments.
Follow-up Analysis

• Ask students to consider how including alternative judgments can strengthen their argument. In Hulbert’s case, she includes two opposing positions (the “liberal-media headquarters” and the “anti-Hollywood moralizers”) that would be likely to judge the film differently and uses her invocation of those positions to show how the film is able to challenge both sides. You might also find it helpful to compare this approach to the more common method for handling alternative viewpoints, which is to invoke those viewpoints and then show how the author’s perspective is better.

• Ask students to compare the handling of alternative judgments in Hulbert’s essay to that in Kim’s essay. How do these authors deal differently with alternative judgments? You might direct their attention to paragraph 9 in Kim’s essay, in which she deals with the alternative judgment that the site is not credible enough. She responds to this charge by conceding that the site is based on opinion, but she also argues that the data on the site are actually amazingly accurate.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have your students attempt the Counterarguing Readers’ Likely Objections or Alternative Judgments activities on p. 426 of the Guide to Writing section.

A Readable Plan

Though students should be familiar with using transitions to advance their argument by this time, reviewing how to adapt the skill of transitioning to this particular rhetorical situation is useful, and the activities in this section focus on how Hulbert uses transitions. Students are also asked to evaluate the effectiveness of these transitions.

Follow-up Analysis

• You may also want to discuss with your students the importance of vocabulary when analyzing a text—whether to evaluate it or to learn from it (as with the readings in this chapter). For instance, you may want to ask them whether they were previously familiar with what Hulbert means by culture wars. This may also be a prime opportunity to remind students that taking the time to look up words they do not know is a good way for them to build a stronger vocabulary and improve reading comprehension.

• Turn to Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader to supplement your discussion of how Hulbert uses transitions to make her essay plan more readable. The section on Cohesive Devices should be particularly useful.

Analyzing Visuals: Still Photograph of Juno’s Main Characters

This exercise adapts the Criteria for Analyzing Visuals in Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals. It provides students with an opportunity to practice reading images and to consider how a visual image can strengthen the arguments they are making. This activity can be beneficial both to students who have seen Juno and those who have not. Those who have seen the film may be able to add context, such as the unstable relationship Juno and Bleeker share, and how this is a moment that brings them together and connects them. At the same time,
those who have not seen the film may be able to see more clearly just what is communicated in the image without having previously judged the characters.

**Considering Topics for Your Own Essay**

This exercise asks students to consider films they have seen recently as potential topics, and it also asks students to begin thinking of reasons for their judgment of the film. (You may find it helpful to limit your students’ choices to a particular overall subject, like films, so you can focus your instruction on that particular subject.) This section also points out that students will need to watch a film at least twice if they are going to evaluate it. Stressing this point in class is important as many students will be tempted to work from memory rather than from close observation of the film.

**Headnote:** This essay, written by first-year college student Christine Romano, demonstrates how standards other than the basic features may be used to evaluate Jessica Statsky’s essay that appears in Chapter 6 (pp. 270–274). The appeal of this approach to the assignment is that students will find its standards readily acceptable to readers. In addition, this exercise should fix the standards firmly in their minds and ultimately enhance their ability to read critically and argue effectively. The “As you read” activity asks students to review Statsky’s essay and determine in what ways it is convincing and in what ways it is unconvincing.

**Making Connections: Competitive Team Sports and Social Cooperation**

This exercise revisits the theme of competitive team sports for children, which students encountered previously in Chapter 6: Arguing a Position. However, it asks them to consider these sports in terms of social cooperation rather than focusing on the way that excessive competition can be harmful to young children. The first portion of this activity asks students to describe their experiences with team sports when they were children. By making a personal connection to Statsky’s and Romano’s topic of argument, the students should be more prepared to move to the second portion of the activity, in which they agree or disagree with Romano’s contention that team sports teach cooperation.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

**A Well-Presented Subject**

Romano’s *summary* of Statsky’s argument may be a useful model for students working with a reading. The questions direct students to read Romano’s first paragraph closely and to identify what type of information Romano gives. They should notice that she identifies the appeal Statsky makes to parents as an appeal rooted in the emotions of hope and fear, summarizes Statsky’s overall position, paraphrases Statsky’s thesis, gives Statsky’s definitions of key terms, and identifies the age range dealt with in Statsky’s essay.
• This section also highlights the importance of knowing teacher expectations regarding citation, and you may want to reinforce your citation standards when discussing this essay.

**Follow-up Analysis**

• You may want to review the differences among summary, paraphrasing, and quoting and remind students when each of these is effective. Have your students turn to the section on paraphrasing and summarizing in Chapter 24: Using Sources (pp. 762–764) where they will find additional help.

• You may want to discuss Romano’s and Kim’s essays in relation to their differences in sourcing. While Kim cites nine different sources in her MLA format works-cited list, Romano only uses Statsky’s essay and does not include a works-cited list.

• You may want to address this section simultaneously with the discussion of summary and quotation in the following section, A Well-Supported Judgment.

• Have students practice briefly summarizing a reading. You may bring in an outside reading for them to summarize, but you can save time by asking them to summarize one of the readings that they have already read in The Guide. After each student has written a summary, you may have the students compare summaries. Which details were included and which were left out of the summaries? Why were some included and others not included? Did students identify the purpose and the audience of the writer?

**Move from Reading to Writing**

• Have students draft tentative summaries, descriptions, or background information for their own essays; then review some of them in class (possibly on an overhead), highlighting material that ought to be included, marking material that might be skipped or more tightly described, and identifying possible holes that still need to be covered.

**A Well-Supported Judgment**

Like summary, quotation is an important way to support a judgment when writing about texts. This section refers students back to Kim’s use of quotation and asks them to pay attention to Romano’s summaries of Statsky. This analysis also directs student attention to the writer’s explanation of textual evidence and how the quote or summary is connected to the argument by the writer’s introduction and explanation of it.

**Follow-up Analysis**

• By this essay, students should be comfortable integrating source material into their essays, but they may need more help using primary source material as their object of study, and devoting class time to how to analyze and explain textual evidence can be very helpful for students.

• You might have students look at Chapter 6: Arguing a Position’s Working with Sources section (pp. 307–308), Chapter 19: Arguing (pp. 667–668), or Chapter 24: Using Sources (pp. 756–764) and discuss the ways those resources might be useful to them as writers of evaluations.
Move from Reading to Writing

- Have your students bring in a quote from or summary of a text source related to their subject (bringing in a portion of a screenplay would be a great way to adapt this exercise to film). Have them write an introduction that sets their quote or summary in context and an explanation that relates their quote or summary to their overall judgment.

An Effective Counterargument

Students may feel that they must refute to make a counterargument in their essays, so asking them to look closely at the use of concession in argument can be helpful. This section analyzes Wendy Kim’s combination of conceding points and refuting readers’ possible objections. Students should note that this combination allows Kim to make her concession without weakening her argument. The questions ask students to apply the analysis modeled on Kim’s essay to Romano’s essay.

Follow-up Analysis

- Discuss with students when it is appropriate to concede objections, accommodate them, or refute them. Ask students what the benefits and drawbacks are of each of these strategies.
- Choose a reading from this chapter, and have the class imagine what would happen if the author refuted every alternative viewpoint. What happens to the ethos or credibility of the author in such a scenario?
- Have your students brainstorm ways to make concessions without weakening arguments. They might consider refuting part of the objection as Kim does, setting the subject in a broader context that explains it more fully (e.g., the representation of a female character in a movie from the fifties may be somewhat sexist but it may be ahead of its time regarding gender roles), or conceding the point but reminding readers of the strengths of a subject (e.g., the movie may be a step back for gender roles, but it might be very sensitive to issues of race).

Move from Reading to Writing

- Ask students to think of reader objections to their arguments that they may want to concede in their essays, and then have them write a concession in which they concede a point without surrendering their theses.

A Readable Plan

Since a clear thesis statement and forecasting the reasons for a judgment are integral to creating a readable plan, highlighting how Romano effectively delivers her judgment can help students organize their paper by providing a model for them. This activity asks students to follow Romano’s argument by following key terms that Romano identifies in her forecasting statement. By highlighting these words in the essay, students should be able to visualize the organization Romano uses to structure her essay. This exercise can also help students see how transitions work to connect paragraphs.
Follow-up Analysis

- While most students should be familiar with writing an effective thesis by this chapter, they may need help understanding the focus of an evaluative thesis. You might have students look at the guidelines for asserting a thesis in Chapter 19: Arguing on pp. 659–662.

- While most of this activity focuses on Romano’s use of transitional words, you may ask students to pay close attention to Romano’s use of topic sentences. For the most part, Romano uses topic sentences that fall within the first two sentences of each paragraph. Showing your students an outline of her argument, using her thesis and topic sentences, is an effective way to demonstrate how strong topic sentences and a strong thesis make an argument more cohesive. Alternatively, you may ask your students to make this type of outline.

Move from Reading to Writing

- If your students have already written their theses, ask them to identify what key words they might use to help readers follow their arguments. If they have not yet worked on their theses, have them work on the Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement activity in the Guide to Writing (p. 428).

- Have your students work on writing an outline that includes a thesis, a forecasting statement, and topic sentences. If they are prepared with support, you may also ask them to give details about how they will make their argument. You may refer them to the Outlining Your Draft activity in the Guide to Writing (pp. 431–432).

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

Judging a text may appeal to students because the standards for evaluating it could be adapted from this book. Because they are familiar with reading evaluations of texts, such as the comments you return on their essays, evaluating a text for this assignment can be comfortable for students. The range of texts possible for students to evaluate is very broad, and The Guide includes many potential subjects for evaluations. If students are interested in evaluating a short story, you may direct them to Chapter 10: Analyzing Stories.

Cross-Reference to A Writer at Work

Christine Romano’s essay is featured in the Writer at Work section of this chapter (pp. 443–444). This section, entitled Christine Romano’s Counterargument of Objections, walks students through Romano’s process when anticipating and responding to possible reader objections. Students can see part of her invention writing and how she used the process to develop effective counterarguments. The Writer at Work section is particularly interesting in regard to how Romano benefited from discussing her ideas with a small group of peers. See our discussion of teaching A Writer at Work on page 234 of this manual.

The Myth of Multitasking
Christine Rosen

Headnote: Christine Rosen’s evaluation of multitasking is the most abstract of the subjects evaluated in this chapter. Unlike the Web site Kim evaluates, the film Hulbert evaluates, and the essay Romano evaluates, multitasking is
not a text to be read but a phenomenon to be studied. The “As you read” activity invites students to consider their experiences multitasking while reading Rosen’s evaluation. Students may resist Rosen’s evaluation because they spend so much of their time aspiring to multitasking well, while others may support Rosen’s evaluation.

**Making Connections: Advantages and Disadvantages of Multitasking**

This activity asks students to continue the thinking they started in the “As you read” activity by connecting personally to the subject of multitasking. Students are prompted to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of multitasking, but this activity asks them to move beyond a simple division of pros and cons. It also asks them to consider which types of activities can be combined without significantly affecting the quality of either. For instance, in many states, drivers are not allowed to talk on a cell phone or text while driving, but they are allowed to talk on a cell phone with a hands-free device while driving. You may want to ask students how technology influences our desire to and ability to multitask and what examples of multitasking without using technology they can list.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

**A Well-Presented Subject**

This activity focuses on identifying two ways to present a subject: by defining it and by giving examples of it. By asking students to judge whether their definitions of multitasking match Rosen’s definition, the last question in this section encourages students to realize that how a subject is defined can change the judgment of that subject. To give a good working definition, students must identify what they expect their readers to know about their subjects. For instance, a student should generally not assume that her instructor is familiar with MMORPGs, and a brief definition and explanation of Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games would be necessary before evaluating the specific game.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- This section points out the difference between Rosen’s subject and the other three subjects the students have encountered in the chapter. You may want to introduce the concept of a phenomenon — something notable about the human condition or social order — which will be dealt with in more depth in the following chapter, Speculating about Causes.
- Note the examples Rosen gives in paragraph 4 — she highlights examples of multitasking, such as talking on a cell phone while driving and interrupting work with checking e-mail or answering the phone. The first example requires partial attention to both simultaneously, while the second requires rapid shifts between subjects.
- Discuss Rosen’s purpose in paragraph 10 when she defines media multitasking. How different is media multitasking from her definition of multitasking? Does this definition build on the previous definition? How does it relate to Linda Stone’s notion of “continuous partial attention” that Rosen discusses in paragraph 4?
• These two ways of presenting the subject, defining and using examples, are strategies the students encountered in Chapter 4: Explaining a Concept. Reminding students who wrote concept explanations previously of this fact can help students appreciate the ways the genres are often interconnected.

• If your students are working on topics, like multitasking, that need to be clearly defined, refer them to Chapter 16: Defining for more help on this explanatory strategy.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If your students have not yet done the Exploring What Your Readers Know about the Subject activity on p. 423 of the Guide to Writing, have them do that activity, paying special attention to what terms they will need to define for their audience.

A Well-Supported Judgment

This section summarizes some of the strategies the writers in this chapter use to support their judgment, focusing on how these writers integrate examples into their essays using different punctuation. The activity asks students to pay attention to Rosen’s use of authorities and research studies.

Follow-up Analysis

• Ask students to compare the effects the different ways of punctuating examples have on the reader. You may point out that parentheses are a good way to include asides, while dashes indicate a stronger break in the sentence. Using a bulleted list is a way to visually organize the information, though students should be sure to explain and analyze the importance of everything in such a list.

• Ask students to classify the types of sources Rosen quotes. Which types of sources do they find the most convincing? Why do they think those are seen as more convincing? For instance, she quotes Lord Chesterfield in her opening, a New York Times Magazine article in paragraph 3, Harvard Business Review in paragraph 4, and the work of a cognitive neuroscience researcher in paragraph 7. Many of your students will likely find the scientific sources more credible, and you can point out how our society values empirical knowledge.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Ask students to work with one or more examples they intend to use to support their evaluation by drafting a paragraph or a portion of a paragraph in which they introduce the example, using one of the strategies discussed in this section (parentheses, dashes, or a bulleted list). Then ask them to try using a different strategy and evaluate which is more effective for their purposes.

An Effective Counterargument

This activity deals with how Rosen is trying to reframe the argument about multitasking. If your students have chosen topics with which readers are probably familiar and about which they might have strong opinions, the strategy of reframing can be useful.
Follow-up Analysis

• Ask your students to consider how Rosen’s discussion of multitasking could be reframed yet again. What other terms might be used instead of *maturity* and *immaturity* to express similar ideas but with the emphasis switched? For instance, people who adopt multitasking may be described as *cutting-edge* or *competitive* and those who do not multitask as *lagging behind* or *obsolete*.

• Have your students come up with examples of what types of subjects might benefit from being reframed. For instance, if the subject is a famous teen movie, the writer might have to overcome resistance to his or her evaluation by reframing the discussion. Or if the subject is a violent video game, the reviewer might have to take parental concern over violence in video games and their potential or perceived social consequences into account.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have your students write about how reframing their subject (or an aspect of it) might be helpful to their arguments. If they think it would be helpful, ask them to describe how they could reframe the issue. If they think it would not be helpful, ask them to support this position.

A Readable Plan

This activity directs students’ attention to the use of headings to organize an essay.

Follow-up Analysis

• Discuss how the length of an essay can influence the decision to use headings. Generally, headings are used in longer papers to give the reader clear breaking points and to make the organization more accessible.

• Ask students to notice that Rosen does not rely exclusively on her headings to make transitions between sections. For instance, between paragraphs 12 and 13, Rosen includes the heading “Paying Attention,” but she has already introduced the idea of attention at the end of paragraph 12 in her mention of “Attention Deficit Recession.”

Move from Reading to Writing

• Ask students to write a couple of potential headings that could help clarify their organization in their essays. Then ask them to evaluate whether these headings would be effective or whether their essays would be better without them.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

Students are frequently quite knowledgeable and enthusiastic about trends in media, many of which are listed in this exercise. Students’ familiarity with a subject can be a real strength for their essays, as they will be able to draw on their base of knowledge. The danger is that they might be too close to their work if it is something they interact with daily and might have a difficult time anticipating alternative judgments.

By getting students to think about trends and phenomena, you can also help them generate potential topics for the next essay in *The Guide’s* sequence, Speculating about
Causes. These essays, however, take a very different approach to the subject, so even if a student works on the same trend or phenomenon, he or she will write very different essays.

**Beyond the Traditional Essay: Justifying an Evaluation**

This section shows how widespread the genre of evaluation is in our society, paying special attention to the expert and amateur reviews on the Internet. Consider the following questions as possible tools to spur discussion on this section:

- Discuss the similarities and differences between an opinion and an evaluation. You may want to ask your students what an opinion needs to become an evaluation.
- Ask your student what the purposes of the evaluations in this section are—why is Trip Advisor advertising that it uses the opinions of “real travelers”? Why do online shopping sites allow users to rate their products?
- Have the students discuss what types of online reviews they encounter on a daily basis. You may want to discuss online forums that frequently include opinion or evaluation without being specifically dedicated to that mode of writing, such as the comments section on a site like Hulu or YouTube.

**Guide to Writing**

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment chapters of *The Guide* in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Justifying an Evaluation.

**Connecting with Additional Resources**

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

- Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader for help with cohesion, flow, or transitions
- Chapter 17: Classifying
- Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting
- Chapter 19: Arguing

**Starting Points: Justifying an Evaluation**

This feature helps students find the strategies in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address the concerns they have. The most common issues that students have, from this list, are coming up with a subject to write about, coming up with a reasonable evaluation, and supporting the judgment.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Refer students to the Consider Your Criteria and Consider Your Readers’ Likely Criteria activities on p. 424 of the Guide to Writing if they say they’re having trouble figuring out how to judge their subject or developing appropriate criteria.
Teaching Tip: Collaborative Evaluations

Gray Scott

Students can sometimes come up with richer, more complicated evaluations if they work together in groups of three to five. There are two ways such group work might be approached: With the first option, they could choose a common subject, debate perspectives among group members, and then write separate, individual drafts, obtaining feedback from their groupmates. A second option is for them to write a single paper collaboratively, negotiating over the shape of the final evaluation and attempting to arrive at a common-ground statement all members can subscribe to. If this idea appeals to you, be sure to consider—in advance—how you will grade the essay. (One option is to give the group the authority to award some of the points for the assignment internally, empowering it to deal with wayward members.) Collaborative projects of this kind can be very productive, but they require careful planning and sensitive guidance to make them work well for everyone. If you do decide to have students collaborate on an evaluation, consider arming them with collaborative technologies such as wikis, Google Docs & Spreadsheets documents (docs.google.com), or Zoho documents (www.zoho.com). Course management software like Blackboard also has many collaborative tools that students might use while working in teams.

Invention and Research

The invention and research section offers students several strategies for coming up with topics, criteria, reasons, and more. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Choosing a Subject to Write About

The first activity of Invention and Research helps students identify prospective topics. You may want to direct your students to the Considering Topics for Your Own Essay activities following the Hulbert, Romano, and Rosen essays. You might also find it useful to limit the type of subject (e.g., film, music video, an essay from The Guide, a short story, a video game, a Web site) your students may select for this assignment because then you will be able to give more directed advice on criteria and how to work with that subject.

Listing Subjects

Encourage students to take each step of the subject-listing exercise seriously, particularly the first criterion on the checklist—if students have both negative and positive things to say about a subject, it increases the likelihood of thoughtful analysis.

Analyzing the Guide to Writing Activity

Help students analyze the Listing Subjects activity. What they should eventually realize is that by writing an evaluation of a subject, they are investing it with value and sending the message that whether it is a good or bad example of that subject, this subject is a worthwhile one to study critically.
Looking Back

Consider discussing with students the ways that many of the topic suggestions here connect with the broad themes raised in the readings and the Considering Topics for Your Own Essay prompts: film, text, and trend. Note that the list of broad categories is not exhaustive and does not deal with trends, so you may want to put more emphasis on the Considering Topics for Your Own Essay prompt following Rosen’s essay.

Teaching Tip: The “New Student Guide”

Gray Scott

I sometimes ask students to imagine they are writing an article for a guide for new students at the university and to evaluate services or locations in and around campus that they think new students might be interested in reading about—but within those parameters, to be creative. Students often think of interesting subjects they might otherwise never have considered: One group of students compared several local pho (Vietnamese) restaurants in an attempt to determine which presented the best value within easy reach of campus, while another team that term did the same thing for sushi bars. Others have focused on evaluating databases our library subscribes to or the campus learning center.

Using the Web to Find or Explore a Subject

Warn students who use this option to pay attention to the rhetorical situations and depth of the evaluations they encounter online. There are many well-reasoned and insightful reviews online, but the Internet is also rife with poorly supported assertions of opinion. You may ask students to locate and bring to class both a good example of a review and a bad one.

Familiarizing Yourself with the Subject

Encourage your students to deeply consider which subject they choose before finalizing their choice. One important way for them to consider whether their topic will work for them is to have them familiarize themselves with their subjects by exploring a Web site, watching a film, reading a short story or essay, visiting a place in the community, or attending a performance.

Ways In: Bringing the Subject and Your Audience into Focus

Encourage students to start anywhere on this map that they’d like but to finish all of the exercises eventually.

Looking Back

When introducing Exploring What You Know about the Subject or Exploring What Your Readers Know about the Subject, consider reviewing what students learned from the initial Collaborative Activity (or possibly conducting that activity again, using the students’ intended subjects to set the stage for these activities).
Connecting with Additional Resources

Because some students might want to make comparisons with similar subjects as a way to establish criteria, steering them toward Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting can sometimes prove helpful.

Making a Tentative Judgment

Once students have identified what they like and dislike about the subject and identified the criteria they will use, they should be ready to make a tentative judgment. Even with a large quantity of invention writing, some students may still be reticent to make a judgment or unsure of how to phrase their judgment. Modeling an example judgment and referring students to the clear judgments of Kim’s and Romano’s essays can help students.

Demonstrating the Activity

Consider demonstrating for students how to take impressions of a subject and criteria and work these into a thesis. Be sure to choose something the students are familiar with, such as one of the essays from this chapter, the building you are teaching in, the writing program at your institution, or a short music video you can show in class. Ideally, your example will work both praise and critique of the subject into an overall evaluation.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Chapter 19: Arguing can help students with asserting a thesis, giving reasons and support, counterarguing, and avoiding logical fallacies.

Testing Your Choice

Consider conducting this activity in class. Students often want to settle on a topic quickly and then skip all of the other topic-selection-related activities. These questions might seem redundant to them at first, but they give students another chance to check the viability of their topic, this time focusing on their knowledge of the subject, the appropriateness of their criteria, and their willingness to write on the subject.

A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

This group activity allows students to discover the needs and assumptions of their readers. Writers present their subjects to other students, who in turn point out gaps in the information provided and suggest standards with which to evaluate the subjects.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students may feel that they cannot help each other if they are unfamiliar with the subject. Although students should still have some idea that a close game and high scores make a football game exciting even if they never watch football, grouping students based on subject area for this exercise—to the extent it is possible—can make this activity more productive.
Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument

Encourage students to start anywhere in these activities they’d like but to finish all of the exercises eventually.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Many students find listing reasons difficult, but the stronger their criteria are, the easier it will be for them later to come up with reasons. If students have difficulty in this activity, ask them to look back at their list of criteria and choose the ones that relate most directly to their specific subject. (For instance, if a student were evaluating the 1998 film Pleasantville, that student might want to use its symbolic use of color and black and white filming as a reason it is a thoughtful commentary on social conformity, but the use of color film is not a particularly helpful reason to argue that the 1999 film The Sixth Sense was a successful thriller.) If students are working on similar subjects, you may want to break them into groups to discuss the criteria they are using and how they generate reasons from those criteria.

Researching Your Argument

The type and amount of research necessary to successfully support an evaluation differs based on the nature of the subject and the rhetorical situation. Be sure to clearly communicate with your students what level of research and what type of research you expect from them.

Looking Back

You may want to briefly review the research in Kim’s and Romano’s essays when students get to this stage in the process because of the differences in their research strategies. While Kim uses many sources to support her evaluation of RateMyProfessors.com, Romano relies only on Statsky’s essay as a source. Be sure to clearly communicate your expectations.

Connecting to Additional Resources

Remind students that the following two chapters can be helpful if they’re doing additional research:

- Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research for help locating appropriate support and source material
- Chapter 24: Using Sources for help incorporating source material

Designing Your Document

This section asks your students to consider using the design features discussed and modeled earlier in the chapter, such as headings, bulleted lists, and visuals.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

For some students, this will be the first time they have used visuals in an academic essay. A short speech about how to effectively incorporate visual images into an argument can anticipate and prevent some student problems with including visuals. For instance, some students include images primarily to take up space in their essay, or else in playing with
graphics and images they end up distracting themselves from their arguments. Sometimes they forget that they need to cite images, just as they would quotes or statistics. For these reasons, be sure to also discuss how many visuals would be appropriate for an essay of this scope, and list for them the common hazards associated with them.

**Connecting to Additional Resources**

Chapter 21: Designing Documents can help students navigate many of the potential pitfalls associated with visuals.

**Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers**

To shift students away from thinking of you as their sole audience and their sole purpose as getting a grade, urge them to start thinking about another audience with whom they might share their work. Once students have identified a potential audience, they will be able to identify whether their audience is likely to agree or disagree with their evaluation and criteria. The presumed agreement or disagreement will, in turn, affect how the student approaches the argument.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Help students who say they cannot think of an audience by suggesting that they could write for their personal blog, classmates, or friends and family. If students are evaluating a recent film or an event on campus, you may suggest they look into whether the campus newspaper needs reviews. You may even decide to electronically collect the class’s work and make a file of their evaluations available to the entire class after the essay is due.

**Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement**

This activity helps students develop a thesis based on the invention materials, audience, and purpose.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Theses frequently intimidate students, but asking students to draw on the work they have already done in the Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument activity can help relieve some of the pressure they feel when asked for a thesis. You may also refer struggling students to Chapter 19: Arguing, which models how to write an assertion of evaluation.

**Planning and Drafting**

The next major section of the Guide to Writing helps students organize the invention materials they have created, plan an approach to the paper, and develop a first draft. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

**Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals**

Previous questions about purpose asked students what they wanted to achieve. These questions ask them to think about how they might achieve it. You may want to focus on one of the sections during class, especially if you notice that students are struggling with
that aspect of writing. Another reason to focus on goal-setting during class is that some students will otherwise attempt to skip it or treat it too breezily in their rush to get to the drafting stage.

**Looking Back**

This section prompts students to compare the strategies they want to use in their essays to the ones used by Kim, Hulbert, Romano, and Rosen. You can ask students to identify which author’s strategy they want to use as a model for one aspect of their papers and maybe have students team up to debate which strategies might best serve each student writer’s purposes.

**Outlining Your Draft**

This activity models two basic organizational schemas for students based on whether the evaluation is positive or negative and whether the student readers agree with their judgment.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

Outlining is a very effective way for students to develop a readable plan, but since many students write outlines without much detail or development, outlining may not improve their organization as significantly as it ought to. Asking students to write out full topic sentences for each paragraph rather than just writing a word or two to identify each topic can help students not only organize their thoughts but do some additional thinking about what they want to say about that topic.

**Connecting to Additional Resources**

You may direct students who, during the outlining activity, request guidance on scratch outlines to Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–568).

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**Teaching Tip: Literature Reviews of Previous Evaluations**

Gray Scott

If you would like your students to position themselves within an existing dialogue about their subjects, you could ask them to write short literature reviews covering existing opinions on their subject and submit their reviews as part of a smaller assignment leading up to their full evaluations. For instance, a student evaluating the film *The Dark Knight* might research a handful of other reviews by top critics and then write a topically organized literature review covering what has already been said about the film. Chapter 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews provides students with advice about and examples of literature reviews. Note: Some students might wish to evaluate subjects about which few published sources exist. In such cases, consider having them base their literature reviews on interviews or surveys; Chapter 22: Field Research can help them with these activities, as can prior experience with Chapter 3: Writing Profiles.
Drafting

This section offers students advice on devising opening sentences, comparing and contrasting their subjects with similar ones, and balancing criticism and praise.

Looking Back

Have the class look back at Rosen’s essay, noting where she balances criticism and praise. Frequently Rosen embeds her praise in criticism. For instance, in her concluding line, she writes, “When people do their work only in the ‘interstices of their mind-wandering,’ with crumbs of attention rationed out among many competing tasks, their culture may gain in information, but it will surely weaken in wisdom.” Ask your students to consider why Rosen presents her praise surrounded by criticism. You may want to discuss the reader response she anticipates. Students may be inclined to write rave reviews or to only disparage a subject, so spending time on this writing strategy can be particularly helpful.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Students whose first drafts include awkward, quoted dictionary definitions of key terms (or even peripheral terms) may be unclear about the many ways definitions can be handled. Consider steering them toward Chapter 16: Defining for additional guidance. If the entire class needs guidance on defining terms, considering assigning one or more of the exercises from that chapter.

Working with Sources: Using Summary to Support Your Evaluative Argument

The Working with Sources section focuses on how to use summary effectively in an evaluative essay. To demonstrate how summary can support evaluation, this section pairs one of Romano’s summaries of Statsky’s arguments with Statsky’s original.

Looking Back

Ask your students to turn to Statsky’s essay in Chapter 6: Arguing a Position and compare another one of Romano’s summaries of Statsky’s arguments with the original essay.

Critical Reading Guide

The Critical Reading Guide, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features of the Justifying an Evaluation essay. The better the class discussions of the basic features and readings have been, the better the critical readings by peers will be.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Ask writers to write down a concern they have about their drafts before students exchange drafts. You may have them write their concerns in question form (e.g., “Would switching my first and second reasons strengthen my organization?”). Encourage your students to be specific (without being excessively specific or focused on a grammar issue) by modeling the types of questions they may have.
Teaching Tip: Practicing Evaluation on Peer Feedback

Gretchen Bartels

The Critical Reading Guide asks students to evaluate peer work using a set of criteria, which, more than with any other essay genre, can reinforce the lessons of this chapter. This lesson can be extended even further: Consider asking students to evaluate the comments classmates have made on their drafts. As a class, you can discuss what would be appropriate criteria for the students to use to evaluate these comments. For instance, students could approach the comments in terms of accuracy and helpfulness. Though students have been implicitly evaluating each comment on previous essays when deciding whether to take the advice, this exercise can make that process more explicit, reinforce the lessons of this chapter, and potentially improve the quality of the comments being made on papers.

Revising

This section directs students to think of revising in terms of improvement and problem solving. Consider having students review their peer feedback and the Troubleshooting Your Draft table in class and then devise revision plans based on the suggestions they have read from both sources.

Thinking about Document Design: Using Images to Support an Argument

This section uses the example from the chapter-opening In College Courses scenario, in which a student evaluates two films based on Jane Austen’s novel *Emma*. You may want to refer students to this section when discussing the opening scenario. The student uses two movie stills to illustrate his argument. This section gives you the opportunity to discuss the usefulness of visual evidence to an evaluation. You may also want to ask students which of the two images is analyzed in more detail and is more integral to the argument.

Teaching Tip: Images, Another Building Block

Gretchen Bartels

Including visuals can be particularly useful to students for the evaluation essay because they will often be dealing with a subject that includes a visual component (e.g., a film, a Web site, a painting, a commercial, a music video). Including a visual image can help students who wish to discuss the physical appearance of their subject—instead of having to write a detailed description, students can refer their readers to the image.

However, many students, unfamiliar with how to analyze and include an image in their argument, might just drop images into their essays without weaving them into their arguments. I like to cover visual images with summary, paraphrase, and citation (the elements of an argument with which students are more familiar), comparing these to the beams of wood the students are going to use to construct their essay, which is, in this (Continued)
Teaching Tip: Images, Another Building Block (continued)

metaphor at least, a house. If I grab an armful of wood and throw it down in front of me, I don’t have a house—I have a pile of wood. To make it into a house, I need to find the right place and job for each piece and integrate the pieces carefully with those around them so each contributes meaningfully to the whole. In the same way, visual images don’t make the argument for students. Authors need to show how all of their pieces fit into their arguments and connect each one to the rest of the surrounding argument. Feel free to take the metaphor as far as you like, including the different rooms in the house or the electrical circuits that connect everything. You may even want to bring in an armful of wood to make the point emphatically.

Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre, such as snags in sentences involving comparisons and reliance on short, choppy sentences rather than on more complex sentences. You can

• Take a few minutes at the end of a draft workshop to have writers look over their own essays for these specific errors
• Highlight these common errors briefly in class, demonstrating how to fix them with a few examples

Troubleshooting Student Problems

If you have noticed that your students’ writing in previous essays has tended toward simple, repetitive sentences, you may want to spend time in class using sentence combining strategies like coordination and subordination. Overuse of simple sentences can indicate that students are not synthesizing their ideas into complex relationships, but it can also indicate that writers are focusing on some of the other demanding requirements of the essay. Turning student attention to sentence-level strategies after they have their ideas and drafts can help them amend surface-level problems resulting from their focus on other elements of the assignment. If you focus on how and why to use a strategy like appositive phrases in class, students will be more likely to try it in their essays.

■ A Writer at Work

This section looks in depth at how Christine Romano anticipated readers’ objections and developed counterarguments using her own and her classmates’ objections to Statsky’s argument.

Connecting with Additional Resources

Consider having students read the section on Counterarguing in Chapter 19: Arguing (pp. 668–671) before discussing Romano’s strategies here.
Looking Back

After reviewing Romano’s development of counterarguments, have students reflect back to their experience with the Collaborative Activity at the start of this chapter (or to some other argument they have made, perhaps in a previous paper). What objections or alternative perspectives, if any, did they encounter? How did they respond to them? Ask students to practice developing counterarguments for that incident, or else have them evaluate the counterarguments they already made. If there are no counterarguments, or if their peer reviewers did not provide alternative perspectives, have them evaluate the feedback they received. This sort of exercise doubles as both practice and metacognition, and can help students hone their understanding of this genre and its demands.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

The two writing activities in this section ask students to reflect metacognitively on their writing process during this essay and to think in greater depth about the social implications of evaluating. By writing about their own writing process, students are able to critically consider which of the strategies they used while writing the essay were effective and what problems they may still need to address in their writing processes. By considering the social dimensions of evaluation and the hidden assumptions of the writers in the chapter, students are able to think more critically about what they read.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Students do not have to answer every question.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

By this point in the course, students may have become accustomed to responding to questions in the Reflecting on Your Writing sections, and some students may be tempted to write this reflection on autopilot. To keep the students engaged, you might ask them to respond to one of the questions they are less likely to write about: the question directing them to consider how one of the readings influenced their essay. You may even want to add an evaluative aspect to this question, asking students if they thought this was the strongest essay in the chapter or what appealed to them about this model.

Considering the Social Dimensions: Evaluators’ Hidden Assumptions

These questions demand some real analysis from students and some fairly deep thinking that goes beyond what they wrote in their essays. Discussing the “hidden assumptions of evaluation” reiterates for students the extent to which evaluations, rather than being neutral, objective documents, are informed by specific ideologies.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

This activity asks students to investigate how a person’s subject position influences his or her judgment of a particular subject. To ensure that this activity is productive, you may
want to talk about how looking at hidden assumptions and how they are influenced by race, class, and gender does not mean that they should use stereotypes to explain why people like what they like. This activity should increase their critical awareness of social conditions.

Responding to Evaluation Essays

Here are some of the kinds of problems you can expect to find in students’ evaluation essays:

A Well-Presented Subject
- The essay does not meet the criteria for an evaluation essay; it may seem more like an interpretation essay.
- The topic is too broad (e.g., evaluates music videos rather than a specific music video).
- The writer does not specify what type of subject it is, which negatively impacts the writer’s ability to use appropriate criteria to judge the subject.
- Summary dominates the essay and is not analyzed and used to support the judgment.
- Insufficient background is given on the subject.

A Well-Supported Judgment
- The thesis is unclear or off-topic.
- The writer is fence-sitting or explaining multiple potential judgments of the subject without clearly supporting one.
- The evaluation is facile or uncritical, perhaps just indicating whether the writer likes the subject.
- The writer takes a clear position but does not clearly back it up with a reasoned argument.
- Criteria are unclear or inappropriate to the subject.
- The writer makes vague statements about the subject rather than drawing on specific evidence.

An Effective Counterargument
- The writer does not consider reader objections or alternative judgments.
- The writer undermines his or her evaluation while including reader objections or alternative judgments.
- The writer uses the straw man fallacy, responding to simplified, ridiculous, or underdeveloped objections.
- The writer’s response to reader objections or alternative judgments is insufficient, not well thought out, or unconvincing.
A Readable Plan
• There is no apparent organizational schema.
• The essay lacks transitioning words and phrases.
• The essay does not use or ineffectively uses forecasting.
• Topic sentences are factual rather than evaluative.

Preparing for Conferences
If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the following form.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 8

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. What have you chosen to evaluate? How did you decide on this subject? What is your judgment of it?

2. Who are your readers, and what can you assume they know and think about your subject? How, specifically, do you hope to influence their thinking through your essay?

3. List the reasons for your judgment. Be prepared to talk about their appropriateness, sequence, and relationship.

4. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

5. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft as well as any that have been pointed out by other readers. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes. (If you have completed the text’s revision checklist, you can bring it with you to the conference instead of answering this question.)
Speculating about Causes

The Writing Assignment
Write an essay about an important or intriguing phenomenon or trend, and speculate about why it might have occurred. Demonstrate that the subject exists, and argue for the plausibility of certain causes while anticipating your readers’ likely objections to your argument as well as their preferred causes.

Student Learning Objectives
This assignment can teach students to
• Perform causal analysis
• Craft a convincing argument for causation based on informed speculation rather than factual proof
• Analyze the ways a phenomenon or trend contributes to larger issues
• Recognize and respond to alternative causes through counterargument
• Anticipate the needs and expectations of their readers
• Use forecasting statements and the repetition of key terms and phrases to clarify essay structure
• Structure essays and develop lines of reasoning in ways that make their causal analysis clear to readers
• Use library research to muster convincing evidence
• Refine their ability to integrate quotes within their own academic prose
• Be aware of and avoid logical fallacies common to causative arguments
• Reflect metacognitively on their own writing process

Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment
The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.
### Challenge Teaching Suggestion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An Appropriate Topic</th>
<th>Use Considering Subjects and Their Possible Causes (pp. 481–483) as a classroom activity, listing items from the chart on p. 482 on the board and discussing items that grab students’ interest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Subject is an event or fad, not a phenomenon or trend. (An event or singular incident, like the attack on Pearl Harbor, tends to produce history papers rather than causal analysis. Fads tend to encourage simplistic or tautological explanations — “Purple smiley faces are popular because everyone likes them right now.”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Subject has factual, scientifically explainable causes and thus is likely to lead to science reporting rather than speculation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Use the Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument (pp. 485–486) exercise as a classroom activity. Discussing causes with peers can help many students recognize the shortcomings in their early drafts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Review the Criteria for Choosing a Phenomenon or Trend checklist (p. 483).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Essay does not clearly establish the existence of the phenomenon or the gradual change of the trend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Essay does not interest the reader by establishing the phenomenon or trend’s significance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Encourage more anecdotal examples or library research, as appropriate, to better establish the subject’s existence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Have students write in class about why they chose their phenomena or trends in the first place, and then encourage them to convey that interest in their essays.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Review any of the chapter’s sample essays to explore how those authors established their subjects and captured their readers’ interest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Use the Analyzing Writing Strategies activity following Goode’s essay (pp. 468–470).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Causes are obvious and predictable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Essay uses logical fallacies to argue causation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Essay fails to convincingly show the cause’s responsibility for the phenomenon or trend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Alternative causes are not considered or are mentioned in passing but not adequately discussed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Review Sheila McClain’s Analysis of Possible Causes in the Writer at Work section, pp. 500–501.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Plausible Causes and Support (Continued)** | ✔ Review logical fallacies with your class, particularly the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy (mistaking chronology for causation), which is particularly common to this type of argument. If possible, provide examples of the fallacies for students to analyze and discuss.  
✔ Consider an activity in which peers speculate on the causes of each other’s subjects. This can furnish students with a list of causes they hadn’t considered and with possible points for counterargument. |
| ✔ Essay shifts focus to discuss effects, not causes. | ✔ Review logical fallacies with your class, particularly the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy (mistaking chronology for causation), which is particularly common to this type of argument. If possible, provide examples of the fallacies for students to analyze and discuss.  
✔ Consider an activity in which peers speculate on the causes of each other’s subjects. This can furnish students with a list of causes they hadn’t considered and with possible points for counterargument. |
| ✗ Essay fails to convincingly refute or accommodate opposing points or alternative causes.  
✗ Essay misses a significant and likely counterargument. | ✔ Review Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument (pp. 485–486).  
✔ Try out Analyzing Your Readers (p. 484) as a classroom activity. Discussing their arguments with peers can sometimes help them uncover additional objections.  
✔ Have the class analyze and discuss how the authors of the model essays, particularly Goode and Hsu, make counterarguments. This discussion might be usefully supplemented by the relevant activities following Goode (pp. 469–470) and Hsu (p. 476). |
| **An Effective Counterargument** | ✔ Review Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument (pp. 485–486).  
✔ Try out Analyzing Your Readers (p. 484) as a classroom activity. Discussing their arguments with peers can sometimes help them uncover additional objections.  
✔ Have the class analyze and discuss how the authors of the model essays, particularly Goode and Hsu, make counterarguments. This discussion might be usefully supplemented by the relevant activities following Goode (pp. 469–470) and Hsu (p. 476). |
| ✗ Essay fails to convincingly refute or accommodate opposing points or alternative causes.  
✗ Essay misses a significant and likely counterargument. | ✔ Review Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument (pp. 485–486).  
✔ Try out Analyzing Your Readers (p. 484) as a classroom activity. Discussing their arguments with peers can sometimes help them uncover additional objections.  
✔ Have the class analyze and discuss how the authors of the model essays, particularly Goode and Hsu, make counterarguments. This discussion might be usefully supplemented by the relevant activities following Goode (pp. 469–470) and Hsu (p. 476). |
| **A Readable Plan** | ✔ Review the Planning and Drafting portion of the Guide to Writing, particularly the Outlining Your Draft section (pp. 488–489), for a variety of effective essay structures.  
✔ As a classroom activity, have students draft, share, and revise thesis statements for their papers until their theses successfully encompass each student’s entire argument.  
✔ Have the class, individually or in groups, choose one of the chapter’s model essays and create an outline of its structure. Afterward, come back together and discuss the author’s possible reasons for these organizational decisions. |
| ✗ Thesis statement fails to adequately forecast the essay’s overall argument.  
✗ Essay structure is scattered or ineffective in clearly communicating the causes’ relationship and significance to the subject. | ✔ Review the Planning and Drafting portion of the Guide to Writing, particularly the Outlining Your Draft section (pp. 488–489), for a variety of effective essay structures.  
✔ As a classroom activity, have students draft, share, and revise thesis statements for their papers until their theses successfully encompass each student’s entire argument.  
✔ Have the class, individually or in groups, choose one of the chapter’s model essays and create an outline of its structure. Afterward, come back together and discuss the author’s possible reasons for these organizational decisions. |
Introductory Materials

Scenarios: Discussion Questions

If you have students read and discuss the scenarios that start the chapter, consider the following questions—organized by scenario—as possible tools to spur discussion. The first scenario is keyed to the Thinking about Document Design section (pp. 496–498). (You may even turn to Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals for additional ideas for interpreting or discussing the visuals accompanying these scenarios.)

In College Courses

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- For examples of how causal arguments are utilized in their respective majors and areas of academic interest
- To talk about the types of sources appropriate for this assignment. The student in the example, for instance, draws from both scientific journals and popular periodicals. Where might students look in their search for discussions of possible causes?
- To discuss the writer’s choice to focus her attention primarily on two causes and to speculate about how one decides when to limit (or expand) the scope of a causal argument. In many cases, students will have an array of possible causes to consider and will need similarly to focus their attention on a cause they think dominates or one they think deserves more attention or one they think is the most preventable. Identifying the moments when writers discuss these moves can help students move past the instinct to list, too simplistically, every cause they can find or think of and then say they are all factors.
- To analyze the photograph accompanying the scenario: Why does the photograph show a rich, vibrant coral reef instead of one that has been clearly harmed by the environmental effects she discusses? (One possibility: A healthy coral reef reminds people of what might be lost; an unhealthy one might suggest that the damage has already been done.)
- To consider how visuals like maps, tables, graphs, and photos can contribute to the clarity and persuasiveness of a causal analysis; have your students read and discuss Thinking about Document Design (pp. 496–498).

In the Community

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To speculate about how this writer’s choice to focus his essay relates to his awareness of audience
- To discuss why personal experience was appropriate for this writer and how it may be utilized effectively in their own essays
- To brainstorm social concerns at the local, national, or international levels that they have experienced personally and that would make interesting subjects for their essays.
Examples might include America’s recent economic recession, the gentrification of a well-known downtown location, or California’s seasonal battles with wildfires.

- To discuss the value of this writer’s concluding call to action and generate ideas for alternative strategies for ending their essays on a strong note
- To analyze the photograph accompanying this scenario: Why might an author have selected this photo? Why does the photo feature a face, and why this face? Why is the young man behind the window, and the photographer outside, instead of both outside, or the photographer inside shooting the young man outside?

**In the Workplace**

To prompt discussion, you could ask your students

- To consider this writer’s use of Tom Sawyer to begin her essay and discuss the value of using hooks to open and grab the reader’s attention
- To note the backlash this writer’s essay received and to ponder what measures a writer may take when dealing with a controversial subject or a hostile readership
- To discuss whether the backlash she experienced constitutes a “failure” of her argument. This apparently simple question opens the class up to discussion about the value and purpose of argumentation. How much, and what, does an argument have to accomplish before we consider it effective? If the class thinks her argument is a failure, try a follow-up question: What if, now that she’s raised the point, more parents and teachers who were initially resistant to her speculations start to see what she’s talking about, and several years later most people in her community think she was at least partly right? Or what if her argument helps a parent understand his or her children better, even if no one else finds the article persuasive?

**A Collaborative Activity: Practice Speculating about Causes**

The collaborative activity asks students to choose a current phenomenon or trend and brainstorm possible causes.

- At this early stage, students may generate events and fads instead of the phenomena and trends the chapter envisions. These initial missteps can provide useful learning opportunities, however. After discussing a few appropriate subjects, list an event or fad on the board and help the students explore how the subject may be adapted to target the phenomenon or trend behind it.
- This collaborative activity could easily be followed by a subsequent homework assignment in which students select a possible subject and post it, along with some initial causes they might discuss, on an online discussion board. Now that they have familiarized themselves with the invention process during this in-class activity, the more considered and deliberate nature of an online post will encourage them not only to put their ideas in writing at an early stage but also to use a medium that their peers can see and possibly benefit from.
Reading Essays That Specify about Causes: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience

- To introduce the basic features, have students apply them to an essay. The student essay by Sheila McClain is a great place to start, as its color-coded annotations will help students recognize these basic features at a glance, but these elements can be productively discussed in regard to every essay included in the chapter.

- Point out the relationships among a writer’s audience, subject, argument, and purpose. Discuss how one often informs the others:
  - An audience unfamiliar with the phenomenon or trend discussed may simply want to know what causes are most plausible.
  - Writing for an audience already familiar with common causes, on the other hand, may encourage a writer to make challenging the audience’s perceptions her purpose.

- As you identify the basic features in each of the readings, continue the discussion by asking students to speculate about each author’s purpose and audience. For instance:
  - McClain seems concerned with simply establishing plausible causes for America’s increased interest in fitness and well-being. Do students think she may also hope to indirectly spark healthier behavior in her readers?
  - King seeks to push beyond easy answers to uncover the “hidden” cause behind our appreciation of horror movies. What is it about his subject, purpose, or audience that encourages him to use such a conversational writing style?
  - Goode is clearly striving to push beyond cultural assumptions regarding obesity and personal failing to offer her readers a new perspective.
  - Hsu is similarly attempting to get his readers to look at stories and storytelling in a new way.

Readings

The first and third readings speculate about the broader cultural changes at work behind their respective trends, while the second and fourth readings instead turn inward to investigate the potential psychological and developmental forces behind their phenomena. Each reading in this chapter, however, establishes a significant phenomenon or trend and then explores the most pertinent causes behind it:

- Sheila McClain presents four major causes she sees behind America’s growing interest in health and fitness.
- Stephen King speculates about why moviegoers flock to horror films.
- Erica Goode looks beyond individual culpability to explore the environmental causes behind America’s obesity epidemic.
- Jeremy Hsu explores the roots of human development to find the reason we love stories.

Other themes are suggested in the Making Connections to Personal and Social Issues and Considering Topics for Your Own Essay sections following each reading, and you will undoubtedly see still other thematic connections worth making.
Analyzing Writing Strategies

For your convenience, we list below basic features and specific writing strategies addressed in each of the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections following the readings. This list can serve as a quick reference in class or in conference to direct a student’s attention to potential help on composing or revising the draft.

**Analyzing Writing Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Goode</th>
<th>Hsu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Well-Presented Subject</strong></td>
<td>Establishing the existence of your phenomenon or trend</td>
<td>Using examples and anecdotes to present the subject</td>
<td>Thinking of your subject as answering a “why” question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plausible Causes and Support</strong></td>
<td>Types of causal evidence Analogy</td>
<td>Offering multiple causes that are necessary and sufficient Avoiding post hoc logical fallacies</td>
<td>Forecasting causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Effective Counterargument</strong></td>
<td>Signaling awareness of disagreement or alternative points of view using <em>may</em> or <em>might</em></td>
<td>Refuting opposing causes</td>
<td>Acknowledging causes Conceding or accommodating causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Readable Plan</strong></td>
<td>When . . . then and <em>If . . . then</em> sentence patterns to present cause-effect relationships</td>
<td>Forecasting causes early Using and repeating key terms</td>
<td>Using headings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fitness Culture: A Growing Trend in America**

*Sheila McClain*

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**Headnote:** The “As you read” activity invites students to evaluate the plausibility of McClain’s argument in the light of their own personal experiences with physical fitness. The color-coded annotations note how McClain attempts to establish this plausibility, and the questions in the essay’s margin draw attention to these efforts as early as paragraph 1.

In paragraph 4, when she introduces perhaps her least plausible cause, the annotations point out McClain’s acknowledgment that this claim is “somewhat surprising,” a point she almost immediately follows with support from outside evidence. As the chapter’s first reading, McClain’s essay provides a useful opportunity to highlight this consideration of plausibility that will be so essential in students’ own causal arguments.

**Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay**

*Annotations: A Well-Presented Subject*

- Ask students at which point McClain’s subject becomes clear and how that happens. Point out that she emphasizes the trend—the changing nature of America’s interest in health and fitness—by opening paragraph 1 with a *then . . . and now* contrast.
• Ask the class how many kinds of evidence they can find in McClain’s writing. For instance, though we don’t highlight it, McClain immediately follows her introduction of this fitness trend with anecdotal and statistical evidence. Following a casual gesture toward the ubiquity of proof (“the evidence can be seen everywhere”)—which you might point out is a problematic move if unsupported—she produces many types of evidence so as to hook a greater variety of readers: late-night infomercial ads, workout products, and the hard numbers of health equipment retail and gym membership. These evidentiary techniques are discussed in the Analyzing Writing Strategies section following Goode’s reading on pp. 468–469.

Annotations: Plausible Causes and Support
• Briefly survey students about the places in their essays where they are most likely to cite or draw on outside sources—the introduction, body paragraphs, conclusions? Then look at McClain’s essay (and perhaps the others) to see whether such support is handled differently by them. For instance, McClain begins using outside evidence in her opening paragraph to establish the existence and significance of her subject. Some students, however, believe such evidence is only used during the “real business” of a body paragraph. These opening annotations can remind students that such sources are often necessary in causal arguments from the very outset.

• Especially because they highlight three consecutive topic sentences, these annotations may be used to get students thinking about McClain’s line of reasoning—in particular, her paragraph order. Notice that she begins in paragraph 2 with “one of the most obvious causes” but opens paragraph 3 with a rhetorical question, suggesting that its answer is less obvious (something she reinforces by qualifying her own answer: “The answer may be in part that . . .”). By paragraph 4, her cause is “surprising.”

• Have students examine the ways McClain contextualizes and establishes authority for her sources. For instance, she follows each of the highlighted names in paragraph 3 with the author’s profession, while in paragraph 4 she follows another source with the periodical in which she found the article. These efforts in turn make each cause the source supports increasingly plausible.

Annotations: An Effective Counterargument
• Ask students whether McClain’s argument is stronger or weaker because she talks about her friend’s alternative perspective and counterargues it. McClain’s counterargument provides a particularly useful starting point for discussion because it so successfully illustrates the kinds of objections that should be addressed in these papers. Unlike the somewhat minor or obscure points—or “straw man” fallacies—students sometimes generate when they include counterarguments, McClain here raises an issue frequently discussed regarding both physical fitness and American culture in general: self-image. As such, it is a perfect topic for a counterargument paragraph. You may have students turn to Chapter 19: Arguing, which ends with a list of fallacies (including the “straw man” fallacy mentioned above), as natural transition from the annotation of McClain to a discussion of logic.

• You may also want to note where this paragraph is situated in McClain’s larger essay structure and, as a class, speculate as to why she chose to place it here, near the end of
the essay but not so late as to be the final body paragraph. This discussion of McClain’s line of reasoning could easily segue into the Readable Plan features below:

How can a writer successfully transition into a counterargument paragraph since it typically begins with a competing cause?

Annotations: A Readable Plan

- It becomes clear from paragraph 2 that McClain is using key words and synonyms to keep referring to the central subject of her argument. Because she uses these terms so frequently in paragraph 2, it may be worthwhile to examine her diction and style with students so they can explore strategies for avoiding repetitive word choice or sentence structures.
- In paragraph 6, we annotate a few of the transition words and phrases McClain employs, though she utilizes them throughout her essay. A quick and useful activity might be to have students circle or highlight the other transition words and phrases they find in her essay, so they can see just how frequently McClain uses this technique and get a sense of how important skillful transitions are to essay writing.

Cross-Reference to A Writer at Work

The section headed Learn about McClain’s Writing Process, following the annotated essay, can be used to introduce the Guide to Writing. Students can see part of her invention writing, see how she used the process to decide which causes were the most plausible, and see how she worked out a way to organize them in her essay. A Writer at Work is particularly useful in that McClain, in her analysis of possible causes, is always careful to classify her points in the language of the chapter’s basic features. Reviewing this should encourage students not just to list causes themselves but to categorize these causes as sufficient, perpetuating, contributing, background, immediate, or necessary. Review the Basic Features (p. 450) for more on types of causes.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity draws attention to how King pushes beyond the obvious in explaining why our culture seems to enjoy horror films. Moving quickly through the “simple and obvious” answers, he soon comes to a deeper cause that speaks to indulging an antisocial side of our psyche that most people would rather not acknowledge, an idea that echoes Aristotelian notions of catharsis. This ultimate cause will likely produce a variety of different reactions among your students, a response due in part to the general familiarity most will have with this subject—nearly everyone has seen at least one horror movie. The point this “As you read” activity makes, though, is that King takes this familiar subject and still produces an unexpected argument. This theme of moving past simple and expected causes is an essential element of strong causal arguments. You might even follow a discussion of King’s essay with an invention activity designed to encourage students to similarly push beyond the obvious causes of subjects they are considering writing about.

Making Connections: Media Violence

This activity asks students to consider the effects of violence in the media. To put it another way, if media violence is the cause of something, what does it cause? The activity
invites students to share their own feelings about violent media, providing specific examples to illustrate what they mean.

The second part of the activity asks students to consider a few questions that further probe their thoughts on media violence. While the opening question presents the issue as a simple binary—does this phenomenon produce violence in real life or, as King argues, does it purge violent impulses?—the follow-up questions quickly complicate matters by introducing the topic of censorship and asking to what degree students feel censorship is acceptable. Like the “As you read” activity, these questions are designed to push students beyond simplistic thinking to struggle with more nuanced and complex causal arguments.

As the class comes back together to discuss its findings, consider broadening the conversation at its conclusion to include the arts in general:

• What is the effect of a painting, a play, a novel?
• Does playing a violent video game affect us differently than watching a violent movie or reading a violent book? Why or why not?
• What sorts of phenomena or trends do you think the arts contribute to?

Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Presented Subject

Many students assume that they will not need to establish the very existence of their phenomenon or trend in the paper’s introduction; they assume that if they realize it exists, their readers must, too. This activity not only calls this assumption into question, but asks them to explore King’s essay to determine how he accomplishes this fundamental step.

Follow-up Analysis

• Extend the analysis of King’s diction beyond his use of we to consider other markers of conversational language that he employs. Many students will still be hung up on the old high school maxim of never using I in their papers, so utilizing first-person pronouns of any sort will be a useful step. Nevertheless, a careful discussion of how and why King employs the informal tone he does will help prevent an “anything goes” response from some students.

• Have students read or review the Testing for Common Ground section in Chapter 12: A Catalog of Reading Strategies (p. 598) and then study King’s essay for evidence that he’s building common ground with his readers. (The use of we, noted earlier, is but one example of this.)

• While King’s essay, with its descriptions of childhood behavior and names of popular horror movies and serial killers, is perhaps best viewed as an example of using anecdotal evidence and common ground, other readings in the chapter contain similar instances. McClain, for instance, begins establishing her trend by gesturing toward the familiar example of late-night fitness equipment infomercials. You can ask students to look for similar instances in each of the chapter’s readings; this will help remind them that they can support their causal argument in a variety of ways.

• Ask students to imagine revising King’s essay so that the popularity of horror movies is described as a trend rather than a phenomenon. What else does this change about
the essay? Are the old explanations still sufficient, or do new ones become necessary? These questions can help students learn the difference between a phenomenon and a trend (something that some students may find confusing at first). They will also illustrate for them that some subjects—like King’s—may be approached either way but that the approaches are mutually exclusive. For example, if we decide that people are more interested in horror today than they were three decades ago, King’s current explanation is insufficient because it does not address what changed in that time period to trigger the increased interest in horror movies.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Students could begin their invention process by generating a chart like the one on p. 481 of the Guide to Writing’s Invention and Research section. A useful first activity in speculating about causes is to present a phenomenon or trend as a “why” question, as in the chart. Students may have a hard time coming up with subjects if given little to no direction, however. If this is the case, consider having them brainstorm specific subjects, like a phenomenon evident on campus or a national trend, to start.

**Plausible Causes and Support**

This activity is designed to introduce students to analogy and illustrate how it could be used in their own essay. The section first asks students to identify King’s use of analogy:

- In paragraph 3, he compares watching horror movies to riding roller coasters, both exercises in defying our fears.
- In paragraph 12, he compares horror movies and sick jokes, both of which appeal to those aspects of ourselves that polite society has taught us to suppress.

**Follow-up Analysis**

- Ask students to consider the different types of comparisons made in paragraph 12, which begins with King’s joke analogy and ends with his alligator metaphor. Have them discuss the merits of each approach, and maybe even brainstorm some analogies or metaphors for use in their own essays, if they already know their subjects.
- Return to the notion of authority when discussing types of evidence and sources. It is no coincidence that King, an acknowledged master of horror, finds little need to cite outside authorities to corroborate his argument. While his essay provides a wonderful reminder of the various tools at the writer’s disposal, students may need to be reminded that they are not writing from the same position of authority as King and thus will need to garner some of that authority from their outside sources.

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- You can take some class time to have students do the Consider Using Personal Experience and/or Doing Field Research activity in the Guide to Writing on page 485. This will get students thinking about evidence apart from outside sources that can still help them establish their causes’ plausibility.
An Effective Counterargument

The counterargument strategies discussed here touch on techniques involving word choice (qualifying statements with *may* or *might*), but the primary focus of the activity is identifying strategies meant to reach out to skeptical readers. King accomplishes this in part through his use of *we*, implicating himself as much as his reader in his discussion of antisocial impulses, and through carefully chosen examples likely to connect with most readers. He also makes a final attempt at convincing the hesitant reader by promising a practical benefit to watching horror movies: keeping “the gators fed.”

*Follow-up Analysis*

- Discuss with students the ways in which qualifying statements with *may* or *might* can help or hurt an argument. For instance, qualifying statements in a main argument or in a surprising point can make the author appear less than confident and undermine the efficacy of the arguments.

- Discuss the use of questions (rhetorical or otherwise) in King’s essay and in the others. Questions can make it clear that the author is addressing a possible concern or objection, but they are also effective transitions. McClain, for instance, asks in paragraph 3, “but why the popularity of fitness clubs and group activities?” to broach a new cause, while Hsu begins his essay’s speculative argument by wondering, in paragraph 2, “Why does our brain seem to be wired to enjoy stories?”

*Move from Reading to Writing*

- King’s effort to reach out to skeptical readers is a result of his audience awareness. To help students develop a similar sensitivity to their readers’ potential needs, have them consider the Analyzing Your Readers and Testing Your Choice sections of the Guide to Writing (p. 484).

A Readable Plan

Suggesting causation often requires first that the author establish a chronological relationship. This activity invites students to analyze King’s use of *when* . . . *then* and *if* . . . *then* sentence structures, but also cautions them to avoid the trap of mistaking chronology for causation, a flaw in logic known as the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy. Explain to students that linking points chronologically is not in and of itself a fallacy but doing so without evidence of an actual relationship between the two would be. From this perspective, the *post hoc* fallacy becomes a reminder to use sufficient evidence to establish a cause as plausible.

*Follow-up Analysis*

- Provide students with a short list of *post hoc* fallacies and have them identify where the faulty logic resides. After that, ask students to reformulate the cause-effect relationship of each statement to present a more viable connection and corroborate it with anecdotal evidence or to decide that the original statements are simply untenable and should not be used. This will help students learn to identify such fallacies and gain experience in dealing with them.


Move from Reading to Writing

• If students have done much brainstorming or invention work, consider having them look through their materials for ideas that might be connected using *if . . . then* or *when . . . then* patterns and then practice writing sentences that convey those relationships.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

This activity encourages students to start thinking about possible subjects and strategies for their own essays. You might have them begin this assignment by freewriting individually or brainstorming in small groups. However, when they’re done brainstorming, opening the discussion up to the entire class and perhaps developing one student’s prospective subject on the board can help model more of the invention stage to the class.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity invites students to note Goode’s methods of providing and documenting her evidence. While she does not cite her sources, as you will probably ask your students to do in their own papers—something the activity notes but you may still want to mention in class—her essay is a model of convincingly arguing causation through the effective incorporation and synthesis of outside sources. Goode’s essay is also the chapter’s only reading to utilize visual aids for evidence, an option further discussed in the Analyzing Visuals (pp. 470–471), Beyond the Traditional Essay: Speculating about Causes (pp. 477–478), and Thinking about Document Design (pp. 496–498) sections.

Making Connections: The Freshman Fifteen

Goode’s essay speculates about the environmental influences behind America’s unhealthy eating habits, and this assignment invites students to consider that argument in relation to the more immediate and familiar environment of their college campus and local hangouts. It asks students to describe a favorite spot and detail what they typically eat or drink there; the questions that follow are designed to get students thinking critically about how this familiar environment may affect their behavior.

Your students may very well supply the discussion with a variety of concrete examples to stimulate the conversation. What types of drinks and snacks do students have on their desks or hidden in their backpacks? Where did they get them? Why did they choose these items to bring to class, and were there other options available? (If your campus prohibits food and drink in the classroom, as many do, students might be unwilling to talk about what they have. If you think they have food and drink anyway, you might try conducting a quick, anonymous survey, perhaps by handing the questions to a designated class leader and then stepping out of the room.)

The activity’s final question, asking whether nutritional information weighs more heavily in students’ minds than price, can open up discussion of the ways that socio-economic status can affect diet. The healthy and organic options of a specialty market may not be as financially practical for some families— or to undergraduates who are employed part-time and are relatively new to grocery shopping for themselves—as the goods of a more generic supermarket.
Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Presented Subject

Once students realize that the first thing an essay needs to do is to establish its subject, the next question becomes “How?” This activity shows that examples and anecdotes may usefully precede a concrete statement of purpose. You may observe to the class that a writer can use examples of a phenomenon or trend as a kind of hook, a strategy writers use to capture a reader’s attention in their opening lines. Goode, for instance, fills paragraph 1 with anecdotal evidence, ending on the startling assertion that one of today’s muffins could serve an entire family from past eras.

Follow-up Analysis

• Have students look at the chapter’s other readings to see how their authors first introduce their subjects. Do they all open with anecdotal evidence as Goode does, with outside sources, or perhaps a combination of the two? Have the class discuss why these authors may have chosen to introduce their subjects the way they did and speculate to what degree matters like audience and subject may have influenced this decision.

• You may also have the class explore this strategy in other genres of writing by turning to other chapters in the textbook and looking at the introductions of the sample essays in them.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If they have not yet done so, have students ask themselves the questions in the Presentation of the Subject section of the Guide to Writing on pp. 487–488.

• Consider a classroom activity in which small groups of students work together to generate hooks and introductory examples for a variety of phenomena and trends you list on the board, or even for one another’s subjects. Encourage them to choose examples that convincingly illustrate the subject’s existence but still entice their audience to read on.

Plausible Causes and Support

This activity not only encourages students to seek causes beyond the predictable and commonplace, but also reminds them that the most effective essays will reflect in their structure and organization how these diverse causes relate. Is one a background cause while another instead perpetuates the phenomenon or trend? The activity’s questions are designed to turn students’ attention to the ways Goode’s essay reflects these considerations.

Notice in paragraphs 10–14 how Goode suggests various levels of familiarity for each cause. The first few are introduced with simple declarative statements, but paragraph 13 opens with a connection to readers familiar with office environments (“anyone who has survived Christmas season at the office . . .”), while paragraph 14 suggests its cause was already suspected by researchers in the field.

Follow-up Analysis

• Goode forecasts her argument’s primary causes at the opening of paragraph 4. Draw students’ attention to how she precedes her list of specific causes with a more general
categorization ("a host of environmental factors") to make this statement more than mere listing. Tricks like this may help students distinguish their essay’s thesis from the formulaic list thesis of the Five Paragraph Essay, a format you may have already struggled to break them of in early chapters. To help students apply this lesson and practice it, have them look at the reasons listed by King or by McClain and then, as a class (or in small groups), attempt to come up with sentences that similarly employ general categorizations to frame the lists.

- Have students rank Goode’s causes in order of plausibility and then compare that list to her essay’s structure. Does her line of reasoning roughly reflect this list? If not, what other reasons might explain her paragraph order?
- Often, instructors will caution students against using one- or two-sentence paragraphs, despite the fact that we sometimes see them in our readings. Consider a brief in-class activity in which students brainstorm additional examples to develop paragraph 1 or paragraph 11 further. Discuss the merits of the longer and shorter approaches—why might a writer choose an unconventional, short paragraph?

**Move from Reading to Writing**

- Once students have a clear idea of the major causes they will discuss in their essays, have them do the Categorize Each Cause activity in the Guide to Writing on p. 485. It may be productive to do this in-class as a group activity; students may find that what they assume is a necessary cause might be, in their peers’ eyes, merely a sufficient or only a contributing cause.
- Goode’s essay, perhaps more so than any of the other readings in this chapter, is explicit in its desire to prompt change. Discuss, as a class, where in her essay she makes this clear. Then have students consider what goals they have for their own essays and brainstorm answers to the following questions:
  - What effect do they want their paper to have on their readers? (Have them look again at the list of common purposes for Speculating about Causes essays on p. 451.)
  - Should they be explicit about this goal?
  - If so, how might they express it in their work?

**An Effective Counterargument**

Writers can counter opposing viewpoints in a variety of ways, but the tactic students may be most familiar with is refutation. McClain, for example, acknowledges that some people work out for reasons of personal vanity. Ultimately she refutes this alternative cause by showing that it is only a temporary motivation and thus not a significant cause of America’s fitness trend. This activity is designed to get students thinking about how Goode responds to competing causal arguments. Goode

- Acknowledges the food industry objection that people should have more willpower and exercise more, but observes that some companies are starting to change their policies anyway (par. 8) and then shows through most of the rest of the essay that willpower is not the chief issue, a point first raised directly in paragraph 3.
• Acknowledges, through sources with which she seems to agree, that bringing lawsuits and trial lawyers into the mix might be problematic, but says, nevertheless, that the evidence still shows that the food industry’s policies are largely to blame (par. 9).

• Reports the food industry’s argument that large portions have no bearing on growing waistlines, but then squarely refutes it with a barrage of studies and counterexamples (pars. 14–19).

Follow-up Analysis

• Unlike McClain, who inserts her counterargument in the final third of her essay, Goode returns to one competing cause—that of personal responsibility rather than environmental factors—multiple times throughout her article. Have students discuss why they think she does this and why those counterargument portions are placed where they are.

• Goode never fully dismisses the opposing view on personal dietary choice. In paragraph 19, for instance, she concedes, “Obviously, people have responsibility for deciding what to eat and how much.” Remind students that they need not completely discard every alternative cause. At the same time, analyze as a class how Goode manages to keep her essay’s focus clearly on her own argument even as she acknowledges this opposing view.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Turn to the Anticipate Objections and Anticipate Alternative Causes activities in the Guide to Writing on p. 486.

• Students occasionally have difficulty countering the alternative causes they come up with themselves. To help them surpass this hurdle, consider having students write down their alternative causes, switch lists with another student, and then counter the new causes they’ve been handed.

• If students are having difficulty coming up with alternative causes or with rebuttals to them, try holding mini-debates: Have students jot down a tentative thesis and their primary supporting points on a piece of paper, and then swap papers with classmates. Then have each pair hold a quick informal debate, with each person arguing against his or her own thesis.

A Readable Plan

This activity helps students build on their understanding of forecasting statements by having them look at the ways in which reiterated key terms work with forecasting statements to create cohesion in an essay. It asks students to track Goode’s use of this strategy throughout her essay.

Note that the order of the items listed in Goode’s forecasting statement (the first sentence of paragraph 4) provides a rough approximation of her paragraph order. At the same time, it is not a list of her every paragraph topic, and Goode is willing to disrupt that order and return to an essential cause when necessary: Though portion size is the first item on her list and is initially discussed in paragraph 6, her sustained examination of the cause takes place in paragraphs 14–19. Remind students that their forecasting statements are not necessarily outlines of their paragraph structure.
Follow-up Analysis

- Have students analyze another reading from this or another chapter, looking for similar uses of key terms and repetition to build cohesion.

Move from Reading to Writing

- Try the Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement section of the Guide to Writing on p. 487.
- Have students practice boiling down larger statements to key terms or phrases they can reiterate later in their papers. Similarly, you may want to have the class practice synthesizing a list of multiple causes into a larger idea they all have in common, as Goode does by grouping portion size, availability, and other causes under the single label environmental factors.
- A common concern that students have about using key terms and phrases throughout their essay is repetitive writing. Try an activity in which you give students a sample paragraph (or essay) with noticeably repetitive word choice and ask them to revise for greater variety while still reiterating key ideas.


This activity invites students to turn their attention to the pictures and graphs included in Goode’s essay, evaluating the efficacy of these visual media and exploring how they relate to the text. This discussion can be particularly rewarding, for, while students live in an environment saturated with visual stimulation, they are rarely experienced at incorporating images and figures into their writing. You may also want to point out that Goode gives the source of every graph and figure; visual evidence, this will remind them, is not exempt from proper citation.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

Examining a current social problem, either as a phenomenon or trend, can be an excellent subject for a causal argument. Students can find good potential subjects by considering phenomena or trends with which they have had personal experience. For instance, students who had service requirements during high school might turn to the social concerns those requirements were meant to address. Or students could return to their Remembering an Event paper to ask what larger phenomenon or trend those isolated events might have represented.

Headnote: The “As you read” activity asks students to consider Hsu’s use of subheadings to divide his essay. Many students, introduced to subheadings, are eager to try them out, so discussing them thoroughly is worthwhile. Consider asking students whether they think the subheadings make things more clear or less clear, whether the headings seem to accurately describe the contents that follow, and whether the headings function as an alternative to transitions or side-by-side with transitions. Discussing these
three points can help students internalize the criteria of clarity, appropriateness, and transition as they pertain to headings.

Making Connections: Storytelling and Technology

Students will have extensive experience with the types of social technologies described here, which will in turn produce lively discussion in class about their relation to storytelling. If your classroom has an LCD projector, you might bring up a few celebrities’ Twitter pages (some of them are rather prolific) to examine firsthand whether these technologies promote narrative. (Find these pages ahead of time, and read them for a few days to ensure that the celebrity in question does not discuss topics or activities not appropriate in the classroom.) Expanding the discussion to consider why people subscribe to these feeds in the first place, and what benefits they receive from keeping up with friends on social networking sites, should effectively transition the conversation into the second question regarding Hsu’s remark on promoting social cohesion.

At the same time, some students’ familiarity with the technology may at first hinder their ability to think critically about its use: Discussion may be filled with numerous personal examples but little sustained analysis. One strategy for encouraging deeper insight is to consider how the medium itself affects the content. Are writers more or less inclined to construct narratives on a blog, which has few restrictions on length, than they are using a Tweet, which cannot exceed 140 characters? In other words, are the human development causes Hsu describes at all affected by external technological factors?

Another possible problem might be lack of familiarity with social networking sites—in some classes, the number of students who have ever tried Twitter may be low and the number who blog might be zero. If this is the case, consider giving the class a chance to experiment with the services, perhaps at home or between classes, before discussing them.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

A Well-Presented Subject

This activity reminds students of a useful technique for writing speculative essays: framing the subject as a “why” question. Hsu utilizes a version of one as the subheading for his essay’s title (“Why We Love a Good Yarn”), and his first paragraph is designed to not only begin establishing the existence of storytelling’s popularity and ubiquity but also to set up the questions embedded in paragraph 2 that will speak more directly to his essay’s purpose.

Follow-up Analysis

• Your discussion of “why” questions will be an ideal opportunity to broaden the conversation to the use of questions as ways to frame subjects and as transitions. Have students scan the chapter’s readings for examples of questions and discuss how these authors utilize them.

• You might momentarily return to the “As you read” activity’s focus on section headings to ask whether “why” questions might be a viable alternative to the short phrases Hsu uses to partition his essay. How might a writer use these questions as headings to introduce new subtopics?
Move from Reading to Writing

• If your students are still in the invention stage of their drafting, consider using this topic to transition into a brainstorming exercise. Questioning—the use of question and answer to generate ideas—is a common tool writers use. Have students begin with the “why” question that most directly speaks to their phenomenon or trend. After they answer it, encourage them to ask and answer increasingly specific questions not only to provide additional material for their drafting but also to complicate the ideas they already had in mind. For more on questioning, see Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies.

Plausible Causes and Support

As mentioned above for the Goode essay, forecasting statements can be used effectively to establish tentative outlines for papers. However, Hsu follows the order put forth in his forecasting statement far more faithfully than Goode follows hers. This activity invites students to observe Hsu’s paragraph sequencing and analyze both the order and the amount of space he devotes to each cause. Along the way, students might notice the following points:

• The sequence of causes listed in Hsu’s forecast statements (par. 3) appears to move from the least conscious or instinctive uses of narrative (keeping tabs on others in a social network) to the most conscious or deliberate uses of narrative (persuasion).

• Paragraphs 4–10 do not directly describe any of the causes Hsu relates in his forecasting statement, but they do provide information essential to establishing his phenomenon and preparing the reader for the causal arguments that are to come. The fact that they precede those causal paragraphs is one clear indicator, but taking time in class for students to analyze exactly how these paragraphs contribute to Hsu’s overall project will help clarify the role of background information in a causal argument and reiterate the importance of predicting readers’ needs.

Follow-up Analysis

• To return again to the topic of headings, you might have students compare how Hsu’s paragraph sequencing matches up with his use of headings. Does he start a new section for each cause, or does he divide his essay using different criteria?

Move from Reading to Writing

• Have students articulate the reasoning behind their paragraph order. One student might sequence paragraphs based on initial plausibility, while another might move from local to national causes of a trend. After students have decided on their organizational rationales, have them take time to strategize ways they can subtly indicate these rationales in their essays. The chapter’s readings may serve as useful models if students are having difficulty generating ideas on their own.

An Effective Counterargument

While students are typically familiar with refuting opposing viewpoints, they are often less familiar with the counterargument strategies this activity initially discusses: acknowledgment, concession, and accommodation. For those reasons, it might be worthwhile to review
the parts of King’s and McClain’s essays mentioned in the An Effective Counterargument section for this reading.

The primary part of this activity, however, asks students to turn their attention to Hsu’s use of counterargument and discuss how effective they find it to be. In Hsu’s case, paragraph 10 features an indirect refutation: Hsu himself raises the objection, permits Steven Pinker to respond to it, mentions that other scientists agree, and moves on. By presenting the refutation in this way—having Pinker issue the response—Hsu makes himself a representative of the audience and avoids the appearance that he is simply favoring a pet theory. When Hsu moves on, he seems to be convinced and in so doing encourages the reader to be satisfied as well.

The final question asks students to consider whether Hsu’s refutation seems effective. It may be productive to invite the unconvinced students to speak up in class, as the resulting conversation will speak directly to what readers feel makes a counterargument successful.

Follow-up Analysis

• Although the activity above calls for analysis of a refutation, acknowledgments and accommodations can be found in this chapter, too. Consider having students look for them. Examples: Hsu begins paragraph 2 with a quick and indirect acknowledgement of an obvious cause (“Popular tales do far more than entertain”) to set up his own explanation. McClain, meanwhile, concedes that vanity may be a factor in America’s growing fitness trend, but observes that it is too temporary to be a sufficient cause.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Returning to McClain’s use of counterargument can provide students with a useful strategy for their own essays. Remind them to categorize not only their own causes (see the Guide to Writing, p. 485) but also alternative causes as necessary, sufficient, background, contributing, or perpetuating. If an alternative cause is too temporary or preliminary to be sufficiently plausible, then the author has found his or her counterargument.

A Readable Plan

Like the “As you read” activity that precedes Hsu’s essay, this activity asks students to analyze Hsu’s use of headings.

Follow-up Analysis

• One point to consider in class is how much the use of headings affects the surrounding text. Do they require miniature introduction paragraphs for the start of each new portion, or can any essay have headings inserted with little planning? To help illustrate what you mean and stimulate discussion, have students read a portion of “The Secrets of Storytelling” aloud and omit the headings. Does Hsu’s essay sound like it’s missing something, or is there little discernable difference? Similarly, you might consider asking students to add subheadings to Goode’s essay. Does the text of her essay, without being changed to accommodate the insertions, feel disrupted or less effective with the addition of headings?

• Point students toward Chapter 21: Designing Documents for more discussion on using headings.
Move from Reading to Writing

• Have students write a few headings for their own essays and explain why they are partitioning their argument in those places. Even if they opt not to use them, the act of thinking critically about their essay’s different elements and explicitly labeling those portions may produce a more thorough understanding of their essay’s structure.

Considering Topics for Your Own Essay

Social phenomena and trends are often popular choices for student essays, as they typically have some familiarity with the subjects and can translate their personal experiences into greater interest in the assignment. The technological examples used earlier in the Making Connections: Storytelling and Technology section may have sparked ideas for a number of your students already. Whatever they choose, remind them that they need not speculate only about societal ills (Considering Topics for Your Own Essay, p. 471). While social problems often produce compelling papers, students can just as effectively write about positive trends and phenomena. Indeed, they need not evaluate their subject as good or bad at all.

Beyond the Traditional Essay: Speculating about Causes

This section prompts students to think about “infographics” and the ways that such graphics help explain causes of events, phenomena, and trends. Many of these graphics rely heavily on visual metaphors, which suggests an alternative for student writers unversed in table- and chart-building: Encourage them to come up with good analogies and metaphors. Not only can these comparisons do the same sort of work that infographics do; they can also sometimes give the writer ideas for graphics.

Guide to Writing

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of The Guide in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Speculating about Causes.

Connecting with Additional Resources

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

• Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader for help with orienting statements, paragraphing, cohesion, flow, or transitions
• Chapter 16: Defining for help with crafting effective definitions of key terms
• Chapter 17: Classifying for help categorizing and organizing the different types of causes students may encounter in their essays
• Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting for help with comparison if students are working with multiple examples of their subjects or using a comparison in a counterargument
• Chapter 19: Arguing for help with asserting a thesis, giving reasons and support, counterarguing, and avoiding logical fallacies
Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research for help with locating appropriate support and source material

Chapter 24: Using Sources for help incorporating sources

Starting Points: Speculating about Causes

This section helps students navigate the Guide to Writing so they can find the strategies and techniques most likely to address their individual concerns. Common issues from this list that students will look to are choosing a subject, plausible causes and support, and an effective counterargument.

Invention and Research

The invention and research section offers students strategies for generating phenomena and trends, causes, and the evidence that will make those causes appear plausible to a reader. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Considering Subjects and Their Possible Causes

This first activity of Invention and Research invites students to brainstorm a number of possible subjects for the speculative essay. Remind them that at this early stage, they should consider a variety of potential subjects and then narrow the field, choosing the one that seems most interesting and most appropriate to the assignment. To help them evaluate these potential subjects, have students utilize the Criteria for Choosing a Phenomenon or Trend checklist on p. 483.

Analyzing The Guide

Point out the activity’s suggestion to not only list possible subjects but also speculate about some initial causes that come to mind for each one. This important tip will help students avoid those subjects that appear viable on the surface but that when actually analyzed for possible causes prove too challenging. Conversely, they may surprise themselves with the causes they generate for a seemingly ordinary phenomenon or trend.

Looking Back

Have students think about which readings most interested them and then look back to the appropriate Considering Topics for Your Own Essay prompts. These sections will typically speak to the themes and rhetorical devices that made the essay jump out at the student. If students completed these activities earlier, ask them to go back through their responses and begin picking out the ideas and connections that appear most promising.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Even without *The Guide’s* suggestion to use the Web, students will turn to the Internet for inspiration on their paper’s subject, the causes behind that subject, and the evidence used to prove its plausibility. In their enthusiasm to find the “perfect” source, they sometimes forget to consider that source’s reputability. Address this directly in class. Go back to the readings...
to have them examine the kinds of evidence these authors used and how they suggested that evidence’s authority. If you are particularly concerned about Internet abuse, consider collecting students’ works-cited pages shortly before the essay’s due date, perhaps with the inclusion of brief annotations for each source. (Refer them to Chapter 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews for tips on creating an annotated reference list.)

**Exploring What You Know and Need to Find Out about Your Subject**

This activity asks students to write about the subjects they have chosen and their possible causes in an effort to see what the students already know about their phenomena or trends. Apart from indicating gaps in knowledge that research will productively fill, this activity should remind them that their perspective and knowledge are key elements of the assignment. The paper is not about merely collecting potential causes but about making arguments about those causes and whether to reinterpret conventional causes or to speculate about new ones. This activity should help students determine what they already have to say.

**Looking Back**

Consider having students go back to a reading and find moments when the authors are making a source’s arguments their own. Some students may respond that much of an essay, perhaps even all (this is likely with King), feels like it’s the author’s argument, the author’s perspective — and that’s exactly the point: Even if they later find research to back up their theses and fill the gaps in their knowledge, the main points in the paper still belong to them.

**Analyzing Your Readers**

Audience awareness is an essential element of any argument, and this activity seeks to foreground that concern for students. Its questions are designed to get students thinking about their readers’ potential needs and how their argument may adapt to meet those needs.

**Demonstrating the Activity**

Consider choosing a phenomenon or trend and modeling on the board how a writer anticipates the reader’s needs in regard to that subject. You may even want to use this as a precursor to the Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice. First share your example subject and have students individually write down their basic questions and concerns about the subject, and then proceed with your demonstration. Afterward, see how well your findings addressed the needs your students generated beforehand.

**Testing Your Choice**

This section’s questions will prove important in checking the viability of student subjects. To encourage them to give this activity more thought than a string of cursory “yes” responses, consider having them answer follow-up *how* or *why* questions after each question in the book, questions designed to get students thinking about *how* they will perform this requirement in their essay. For instance, if they answer that they will “be able to demonstrate that the phenomenon or trend exists,” have them then answer “how?” If they insist readers will be interested in their subject, ask “why?”
A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

As a final check before shifting their focus fully to the causes and evidence, students are asked to share their phenomenon or trend, as well as a few central causes, with a group of peers to hear their reactions.

Analyzing The Guide

To help stimulate conversation beyond a facile “sounds great,” have respondents first speculate about their own top two causes for each speaker’s subject before sharing their own. Not only does this make the listeners’ initial expectations and speculations more concrete; it also provides a potential list of additional causes.

Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument

As your students completed the Analyzing Writing Strategies sections after each reading, they might have turned to various sections of this map to aid their own invention process. By this stage, they will want to review those activities already completed and turn to those remaining to be done. It is sometimes worthwhile for students to repeat activities.

Connecting to Additional Resources

After your students complete their research, but before they begin to plan their document, you may have them write an annotated reference list and possibly a literature review. Completing the annotated reference list can help students establish what has already been said on their subjects, while the literature review activity gives them a chance to analyze what has been said and look for grounds on which to stake their own positions. Chapter 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews provides students with tips and examples for each genre. Consider walking them through the examples, so they are clear which types of annotated reference lists or literature reviews you are interested in and which citation style you would like them to use.

Looking Back

Encourage students to create a chart listing possible causes and analyses similar to those modeled on pages 481 and 485. The best example of this type of chart, however, is Sheila McClain’s in A Writer at Work on pp. 500–501. Have students study her list and then see how she implemented it in her essay “Fitness Culture: A Growing Trend in America.”

Designing Your Document

As the Goode and Hsu readings illustrate, incorporating headings or visuals within the text are both viable options for student essays, though students should be clear that these are not requirements (unless, of course, you intend them to be). Ask them to start thinking about what these additions may contribute to their overall arguments and how they might implement them.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Remind students that these additions, particularly the visuals, are only supplements to their argument. Some students get carried away with the visual elements and allow them
to eclipse the content of the essay itself. Asking them to have a complete draft of their paper before they begin inserting visuals is one way to reduce this risk.

Conversely, some students believe visuals to be functionally separate from the essay proper and therefore assume they are not beholden to the same standards of proper citation that embedded quotation and paraphrase are. Remind them that any chart or graph must have its source acknowledged, and point them toward Chapter 24: Using Sources to see how this is done.

Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers

This activity invites students to consider why they are writing this causal analysis. Considering purpose is an important aspect of writing, though students sometimes forget to think about it enough. They just know they have to write an essay by a certain date. The activity’s questions, building on previous invention assignments that considered audience, ask what the writer’s intentions are and how they may best be accomplished for the readers they have imagined.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Many of the students who write about social problems will hope not only to increase awareness but also to promote change. In the process, however, some might become distracted from analyzing the causes that exist, lecturing instead on what should and shouldn’t be done. Remind them that this paper is not a Proposing a Solution essay but a Speculation about Causes. Warn them that if they find the word *should* creeping into their essay too much, they may be veering off track.

Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement

This section asks students to put their central argument about the causes behind a phenomenon or trend into words, an essential final activity before launching into the drafting stage.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Some students may be initially frustrated by early attempts at thesis statements that are little more than a lengthy list of causes. Remind students that their theses do not necessarily have to be single sentences. Hsu, for instance, spreads his out over the entirety of paragraph 3. Furthermore, encourage them to not only forecast their principal causes but also synthesize a broader concept from them: Goode combines her causes under the broader heading of *environmental factors* (par. 4), while Hsu links his causes to “our history as a social animal” (3).

Planning and Drafting

The next major section of the Guide to Writing helps students organize the invention materials they have created, plan an approach to the paper, and develop a first draft. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals

This activity contains a list of invaluable questions designed to get students thinking about the essential elements and rhetorical strategies characteristic of causal arguments in terms
of how they will affect their imagined audience. This builds upon the students’ previous consideration of purpose: Now that they know what they want to achieve with their papers, this list will help them review all the various ways they can accomplish their goals.

Looking Back
Remind students that nearly every question in this section refers to at least one of the chapter’s readings as an example. Invite them to use these references as guides for what essays to review should they need any of these strategies modeled.

Outlining Your Draft
Here, the Guide to Writing offers a variety of different essay structures particular to the basic elements of a causal analysis, each prefaced by a short explanation of a hypothetical writer’s general purpose in relation to readers’ expectations.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
Some students will feel outlining to be an unnecessary activity, preferring instead to skip directly to drafting and spontaneously deciding paragraph order as they go. The result, typically, is a meandering and unfocused essay. Encourage students to create a formal and thorough sentence outline before they compose their draft. Alternatively, ask them to expand the chart of causes and analysis they created during the invention stage, including elements like their outside sources and categorization of their causes in the appropriate columns.

Connecting with Additional Resources
Should students need additional help with creating an outline, have them turn to the outlining portion of Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–568).

Teaching Tip: Transitions and Line of Reasoning

James Condon

When discussing paragraph order with my students, I tell them that strong writers have an internal logic to how they present their argument to their reader. Not only does this make their argument more effective and easier to follow, it makes it easier for them to generate effective, organic transitions between paragraphs. Also, it means that even if someone were to cut up the essay and rearrange the paragraphs, a smart reader should be able to piece it back together in the proper order.

I then have the students do just that. Using a short essay that I have cut up (about five to six paragraphs long) by a professional writer, I pass out packets of individual paragraphs to my students, who are arranged in groups. The assignment is simple: Put the article back in the right order. To do so, they must examine the internal cues from the essay’s transitions and its overall line of reasoning. Inevitably, when we come back together, groups disagree on the paragraph order, and what results is a lively discussion that explores how and why writers structure their essays the way they do.
Drafting

This section offers students suggestions for beginning their essays, developing topic sentences, and crafting examples and sentence structures in parallel forms. It also usefully reminds students of the recursive nature of the writing process: It advises students to return to their invention work to develop new content for their draft and observes that they should be willing to use placeholders or admittedly imperfect writing at times, with the intention of returning to these sections later to improve them through revision. This section has two great recommendations worth discussing with classes: using topic sentences to signal stages in their arguments and presenting examples throughout the essay in such a way that each example follows a similar grammatical pattern (parallelism). The latter pattern can be easy for students to miss, so slowing down to highlight or annotate readings (like Goode’s) as a class or in teams can help students work out how to spot and possibly follow it.

Looking Back

You may want to have students briefly return to other readings from this or other chapters to study the authors’ use of key terms, parallel examples, and parallel sentence structures. Show students how these different tactics both work toward a common goal: the Readable Plan basic feature.

Working with Sources: Citing a Variety of Sources to Support Your Causal Speculations

One of the student research weaknesses seldom addressed in the classroom, but raised here, is that students often dig up most of their research from the same ground: They might do all of their digging at the library, picking up many books, or they might do it all online, using Google, but a mixed approach is relatively rare. Discussing the variety of research in McClain’s article or in Ngo’s article from Chapter 4: Explaining a Concept or in the sample essay at the end of Chapter 24: Using Sources can help reinforce for some students the rhetorical effects described here.

Critical Reading Guide

The Critical Reading Guide is designed to help students, as well as prospective readers like tutors and friends, respond productively to student drafts. Building on the chapter’s discussion of the assignment’s basic features, the Critical Reading Guide directs readers in how to evaluate a draft and offer constructive feedback. Productive classroom discussion of the chapter’s basic features during reading and invention can pay additional dividends in the quality of student response.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

To give authors some feeling of control during the workshop process, have them write on the fronts of their drafts the major concerns they’d like their peers to focus on during their reading and response. This will ensure that students offer their opinions and advice on the issues that most concerns other authors. In addition, be sure to insist students write on
every draft they read, writing both marginal comments as they go and a short end comment that summarizes their general impression of the piece and their advice on how to improve it further. Without this guidance, some students will merely circle grammatical mistakes and write a simple “good job” at the end, defeating the true purpose of a draft workshop.

Looking Back

Use the annotated McClain essay as a general model for the kind of active reading that takes place in a draft workshop: Individual words are noted, as are complete sentences, and marginal comments are made throughout. Often, instructors will have students practice these skills by annotating another reading from the chapter or responding to a sample student essay in class as they would during a draft workshop; this last exercise can be particularly fruitful, as students often have less experience practicing their active reading skills.

Revising

This section urges students to think of revising as problem solving, offering a chart linking potential problems to a number of viable solutions and suggesting they outline their draft again to better understand the paper they actually produced.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

These revision outlines are often very helpful to students, so emphasize the potential benefits they offer, particularly for students with organizational problems or a tendency to stray off topic. At the same time, these outlines are effective only if students reproduce what is actually written in the draft rather than their original intentions. This distinction is key and one you may want to ensure by having them produce these outlines collaboratively in groups.

Thinking about Document Design

This section focuses on the incorporation of visuals, such as pictures and charts, in students’ Speculating about Causes essays. It explains the many benefits of including visuals, but cautions that they are only supplements to the main text. One way to emphasize this point might be to have students look at the art in Thinking about Document Design and try to determine what the point of the student’s paper is before they are asked to read the opening In College Courses scenario. Most students will find that the images are easier to interpret if they have text to support them.

Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in causal arguments. While the Checking Your Use of Numbers portion is fairly self-explanatory, you may want to include a short lecture and exercise in class to help students understand and avoid reason is because constructions. Note that practicing the construction of sentences using words like since, because, or reason can help students internalize this lesson.
Troubleshooting Student Problems

Often students will miss grammatical mistakes and typos in their own work because they reread their draft too quickly and assume that elements are correct when they are not. One technique for reducing the likelihood of this tendency is advising students to edit their drafts by reading them backward. By reading the last sentence first, then the second to last, and so forth, students disrupt the essay’s progression of ideas and must therefore examine each line on a sentence-by-sentence basis. It may feel strange at first, but often it will result in greater success during the editing stage.

A Writer at Work

This section gives students a glimpse of Sheila McClain’s invention process, specifically her efforts generating, categorizing, and analyzing potential causes for her essay. Her chart of possible causes and analysis reflects not a writer with a static and unchanging idea that merely found corroboration in research but a writer whose ideas on her subject evolved as she explored them further.

Looking Back

Your class may return to McClain’s essay on pp. 452–455 to compare the points made in her invention notes from this section with the points she made in her final draft. In addition, you might point out to students that the chart of possible causes and analyses in the Writer at Work section provides an excellent and complete example of what the Ways In: Developing Your Argument and Counterargument section describes on pp. 485–486.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

The following activities ask students now to turn their attention to the decisions they made in their own writing process—to think critically about themselves as writers and their experience writing a causal argument. Such metacognitive assignments can often uncover insights that benefit students as they construct a more accurate understanding of their own process.

Reflecting on Your Writing

This activity invites students to consider a number of questions about their writing process, including how purpose and audience affected their decision making, one thing they learned about themselves while composing this essay, and what advice they would offer a friend who was about to write a causal argument paper. Students do not have to answer every question here.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Although students do not have to answer every question, you may want to have them respond to more than one. At this late stage of the chapter, students are often tired and opt for the path of least resistance. An alternative is to require a response of a certain length, such as one double-spaced page.
Considering the Social Dimensions: Causal Speculation and the Power of Authority and Ideology

This section invites students to consider aspects and implications of themselves and the assignment that may not have occurred to them over the course of reading, invention, and drafting their essay. It turns their attention to matters of power and authority, both in relation to their reception of causal arguments and with regard to others’ reception of theirs.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Thinking critically about their perspectives and influences is often difficult for students. One way to help them is to ask them what different groups they belong to, socially, ethnically, or economically. What are their groups' general characteristics, and how much do the students as individuals reflect those traits? Then, ask students to consider their place within that group: How is being a freshman different from being a senior or being the child of a middle-class family different from being the sole provider for that family? Questions like these will give students a variety of ways to approach the activity’s concerns and begin uncovering the forces that influence their identities.

Responding to Essays Speculating about Causes

Here are some of the kinds of problems you can expect to find in students’ writing when speculating about causes:

A Well-Presented Subject

- The subject is not a phenomenon or a trend.
- The essay wavers between presenting the subject as a phenomenon and as a trend.
- The subject is a phenomenon or trend with a factual scientific cause and no room for speculation.
- Students may misgauge just how familiar their audience is with the subject and not spend enough time (or spend too much time) establishing its existence.

Plausible Causes and Support

- Causes are too obvious and predictable.
- Causes are neither necessary nor sufficiently plausible to explain the subject.
- The essay structure is confusing or ineffective, failing to show how each cause relates to the others.
- The essay’s argument depends on logical fallacies, often the post hoc fallacy of mistaking chronology for causation.
- Insufficient evidence is used to explain a cause or show its role in producing the phenomenon or trend.
- The essay speculates about effects of the subject and forgets its causal focus.
- The writer fails to document outside sources correctly.
An Effective Counterargument

• The essay fails to acknowledge and respond to alternative or competing causes.
• The writer’s tone is overly aggressive or dismissive of opposing viewpoints.
• The essay does not successfully respond to alternative causes.

A Readable Plan

• The essay lacks a forecasting statement early on that previews major causes.
• The writer fails to use key terms and phrases throughout the essay, leaving readers confused as to how some points relate to the larger argument.
• The writer overuses key terms and phrases, producing prose that is repetitive and simplistic.

Preparing for Conferences

If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the following form.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 9

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. What trend or phenomenon are you writing about? Why did you choose this subject? If it is a trend, when did it begin and to what extent has it increased or decreased over time?

2. Who are your readers? Describe briefly what you assume they already know about your subject and how your assumptions about your readers influenced the way you wrote this draft. Be specific.

3. List the cause or causes you propose to explain the trend or phenomenon. Be prepared to talk about why you’ve chosen these causes.

4. If you’ve considered and rejected other possible causes, list them here. Be prepared to talk about your reasons for rejecting them and how you handled alternative causes in your essay.

5. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

6. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft as well as any that have been pointed out by other readers. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes. (If you have completed the text’s revision checklist, you can bring it with you to the conference instead of answering this question.)
Analyzing Stories

■ The Writing Assignment

Write an essay analyzing one or more aspects of a story. Aim to convince readers that your interpretation adds to the conversation among those who read stories and write about them. Back up your analysis with reasons and support from the story.

Student Learning Objectives

This assignment can teach students to

• Emphasize invention as part of the writing process
• Read critically
• Analyze the language of a text
• Use textual evidence to support ideas
• Sharpen their receptivity to language, heightening their own writing style
• Become more accepting and appreciative of complexity, subtlety, and ambiguity in literature and in other forms of art and discourse
• Practice writing and organizing an essay around a central thesis
• Gain insight into the ways writers use language and readers interpret meaning from it
• Write to influence readers and shape their opinions
• Reflect metacognitively on what they have learned

Special Challenges Posed by This Writing Assignment

The table below outlines some common challenges students may encounter when they write this type of essay, along with suggestions for how instructors might deal with them.
### Challenge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Clear, Arguable Thesis</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Students are uncomfortable with the ambiguity involved in interpreting a literary text and are reluctant to probe their own responses to it.</td>
<td>✓ Point out that though the authors of the essays in their readings analyzed the same story, they each came up with different interpretations of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Students simply retell the story without offering an interpretation and supporting it.</td>
<td>✓ Remind students that as long as they provide convincing evidence for their interpretations, their arguments are likely to be well received by readers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Students’ thesis statements (interpretations) are too superficial.</td>
<td>✓ Have the class analyze the thesis statements of the readings in the chapter and discuss why these thesis statements worked well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Students have difficulty knowing how to begin to formulate a thesis statement.</td>
<td>✓ Ask students to consider their audience and what their audience already knows about the story. You may want to refer your students to the discussion of audience on p. 508.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for the Argument</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Students do not understand the importance of supporting their assertions with textual evidence.</td>
<td>✓ Refer students to Chapter 19: Arguing for a more complete discussion of thesis statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Students fail to explain how the particulars from the text they are citing demonstrate the points they are making</td>
<td>✓ Remind students that their arguments will become more precise as they offer detailed textual support in the body of their essays. In other words, they may need to do a little more work analyzing the essay before revising their thesis statements. Students have found pp. 521–524 of the Guide to Writing quite helpful in beginning this process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Students do not know how to take evidence from a text.</td>
<td>✓ Discuss the ways in which the writers of the essays in this chapter present and use textual evidence, using some of the prompts on pp. 506–507 under the Support for the Argument heading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teaching Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Readable Plan</td>
<td>✗ Essays lack clear thesis statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✗ Transitions between textual evidence and the students’ own thoughts are abrupt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ In addition to the advice above under the Clear, Arguable Thesis heading, discuss forecasting statements and their ability to help writers organize essays (see p. 506).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Have students refer to pp. 531–535 of the Guide to Writing to practice integrating textual evidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introductory Materials**

This chapter does not include scenarios. The chapter begins by emphasizing the importance of stories across cultures and generations, and introduces such terms as **characters**, **setting**, **plot**, and **theme**. This section also invites students to consider a six-word Hemingway short story, which he was said to have regarded as his best work: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” The questions included after the story prompt students to begin to analyze this story. Discussing these questions in class can make for an excellent introduction to this assignment.

**A Collaborative Activity: Practice Analyzing a Story**

The collaborative activity invites students to practice reading and analyzing a story from the Anthology of Short Stories at the end of this chapter. You may wish to assign the students a particular story for this activity, or you may allow them to choose their own.

- You might find it helpful to follow up the students’ analysis with feedback on thesis ideas or warnings about unpromising thesis statements.

**Reading Essays That Analyze Stories: Basic Features and Purpose and Audience**

- You should decide whether to have students read the story “Araby” (pp. 549–554) before having them read the Sally Crane and David Ratinov essays that analyze it. Whereas instructors typically begin by having students read and discuss “Araby” before reading the two essays analyzing the story, you could begin with the essays if you have a limited amount of class time and want to use it primarily to introduce the analytical essay’s basic features and main strategies. Taking the time to discuss “Araby” can be especially useful if you want your students to have the opportunity to write their own essays analyzing it or if you want to model close reading for them.

- To introduce the basic features, have students apply them to an essay, such as the opening essay by Sally Crane, which has already been annotated with color-coded comments to help students see each of the basic features at a glance.
• Emphasize the importance of providing context in the introduction of an essay that analyzes a story.

• Students may wonder not only why they themselves should be writing essays about literature but also what purposes such essays fulfill. You may want to emphasize that sharing interpretations in a community of readers deepens everyone’s understanding of a story.

• Help students gain confidence that whatever their ideas, if they can be convincingly argued, they are likely to be well received. However, students sometimes think that, because there is no single “correct” interpretation of a story, that means any interpretation is okay. To counteract this impression, we stress that literary analysis makes an argument that must be supported with textual evidence. Another requirement is that the analysis contribute to the conversation; but that can be difficult to gauge for students who are just entering the academic discussion of literature. Therefore it can be helpful to frame the assignment in terms of topics and issues raised in class and perhaps also in terms of critical commentary or theoretical approaches.

Readings

In a departure from the preceding chapters, we provide only two essay selections here, both written by students, both analyzing James Joyce’s “Araby.” Sally Crane’s essay is annotated to highlight basic features of the assignment to students. An Analyzing Writing Strategies section follows the Ratinov essay.

Gazing into the Darkness

Sally Crane

Headnote: To reach her interpretation of the final scene of “Araby”—an interpretation that conflicts with accepted readings of the scene—Crane focuses on the point of view of the narrator, suggesting that the voice in the story, rather than being that of a naïve young boy on the threshold of adulthood, is the somewhat ironic voice of a grown man looking back on his youth. Use the color-coded annotations to help guide your discussion of the essay and to point out to your students the basic features. The “As you read” suggestion asks students to consider how well the title captures Crane’s main idea.

Suggestions for Teaching the Annotated Essay

Annotations: A Clear, Arguable Thesis

• Using the criteria given for thesis statements on p. 506, have the students evaluate Crane’s thesis to determine whether it is successful and, if so, why.

Annotations: Support for the Argument

• Have students examine the way Crane incorporates her evidence into the text and the way she explains the significance of the evidence she presents rather than assuming that the readers will make the connections on their own.
• Examine how Crane’s paragraph 5 may be divided into three sections. In the first section—preceding the quote—Crane presents an assertion that the boy, unable to understand Mangan’s sister, casts her “in the traditional female roles of angel and whore.” The second part of the paragraph—the quote—provides textual evidence to support Crane’s argument. The third section of the paragraph—the analysis of the quotation—explains what the quotation says in light of the opening assertion. Some people call this pattern a “quotation sandwich” because the quote is sandwiched between an assertion and the analysis of it. Students can be encouraged to use this pattern in their own essays.

• In class, take a look at paragraphs 6–8. Crane focuses on what she sees as the boy’s egotism (“self-absorbed”) and lack of self-knowledge (“blind to himself”), which she states in the opening sentence of paragraph 6. The rest of paragraph 6, together with paragraphs 7 and 8, offers and develops evidence to support Crane’s position.

Annotations: A Readable Plan

• Examine the way Crane’s thesis includes a forecasting statement and how the forecast is fulfilled.

• Have students look at the way Crane uses topic sentences and key terms to link her supporting paragraphs to her thesis statement.

Headnote: Whereas Crane focuses on the narrator, Ratinov focuses on the role other characters play in the story. He uses his findings about these characters to argue that, through his self-delusion, the boy increasingly resembles the adult characters, and later, at Araby, “he realizes the parallel between his own self-delusion and the hypocrisy and vanity of the adult world.” The “As you read” suggestion asks students to focus on the differences between Crane’s analysis and Ratinov’s.

Learn about Ratinov’s Writing Process

The Learn about Ratinov’s Writing Process section following the essay can be used to introduce the Guide to Writing. Students can see part of his invention writing and see how he used the process to analyze the story. The Writer at Work is particularly helpful because it models the invention work that helped Ratinov arrive at his thesis statement. As this is a move with which many students struggle, you may want your students to have a look at Ratinov’s annotations and invention work before they begin annotating and analyzing their own essays.

Analyzing Writing Strategies

The techniques analyzed in this section can help your students understand the basic features of the assignment more thoroughly and allow them to begin to move from reading to writing.
A Clear, Arguable Thesis

Students sometimes have difficulty providing the right context in the introduction of their essays; this section addresses those concerns. This section also asks students to identify and analyze Ratinov’s thesis and forecasting statement, as well as the key terms he introduces and repeats throughout the essay.

Follow-up Analysis

• Have students go back to the Crane essay to compare and contrast each writer’s handling of the thesis statement.
• For more on thesis statements, students may consult Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader.

Move from Reading to Writing

• If students have not yet begun to annotate and analyze their own essays, walk them through some of the activities on pp. 521–524 of the Guide to Writing and have them begin to annotate their own stories.
• If students have already annotated their essays and have done some invention writing, have them follow the activities on pp. 525–527 to begin drafting their own thesis and forecasting statements.

Support for the Argument

This section discusses the ways that both Crane and Ratinov incorporate textual evidence into their arguments. The activity at the end of the section asks students to analyze and evaluate the way Ratinov uses textual evidence to support his argument.

Follow-up Analysis

• Have students discuss the ways in which the thesis statement is strengthened by textual evidence and explanation of how the text is being read as supporting the thesis.
• Imagine with the class that Ratinov had used much more quotation, and longer quotes (perhaps block quotes), in presenting textual evidence. What happens to the effectiveness of the support for his thesis if the amount of quotation is expanded? (You might have the class pick out longer quotes and then revise Ratinov’s second paragraph before students start to see that quoting more than is strictly necessary makes it much harder for readers to see the connections among the thesis, the quoted material, and the explanations accompanying that material.)
• Have students look over pp. 531–535 of the Guide to Writing to familiarize themselves with techniques for incorporating quotes into their own essays. Refer them to Chapter 24: Using Sources (pp. 757–762) for further review on integrating quotes and appropriately citing sources.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Depending on how far along the students are in the writing process, you might direct them to write a paragraph for their own essays that incorporates textual evidence.
• If your students are not very far along in the writing process, ask them to find and annotate passages in their short stories that they believe convey significance about the meaning of the story.

A Readable Plan

This section focuses student attention on the importance of thesis and forecasting statements, topic sentences, and good transitions. The activity at the end of this section asks the students to review some of Ratinov’s topic sentences and can be a very helpful in-class activity.

Follow-up Analysis

• Discuss the importance of forecasting statements and key terms as they relate to essay organization. To do this, you may want to trace Ratinov’s use of key terms throughout the essay. The key terms in Ratinov’s thesis are *initiation*, *self-delusion*, *hypocrisy*, and *vanity*.
• As a class or in small groups, examine, evaluate, and discuss Ratinov’s transitions. Some readers may find the transition from *hypocrisy* in paragraph 4 to *vanity* in paragraph 5 somewhat abrupt.
• Have students analyze Crane’s essay, or another sample essay, for similar uses of forecasting statements and repeated key terms.

Move from Reading to Writing

• Discussion of thesis and forecasting statements, topic sentences, and transitions can prepare students quite well for outlining their own essays. If students are sufficiently far along in the writing process, consider referring them to p. 530 of the Guide to Writing and allowing them to begin their outlines.

Beyond the Traditional Essay: Analyzing Stories

This section invites students to consider other contexts in which the skills they are learning may be applied. Students are invited to consider adaptation (from book to film, from poem to theater) as a kind of analysis. The section also discusses fan fiction (“fanfic”) and other forms of response to art. Discussion of this section can provide a good opportunity for you to emphasize to students the value of the skills they are learning.

Guide to Writing

For general advice on teaching the Guide to Writing, see Teaching the Writing Assignment Chapters of The Guide in this manual. Following are some suggestions specific to teaching the chapter on Analyzing Stories.

Connecting with Additional Resources

As they work through the process, students may benefit from additional material elsewhere in the book—for example:

• Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader for assistance using orienting statements, paragraphing, cohesion, flow, or transitions
• Chapter 17: Classifying for help categorizing and organizing examples from the story
• Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting for aid in making comparisons

Starting Points: Analyzing Stories
This feature helps students find the strategies in the Guide to Writing that are most likely to address the concerns they have. The most common issues that students have, from this list, are shaping ideas into arguable thesis statements, supporting their ideas with textual evidence, and organizing their arguments.

Invention and Research
The invention and research section offers students several strategies for choosing stories to analyze, analyzing them, formulating their thesis statements, and more. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Finding a Story to Write About
This section makes students aware of the Anthology of Short Stories at the end of this chapter. Remember, as an instructor you may assign a specific story, encourage students to choose their own story from the Anthology of Short Stories or allow students to choose a short story not included in the textbook. This section of The Guide also includes a list of possible stories students might choose.

Criteria for Choosing a Short Story to Analyze
This checklist can help students choose a story they will be able to analyze.

Troubleshooting Student Problems
If you allow students to choose their own short stories independently of the recommendations in The Guide, you may want to require that they seek your approval of the stories they choose. Students sometimes lack a firm understanding of the short-story genre and may choose pieces that aren’t short stories (i.e., novellas or graphic novels), or they may choose short stories that would not lend themselves well to this assignment.

Analyzing the Story
This section offers students a series of questions related to character, setting, plot structure, point of view, and literary motif or theme. As students read through the stories they have chosen, these questions can help guide their annotations and ultimately help them form interpretations they can argue. Consider emphasizing that this activity and the ones that follow are how students should develop most of the evidence for their papers—that when we speak of “textual evidence,” we mean evidence gleaned from the kind of analysis discussed in this section. (Students often assume, unless corrected, that “textual evidence” means any support that involves quoting someone, such as quoting an expert or literary critic’s opinion. Clarifying this point early can save students a lot of frustration.)
Teaching Tip: Walking through the Questions  
Gray Scott

This is a very helpful section for students who are struggling with getting started on this essay. However, many students will skip these activities unless they are somehow escorted through them. Consider polling the class about films most students have seen recently; picking a popular one (or else showing a short film); then breaking the class up into small groups, each taking a different line of questioning from the book and applying it to the film; and then reviewing the results in plenary discussion. Follow up by having the students reflect metacognitively on their experience with the questions. Doing so can significantly increase the likelihood that they repeat those activities and revisit those questions for their own papers.

Annotating with the Suggestions for Analysis in Mind

This section contains further and more detailed advice for analyzing and annotating stories. Students who successfully complete the activities in the writing process outlined here will be much closer to articulating the arguments they wish to make in their essays.

Demonstrating the Activity

Choose one or two of the elements to analyze and the approaches discussed on pp. 522–523. Then, as a class, read through and annotate a sample story. Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour” is one of the shorter stories from the anthology at the end of the chapter and lends itself well to in-class analysis and annotation.

Ways In: Developing Your Analysis

In this section of the Guide to Writing, the difference between inductive and deductive analysis is explained, and students are encouraged to employ both techniques in analyzing their stories. This is another good activity to model in class.

Testing Your Choice

Because students will be spending quite a bit of time reading, analyzing, and writing about the story they choose, they should be committed to their story and any ideas they have for analyzing it. Consider having students answer the questions posed in this section in class.

A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

As a final check of their topics, students are asked to try out two or three promising ideas for analysis with an audience of peers to gauge interest and reactions. If students have been limited to the stories in the textbook, grouping students by common story or by having everyone read all of the stories before conducting this activity can lead to more energized, fruitful discussions.

Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement

Here students are guided through a series of prompts designed to help them arrive at a tentative thesis statement. The first series of prompts helps them find and clarify
main ideas or arguments; the second series coaches them to frame those ideas as thesis statements. Having the students begin (and possibly) finish this process in class can be an extremely valuable use of class time.

**Teaching Tip: Using Online Discussion Boards**

**Leona Fisher**

**to Workshop Thesis Statements**

I like to begin the process of drafting thesis statements in class with my students. I have the students respond to several of the prompts in the Finding a Main Idea section, and we read through the material in the Stating Your Thesis section. After class, I have students post their tentative thesis statements to an online class discussion board, where they are also given an assignment to review each other’s work. I read through the thesis statements as well and give students feedback.

**Researching Your Story**

Research into the life of the author, historical context of the short story, or other critical responses to the story can benefit your students as they prepare to begin drafting their essays. *The Guide* provides students with suggestions for starting their research if they choose to do so or you require them to do so. While *The Guide* makes the point that such research can be very helpful, it is not usually necessary. Research can divert students from a close reading of the story. Be sure to remind them that the primary source of support for their essay must come from the story itself. It might help to discuss, in class, the ways that research can enhance an essay by providing background information relevant to the argument they are developing, but stress that it can also harm a paper by providing padding.

**Teaching Tip: The Annotated Bibliography**

**Gray Scott**

As we have already noted, students should be drawing their theses directly from the stories they are analyzing and might not need to do much background or additional research—and, as we have noted, background research can often become “padding” for papers short on story analysis. Nevertheless, students frequently want to do additional research, and because it can often be useful, you may not wish to prohibit it outright. One way to reduce the risk of padding—and encourage more thoughtful research—is to ask students interested in using outside sources for background (or as opposing viewpoints they wish to counter) to write annotated bibliographies or literature reviews in which they show how they intend to use those supplemental sources. Chapter 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews can help students with these genres. The annotated list or review could be submitted to you as a proposal that you could then approve, reject, or send back for changes. Instead of making this a graded or required item, you could make it optional but tell students that their sources for the analysis are limited to the stories being analyzed and supplemental sources approved through this process. If so, consider having students attach the final approved proposals to their final analyses so you can compare the final paper to the proposal leading up to them.
Designing Your Document

This activity helps students consider ways they might incorporate other elements, such as visuals, into their essays. While such elements can help to enhance the analysis of a story, students should understand that these elements are not often necessary and that focus on visual elements at the expense of their writing will ultimately hurt their essays.

Teaching Tip: The Visual Element Pitch  
Gray Scott

It can be tough sometimes to convince students to focus first on their writing and their analysis, and not to use visuals as padding. One way to keep the focus on writing is to require students interested in including graphics or visuals to first submit a Visual Element Pitch when they bring their first drafts in for peer commenting. The pitch should be a typed one-page description of the graphics the author has in mind, how they would be used, and why the author thinks they will enhance the argument. Because the pitch requires a page of writing, it is a poor strategy for padding, and because it requires both planning and explanation and is due when the first draft is due, it boosts the odds that the graphic elements will be germane and well-integrated.

Planning and Drafting

The next major section of the Guide to Writing helps students organize the invention materials they have created, plan an approach to the paper, and develop a first draft. Below, each subsection is listed and briefly discussed.

Connecting to Additional Resources

Direct students who, during the outlining activity, request guidance on scratch outlines (or more involved types of outlines) to Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies (pp. 564–568).

Refining Your Purpose and Setting Goals

Previous questions about purpose asked students what they wanted to achieve. These questions ask them to think about how they might achieve it. Questions about each of the basic features are posed, and students are asked to consider their audience and purpose as well as the endings of their essays.

Outlining Your Draft

This activity advises students to create outlines laying out their arguments using because sentences. This can help them make the connection between their assertions and the evidence from the text supporting them.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

Students often try to take shortcuts through or around the outlining and planning stages in their haste to begin drafting and to finish the paper. Including enough in-class work so
that students aren’t rushing at the last minute can help with sketchy outlines. The following activities can help encourage planning:

- Sometimes students are unfamiliar with outlining and do not realize what is meant by the term. Going over outlines in class and showing them the book’s guidance on outlining (pp. 564–568) can help dispel some of the confusion and send a message that the activity can be highly productive.

- Often, a poor outline is a reflection of poor invention work or poor goal setting. The student may not have a good idea of what the paper will say and thus is unsure how to plan it. Consider collecting the outline as a separately graded item, and return it with feedback while there is still time for the resulting essay to benefit from your comments on the proposed organization and structure.

**Looking Back**

Have students, working in teams, create outlines for Ratinov’s essay (Crane’s is provided in the Outlining section of *The Guide*). You might also have students read Ratinov’s annotations of “Araby” (pp. 542–543). This may give them a sense of how writers move from their invention writing into creating outlines.

**Drafting**

This section offers students advice on devising opening sentences, using short quotations, commenting on quotations or paraphrases, and commenting directly on quotations so readers will understand their relevance to the students’ analyses of their stories. Many of these quotation and source-handling tips will be helpful to students who don’t plan on becoming English majors or writing about literature, so it is worth going over this section of *The Guide* slowly with them.

**Critical Reading Guide**

The Critical Reading Guide, like other parts of this chapter, is built around the basic features of the Analyzing Stories essay. The better the class discussions of the basic features and readings have been, the better the critical readings by peers will be. Many students will have only those lessons to guide their feedback.

**Troubleshooting Student Problems**

In a peer review, one of the questions you may wish students to respond to when reading other students’ essays is this: “Find at least two instances where the writer uses textual evidence to support his or her assertions. Write out the assertion and the textual evidence used to support it. (If the textual evidence is longer than two sentences, please paraphrase the information.)” The answers can help student authors identify passages they have written well, but the inability of a peer reviewer to connect evidence to assertion can also alert writers who are having difficulty with this important component of the assignment that they need to revise their essays.
Revising

This section urges students to think of revising as problem solving.

Troubleshooting Student Problems

- Urge students to complete the outlining activity, which some might be tempted to skip: It encourages them to see their papers in a nutshell, which makes it easier to assess the impacts of changes they’re considering.
- Consider warning students, before the Critical Reading Guide activity, to look for essays with superficial or thin thesis statements and poor support, or support that seems only vaguely connected to the thesis, as these are some of the most common problems listed on the Troubleshooting Your Draft chart. After students have completed the reviews, use these issues as examples as you walk them through how to use the Troubleshooting chart.

Editing and Proofreading

In this section, we direct students to proofread their essays and edit for errors commonly found in this particular genre. You can

- Ask students to edit and proofread outside of class
- Have students work through the tips in this section a class session or two before the due date
- On the day the revision is due, have students work through this section, making corrections neatly on the final draft

A Writer at Work

This Writer at Work section gives an overview of David Ratinov’s invention work, focusing on the way he annotated his story and his own reflections on the story that eventually led him to his thesis statement.

Looking Back

Have students read Ratinov’s Writer at Work before or after they’ve studied his completed essay. You might also refer to it as a way of introducing the process of annotating and analyzing a story (pp. 521–524 of the Guide to Writing), since it shows how Ratinov used the same strategies.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned

The writing activities described here ask students to reflect on their writing experience. Reflecting on the experience of writing this essay is often the best way for students to recognize the skills that they’ve learned.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Students do not have to answer every question.
Considering the Social Dimensions: Writing for a Specialized Audience

Students are asked to consider how they approached this particular assignment, considering that they were writing for a narrower audience. This section asks students to consider the ramifications of writing for a comparatively small group of people versus writing for a wide audience.

Responding to Essays That Analyze Stories

Here are some of the kinds of problems you can expect to find in students’ writing about stories:

Choice of Story
- If students are given free rein to choose their own stories, they may choose a piece that is not a short story.
- Students may choose stories that are too long, too short, or too difficult (or, occasionally, too straightforward) for them to analyze.

A Clear, Arguable Thesis Statement
- The essay lacks an analytical thesis statement and reads instead like a summary of the story with some commentary thrown in.
- The thesis is too obvious or superficial.
- The thesis lacks the support of a forecasting statement, but could use one.

Support for the Argument
- The essay does not use textual evidence to support its thesis. (It might, for instance, use authorities like literary critics instead of the original story.)
- The essay does not provide enough textual evidence to support its thesis.
- The essay does not make the connection between the textual evidence presented and the thesis statement.

A Readable Plan
- The essay is not clearly written in support of a central thesis and forecasting statement.
- Topic sentences and paragraphs seem unconnected or only loosely connected to the thesis statement.
- Transitions between paragraphs or transitions between textual evidence and the writer’s own words are awkward.

Preparing for Conferences

If you hold conferences with your students on their drafts, you could have them prepare for the conference by filling in the form on the following page.
Preparing for a Conference: Chapter 10

Before the conference, write answers to the questions below. Bring your invention writing and first draft to the conference.

1. Briefly describe the story you are writing about. Why did you choose it?

2. What is your thesis statement? How did you decide that this would be the argument you would write about in your paper?

3. Do you feel you have provided adequate evidence to support your thesis? How did you determine the evidence you would use for this essay? What techniques did you use to incorporate this evidence into your essay? How did you make the connection between your evidence and your thesis clear?

4. Explain briefly how you organized your essay. Did you use a forecasting statement? What key terms were repeated throughout the paper? You may also wish to evaluate your transitions.

5. What are you most pleased with in this draft? Be specific.

6. What specifically do you need to do next to revise your draft? List any problems you see in the draft or problems that another reader has pointed out. Say briefly how you might attempt to solve these problems. Use the back of this form for these notes.
Because each Writing Assignment chapter in Part One has its own invention sequence, we do not discuss invention as a general topic early in the text. Instead, we engage students immediately in invention at the beginning of each Guide to Writing in Chapters 2–10. In Chapter 11, the first chapter in Part Two, we catalog the familiar all-purpose heuristics or strategies of invention and inquiry in two categories:

**Mapping:** These graphic means of recording discoveries and seeing connections include clustering, listing, and outlining.

**Writing:** The various ways to use writing itself to discover what one knows and needs to know include cubing, dialoguing, dramatizing, keeping a journal, looping, and questioning.

You can orient students to this catalog and let them use it whenever they want to, or you can make specific assignments from it, helping students learn to use the strategies. All of the strategies can support writing activities in Part One, and specific strategies are recommended in the Guides to Writing. For example, in the Guide to Writing in Chapter 2: Remembering an Event, students list, loop (write and then stop to focus their thoughts), write a dialogue, and outline. In addition, as students revise and edit their essays, they might use activities in this chapter to explore their subjects further or to solve problems in their drafts.
A Catalog of Reading Strategies

In this chapter, we present various ways of using writing to think critically about reading. To illustrate these strategies, we refer throughout the chapter to a sample reading selection—a annotated excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” provided near the beginning of the chapter.

The strategies include annotating, taking inventory, outlining, paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, contextualizing, exploring the significance of figurative language, looking for patterns of opposition, reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values, evaluating the logic of an argument, recognizing emotional manipulation, and judging the writer’s credibility.

As with the preceding chapter on cataloging invention strategies, you can introduce students to this catalog of reading strategies and encourage them to use it whenever they like, or you can make specific assignments from it. Some of these strategies, such as annotating, taking inventory, evaluating the logic of an argument, and judging the writer’s credibility, are integrated into the Part One Guides to Writing and can support the reading that students do in that section of The Guide.
Cueing the Reader

Whereas Part One introduces the possibilities and constraints of various kinds of nonfiction prose, Part Three focuses on the craft of writing—the strategies a writer can use to achieve a particular purpose in a piece of writing. Of the nine chapters in Part Three, five are devoted to what are commonly called the modes of writing: narration, description, definition, classification, and comparison/contrast. A sixth covers arguing, and the last two chapters in Part Three concern the reading and production of visual elements. In addition to these, the opening chapter brings together several topics that are generally taught in isolation: orienting statements, paragraphing, and cohesion. We combine these topics in one chapter called Cueing the Reader because we want students to think of thesis and forecasting statements, paragraphing, cohesive devices, connectives, and headings as parts of a signaling system that writers use to help readers read and comprehend their texts. In effect, these are strategies that writers use to establish and maintain focus in writing.

The chapter is divided into five sections:

**Orienting Statements:** To suggest how writers can provide a context so that readers will understand each succeeding sentence, we discuss thesis statements and forecasting statements.

**Paragraphing:** To indicate how writers can use paragraphing to help readers, we show how indentation affects readers and also how writers can use topic sentence strategies to orient readers.

**Cohesive Devices:** To show how writers can enhance coherence by connecting key words and phrases, we illustrate the following cohesive devices: pronoun reference, word repetition, synonyms, sentence structure repetition, and collocation.

**Connectives:** To demonstrate how writers signal and identify connections for readers by linking ideas between sentences and paragraphs, we survey the following transition strategies: logical, temporal, and spatial relationships.

**Headings and Subheadings:** To show how writers can provide their readers with visual cues about the content and organization of a text, we discuss headings and subheadings.

We illustrate each of these strategies extensively with examples by professional writers. The exercises invite students to see how these cueing strategies work in longer pieces of discourse.
Overview of the Exercises

13.1 Analyze the thesis and key terms in Statsky’s “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” (Chapter 6).
13.2 Analyze forecasting in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists” (Chapter 4).
13.3 Analyze paragraphing in O’Malley’s “More Testing, More Learning” (Chapter 7).
13.4 Analyze topic sentence strategies in Statsky’s “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” (Chapter 6).
13.5 Analyze topic sentences and transitions in Miller’s “A New Deal for Teachers” (Chapter 7).
13.6 Analyze topic sentences in your own essay.
13.7 Analyze cohesive devices in Cable’s “The Last Stop” (Chapter 3).
13.8 Analyze cohesive devices in your own essay.
13.9 Analyze connectives in Ellis’s “When the Walls Came Tumbling Down” (Chapter 2).
13.10 Analyze connectives in your own essay.
13.11 Analyze headings in either Kluger’s “What Makes Us Moral” (Chapter 4) or Kuttner’s “Good Jobs for Americans Who Help Americans” (Chapter 7).
13.12 Analyze headings in your own essay.

Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

13.1 Analyze the thesis and key terms in Statsky’s “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” (Chapter 6).

You can use this exercise to stress the function of the thesis as a cueing device. As a follow-up, students might examine the effectiveness of the key terms in their own or in their classmates’ thesis statements and essays. In pairs, students could trade essays and work through the exercise. They might then use the responses from their classmates when they revise their own essays.

13.2 Analyze forecasting in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists” (Chapter 4).

Some students wonder whether giving a detailed preview is advisable since it gives so much away. You might use this opportunity to discuss when writers need to forecast and how much forecasting they need to give. But recognize that this writing problem usually involves a broader one—how explicit should a writer be? Many inexperienced writers are afraid of being too obvious when stating a thesis or forecasting an essay. They do not know what readers expect and what etiquette to follow.

13.3 Analyze paragraphing in O’Malley’s “More Testing, More Learning” (Chapter 7).

You might assign this exercise at the point when students are drafting and revising their own essays. After working through the exercise, perhaps as a journal entry, students could repeat it using their own essays or a classmate’s. As with Exercise 13.1, students could use the feedback from this exercise to revise their paragraphs.
13.4 Analyze topic sentence strategies in Statsky’s “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” (Chapter 6).

It might be helpful to assign this exercise as a small-group activity, asking each group to analyze one or two paragraphs and then report its findings to the class.

13.5 Analyze topic sentences and transitions in Miller’s “A New Deal for Teachers” (Chapter 7).

After students complete this exercise for a journal entry or for homework, you might want to discuss it with them. They may have different opinions about the effectiveness of Miller’s topic sentences as transitions, and you can encourage them to justify their views.

13.6 Analyze topic sentences in your own essay.

Students will use what they learned about the topic sentence and its various functions in the previous three exercises to complete this activity. You might incorporate this exercise into an in-class workshop on their drafts as part of the revising process. Students may work independently, in pairs, or in small groups to analyze and evaluate their topic sentences. If they discover that topic sentences are either missing or ineffective, they can discuss ways to improve them with their peers or with you.

13.7 Analyze cohesive devices in Cable’s “The Last Stop” (Chapter 3).

Students might find this easier to do if they work in small groups, each group looking for a different cohesive device. They also might find it easier to study cohesion within paragraphs. Students might repeat this exercise using other student essays, perhaps from Sticks and Stones.

13.8 Analyze cohesive devices in your own essay.

This exercise might be assigned as part of the revision process. You might guide the students through it in class and ask them to continue analyzing cohesive devices in the rest of the paragraphs for homework. As a follow-up to this activity, students might add necessary, appropriate cohesive devices to their essays as they revise.

13.9 Analyze connectives in Ellis’s “When the Walls Came Tumbling Down” (Chapter 2).

The purpose of this exercise is not simply to locate transitions; it is to examine how they help readers make sense of what they are reading. Students will find logical connections used to show results (“So”) and introduce opposing points (“Instead”), and temporal connectives used to indicate a particular time (“A year before his death,” “But back then,” “That August”). Students should probably work in groups on this exercise.

13.10 Analyze connectives in your own essay.

Along with Exercises 13.6 and 13.8, this one is particularly effective when assigned during the revision process because students will immediately see the relevance of it to their own writing. Students might work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to analyze the connectives in their essays and then make any changes that their analysis suggests are necessary. This exercise, as well as the other two, might productively be repeated with different essays throughout the course.
13.11 Analyze headings in either Kluger’s “What Makes Us Moral” (Chapter 4) or Kuttner’s “Good Jobs for Americans Who Help Americans” (Chapter 7).

After asking, “Where do these intuitions come from? And why are we so inconsistent about following where they lead us?” (par. 7), Kluger presents a series of sections, the first (“The Moral Ape”) designed to answer the first question and the remaining two designed to answer the second question by investigating the issues that complicate our moral nature (“How We Stay Good” and “Why We Turn Bad”). In all three cases, though they are not grammatically parallel, the headings complement natural transitions and logical progression of thought. Kuttner, meanwhile, has three headings: “Don’t Mourn — Professionalize,” “All It Takes Is Money,” and “But How Much Money?” The links among the headings — particularly the last two — are plain. Just as Kluger’s essay does, Kuttner’s uses headings to complement existing natural transitions in a logically organized argument.

Note: The first two of the final three questions in this exercise will evoke a variety of answers from your students. Be sure students are able to justify their answers.

13.12 Analyze headings in your own essay.

In addition to the points we make in the section on Headings and Subheadings, you may wish to remind students that headings do not take the place of topic sentences, as students sometimes believe. Typically, headings are meant to allow readers to grasp quickly the essential idea of a section of prose. Having students develop and insert headings appropriately should also help students recognize both organizational strengths and weaknesses in their essays.
Narrating

This chapter on narrative strategies focuses primarily on structure—the way writers string events together to give them form and meaning. We cover the following topics:

**Narrating Strategies:** To indicate how events may be presented, we discuss calendar and clock time, temporal transitions, verb tense, specific narrative action, and dialogue.

**Narrating a Process:** To indicate how processes are presented, we explain the essentials of process narration.

In this chapter, we illustrate these narrative strategies with numerous excerpts from published writers. Many of the exercises urge students to practice these strategies in isolation, without consideration for the larger writing issues of purpose and audience. These larger issues, however, are part of other exercises that invite students to analyze particular narrative strategies in readings in Part One.

### Overview of the Exercises

14.1 Analyze calendar-time markers in Ellis’s “When the Walls Came Tumbling Down” (Chapter 2).
14.2 Analyze clock-time references in Orlean’s “Show Dog” (Chapter 3).
14.3 Analyze temporal transitions in Orlean’s “Show Dog” (Chapter 3).
14.4 Analyze temporal transitions in Toufexis’s “Love: The Right Chemistry” (Chapter 4).
14.5 Analyze verb tense in Brandt’s “Calling Home” (Chapter 2).
14.6 Analyze specific narrative action in Coyne’s “The Long Good-Bye: Mother’s Day in Federal Prison” (Chapter 3).
14.7 Narrate a sports competition using specific narrative action.
14.8 Analyze direct quotations and summaries in Shah’s “Longing to Belong” (Chapter 2).
14.9 Analyze narrating strategies in your own essay.
14.10 Analyze process narrative in Cable’s “The Last Stop” (Chapter 3).
14.11 Write a process narrative.
Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

14.1 Analyze calendar-time markers in Ellis’s “When the Walls Came Tumbling Down” (Chapter 2).

The examples and our analysis of them preceding the exercise should get students started on this task. You might have students work in pairs to find the markers in Ellis’s essay. Then you could discuss in class how these markers help readers. You might try reading the passage without some or all of the time markers.

14.2 Analyze clock-time references in Orlean’s “Show Dog” (Chapter 3).

The references to clock time in Orlean’s essay—“had to wait for several hours” (par. 22), “for a moment” (24), “a few minutes later” (24), “after a few minutes” (27), “Half an hour passed” (27)—help her pace her narrative accounts of a dog show and a later talk at Biff’s house. Encourage students whose profiles lend themselves to the use of clock time not to hesitate to embed clock-time references into their essays.

14.3 Analyze temporal transitions in Orlean’s “Show Dog” (Chapter 3).

Before students do this assignment, you might discuss the distinctions between narratives of one-time events and recurring transitions in the two paragraphs.

14.4 Analyze temporal transitions in Toufexis’s “Love: The Right Chemistry” (Chapter 4).

If you assign this exercise as a follow-up to Exercise 14.3, students will be able to explore the similarities and differences between the use of narrative in essays like profiles and in explanatory essays like Toufexis’s. You might ask the students to write this exercise as a journal entry and then to discuss these larger distinctions in small groups or as a class.

14.5 Analyze verb tense in Brandt’s “Calling Home” (Chapter 2).

You might want to do this exercise in class during the time when students are planning their own Remembering an Event essays. As a follow-up, they might write short narratives of one-time events and recurring events that they might later incorporate into their own essays.

14.6 Analyze specific narrative action in Coyne’s “The Long Good-Bye: Mother’s Day in Federal Prison” (Chapter 3).

Have students underline each of the mothers’ physical actions in paragraph 2. Encourage them to talk about the way such precise presentation of action slows and focuses the narrative pace and at the same time invites readers to create vivid visual images. Invite students’ conjectures about the contribution of this paragraph to the essay. There is no right or best answer.

14.7 Narrate a sports competition using specific narrative action.

Although you might ask students to do this exercise as an out-of-class assignment, you might also show a videotape of a sports competition in class and then have them write the narratives about it. Either way, students will enjoy reading their narratives aloud to
their peers. You may wish to encourage students to exaggerate the use of narrative actions so they understand the effective use of narrative structure.

14.8 Analyze direct quotations and summaries in Shah’s “Longing to Belong” (Chapter 2).

After several paragraphs of summarized conversations about the Pakastani pilot her uncle wants her to marry, Shah uses direct quotation to establish that her intended match spoke of love over the telephone (“We shall have a love match, ach-cha?”; par. 6), summarizes her conversation with Aunt Amina about her change of heart (which we, as readers, already understand, making summary a reasonable choice), quotes the conclusion of that conversation (“I’m glad that finally you’ve stopped this silly wild goose chase for your roots. I’ll have to extricate you from this mess”; par. 6), and then follows it up with the verbal duel between her two aunts, which—being the climax of the story—is entirely conveyed through direct quotation (pars. 7–10).

14.9 Analyze narrating strategies in your own essay.

Students might work through this exercise during the revision process for the Remembering an Event essay. After analyzing a narrating strategy that they did use, students might locate a place in their essays where they could have used a different strategy. They might then revise their essays accordingly. Students could work independently or in pairs or small groups.

14.10 Analyze process narrative in Cable’s “The Last Stop” (Chapter 3).

The overview of the process (par. 6) is presented chronologically, briefly without much development, but is sufficiently explained for the reader to understand the procedure. The use of when, whereupon, afterward, and also allows the reader to move smoothly through the prose description.

14.11 Write a process narrative.

We ask students to describe a familiar process to inform and interest readers, even to entertain them, not to give them directions (or procedures or recipes) for enacting the process.
Describing

This chapter on describing strategies focuses primarily on language choice. Its aim is twofold: (1) to heighten students’ awareness of the words writers use and (2) to give students practice making word choices.

Describing Strategies: To help students generate richer, more specific descriptions, we divide describing into three strategies: naming (nouns used for identification), detailing (modifiers used for particularization), and comparing (figures of speech used for evocation).

Using Sensory Description: To suggest the language possibilities for sensory description, we discuss some resources for naming and detailing different sense impressions.

Creating a Dominant Impression: To indicate how successful descriptive writing works, we discuss the importance of choosing words that reinforce a single, unified mood and purpose.

In this chapter, we offer two kinds of exercises: directions to analyze specific describing strategies used in reading selections from Part One and opportunities to practice these strategies.

Overview of the Exercises

15.1 Name objects and sense impressions, and then describe a scene.
15.2 Analyze naming in Dillard’s “An American Childhood” (Chapter 2).
15.3 Add details to the description you wrote for Exercise 15.1.
15.4 Analyze detailing in Dillard’s “An American Childhood” (Chapter 2).
15.5 Analyze description in Coyne’s “The Long Good-Bye: Mother’s Day in Federal Prison” (Chapter 3).
15.6 Analyze comparing in the description you wrote for Exercises 15.1 and 15.3.
15.7 Describe a person.
15.8 Analyze descriptions of sound in Shah’s “Longing to Belong” (Chapter 2).
15.9 Describe a place through its sounds.
15.10 Analyze descriptions of smells in Edge’s “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing” (Chapter 3).
15.11 Describe a place through its smells.
15.12 Describe a tactile sensation.
15.13 Analyze descriptions of the sense of touch in Cable’s “The Last Stop” (Chapter 3).
15.14 Describe the taste of a particular food.
15.15 Analyze descriptions of the sense of taste in Edge’s “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing” (Chapter 3).
15.16 Analyze the dominant impression in Coyne’s “The Long Good-Bye: Mother’s Day in Federal Prison” (Chapter 3).

Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

15.1 Name objects and sense impressions, and then describe a scene.

The aim of this exercise and the one that follows is to get students thinking about the role of naming in description. This exercise makes students conscious of the words they use to name things. In observing a scene and considering what to name the things in it, students become more attentive to their surroundings and to language. Students might be encouraged to do this exercise in pairs or small groups, either making separate lists and then comparing them or collaborating on a list. By discussing alternative word choices, students help each other understand the concepts of specificity and concreteness.

15.2 Analyze naming in Dillard’s “An American Childhood” (Chapter 2).

Dillard uses the names “hedge,” “steps,” “delivery driveway,” “backyard,” “back porch,” “Edgerton Avenue,” “alley,” “woodpile,” “yard,” “Lloyd Street,” “hilltop,” “picket fences,” and “garbage cans,” among others, to describe the route she runs while being chased. The constant naming—even of landmarks that will be unfamiliar to most readers, such as specific streets—provides a sense of the struggle and effort Dillard and Mikey exert in an attempt to lose the stranger and a sense of the stranger’s tenacity.

15.3 Add details to the description you wrote for Exercise 15.1.

This exercise builds on the first one in this chapter, asking students to provide details for the descriptions they wrote, particularizing the scenes, and to comment on the effectiveness of the additions. You might assign this exercise when students are working on one of the essays in Part One, remembering events or people or writing profiles.

15.4 Analyze detailing in Dillard’s “An American Childhood” (Chapter 2).

As with the previous exercise, we ask students to build on work already completed. Our goal is to show how writers make descriptions specific by layering on details. This exercise could be done in small groups or with the entire class as a follow-up to Exercise 15.2.

15.5 Analyze description in Coyne’s “The Long Good-Bye: Mother’s Day in Federal Prison” (Chapter 3).

This exercise requires students to draw from what they have learned so far in this chapter to analyze the function of Coyne’s description of Stephanie and her son Ellie. You might ask them to do this exercise as a journal entry and then discuss their conclusions with the entire class.
15.6 Analyze comparing in the description you wrote for Exercises 15.1 and 15.3.

This exercise might also work well as a journal assignment, but you might ask students to exchange descriptions and analyze each other’s comparisons in pairs. Again, students could incorporate this writing into essays written for the assignments in Part One.

15.7 Describe a person.

This exercise not only encourages students to use visual images, but it also introduces the idea that description should create a unified impression. An enjoyable and instructive classroom activity is to have each student describe someone else in the class. The students read their descriptions aloud while their classmates try to identify the person being described.

15.8 Analyze descriptions of sound in Shah’s “Longing to Belong” (Chapter 2).

This exercise asks students to focus on the way Shah uses the description of sound to create a particular effect. Perhaps the most significant sound is the one made by her uncle’s wife at the end of the story, in paragraph 10. The sound clearly signifies that the uncle’s wife has been defeated, but students might find it useful to discuss how this effect is achieved—why do they interpret it as defeat? You might assign this exercise as a journal entry or use it in conjunction with Exercises 15.10, 15.11, and 15.15 to explore the sensory description in three different essays.

15.9 Describe a place through its sounds.

This exercise invites students to experiment with the language of auditory description. Students might exchange their descriptions to see whether they have conveyed the impressions they were trying to create.

15.10 Analyze descriptions of smells in Edge’s “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing” (Chapter 3).

Focusing on Edge’s descriptions of smells introduces students to a kind of description that they may have overlooked in their own writing. You might discuss with the entire class the effects of this description on readers.

15.11 Describe a place through its smells.

This exercise again invites students to experiment with sensory language. In reviewing the paragraphs that students produce, you might have the class discuss the accuracy of the assertion that opens this section: “The English language has a meager stock of words to express the olfactory sense.”

15.12 Describe a tactile sensation.

In reviewing their paragraphs, students might consider the assertion that opens the discussion of the sense of touch in the text: “writers describing the sense of touch tend not to name the sensation directly or even to report the act of feeling.” Students could examine their own writing to see what nouns and verbs they used. In addition, they might discuss consistency of impression and how their language choices create a particular effect.
15.13 Analyze descriptions of the sense of touch in Cable’s “The Last Stop” (Chapter 3).

The words that describe the sense of touch are *cold*, *firm*, and *clay*. At this point in the essay, Cable has learned a tremendous amount about the business of dead bodies, but he has not yet viewed a corpse. His viewing and touching of a dead body brings closure both to his research and the essay.

15.14 Describe the taste of a particular food.

You might bring several kinds of food to class (including a can of sliced pineapple) and ask students to describe the tastes of these foods. They might classify particular foods as sweet, sour, bitter, or salty. You might also ask them to consider how much their descriptions rely on naming and evaluating foods as opposed to describing the sensation of taste.

15.15 Analyze descriptions of the sense of taste in Edge’s “I’m Not Leaving Until I Eat This Thing” (Chapter 3).

This *New Yorker* profile works particularly well as a site for an exploration of the effectiveness of descriptions of the sense of taste. As with several of the other exercises in this chapter, students are encouraged to focus on the effects of this strategy on readers.

15.16 Analyze the dominant impression in Coyne’s “The Long Good-Bye: Mother’s Day in Federal Prison” (Chapter 3).

Students will use all that they have learned about describing for this analysis. You might have students begin the exercise in pairs, discussing the dominant impression of the description in this paragraph. Then, with the entire class, you might discuss how this description contributes to the dominant impression of the essay as a whole.
Defining

This chapter opens with a discussion of writers’ uses of definition as a strategy in various genres.

**Sentence Definitions:** To increase students’ awareness of the important role of defining terms, we focus on writing within specific disciplines and illustrate the syntactic strategies of brief sentence definitions.

**Extended Definitions:** To demonstrate the special function of extended definitions, we analyze illustrations of strategies writers use to structure these definitions: comparisons, examples, synonyms, and classification.

**Historical Definitions:** To familiarize students with the historical definition, we focus on its use in writing to explain a concept and analyze a definition of the term *cyberspace*.

**Stipulative Definitions:** To introduce students to stipulative definition, we begin with a sentence definition of the term and then provide examples of its uses in two different genres.

The exercises ask students to practice these forms of definition and to analyze the ways writers use these forms for particular purposes within essays from Part One.

### Overview of the Exercises

Asterisks mark the exercises that could be assigned as full-length essays.

16.1 Practice various forms of sentence definition.

16.2 Analyze sentence definitions in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists” (Chapter 4).

16.3 Write an extended definition.

16.4 Analyze an extended definition in Friedman’s “Born to Be Happy” (Chapter 4).

16.5 Write a historical definition.

16.6 Analyze stipulative definitions in Kornbluh’s “Win-Win Flexibility” (Chapter 7).

16.7 Write a stipulative definition.
Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

16.1 Practice various forms of sentence definition.

This exercise invites students to try out some syntactic options for the one-sentence definitions that are so common in all writing, especially reports and textbooks. Students could check each other’s exercises for the correctness of the definitions and the fluency of the sentences.

16.2 Analyze sentence definitions in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists” (Chapter 4).

Ngo’s definitions, even in their brevity (and, in part, because of their brevity), clearly define the general concept of cannibalism and its varieties. The examples, almost always immediately following the definition, support and clarify the definitions. You may wish to ask students to develop, like Ngo and when appropriate, a pattern of definitions-examples in essays. Our last question is important because it reminds students that defining serves a larger rhetorical purpose. Writers rarely write essays or book chapters of definition. They use definitions to explain or argue or entertain. For that reason, we treat definition writing as a strategy, not as a separate kind of writing. Students could readily and usefully do this exercise together in class in pairs or small groups.

16.3 Write an extended definition.

Here students write an extended definition—several sentences or a full essay. We specify readers (their peers) and the writing situation (readers who do not know the term being defined). As with all the extended writing exercises in this chapter, this one could be revised after a class workshop or conference. Or it could be only a one-draft journal entry.

16.4 Analyze an extended definition in Friedman’s “Born to Be Happy” (Chapter 4).

Friedman defines hyperthymia first by giving examples of those who have it and then by contrasting hyperthymia with dysthymia and contrasting it with bipolar disorder. Once students have carried out the analysis and written down their conclusions, this exercise could be the basis for a brief productive class discussion.

16.5 Write a historical definition.

This exercise enables students to do what they have just seen Elmer-DeWitt do—develop an extended historical definition. Students look up one of the words from our list and devise a coherent historical definition from the bare etymological facts. A secondary benefit of this exercise is that students learn about several important specialized dictionaries: *Oxford English Dictionary, A Dictionary of American English*, and *A Dictionary of Americanisms*.

You may wish to photocopy some or all of these dictionary definitions for your students. You might first want them to write about the same word, comparing the results in class and then perhaps revising. They could then choose their own words from those remaining on the list to write a second historical definition.

16.6 Analyze stipulative definitions in Kornbluh’s “Win-Win Flexibility” (Chapter 7).

Like Exercises 16.2 and 16.4, this exercise asks students to return to an essay in Part One and analyze the role of defining as a writer’s strategy in the context of a full essay.
written to specific readers for a particular purpose. Encourage students to pay attention to the way Kornbluh organizes and develops her stipulative definitions.

16.7 Write a stipulative definition.

This exercise, which could produce a full essay, requires students to write a stipulative definition. Students would almost certainly be interested in seeing each other’s stipulations—since they most often define familiar concepts or aspects of popular culture. A stipulative definition can be judged like an argument: Does the writer convince the reader the stipulation is plausible?
This chapter presents illustrations and exercises for various strategies of classifying—
dividing, grouping, and naming information one intends to write about. This is a chapter
about a basic operation of mind, as well as a basic writing strategy. We illustrate principles
of division, strategies for presenting a division coherently in writing, and the use of divi-
sion with other writing strategies.

Students typically do not have to learn to classify because their minds naturally do so.
They do, however, need to learn how writers present the results of classifying, how classi-
fying looks as text on the page, and what decisions writers make so that classifying is both
engaging and readable.

### Overview of the Exercises

17.1 Diagram and analyze the classification in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists”
(Chapter 4).

17.2 Diagram a classification in your own essay.

17.3 Analyze strategies of clarity and coherence in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still
Exists” (Chapter 4) or in the example by Begley and Brant.

17.4 Analyze strategies of clarity and coherence in your own essay.

### Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

17.1 Diagram and analyze the classification in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists”
(Chapter 4).

Using the model in this chapter, students will make a tree diagram of the classification in
Ngo’s essay. You might use this exercise in conjunction with your discussion of Ngo’s organi-
zational strategy or as part of your introduction to the Explaining a Concept assignment.

17.2 Diagram a classification in your own essay.

This exercise functions as a useful follow-up to the previous exercise. It might be
helpful to suggest that students diagram their own classifications during the revision
process. You might also suggest that they exchange essays to complete this exercise.
17.3 Analyze strategies of clarity and coherence in Ngo’s “Cannibalism: It Still Exists” (Chapter 4) or in the example by Begley and Brant.

This exercise gives students a choice of analyzing clarity and coherence in Ngo’s essay or in an example essay in this chapter. You might have students work in small groups to analyze the strategies and then ask them to share their findings with the rest of the class. As with Exercise 17.1, you might use this exercise as part of your discussion of Ngo’s essay.

17.4 Analyze strategies of clarity and coherence in your own essay.

As is Exercise 17.2, this activity is particularly helpful for students who are in the process of revising their own essays. Again, students might work in pairs, exchanging essays to analyze each other’s strategies of coherence and to make recommendations for improvement.
Comparing and Contrasting

This chapter illustrates the writer’s strategy of comparing and contrasting. We provide examples of the two basic forms of comparison—chunked and sequenced—and we emphasize the importance of a limited, focused basis for any comparison. We also include several examples of analogy as a special form of comparison. The exercises invite students to write comparisons and analogies and to analyze comparisons and analogies found in the readings in Part One.

■ Overview of the Exercises

18.1 Analyze contrasts.
18.2 Analyze comparisons.
18.3 Write a comparison or contrast.
18.4 Analyze the organization of the comparisons in readings in Part One.
18.5 Write an analogy.

■ Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

18.1 Analyze contrasts.

This exercise gives students an opportunity to see how a writer organizes contrasts in chunks. You might ask them to complete this exercise in conjunction with the next one so that they can compare two ways of organizing. You might also use both exercises as a single small-group activity, assigning the exercises to different groups and asking the groups to compare their findings in a whole-class discussion.

18.2 Analyze comparisons.

The focus of this exercise is on sequencing comparisons. Students will examine the pattern the writer uses to compare bird wings and aircraft wings. They will then judge the effectiveness of these comparisons. If students work through this exercise in conjunction with Exercise 18.1, they will understand more fully the logic of ordering comparisons and contrasts and the possibilities open to writers.
18.3 Write a comparison or contrast.

In this exercise students practice writing comparisons. You could ask them to write for others in the class. You might limit them to either chunked or sequenced comparisons, or let them decide which format to use. Or you might want to have them write on one topic in the chunked form and another in the sequenced form. In pairs or small groups, students can evaluate their comparisons using criteria of coherence, basis of comparison, and informativeness.

18.4 Analyze the organization of the comparisons in readings in Part One.

Here we ask students to consider comparison as a writer’s strategy within the context of a reading. Students analyze specific comparisons in three personal, explanatory, or persuasive essays. They must analyze the format of each comparison, identify its role in the whole piece, and judge its effectiveness—quite a challenging task. For this exercise, you might want students to work together in pairs or small groups and to compare their analyses with those of other students.

18.5 Write an analogy.

This exercise requires students to write extended analogies, something many of them will never have done before. Each student must compare a principle or process that is unfamiliar to readers with something very common and familiar. The trick is to find this familiar “something” as the basis for the analogy. The writers of our examples have chosen the calendar, widespread human arms, and the concept of philanthropy to explain their unfamiliar ideas.

Writing an analogy wonderfully illustrates the principle that writing itself lets you find out what you have to say. Tell students that the only way to test an analogy that seems workable is to write it out. Then it is possible to see whether it works—that is, whether it holds up reasonably well on paper so that a reader would find it convincing. Students may make several false starts.

Because this challenging exercise has such unpredictable results, students will especially enjoy sharing the outcome. Have them evaluate each other’s analogies to determine whether the analogies are plausible, consistent, and truly explanatory. You might challenge students in pairs to help each other revise to meet the criteria to ensure that both have workable analogies.
Arguing

This chapter complements Chapters 6–10, the text’s writing activities that require explicit argumentation. On one hand, since Chapter 19 offers a comprehensive introduction to the basic strategies of argument, you could devote some time to it before introducing your first argument assignment from Part One. On the other hand, two chapters in Part One—Chapter 6: Arguing a Position and Chapter 7: Proposing a Solution—also provide comprehensive introductions to all the basic strategies of argument, but they introduce them in a full rhetorical context. Consequently, you might want to have students begin with Chapter 6 or 7 (or some other argument chapter) and work in Chapter 19 only to consolidate rhetorical concepts and argumentative strategies they are analyzing and practicing while working on a full essay.

Among the strategies in Chapter 12: A Catalog of Reading Strategies are three specifically designed for analyzing and evaluating argument: evaluating the logic of an argument, recognizing emotional manipulation, and judging the writer’s credibility. Other critical reading strategies in Chapter 12 will be useful as well.

In this chapter, we introduce students to the following strategies of argument:

- **Asserting a Thesis**: arguable assertions, clear and precise wording, appropriate qualification
- **Giving Reasons and Support**: examples, statistics, authorities, anecdotes, and textual evidence
- **Counterarguing**: acknowledging readers’ concerns, accommodating readers’ concerns, and refuting readers’ objections

### Overview of the Exercises

Since we assume students will be practicing (drafting, revising) these strategies as they write essays in Chapters 6–10, only a few exercises in this chapter ask them to practice a strategy. Instead, we ask them to analyze the strategies at work in the context of full essays in Part One.

19.1 Write an assertion.
19.2 Analyze the thesis in any essay in Chapters 6–10.
19.3 Analyze the thesis in your own essay.
Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

19.1 Write an assertion.

Writing an arguable, clear, and qualified assertion is often a more challenging task than inexperienced writers can imagine. They may have difficulty in understanding the challenge, much less learning to meet it confidently, unless you help them with their assertions one by one. An assertion must be arguable—that is, of consequence to some readers and to the writer. An assertion is not arguable if it derives solely from personal preference. Finally, an assertion is arguable—and workable as an essay’s thesis—if the terms are clear and exact and if they will sustain the argument as its key terms, to be repeated in nearly every paragraph right through to the conclusion.

The notion of “workable” is important, in our experience. Unfortunately, a writer does not know whether the key thesis terms are workable without drafting the essay. Writers can, however, test an assertion by projecting an essay’s argument and direction. And that is what we would encourage students to do as you help them evaluate their assertions. They will need to have specific readers in mind for an assertion if they are to decide whether it is appropriately qualified.

We spend much time in class preparing for argumentative essays, going from student to student, discussing assertions, with the class contributing.

19.2 Analyze the thesis in any essay in Chapters 6–10.

As in all Part Three chapters, exercises here return students to full essays in Part One so that they can see how writers’ strategies we survey in Part Three can be used purposefully and shaped for particular readers. This exercise asks students to evaluate the thesis in one of the essays in Chapters 6–10. You might divide the class into pairs of students, assigning an essay to each pair. Each student could evaluate the thesis on his or her own, and then the pair could take some time at the beginning of class to share results. However
we posed the assignment, we would want to ensure that students understood how to find and evaluate a thesis.

19.3 Analyze the thesis in your own essay.

You might assign this exercise during the revising process. Students may work individually, but you might also ask them to work in pairs, analyzing each other’s theses and then discussing possible ways to revise them.

19.4 Evaluate the use of examples in Statsky’s “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” and Etzioni’s “Working at McDonald’s” (Chapter 6).

19.5 Analyze the use of statistics in Statsky’s “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” (Chapter 6).

19.6 Analyze the use of authorities in O’Malley’s “More Testing, More Learning” (Chapter 7).

19.7 Analyze the use of anecdote in Etzioni’s “Working at McDonald’s” (Chapter 6).

19.8 Analyze the use of evidence in Ratinov’s “From Innocence to Insight: ‘Araby’ as an Initiation Story” (Chapter 10).

These five exercises ask students to analyze the ways writers give reasons and support. You might want to go over the essays with your students before assigning the exercises, perhaps asking them to write journal entries for them or to work in pairs or in small groups. You might also combine the exercises for a class in which you look at several ways to support an argument; each group would work on a different exercise and then report its findings to the class.

19.9 Evaluate the acknowledgment of readers in Estrada’s “Sticks and Stones and Sports Team Names” (Chapter 6).

19.10 Analyze the accommodation of readers in O’Malley’s “More Testing, More Learning” (Chapter 7).

19.11 Analyze the use of refutation in Kuttner’s “Good Jobs for Americans Who Help Americans” (Chapter 7).

Each of these three exercises enables students to observe how writers anticipate their readers’ concerns. We are always surprised at how few students have ever noticed this strategy, though they have heard and read it countless times. Students seem never to have been asked to do it in their own writing. Since it is an easy and satisfying strategy to master, we give it special attention in our classes. In every Guide to Writing in Chapters 6–10, anticipating readers in various ways is a major invention activity.
Analyzing Visuals

Students today do not just write interpretations of stories, the skill emphasized by Chapter 10: Analyzing Stories. Thanks to growing interest in visual literacy and new media, students are being asked with increasing frequency to analyze images. Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals is a new chapter with this edition, designed to address this type of writing strategy and this potential source of evidence for arguments.

You could use Chapter 20 in combination with the various Beyond the Traditional Essay sections that follow the reading selections in each of the Part One chapters. Alternatively, or additionally, the chapter can give students a chance to augment their argumentative repertoire—while Chapter 19: Arguing discusses textual evidence, this chapter explores visual evidence.

The essay by Paul Taylor (pp. 682-685) and his invention materials (which, in this case, precede the essay) can be read and discussed by students in the same manner as the sample readings in the Part One chapters. Another option is to augment the lessons of Chapter 10: Analyzing Stories with those from Chapter 20: Analyzing Visuals for students interested in analyzing short or feature-length films instead of short written fiction. Used this way, Chapter 10 guides students through the analysis of the script and story, while Chapter 20 helps them analyze the use of the medium itself.

The chapter ends with three exercises, each designed to serve as an essay prompt in its own right:

20.1 Analyze Dorothea Lange’s First-Graders at the Weill Public School.
20.2 Analyze an ad.
20.3 Analyze an ad or public service announcement.

Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

20.1 Analyze Dorothea Lange’s First-Graders at the Weill Public School.

Using an overhead projector, you may use this exercise as an in-class writing assignment—perhaps as a chance to practice visual analysis before a more substantial assignment. After collecting the in-class analyses, you could then hold a plenary discussion and move from there into a larger assignment drawing on this skill.
20.2 Analyze an ad.

20.3 Analyze an ad or public service announcement.

Both of the last two exercises (but particularly 20.3) lend themselves very well to visually supported oral presentations, either as stand-alone assignments or as supplements to written papers on the same subjects. You may refer students to Chapter 28: Oral Presentations for assistance preparing for their talks and perhaps refer them to Chapter 21: Designing Documents for help using images within their papers.
Designing Documents

In this chapter we provide information about designing documents for a variety of writing situations, including those encountered in college classes, in the workplace, and in community organizations. As we do throughout The Guide, we continually remind students to think about purpose and audience as they plan the designs of their documents. We point out that certain writing situations and certain kinds of documents have set formats but that in other cases they will need to make decisions based on their readers’ expectations and needs. You might assign this chapter in conjunction with Chapter 24: Using Sources or Chapter 28: Oral Presentations. It will also be useful when students are working on Chapter 7: Proposing a Solution, especially if students are writing proposals addressed to readers within their own communities or workplaces.

For courses with a service-learning component, this chapter will be particularly helpful. If students are writing for community organizations, they may need to design documents that meet specific requirements of the organization and that are appropriate for public distribution. If students are writing about their community-service experiences, you might want to have them publish their writing in a class anthology or on a Web page, using this chapter as a guide.
Field Research

This chapter introduces Part Four of The Guide, Research Strategies, and presents three essential techniques of field research: observing, interviewing, and surveying by questionnaires. Observations and interviews are required for Chapter 3: Writing Profiles, but may be used along with questionnaires for other essays in Part One as well. Although field research is not likely to be as important in most first-year composition programs as library research, we urge you to introduce these techniques to your students. They will not only make students more observant but will also heighten their sensitivity to readers’ varying needs and interests. Field research will be central to the academic majors and careers of many students. It engages them in a basic form of inquiry in the social sciences.

Observations

This section is keyed to the Guide to Writing in Chapter 3: Writing Profiles. In that chapter, we refer students to the advice given here on conducting observational visits. You may also use this chapter in conjunction with the exercises in Chapter 15: Describing. We recommend that any observation include these stages: planning the visit, observing and taking notes, reflecting on your observation, writing up your notes, and preparing for follow-up visits.

Whereas reflecting on observations should follow directly after the observational visit when the experience is still fresh in the observer’s mind, writing up the notes can wait until the observer has considered what impression the description should give.

To help your students read their own and each other’s observational notes and write-ups analytically, here are critical reading guides they could use.

Reading Observational Notes with a Critical Eye

Even though notes are not finished writing, they are an interesting written artifact. They represent the immediate translation of firsthand experience into written language. They reveal what catches the observer’s attention in a new scene. They are interesting for what they include and what they ignore, as well as for how they are patterned. Students reading each other’s notes will see how someone else, faced with the same writing situation, recorded his or her experience.
1. What is centrally important about these notes? What general impression do they give you of the person, place, or activity being observed?

2. What is the single most surprising or incongruous detail in the notes? Try to explain why you find this detail so surprising.

3. Consider the notes as a collection of sensory images (sights, smells, sounds, tastes, and tactile sensations). Point to the single most evocative or suggestive image, and then briefly explain what feelings and associations this image evokes in you.

4. Try to imagine the notes accumulating on the page during the time the writer was observing the scene. What does the order of these notes tell you about the way the writer was looking at the scene?

**Reading Observational Write-Ups with a Critical Eye**

Composing observational notes into a report or write-up can be considered real writing because a write-up assumes particular readers and aims to create a specific impression. Write-ups as part of the assignment in Chapter 3: Writing Profiles, however, do not serve as ends in themselves but as means to an end. In fact, the very process of writing up observational notes enables a writer to analyze and reorder them to reach a better understanding of how they might be useful in a profile.

1. What general impression of the place, person, or activity does this write-up give you? In one sentence, try to summarize your impression.

2. What order or pattern has the writer imposed on his or her observations? Are the details organized spatially, temporally, in groups, randomly, or some other way?

3. Where is the writer in relation to the subject? Does the writer use a moving vantage point, a stationary one, or a combination of the two? Does the writer move in close, remain at a distance from the subject, or shift perspectives?

4. What is the single most evocative image? Briefly explain what feelings or associations this image evokes in you.

5. Has anything you particularly liked in the notes been left out? Suggest where it could be included.

6. Are you left with any questions about the subject? List any information you would still like to have about this subject.

- **Interviews**

Like the section on observations, this section on interviews is keyed to the Guide to Writing in Chapter 3: Writing Profiles. In that chapter, we urge students to study the advice offered here on conducting interviews. We recommend that students follow these steps: Set up and plan the interview, take notes during the interview, reflect on the interview immediately afterward, and write up the interview notes at a later time. We emphasize the need to plan an interview by writing questions, and we also discuss various kinds of questions to ask.
Here are guidelines for reading interview notes and write-ups. We urge you to offer these guides to your students to help them analyze their own and their classmates’ interview material.

**Reading Interview Notes with a Critical Eye**

Like observational notes, interview notes are interesting to study in isolation and as raw material for an interview write-up. These guidelines assume that students have followed the suggestions for interviewing, written several questions in advance, and divided their notebook paper between Details and Impressions in the left-hand column and Information in the right.

First, read the interview notes and the writer’s reflections directly following the interview. Then, briefly respond to these questions:

1. Compare the questions prepared in advance with the information received during the interview. Which of the questions were answered? What other questions seem to have been answered?
2. Study the information. Given the writer’s reflections following the interview, identify what seems to you to be the most important bit of information the writer received in the interview.
3. Study the details and impressions. Identify one detail that is particularly evocative, helping you imagine the person and the scene. Then briefly explain what feelings and associations this detail evokes for you.

**Reading Interview Write-Ups with a Critical Eye**

Interview write-ups are published in various forms in magazines and newspapers. In this chapter, we encourage students to compose a write-up that is more than a mere compilation of quotations and details. The write-up featured in the Writer at Work for Chapter 3: Writing Profiles shows the writer still trying to create order from the interview. Such a write-up is not really written to be read by others, nor does it have a specific aim other than to record the writer’s thoughts on the interview. The following guide was written to enable students to evaluate each other’s interview write-ups.

1. What is your general impression of the person being interviewed? What details help you imagine the person? What else would you like to know about the person?
2. What particular angle of vision on the subject does this person give the writer? Do the person’s comments raise any interesting new questions about the subject? Do they suggest any incongruities or surprises?
3. How much of the interview is quotation? Could the writer have paraphrased or summarized any of this quoted material without losing something of value?
4. Describe how the writer organized the quotations, paraphrases, summaries, descriptive details, and so forth. Is the description clumped together at the beginning, or is it interspersed with the other features? Advise the writer on possibilities for better integrating these features.
Questionnaires

Our discussion of questionnaires focuses on the preparation of questions. We illustrate several kinds of closed and open questions. Then we briefly treat the topics of designing, testing, and administering the questionnaire. Finally, we suggest a plan for organizing a report of the results. Since questionnaire reports are not an integral part of any of the writing assignments in Part One, we do not supply guidelines for reading them with a critical eye. Students can work in pairs or small groups to complete survey projects. Working collaboratively, many students commit themselves energetically to survey projects. You might want to select two or three survey reports from the social sciences as models of the reports students will write.
Library and Internet Research

This chapter and the next present first-year college students with all the information they need to do library and Internet research and to document a research paper. Knowing, however, is not the same as doing. We urge you to arrange a library tour and Internet orientation for your students, one that not only follows the steps in the search strategy but also gives students actual experience with many of the research materials—encyclopedias, bibliographies, library catalogs and databases, indexes, abstracts, government publications—introduced here.

We also urge you to have your students do research for several of their papers in your course. The only writing activity in Part One that does not invite formal research is the reflective essay—remembering an event. Research could be used for every other assignment. You would not have to make any of these essays a major research project. Research need not make writing seem more difficult or more time-consuming but should be viewed as a strategy used routinely, like clustering or reading a draft critically.

This chapter shows students how to approach library research and carry out all the stages of a research project. Besides describing many types of library research sources and opening up access to academic sources, the chapter identifies sources useful for researching trends and their possible causes (the assignment for Chapter 9: Speculating about Causes) and current controversies (the assignment for Chapter 6: Arguing a Position).

In addition to guiding students in their use of the library, this chapter introduces students to the Internet as a resource tool for research. To help students learn their way through the vast array of sources available online, consider conducting a “tour” of the Internet. Before students begin the online tour, it is best to assign the section called Using the Internet for Research for them to read in advance. You can then go through each section in class while sitting at the computer, giving your students a hands-on experience. If you can, arrange to use a projector that can display your computer screen. To encourage your students to try electronic sources, Vicky Sarkisian of Marist College suggests that you use the material on the Internet in conjunction with one of the writing assignments that may involve research in Part One. Once they have defined their topics and begun the invention work, students would then be responsible for locating material using the World Wide Web. Stress that students should bookmark, download, and print their source material and learn to cite and document electronic sources properly.
Evaluating online text poses special problems. Instructors should start with traditional guidelines for evaluating text material and move on from there (see Evaluating Sources at the end of Chapter 23). Because search engines prioritize information when they provide search results, you might do a model search with your students, noting the number of hits and the criteria the search engine uses for judging the sites. You should also point out to students that anyone with the necessary knowledge and equipment can create a Web site and that it is important to deal with reputable sites such as those connected with libraries, museums, and universities.

In addition to problems with determining the credibility and reliability of sources, students need to be warned about plagiarizing online sources. Because information is so readily available, you will need to cover thoroughly your school’s plagiarism policy and stress the importance of documenting sources. However, the Internet is a valuable tool for learning, and it can help students greatly if they learn to use it accurately and carefully.
Using Sources

The first of the three sections in this chapter, Acknowledging Sources, teaches students how to correctly integrate source material into their writing. Next, Documenting Sources surveys MLA and APA documentation styles and formats. Finally, An Annotated Research Paper illustrates MLA documentation style and format.

In this chapter, we briefly discuss plagiarism to clarify what the term means and to bring into the open some of the reasons writers plagiarize. We define plagiarism broadly as the “unacknowledged use of another’s words, ideas, or information.” You may wish to discuss these issues in class, and you probably also will wish to inform students of your own and your institution’s policy regarding plagiarism. Most students who plagiarize, we assume, do not understand that the acknowledged use of other people’s ideas, information, images, and even words is not only acceptable but expected of educated people. For this reason, if for no other, we believe students should routinely be asked to consult sources when they write. If this is done, students will begin to understand that, for the most part, academic writing is a dialogue between the writer and other writers on a given subject.

We also assume that plagiarism is in many cases simply evidence of students’ unfamiliarity with academic conventions in our culture. Students may plagiarize because they do not know how to integrate source material into their own writing. The Acknowledging Sources section surveys various acceptable methods of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing source material. You might take some class time to discuss these strategies and to suggest others that students might add to their repertoire. (For a set of readings about plagiarism in this manual, see The St. Martin’s Guide companion Web site, bedfordstmartins.com/theguide.)
The above discussion of Chapter 24: Using Sources encourages you to ask students to use sources in their papers. However, research and documentation are challenging enough for students, even before they start to write arguments based on their findings. One way some instructors deal with this is to ask students to write annotated bibliographies, based on their research for a paper, before they write the paper itself.

This approach can be used, for instance, as a graded part of the invention process for Chapter 4: Explaining a Concept or Chapter 9: Speculating about Causes. Or you might ask students to write a literature review as part of a position or solution paper (see Chapter 6: Arguing a Position and Chapter 7: Proposing a Solution), in which case students can develop applicable skills in analysis and synthesis by working first on Chapter 5: Finding Common Ground, which introduces students to the topic-by-topic discussion of conflicting ideas. To keep such assignments from becoming overwhelming to students, you might separate the steps: Have students use Chapter 25 to work through a literature review on a subject; then, after those have been submitted and graded, have them write a position or proposal essay on those subjects, integrating their literature reviews into their arguments for a second assignment.

Of course, students might write a literature review as a stand-alone essay, an option described on p. 805. The last type of literature review described in this chapter, on p. 809, asks the writer to draw new conclusions from analysis of the existing literature in a topic. This is a particularly challenging type of work, possibly suitable for advanced or honors classes, for students with demonstrated skills in textual analysis or statistical analysis, or for students who have already completed Chapters 2 through 10, as a kind of capstone exercise using all of the skills they have learned. Students might initially suspect that there is little new to say on their subjects once they’ve had a chance to collect some literature on it. However, if you encourage them to work patiently through the steps starting on p. 811—and maybe supplement their approach by having them use the same topic charts and annotation strategies taught in Chapter 5 and textual analysis skills honed in Chapter 10—your students will find that, once they have carefully studied and analyzed the material, there is nearly always something new that can be said about it.

In learning to write the above genres, students will need to study the examples in the chapter. As we did in the Part One chapters, we have identified basic features for these
genres and annotated the samples that appear in the chapter. After discussing these examples with students and reviewing the annotations, if you wish to test their understanding or give them additional practice at analyzing the genres, you may find additional examples online fairly easily and ask students to review the purpose and audience of the examples, as well as the ways the authors carefully document their work, indicate content, describe context and significance, and establish their place in the conversation.
Essay Examinations

This chapter offers a comprehensive introduction to the writing demands of essay exams. You could assign it at any point during the course, although just prior to midterm exams would be a good time. After their first essay exams in other courses, students might bring in their essay questions for the class to analyze and critique.

This chapter is nearly all example, analysis, and discussion. The two exercises come at the very end of the chapter. After inviting some discussion from students about their successes and failures with essay exams, you can ask them to read the whole chapter down to the exercises. Ask them to come to class having identified what for each of them is the most puzzling or difficult essay exam question in the series of twenty-two sample questions. You can then extend your discussion of ways to handle the most difficult questions.

You might want to spend some time talking them through John Pixley's model long answer, helping them understand the decisions he made in composing the answer. You will want to point out that he relies on the strategies of contrast, illustration, and coherence that we emphasize throughout the book, particularly in Chapter 4: Explaining a Concept, Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader, and Chapter 18: Comparing and Contrasting.

Suggestions for Teaching the Exercises

26.1 Analyze an essay answer.

Students analyze a long essay answer written by a student in response to the same question Pixley answered. Summarizing the successful features of Pixley’s essay and the criteria in the section Writing Your Answer would be a useful preliminary to this exercise. When students assess Hepler’s essay, they could either write out their analyses or make notes for class discussion. Some students would benefit from your reading the essay aloud, commenting on its successful features as you go.

26.2 Analyze essay questions.

In this exercise, we ask students to analyze nine essay questions from exams in history, communications, and literature. We want them to decide what writing task is being posed in each of these questions and then, within the time constraints, to propose a general plan for answering the question. You could very usefully talk students through two or three of these questions and then have them develop plans for two or three more during class, evaluating their plans immediately while still in class. Then you could assign two or three more to be analyzed as homework.
This chapter introduces students to writing portfolios and offers guidelines for assembling a portfolio of work from assignments in *The Guide*. Specifically, it offers students help in selecting work, reflecting on their work and learning, and organizing and presenting a portfolio. It also helps them understand how instructors read and evaluate portfolios.

For a portfolio to be a satisfying learning experience for students, you will have to allow time—some programs allow a week or two—for students to review their work, choose selections, perhaps revise an essay further, assemble the portfolio, and write an essay (or perhaps a letter to you) reflecting on their learning. They may need to confer with you and other students about their plans.
Oral Presentations

This chapter provides useful information on preparing and delivering oral presentations, which may be incorporated into any one of the writing assignments in Part One. Students will also likely be called upon to give presentations in their other academic courses and at work. Here we stress the necessity of defining the audience and purpose for a presentation, noting the importance of remembering that, as in writing, presenting information orally is an act of communication rather than a performance. Encouraging students to focus on communication—on talking to an audience—may shift the attention away from themselves, from their own self-consciousness. We also emphasize preparation: doing research; writing up notes, an outline, or a script; preparing appropriate visuals; securing equipment and supplies; and rehearsing. We finish the chapter by giving tips on delivery of their presentation.

We also list and discuss four basic kinds of oral presentations: impromptu, extemporary, scripted, and memorized. You could make a specific assignment of one or more of these types, but you might also point out to your students that they probably give impromptu presentations every day of their college careers. Many instructors ask their students to read aloud from their essays as part of class workshops, and if you are incorporating a community-service learning component into your course, your students may have the opportunity to read their essays outside of class to a community audience. Your students will find the information in Chapter 13: Cueing the Reader and Chapter 21: Designing Documents helpful as they prepare for their oral presentations.
Working with Others

Throughout *The Guide*, assignments allow for and sometimes require collaboration among students on their individual writing projects. In this chapter, we focus on this kind of collaboration, as well as on students’ working together on joint projects. Students may have little experience sharing their ideas and writing with others, and they may instead see themselves in competition with other students for the best grade. If you plan to assign a grade for a collaborative activity or writing project, you will need to discuss your grading criteria with your students. They will need to know if they will receive one grade for the project, or if they will each be graded separately for their contributions.

At the beginning of this chapter we list examples of the formal collaborative activities in Part One and suggest ways in which students can work together on other activities. We then provide guidelines for preparing for and working collaboratively on these activities and on their individual writing projects. You might suggest that students read this portion of the chapter early in the course.

If you decide to assign collaborative essays, the second half of this chapter will be particularly useful. Using a workplace writing example (pp. 845–846), we walk students through the project, discussing the ways in which the team of managers and technical writers for a pharmaceutical company divides the responsibilities for their project. We also provide guidelines for carrying out students’ own joint projects.
If your institution has a community-service learning program, or if you decide to include such a project in your course, this chapter will be useful in preparing your students for their writing assignments.

Community-service learning projects and the writing they involve offer challenges and opportunities for both instructors and students. Rhetorical issues, like assessing readers and defining one’s purpose, take on greater significance when students understand that their audience reaches far beyond the classroom, even beyond the college campus. They also become more aware of the need for accuracy and correctness in their writing in this situation, recognizing that sentence-level errors are unacceptable if their writing goes public. They frequently take greater pride in authorship when they see that their writing has genuine consequences.

Before you send your students out into the community, you should remind them that they are representing themselves, their class, and their institution and that their behavior should be professional at all times. They should remember to make appointments, arrive on time, and call if they discover that they will be late or if they need to reschedule. You should also be alert for any problems that arise between the students and their community organizations. Community-service learning projects require good communication and good will among all parties.

In conjunction with this chapter, students will find Chapter 21: Designing Documents, Chapter 22: Field Research, and Chapter 29: Working with Others particularly useful.
Using the Handbook

We conclude the complete edition of *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing* with a comprehensive Handbook, one that can be used by students on their own or to illustrate class discussion. Designed for quick reference, the Handbook is divided into nine sections:

- Sentence Boundaries
- Grammatical Sentences
- Effective Sentences
- Word Choice
- Punctuation
- Mechanics
- ESL Troublespots
- Review of Sentence Structure
- Glossary of Frequently Misused Words

In the introduction to the Handbook, we suggest that students keep a record of errors, and we provide a sample form for them to use. In Chapter 33 of this manual, *Evaluation Practices*, we offer instructors specific advice on using the Handbook: Responding to Error. We advocate an efficient procedure for teaching students how to use the Handbook by having them take responsibility for correcting their own errors.
Teaching Practices

In this chapter, we discuss ways you can:

- hold student conferences
- organize draft workshops
- assign reading journals
- set up collaborative learning groups
- conduct community-service learning projects

### Holding Student Conferences

Conferences with students are time-consuming and difficult to schedule, but we highly recommend them as a teaching practice, even if you can see students individually only once during the course. Some schools allow conferences to replace class meetings altogether as the forum in which instructor and students meet; however, the most common practice is to use conferences in addition to class meetings. Conferences allow the instructor to develop a rapport with students, thus building the trust and self-confidence that many students need before they will take the risks in their writing that lead to real progress. For many students, these conferences are their only opportunities to work individually with a college instructor.

A conference may be scheduled at any time during the composing process. We find a conference most useful after the first or second draft of an essay has been written, at a point when the student has spent some time thinking about the assignment, generating invention notes, and making at least one attempt to put the ideas into draft form. The first draft may be discussed in a conference and the second draft in a workshop with other students, or vice versa, before the student writes the final revision of the essay.

### Individual Conferences

Depending on the purpose of the conference, you could schedule brief in-class conferences (while the other students are working on a task) or longer office conferences. Brief in-class conferences work best for targeted problems such as checking essay topics; confirming that students have correctly completed a particular invention activity; reviewing
an outline, opening paragraph, integration of sources, or use of transitions; and making sure students edit for their common sentence errors.

The most common use of the office conference is for draft conferences, typically fifteen to twenty minutes per student. To make the draft conference efficient, the student should come with a complete draft, notes from a peer workshop, and an outline he or she has made of the draft. You can also require students to come either with a revising plan or with a list of one or two major problems in the draft that you can help troubleshoot. At the end of each of the Detailed Chapter Plans in this manual, we provide conference-planning forms for students to fill out, a form for each writing assignment in Part One of the text.

**Small-Group Conferences**

An alternative to the individual draft conference is the small-group draft conference. Instead of meeting with each student for fifteen to twenty minutes, the instructor might meet with three students for forty-five minutes, spending fifteen minutes on each student’s draft. In a typical group conference, each student brings copies of his or her draft for the other two students and the instructor. They each read their drafts aloud while the listeners make notes on their copies. At the end of each reading, the instructor leads a discussion about the draft, with the other two students contributing their views and suggestions. After fifteen minutes, the writer collects the annotated copies, and attention turns to the next student’s draft.

The group conference lacks the privacy of an individual conference, an important consideration for shy students. On the other hand, the group may generate ideas that would not emerge in a one-on-one conference. Some of the comments we make about the first student’s draft usually apply to the other two as well, and students often decide to change their own drafts after the discussion of another student’s draft. When this happens, you might be able to spend ten minutes on each student’s draft and help three students in a half hour.

**Electronic Conferences**

Instead of meeting face-to-face with individual students or in small groups, you can hold conferences electronically — using e-mail, a chat room, or a discussion board. For commuting students, especially those with full-time jobs who have limited time on campus, these modes of communication provide alternative ways of getting feedback and asking questions. Moreover, they allow you and your students to keep written transcripts of the discussions, which often prove useful later. For example, if you find you’re telling multiple students the same things, you can save typing time by using the transcripts to quote yourself.

**Organizing Draft Workshops**

The draft workshop brings class members together to read and respond to their work in progress. There are many possible variations in the format of a draft workshop, but we find that the most productive peer review includes the following:

- **Use a Critical Reading Guide.** If left to their own devices, students are likely to point out typos and sentence errors, sometimes incorrectly. Assuming you want the draft
workshop to focus on global issues that will lead to substantive rethinking, elaboration, and clarification of the draft, it helps to provide students with a list of questions and activities like those in the Critical Reading Guide in each writing assignment chapter. Our guides are keyed to the genre’s basic features and writing strategies that the students have been studying, so it gives them a common vocabulary and frame of reference.

- **Model a response.** It helps to take some class time to show students what a good peer review looks like. Walk students through the activities and questions in the Critical Reading Guide on a student paper, showing them the kinds of praise and critique that would let the writer know what works, what needs help, and what might be done to revise the essay. A good response points to specific things in the draft, describes their effect on the reader tactfully but honestly, and suggests options the writer might consider.

- **Ask for a written response.** Because writers don’t hear or remember everything a reader says about a draft, we find it helps when students write up their responses so that the writers can refer to written comments later when they actually revise. To reinforce good peer reviews, we collect written responses with the writer’s draft and revision and often point out good advice in our final comments on the writer’s paper.

**Here are several formats for draft workshops:**

- **Students exchange drafts in class.** Students exchange drafts with another class member. As they do this, they may brief their partner on particular points on which they would like feedback. Each student then spends ten to twenty minutes silently reading the partner’s draft and writing a response to it following the Critical Reading Guide. While students are working silently on each other’s drafts, you may choose to move among them to offer advice. Alternatively, you can arrange in advance for one or two students to bring copies of their drafts for you to review during this time. When students have finished writing, they return the draft with their written comments, taking a few minutes to look over the response to their own essay and to ask their partner about anything confusing. To facilitate this critical exchange, you may want to pair students according to their writing abilities and change the pairs with each essay assignment so that each student receives comments from several others during the course.

- **Students read their drafts aloud in small groups.** To organize the workshop around oral reading and response, you can arrange in advance for the students to bring enough copies of their drafts for the other group members. This way students read and make notes on the draft as it is read aloud by the writer. Afterward, give the students a few minutes to discuss the draft’s strong and weak points before they give the writer the draft with their comments.

- **Online peer review.** Students swap papers and give feedback online, using e-mail or a discussion board. Electronic feedback has some advantages over traditional in-class peer review, chief of which is that it can be performed outside of class and give students more time to reflect on the draft. In addition, if students use Word’s Comment tool, they can insert notes as they read and send the writer their marked-up file. If you decide to go with electronic peer reviewing, consider downloading
Assigning Journals

Many writing teachers appreciate the value of journals in a writing course. The brevity, frequency, and informality of entries in a journal allow students to use writing in many more ways than they do in formal essays. Journal assignments can be used to challenge students to engage in a wide range of activities, including responding to readings and practicing various thinking and writing strategies. In our courses, students have kept a journal in which they respond to Analyzing Writing Strategies and Making Connections following every Part One reading in The Guide, to Part Three exercises, or to further questions and assignments provided by their instructors.

Although journal entries are most often written outside of class, they can be written in-class—for example, to begin discussion of the reading, to summarize a discussion, or to reflect on what has been learned, perhaps using the set of metacognitive activities at the end of each Part One chapter.

Responding to journal entries need not be time-consuming. A few suggestions or words of encouragement are generally sufficient to let students see that you've read their entries. Some instructors use informal marking systems such as pluses, checks, and minuses, evaluating for the quantity and quality of thought.

Online Journals

Journals can also be taken online using discussion boards, blogs, or wikis. To take full advantage of the public nature of these forums, ask each student to pick a classmate's journal entry and respond to it. (Most blogs and wikis have discussion or comment features so visitors can leave feedback.) Journal entries then contribute to a shared body of knowledge, and students get feedback from their classmates as well as from you.

Setting Up Collaborative Learning Groups

Collaborative learning has always been central to writing-workshop courses and to any composition course in which students discuss work in progress. In addition, several of the activities in the writing assignment chapters in Part One provide opportunities for collaborative work:

- A Collaborative Activity: Practice [in the genre]
- Making Connections activities following the readings
- A Collaborative Activity: Testing Your Choice

Some of the Analyzing Writing Strategies following the readings can also be done collaboratively.

You could also have students work in teams to research and possibly also to co-write some of the essays. The most productive genres for group writing are Explaining a Concept (Chapter 4), Finding Common Ground (Chapter 5), Proposing a Solution (Chapter 7), and Speculating about Causes (Chapter 9). Chapter 29: Working with Others, in The Guide, addresses collaboration on both individual and joint writing projects.
Conducting Community-Service Learning Projects

Another area gaining increasing interest and scholarly attention is community-service learning, in which students participate in activities outside the classroom, within a particular community, and write on behalf of that community with a specific public audience in mind. Involving students in community service while they are enrolled in a composition course enables students to take part in projects that increase their civic awareness and prepare them for future roles as engaged citizens. In addition, they gain an understanding of writing as a social act and an increased recognition of the importance of the rhetorical dimensions of specific kinds of writing.

Several writing assignments in Part One of The Guide reflect the kind of writing that might actually occur outside of the academy. These assignments are also well suited to community service, which involves students in working through real issues that affect their communities. The following assignments could include a community-service learning component:

- Writing Profiles
- Arguing a Position
- Proposing a Solution
- Justifying an Evaluation
- Speculating about Causes

For example, students can interview elderly people involved in neighborhood programs and write profiles of them, which can be published in an anthology or on a Web page. They can also submit editorials to the op-ed page of the local newspaper or send proposals in the form of letters to local officials or government bodies. These assignments can be completed by individual students or in collaboration with other students. Students can also collaborate with individuals outside the academic setting—members of specific community groups or organizations, for example.

You might allow students to choose their own projects in their own neighborhoods, or you might set up projects with nonprofit organizations. The latter may require extensive preparation on your part, unless your institution already has a community-service program. In general, though, you will find staff people in these organizations eager to work with educational institutions and ready with project ideas. To make community-service learning projects work, you should be sensitive to the kinds of problems students may face. Some may have difficulty getting to a project site far from campus. Asking students to share transportation or limiting projects to the campus community might solve this problem. Students may also have difficulties making connections with staff people in the organizations or measuring up to expectations of professional behavior. It might be necessary to remind them that they are representing not just themselves but also the university or college. You might need to discuss codes of conduct as obvious as keeping appointments or arriving on time.

For additional information on conducting community-service learning projects, see Chapter 30: Writing in Your Community in The Guide.
Evaluation Practices

Grading essays is the most basic and important evaluation practice in a composition course, but we advocate considering grading in the broader context of a writing course that teaches writing as a process. That does not mean requiring students to follow a rigid set of steps to produce an essay. Rather it means fostering the use of writing to enhance critical thinking and effective communication for different purposes and audiences. That is why general criteria, based on the assumption that all writing is the same, tend to be less helpful than genre-specific criteria. For criteria to have meaning, the basic features of the genre must be instantiated, made tangible through example and practice. Moreover, the basic features must be the basis for evaluation and response throughout the composing process, not just at the end.

Using Grading Rubrics

Many teachers like to use grading rubrics to show students what constitutes an A, B, C, D, and F paper. Grading rubrics could be used to reinforce what students are learning in the writing assignment chapters of The Guide. Rubrics, of course, cannot substitute for intensive reading in the genre and extensive analysis of the genre’s basic features and writing strategies, but they do provide a handy summary for teachers and students. Probably the best way to construct meaningful grading rubrics is to compose them collaboratively with your students and to apply them to sample student essays. Spending some class time in this way will make students more confident that they understand—and share—the criteria you are using as you grade their essays. Here is a sample rubric for Chapter 2: Remembering an Event.
### Sample Grading Rubric for Remembering an Event

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Well-Told Story</td>
<td>The narrative structure is dramatic, building tension and suspense around a clear and compelling conflict. The story is set in a specific time and place, engages readers, and dramatizes the action with strategies such as active verbs and dialogue. The story culminates in a climax that leads to significant change or discovery.</td>
<td>An attempt at narrative structure is apparent, but the story lacks drama and suspense. The conflict may be confusing or oversimplified. The story may drag in places or lose focus and intensity.</td>
<td>The narrative wanders, lacking dramatic structure or a meaningful climax. There may be no clear conflict or one that is undeveloped.</td>
<td>Dialogue may be used, but neither dramatizes the action nor reveals character.</td>
<td>The narrative lacks purpose, dramatic structure, or meaningful conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivid Description of People and Places</td>
<td>Descriptive strategies of naming, detailing, and comparing are used effectively to create a dominant impression. Dialogue contributes well to the portrayal of people and places.</td>
<td>Descriptive strategies of naming, detailing, and comparing generally work well to create a dominant impression. Dialogue sometimes seems unnecessary and does not contribute to the portrayal of people and places.</td>
<td>Descriptive strategies of naming, detailing, and comparing are not consistently used together to create a dominant impression. Dialogue does little to enhance the portrayal of people and places.</td>
<td>Descriptive strategies of naming, detailing, and comparing are often lacking so that there is no clear dominant impression. Dialogue does not convey a dominant impression.</td>
<td>The essay generally lacks vividness and specificity. Language describing people and places does not convey a dominant impression.</td>
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(Continued)
The autobiographical significance develops contradictions or shows ambivalences. The significance is woven into the story creatively through a combination of showing and telling. The essay gives the reader a vivid impression of the writer and is thoughtful in exploring the event's significance.

The essay is organized effectively and creatively. The order of action is clear and dramatic. Anecdotes, dialogue, and reflections are well-placed. The essay arouses curiosity and continues to be interesting.

A few mistakes may be made, but they are not distracting.

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**Sample Grading Rubric for Remembering an Event (Continued)**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Significance</td>
<td>The autobiographical significance develops contradictions or shows ambivalences. The significance is woven into the story creatively through a combination of showing and telling. The essay gives the reader a vivid impression of the writer and is thoughtful in exploring the event's significance.</td>
<td>The autobiographical significance is clear, but it borders on being sentimental or oversimplified. The essay may rely too heavily on telling and not enough on showing.</td>
<td>The autobiographical significance is unclear or undeveloped, giving a vague impression of the writer and tending toward sentimentality or cliché.</td>
<td>The autobiographical significance may be oversimplified or sentimentalized, with a moral tacked on at the end.</td>
<td>There is no apparent significance, stated or implied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>The essay is organized effectively and creatively. The order of action is clear and dramatic. Anecdotes, dialogue, and reflections are well-placed. The essay arouses curiosity and continues to be interesting.</td>
<td>The essay is organized in a coherent manner. The order of action is clear, and most anecdotes, dialogue, and reflections are well-placed. The essay remains interesting, for the most part, although it may lag in places.</td>
<td>An attempt to organize the essay is made, but the order of action may be unclear in places. Anecdotes, dialogue, and reflection may add to the dominant impression of the essay, but are misplaced. The essay fails to hold the reader's interest.</td>
<td>Organization is unclear. The essay rambles, and anecdotes, dialogue, and reflections appear without order. The essay fails to gain and hold interest.</td>
<td>The essay is unorganized, confusing, and fails to gain and hold interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar/Punctuation</td>
<td>A few mistakes may be made, but they are not distracting.</td>
<td>Mistakes—in number or seriousness—begin to be distracting.</td>
<td>Mistakes—in number and seriousness—stand out.</td>
<td>Mistakes are so distracting that it is difficult to read the essay.</td>
<td>Mistakes make the essay very difficult to read.</td>
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</table>
Responding to the Final Draft in the Context of the Composing Process

Instead of responding only to the final revised essay, you could collect and respond to the packet of materials the student generated throughout the composing process. You need to tell students exactly what materials are to be turned in for each writing assignment. We ask for the following materials:

1. The final, revised essay, typed and proofread.
2. A brief metacognitive essay based on the Reflecting on Your Writing activity (in Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned).
3. At least one draft with a written peer review based on the Critical Reading Guide.
4. Any other drafts, with each draft numbered in sequence.
5. The Invention and Planning notes.

Some instructors grade the revised essay without spending much time on the process materials. But your comments to students can be especially effective when they acknowledge the writer’s own analysis and assessment in the metacognitive essay and reinforce perceptive comments made by the peer reviewer during the draft workshop. It is also very helpful to point out ways the writer improved the draft, as well as opportunities for improvement that were suggested by the peer reviewer but missed. Even if you are not giving the student a chance to do additional revision, we find that comments oriented toward revision are more productive than straightforward evaluative judgments. For example, instead of asserting that the student’s Remembering an Event essay lacks a compelling conflict that gives the story significance, you could indicate how the conflict could have been sharpened and made more significant by presenting remembered feelings and thoughts supported by bits of dialogue to convey contradictory feelings. Posing a question of your own, noting a peer’s helpful suggestion, or pointing to a promising passage in the writer’s own Invention writing or early draft has the potential to help the writer understand the essay’s shortcomings and see ways the essay could be improved.

Using a Grading Sheet

Instructors typically add marginal comments as they read the final revised essay and then add an end comment with a grade that sums up their evaluation of the essay. Some of us use a form like the following that records the materials in the process packet and evaluates the final revised essay.
### SAMPLE GRADING SHEET

**Essay # 1: Remembering an Event**

| Student’s Name: _____________________ |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Process Packet</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Final Revised Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Essay</td>
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<td>Draft with a Peer Review</td>
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<td>Other Drafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invention and Planning Notes</td>
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<tr>
<th>Final Revised Essay</th>
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**Comments:**

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

**NUMERICAL SCORE:** ______________  **LETTER GRADE:** ______________

If you use a point system, you could put a numerical score in each cell of one or both tables, which you then add together to get the numerical score at the bottom of the sheet. Or you could use ✓+, ✓, and ✓– symbols or letter grades. In either case, concluding with a written comment is advisable. If you fill in this form on your computer, you will have a useful record not only of the grade but also of your reasons for the grade.
Giving a Selective Response

We advise against trying to respond to everything that needs improvement. Any writer, especially an inexperienced one, can easily be overwhelmed by too much criticism and become discouraged. Rather, we try to focus on a few of the most important things that need attention, thereby giving the student achievable goals.

We follow the same policy with grammatical problems, trying to mark serious patterns of error. Although we expect revised essays to have been carefully edited and proofread, most students are just learning to edit their own writing. Since even the best essays often have some sentence-level problems, we find it helpful for students to keep a record of their common errors to guide proofreading and editing. This procedure reinforces the importance of editing but puts it in its proper place. Refer students to Keeping a Record of Your Own Errors at the beginning of the Handbook, pp. H-3 and H-4. The error-frequencies list on pp. H-2 and H-3 is derived from our close analysis of errors in more than five hundred student essays, representing all of the genres assigned in the Part One chapters. Both college writing instructors and professional editors participated in the analysis. Because we discovered somewhat unique error patterns in each genre, we were able to identify with confidence the two most frequent errors in every genre we assign. Therefore, in the Editing and Proofreading section of each writing assignment chapter, we ask students to begin editing by searching their revised essays for the two errors most likely to occur in that genre.

Responding to Error

Responding to students’ errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, and punctuation is no small matter in a writing course. First, it is not easy to reduce students’ errors; second, it is all too easy for efforts at reducing errors to dominate a writing course, crowding out time for reading, thinking, and composing. Following are some widely accepted principles for dealing with error in a first-year college writing course.

- Attention to error must not prevent students from spending most of their time reading, discussing, inventing, researching, planning, drafting, and revising extended, multi-paragraph essays. This principle holds for all students, no matter how high their initial error rate. Overattention to error makes students cautious when they need to be taking chances, both to discover something to say and to develop the sentences to say it.
- Standard edited English is better acquired through intensive reading, writing, and revising than through extended grammar study and exercises.
- Error should become the focus of attention when students are editing and proofreading final drafts.
- The goal of instruction should be to help students take responsibility for finding, diagnosing, and correcting their own errors. If students, with the help of their instructors, analyze their errors, they will find patterns of common errors in their own writing that can focus and simplify their efforts at overcoming those errors.
- Instruction in error correction must be individualized. Whole-class instruction in grammar, usage, or style should occur only occasionally, if at all.
- Students should learn to use a handbook to identify and correct errors.
These principles can guide your dealings with error even for students whose error rate is high, who speak a nonstandard dialect, or who still struggle with English as a second language. Following are two interrelated strategies we use to help our students learn to avoid error or edit their own writing. First, we teach them to identify and correct their own errors by marking the errors we find in a portion of their revised essays. We underline the error and either put a check or the error code from the Handbook in the margin. We focus on one section of the essay, such as a paragraph or a page, and try to identify every error we find in that section. The key to this approach is the follow-up, which requires students to use the Handbook to decide how to correct the marked sentence. Students rewrite these sentences and we review their work, asking them to try again if they have not corrected the error satisfactorily.

Our second strategy follows from the first. We ask students to keep a chart of their common errors, including the Handbook code and name of the error, one or more examples of their own sentences with the error and their corrections, and any other notes that will help them remember how to identify and correct the error. Students should use this chart when they proofread and edit their revised essays. In conference, we review the chart with students and help them analyze their patterns of error. We may devote class time to discussing certain error patterns shared by many students in the class. We also sometimes use the error charts to construct groups for an editing workshop on the day students hand in their revised essays.

**Evaluating Achievement with Portfolios**

Portfolio assessment deserves serious consideration in any writing program. More and more instructors and programs are assigning portfolios because they involve students in evaluating their own work and reflecting on their learning. Portfolios invite continuing collaboration among students and instructors, with the goal of enabling each student to do his or her own best work. Instead of grading separate exercises or essays, the instructor focuses on helping students revise their work. The student then selects the best of this work for inclusion in a portfolio, usually at the end of the course. The student must justify the selections and use the portfolio as an occasion to reflect on his or her learning and achievement during the course. Often the course grade is based on the entire portfolio.

In many sections of first-year composition at the University of Houston, where individual essays are graded, portfolios make up a large percentage of students’ final grades. Students are required to choose two essays to revise a second time. These revisions, along with a reflective essay (outlined in *The Guide*’s Chapter 27: Writing Portfolios) are submitted at the end of the term. Instructors evaluate the entire portfolio holistically, reading the metacognitive essay first. This limited use of the portfolio system reveals to students the importance of revising and critiquing their own work, and it gives them an opportunity to participate in their own evaluation. Chapter 27: Writing Portfolios provides students with information and guidance on preparing a portfolio. It proposes a portfolio that presents several kinds of work from across the term — including invention, drafts, revisions, critical responses, and a further revision of at least one essay. The chapter also prompts students to justify these choices and account for problems identified and solved in the further revisions. Most important, the student is guided in reflecting on learning and achievement for the entire course. This plan gives the portfolio far more importance than any one essay.
assignment. It provides a unique learning experience that enables students to review and consolidate all that they’ve learned and to be evaluated on what they themselves consider their best work. They participate in the evaluation by making choices, explaining and justifying those choices, and reflecting on their own personal achievement.

For this challenging assignment to work well, students need support and time. It cannot be done hastily over the final weekend of the course. Many instructors give it at least a full week. You might wish to schedule a conference with each student to discuss choices of work to include and the plan for a further revision of one essay. Encourage students to help each other.
Technology and The Guide

Computer technologies can extend your classroom beyond the bricks-and-mortar walls of the room itself, bringing student writers into frequent and productive written contact with each other outside of class sessions. Many of these technologies, such as the commenting tools of word processors, enable students to apply The Guide's lessons in pinpointed ways and create legible and durable records for later revision work. Similarly, when you bring activities that are usually handled orally online, such as many of the Collaborative Activities related to topic selection, these activities become writing—not speaking—exercises. When you use e-mail distribution lists, discussion boards, blogs, and wikis as posting spaces, you give student writers an audience beyond their instructor and provide student readers with opportunities to hone their evaluation skills.

Keeping in mind that no single technology fulfills all needs and that it would be impractical to implement all possibilities in one course, we profile in this chapter a handful of popular technologies useful to Guide classrooms and describe the specific tasks and situations in which they work best.

- Technologies Useful to Guide Classrooms

Word Processors. Not surprisingly, most word processing programs include features ideal for writers, collaborators, and editors. Few students will be aware of them until you point them out, however. Among the more powerful options are comment insertion, color-coding, outlining, and change tracking.

Students can complete the invention activities in The Guide using their word processors. Later, as they sort through the material they came up with, they can write notes to themselves using the Comments feature, color-code related phrases or sentences, and use the Outlining function to organize highlighted text. (Most students resist making outlines, but this word processing function can make the task more inviting.) In later stages, peers can use some of the same tools, interjecting comments (even as early as the Testing Your Choice activity in each Part One chapter) and color-coding problem areas. Ask students to save the commented-on versions before integrating any of the feedback in case they want to use the comments for reflective writing later on.

When students are ready to fine-tune their sentences, have them use the Track Changes function of their word processor to experiment with sentence variations. For
example, they can test out the sentence strategies described in the Planning and Drafting section of each Guide to Writing. They can then save a new version of their paper and carefully go back through it to review and approve each change.

Word processors also provide users with document design options. Students often enjoy the opportunity to experiment with fonts, columns, side bars, and photos, and their enthusiasm can sometimes lead to increased attention to the writing process.

**Collaborative Word Processors.** Google Docs & Spreadsheets (docs.google.com), a Web-based word processing and spreadsheet program, enables you and your students to post and share documents in a central, accessible location. You can insert comments, just as you would in Word, and download files in several formats. Best of all, multiple users can edit a single document (with the original author’s permission). The result is a program that allows you to meet with students virtually, hold online class discussions (for up to fifty participants), and workshop essays—all using the same word processor interface.

In addition, Docs & Spreadsheets provides safeguards to minimize editorial confusion: Old versions can be restored or compared with newer versions with the click of a button. If two editors change the same piece of text simultaneously, they receive warnings when they try to save their work. Nevertheless, it’s a good idea to set up some protocols. For example, peer reviewers should respond solely through Comments rather than by making text revisions. Collaborators should indicate authorship through color-coded text and label their changes with dated Comments (the program does not presently support a Track Changes feature).

**E-mail Groups and Distribution Lists.** E-mail is a powerful tool; of the communication technologies discussed here, it is among the most commonly used and the most familiar to students. Because students check their e-mail regularly, it has an additional benefit: immediacy. What’s more, because students receive e-mails individually, they tend to see them as personal communications and respond accordingly. Whether you create an e-mail distribution list or use the group e-mail function built into most messaging software, this tool can become a valuable classroom technology.

When you send a message to the distribution list and students respond to that message, a “thread” of conversation will develop. As multiple participants start conversations, multiple threads will develop, and e-mails in these threads can be segregated, sorted, compiled, or printed. You can also use an e-mail distribution list to have students engage in a form of public journaling; bounce ideas around with peers; or receive responses to ideas, plans, and early drafts. E-mail distribution list discussions that start with a Collaborative Activity from Part One of *The Guide* can easily blossom into essay topics. After essays are completed, you can shift discussions toward the sort of reflective writing described in the Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned section of each Part One chapter. Have students compare notes on their experiences, drawing on saved messages for evidence and inspiration. Toward the end of the term, students can create portfolios of their best work based on the feedback they received from peer reviewers through the distribution list.

If you plan to use e-mail in your course often, encourage students to paste their work directly into their e-mail messages, both to cut down on slow downloads and to increase the likelihood that others will read it. Many users will not open file attachments unless they have extra time, trust the sender, and are expecting to receive them. Later, as students
develop relationships with particular peer reviewers, encourage them to work in smaller e-mail groups. At this point, if students want to include attachments (perhaps to trade Word files loaded with comments), doing so is less likely to cause problems.

**Discussion Boards.** A common feature of course management systems such as Blackboard, WebCT, and CompClass, discussion boards enable students to post and reply to messages. Even if you don’t use a course management system, you can set up a discussion board by creating “group pages” on a site such as Yahoo!, Google, or ICQ. These sites, among others, offer file-exchange and live-chat features, though they don’t provide some other features of course management systems, such as an online grade book and online test creation. Consider free course management systems as well, such as Wordcircle (www.wordcircle.org) and Internet Classroom Assistant (www.nicenet.org). One of the more promising systems, Moodle (www.moodle.org), requires you to download and install a free software program.

Like an e-mail distribution list, a discussion board produces grouped conversations or threads. Unlike an e-mail distribution list, a discussion board stores all of its exchanges online, enabling you and your students to access the content from any Internet-connected computer. Because users can skim subject headings, the discussion board also makes it easy to search for particular threads. Many discussion boards (Blackboard’s, for instance) also permit students to attach documents (such as file versions of their papers) to posted messages.

One downside of the discussion board is that it is less immediate than an e-mail distribution list. Students are less likely to check the board regularly unless you frequently remind them to do so. Although students often find the discussion board less overwhelming than an e-mail distribution list (which can quickly overwhelm an inbox), they will be less likely to read board messages posted by other students unless you encourage them to do so. (See the Troubleshooting section later in this chapter for advice on dealing with this issue.)

Nonetheless, the discussion board presents a host of possible uses for you and your students. During the invention stage, students can run lists and topic ideas by each other, engage in dialoguing (see Chapter 11: A Catalog of Invention Strategies in *The Guide*), and challenge each other to develop details and refine arguments. Exposure to diverse opinions at this stage can help students anticipate objections, particularly when they have a written record of those opinions. In addition, you can have students post plans and drafts online for peer review, enabling feedback during critical stages that seldom receive it. As drafts develop, students can evaluate and respond to them using the Critical Reading Guides, which are also available on *The Guide’s* companion Web site: bedfordstmartins.com/theguide.

Finally, discussion boards make it possible to gather and organize the history of a writing project—from its inception to its feedback and through multiple drafts. This is not only helpful to you, since you no longer have to ask for large packets of paper to track a student’s progress; it is also a boon to students, who might otherwise lose valuable feedback and who can draw on their online history in framing responses to the Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned prompts at the end of each Part One chapter. (Students might also compare the feedback they’ve received on various assignments while trying to decide which of their papers to gather for a portfolio evaluation.) To ensure that students reap organizational benefits from the discussion board, encourage them to keep
all material pertaining to one paper within a single thread and to number their drafts, even to the point of using decimals to indicate partial revisions needing only partial feedback. For example, Draft 1.1 might be headed by a question asking whether the new first sentence works better, while Draft 2.0 might ask for a full evaluation.

**Overhead LCD Projectors.** By using an overhead projector that is connected to a computer in the classroom, you can model the writing process and many of the technologies discussed here live, in classwide collaborative activities. You can display and discuss essays from *The Guide* and its student essay collections, *Sticks and Stones* (available in print) and *Marriage 101* (available on The Guide companion Web site). Drawing on the class for input and ideas, you can then demonstrate brainstorming and topic selection processes, writing strategies, citation practices, feedback options (including how to use the Comments function discussed earlier), and editing techniques. As you walk students collectively through each step of the model, they learn what their own process could look like. And by participating in those processes, they get valuable practice through a low-risk writing activity.

**Instant Messaging.** Instant messaging—an online tool for speedy, real-time communication—has many advantages for writers. Unlike a discussion board or an e-mail distribution list, which results in relatively public displays and slow response times, instant messaging permits students to target specific individuals and receive more immediate answers. Often during the writing process, student writers need answers to single, specific questions. Asking an occasional specific question—“What’s another word for grace?” “Is this citation in the right format?” “What sentence do you like better?” “What’s wrong with this paragraph?”—can feel petty and insignificant on an e-mail distribution list or discussion board, where the typical posting is more complex, but such queries are right at home in an instant message. Furthermore, while other options tend to expose a writer’s ignorance to relative strangers in the class, instant messaging can be directed at just a few known friendly peers. For these reasons, you might find instant messaging a better tool than e-mail or discussion boards for invention work and topic selection. Because some privacy is preserved, students may be more willing to express their ideas and doubts.

Some instant messaging programs offer voice chat. However, taking advantage of voice options fully can present some tough technical hurdles at first (for instance, students might have to buy headsets and download drivers). Nevertheless, by teaching students to drop sentences and paragraphs from their papers into message programs and talk about them over headsets, you can help them get past crunch-time problems that might otherwise stall them for most of an evening. Voice chat enables students to read papers aloud to each other—something that many instructors swear by but that students seldom get to do unless they share a dorm room. Thanks to voice chat, you can encourage even students who live in different cities to work collaboratively.

Unfortunately, the voice feature bypasses one of the advantages of text-based messages: transcripts. Although it’s possible to tape a voice chat session, it isn’t very easy to turn those recordings into readable transcripts without dictation software. By contrast, most instant messaging programs enable users to save plain-text transcripts (.txt files) of their written discussions. Students can refer to these transcripts as they revise and then attach them to their papers to document their invention work.
You can marry the best features of voice and text, however, by encouraging students to read papers aloud to each other as listeners respond textually. Have students follow the Critical Reading Guides—the prompts and responses can be cut-and-pasted into the message program.

Blogs. A cross between a diary and an opinion column, the blog or Web log can provide students with a vehicle for the sort of reflective writing encouraged by The Guide. The Remembering an Event genre in Chapter 2 (when used, for example, as an entry point to commentary on current events) and most of the argumentative genres (Chapters 6–9 in particular) are well suited for blog writing, and you can find ready examples of these genres by perusing existing blogs. As with discussion board posts or e-mail distribution list messages, students can use their blog postings as springboards for essays.

While blogs are not conducive to rudimentary invention work—the sort of fumbling around and risk-taking associated with listing and looping probably ought to be handled off-line—they do give students a chance to test out their ideas against a real audience. A class Web page containing links to each student’s blog can help ensure that most of the feedback students receive comes from their peers. Nevertheless, part of the advantage to blogging is that students can develop a better sense of opposing arguments by seeing how outsiders react to their writing. Most blogs come packaged with options enabling readers to comment on what the author has written. A few days after students post their essays, you can have them scroll down the page or open the comment area to see how readers have responded. Armed with readers’ reactions, students can better anticipate objections in the ways described in Basic Features. You can have students post later revisions as updates, while older versions can be saved elsewhere or archived. By the end of the term, students should have something very much like an online portfolio.

Remind students that on a blog, the comments left by readers are themselves a form of public writing. Students offering feedback on their peers’ blog entries can use the Critical Reading Guides as the basis for formal responses or even write full-length evaluation essays of the blogs using the guidelines in Chapter 8: Justifying an Evaluation.

Wikis. To the casual observer, wikis often look just like regular Web sites. However, wikis have a special distinguishing feature: Anyone with a password can sign in and change them. (The best-known example of a wiki is Wikipedia, a controversial online encyclopedia that is also a wiki, hence the name. Anyone who visits Wikipedia can edit the articles in it, hence the controversy.) Free wiki-creation services, such as Wikispaces.com and PBWiki.com, abound, and they vary widely in approach and style.

All wikis enable multiple people to work on the same text without having to worry about someone’s changes getting lost in the shuffle. For this reason, a wiki is most useful to a team of collaborators working on a single project. Your students can make changes to the same centralized document from separate computers; all changes are recorded by the wiki and can be viewed by all of the students. Because most wikis enable users to create new pages with the click of a button, teams can explore several ideas simultaneously on separate pages, homing in on the most effective approach after seeing them played out. For example, five students can each take a shot at writing an introduction and then collectively decide which one they like best. Invention work and research, posted across several pages, can be compiled into one main page later by the team or a key team member.
Wikis often have other, less obvious features that can be useful to you. Many services, like PBWiki, permit you to recover old versions of pages in case a team suddenly decides it wants to go with an earlier vision or needs to undo a change. Many systems also track the names of people who make changes so that it’s relatively easy for you to attribute work to the right students. Additionally, like most blogs, many wikis have comment or discussion features for offering feedback on an unfolding project. Once a team is satisfied with its project, its wiki can—in most cases—be toggled from private to public, essentially “publishing” it on the Web and reinforcing the sense of writing as a public activity.

Like the discussion board and the blog, the wiki thrives on simplicity—you do not need to know how to program Web sites to use one. All of the important work is done in a simple text screen, just as in an e-mail message, except that in a wiki you can also change what other people have written. Because of the wiki’s simplicity, some teachers like to use it in place of a Web site or blog. However, the primary purpose of a wiki is to facilitate collaboration.

With a wiki, it becomes possible to assign a class paper—a single paper written by the entire class. This works best with large-scale, research-dependent assignments, such as the Proposing a Solution (Chapter 7) or Speculating about Causes (Chapter 9) essay, because the research work can be divided among the participants. However, it also makes for an interesting warm-up exercise at the beginning of a term to have the class write something apparently simpler, such as an Explaining a Concept (Chapter 4) essay. As long as (1) the prompt is clear, (2) you show students the basics of how to use a wiki, and (3) you permit the class to self-organize in order to get the job done, your class is likely to explode into fruitful activity. The results will provide you with great fodder for in-class analysis of what went well—and what did not. Grading, the bane of group projects, need not be a stumbling block. Make the project a small portion of the overall class grade and have students evaluate each other, or award credit based on participation. Or have students write their own papers based on the class project, and grade those.

The Companion Web Site. The companion Web site to The Guide (bedfordstmartins.com/theguide) provides downloadable versions of Starting Points, Critical Reading Guides, and Troubleshooting Checklists for you and your students. You could encourage your students to use these materials while writing and revising, or print them for use as handouts in class. The site also provides supplementary debates and resources for Chapter 5, Finding Common Ground. If you and your students become familiar with the companion Web site, you can have Guide-specific materials at your fingertips when you need them.

Troubleshooting

Every technology has its gremlins. Following are some suggestions for dealing with them.

Balancing Technologies. To prevent students from cracking under the weight of additional technology-based requirements, follow a simple rule: For every burden you add, remove one elsewhere. In most cases, the matter is one of simple substitution. For example, if students are expected to leave elaborate comments based on the Critical Reading Guides on each other’s blogs, give them a break from in-class peer reviews.
Motivating Participation. Many of the technologies described here enable instructors to move activities out of the classroom. If you don’t provide students with feedback on out-of-class tasks, they are likely to view them as busywork. For this reason, it’s a good idea to talk about online activities in class, refer to such work in discussions with students, or remark on it in comments on papers. Make it clear why the activities are important to the course and to the students’ writing.

Managing E-mail Traffic. An e-mail distribution list with a full class of busy writers can quickly become overwhelming to the instructor, necessitating some message management strategies. For instance, you might ask students to put the word Question in the subject line of e-mail messages requiring an answer from you. You could then use filters to segregate these messages into a single folder.

Students may face a similar problem: If their inbox becomes flooded with messages that seem irrelevant to what they are doing, they might start screening out messages related to your class. Perhaps the most efficient way to deal with congestion on the student end is to break the class into several e-mail groups or distribution lists, and let each group pick its own internal moderator or moderators. Collectively establish some ground rules covering use of “Reply All” and what sorts of messages are acceptable to post. Finally, make sure you disband the lists when the class ends. Meanwhile, if your distribution list has customizable retrieval options (some allow members to read threads and messages online, while others deliver a day’s business in one package), consider using them and encouraging students to do the same.

Maintaining Electronic Civility. The immediacy and intimacy of e-mail can lead to lively discussions—and sometimes to lost tempers and brutal exchanges. Establishing protocols for distribution list behavior—and then enforcing them—can help keep flaming to a minimum.

Encouraging Evenly Distributed Feedback. On most discussion boards, all one can see are the subject headings. The simple step of clicking on a message to view it can deter students from reading each other’s work. Even if you require students to read and reply to messages from their peers, they tend to move in herds, congregating on one student’s paper (often because it is among the more readable) and ignoring others. You can mitigate this problem by setting an example and posting replies to threads that are being ignored. Encouraging students to use paper titles as subject headings (“How I Nearly Got Crushed by a Truck” instead of “Paper 1”) can also improve interaction. Another feature of Blackboard and some other systems allows users to select and collect unread messages. The selected messages will appear in one long page so that readers can peruse them without having to open and close many individual links. Or you can simply give students the following instructions: “Post your paper by [date and time]. After the deadline has passed, log back into the discussion board. Respond to the two posts directly below yours. If you posted last, respond to the first two posts.” With this method, you ensure that the discussion begins with every student getting responses to his or her post.

Using Instant Messaging Appropriately. Instant message conversations tend not to be deep, thanks to the speed at which thoughts are dashed onto the keyboard, interrupted by other typists, and left behind. IMing is great for generating lots of thoughts quickly and
is a useful tool for invention stages and early brainstorming, but for more deliberative work—say, discussing a paper or a reading—it requires a bit more planning. If, for example, you want two students to talk about a third student’s essay, you’ll want to supply some structure and advice. It might be something like this:

Read the essay (or draft or portion of an essay) and use the Comments feature to record your notes. You will keep the essay open with the notes in view while instant messaging. Set an appointment so you’re all online, and turn the instant messaging or chat log on so you will have a transcript. Focus on one or two issues per writer. For ease of reference, before giving your paper to your peers, insert numbers in front of each paragraph. Together, you can agree on the shorthand you will use to refer to specific parts of the text; for example, you might use “p2:s3” to refer to paragraph two, sentence three. If the writer asks a question, make sure to address it before moving on to a new topic.

Because an open instant messaging program is like an open office door—it tends to invite distractions and unrelated conversation—encourage students to set windows of time for chatting about papers and to log off when outside those windows.

**Delegating Authority in Online Collaborations.** With collaborative tools like wikis, one danger is that because everyone has the ability to make changes, no one does. Team-building exercises and other forms of team training can help but are time-consuming. You might instead have each team member sign up for a specific job and sign a pledge to perform it.

**Simplifying Formats.** Formatting on wikis, Web sites, and discussion boards is—though simple—handled differently than in word processors. Hence, italicized text and the like won’t usually translate from one to the other. If you make heavy use of online tools, consider either waiving the usual formatting requirements or accepting online versions without also requiring that students turn in physical copies.

**Safeguarding Student Work.** If you use wikis as a simple alternative to blogs or other Web sites, you must plan for the possibility that students—able to change the site with a click—will do so in destructive or offensive ways. With some sites, it’s possible to determine who made the change. With others, your only recourse may be to restore an older version of the page in question. Before an incident occurs, however, it’s a good idea to talk to the class about the issue, just as one would about plagiarism. Coaching students on how to present differences of opinion in collegial ways can lower the odds of vandalism. In the meantime, encourage students to save copies of their work off-site. (Some wikis offer back-up options for saving copies of files on a personal computer.)

### Time Management Issues

Lost time is a significant peril of the technological landscape: Instructors frequently complain that attempts to fold high technology into courses end up being a huge drain on their precious store of minutes. Accordingly, time management issues have earned their own section in this chapter. The following principles can help ensure that technology does not slow you down—and might even give you more time for your best low-tech approaches.
1. Use Technology to Move Activities outside of the Classroom

Virtually everything about teaching with The Guide can be moved out of the classroom, freeing up class time for things you would rather do in person. For instance, most Collaborative Activities can be performed on a course management system or via e-mail or instant message exchanges. Indeed, the notetaking that The Guide encourages during such activities is built into these processes—at the end of a digital exchange, each student has a permanent record of the conversation. To ensure that interactions take place, you can have students staple transcripts of their exchanges to their papers, with the understanding that they’ll receive credit for both their papers and their interactions with others. Peer review can be similarly handled outside of class using the Track Changes and Comments features of a word processor; it may even be graded—based on how well students use the Critical Reading Guide—in addition to the paper itself.

Non-Guide activities can also be moved outside the classroom. You can conduct quizzes, for example, on a course management system such as Blackboard or post a survey on a free site such as SurveyMonkey.com. With ungraded survey-styled quizzes, you can gauge understanding without having to set aside time for quizzing and grading. Moreover, once created, online quizzes and surveys can often be reused with the click of a button, though if they represent a significant chunk of the students’ grade, you’ll probably want to make changes between terms to prevent cheating.

Similarly, online resources provide efficient options for making announcements, “returning” assignments, providing an electronic copy of the syllabus, and performing other administrative tasks that tend to eat away at class time. You might even consider creating an online “help forum” where students can post questions. While such a forum might seem to be a hassle at first, students tend to ask many of the same questions repeatedly throughout a term. After answering a question once, you can direct later queries on the same subject to the forum.

The chief disadvantage to moving course features online is that students may get the impression that you are online, waiting to help them, twenty-four hours a day, and develop unreasonable expectations about response times. To dispel such notions, it helps to post or announce details about how often you will be checking your forum or e-mail or to set a regular “virtual” office hour each week during which you respond to electronic queries.

2. You Don’t Have to Grade Electronic Activities

Because electronic activities typically take place outside the classroom, you might assume you have to grade them to ensure they happen. Grading begets detailed feedback (to justify the grades), and by the end of the process, you’re a born-again technophobe. But most activities don’t need to be graded. Only the resulting papers do. Some electronic activities can be their own rewards (if they are fun or make the assignment easier), while others can be the subject of class discussion at the next meeting and thus handled much like assigned readings. Still others can simply be printed out and attached to assignments as proof of task completion for a checkmark in the grade book. You can refer to the attachments as needed when making comments on the resulting paper.

In short, the key to ensuring that activities happen is not to grade them but to discuss them somewhere—in written comments, in class, or (perhaps ideally) both. The LCD computer projector discussed earlier is a great tool for this purpose. Pull a discussion
board comment up on the overhead for discussion. Display a transcript of a chat session. Make a positive example of a student’s comments in a Word document. Without discussion, even if the electronic work is graded, students may assume that these activities are “make-work” and treat them accordingly.

3. Electronic Activities Need Not All Be Mandatory

Mandatory conditions tend to drain enthusiasm from students while forcing you to spend a lot of time checking up on things. So make some things optional instead. There’s no reason you can’t tell students that, if they want to, they may present their remembered event as a blog item or their explanation of a concept as a Web page or a wiki posting. There are many bored computer junkies sitting in English classes these days, and they often jump at such opportunities. Moreover, they tend to do a heck of a job at it, drumming up graphics, background music, and other reinforcements that might not be, well, writing but nevertheless encourage a level of engagement and pride in the work that is normally not achieved and that tends to result in better writing. (You might still require that supporting documentation from Collaborative Activities and the like be turned in physically.)

Great results can, indeed, be obtained by simply providing technological tools, demonstrating how to use them—and then not requiring them. If, for instance, you showcase Microsoft Word’s Comments or Track Changes feature on an LCD projector as part of an in-class demonstration on providing effective feedback, you will find that students tend to ask a lot of questions about how you performed those commenting tricks. Then they use those features without further encouragement.

A similar approach works for demonstrating wikis, discussion boards, and even online research tools. Students will tend to gravitate toward tools they find useful and eschew those they do not, making it unnecessary for you to put a lot of work into figuring out ahead of time which tools are good for them.

The exploration of technological tools might even be made the theme of a course using *The Guide*. Turn the class into a testing lab for composition technologies by having students identify tools that might be useful to writers; then have them write essays based on their investigations and modeled on the genres discussed in Part One of *The Guide*. For example, students might describe their observations during a technological experiment in a profile (Chapter 3), discuss the problems of a particular technology in an evaluation (Chapter 8), or propose solutions to those problems (Chapter 7). Students could also explore thorny issues or mystifying trends in technology by speculating about their causes (Chapter 9). Grade students on the quality of the reporting and their use of *Guide* genres. This approach puts students in a proactive, creative, and inquisitive role with real benefits for their own academic survival, as well as a role that plays to their likely technical strengths. Meanwhile, it relieves you of the burden of having to master new technologies—you can simply concentrate on teaching.

4. Do Test Runs

One reason new technologies sometimes sponge up valuable time is that the instructor embraces them too wholeheartedly, too quickly. By introducing a new technology in small doses, particularly (when possible) as a part of nongraded optional activities, and by letting students do some of the exploring for you (as discussed in the preceding section), you
can get a feel for the technology’s strengths and weaknesses before implementing it on a larger scale.

5. Start Small

On a related note, don’t try to test out more than one thing at a time or to cram several technologies—a wiki, blog, and discussion board—into a single course. In particular, course management systems often offer a wide range of options and tools, but using more than a select few at one time can quickly leave both you and your students overwhelmed.

Try to make the most of one technology at a time. Although a wiki doesn’t offer all of the advantages of a discussion board, you’ll find that a class focused on making the most out of just a wiki will still get better results than one that asks students to master several technologies at once. Remember that your students are also trying to learn to write.
Here we outline a variety of course plans suitable for different students’ needs and instructors’ preferences. For your convenience in reviewing the course plans, the following outline of Part One of *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing* briefly defines each chapter’s assignment:

**Chapter 2: Remembering an Event.** Students write a narrative that conveys the significance of a past event.

**Chapter 3: Writing Profiles.** Students observe and then present people or activities in their community.

**Chapter 4: Explaining a Concept.** Students investigate a concept and explain it to their readers.

**Chapter 5: Finding Common Ground.** Students analyze different positions that have been taken on a controversial issue, suggesting where there may be potential for agreement and where disagreement seems unbridgeable.

**Chapter 6: Arguing a Position.** Students research an issue and present an argument to support a position on it.

**Chapter 7: Proposing a Solution.** Students present a problem, propose a solution, and argue for the feasibility of the solution.

**Chapter 8: Justifying an Evaluation.** Students establish criteria on which they base an evaluation of something.

**Chapter 9: Speculating about Causes.** Students establish the existence of a trend or phenomenon and speculate about possible causes for it.

**Chapter 10: Analyzing Stories.** Students analyze a short story and offer evidence supporting their interpretation of it.

The assignments in Part One move from reflective to informative to argumentative forms of writing. The reflective essay, Chapter 2 on a remembered event, stresses the exploration of memory and feeling. Students learn to find meaning in personal experience. They also learn to present an experience so that their readers can understand its significance.
The informative essays—Chapter 3 on the profile, and Chapters 4 and 5 on the explanatory paper—shift the focus from the personal to the public. Students learn to gather, analyze, and synthesize information. In presenting what they have learned to their readers, students learn to organize and pace the flow of information and ideas so that readers’ interest is aroused and sustained.

The argumentative essays—Chapters 6–10—require students not only to gather and analyze information and ideas but to deliberate on them and to present the results of their deliberation in a carefully reasoned, well-supported argument. The position paper (Chapter 6) introduces students to the special rhetorical demands of argumentation. The proposal (Chapter 7) develops the idea that arguing can be a constructive activity, one that enables groups of people to take action together to solve common problems.

Evaluation, speculation about causes, and literary interpretation expand students’ reasoning skills and audience awareness. Evaluation (Chapter 8) establishes in students’ minds the need to build a case on shared assumptions and principles. Speculating about possible causes (Chapter 9) involves students in the special logical problems of determining causality. Analyzing Stories (Chapter 10) engages students in the challenging task of analyzing short stories and finding textual evidence to support their theses.

Any of the informative and argumentative essays in Part One can be used as the basis of a library–research paper project, large or small. Several documented essays are presented and discussed in The Guide.

The Course Plans

In all of the course plans, you may want to use all or parts of relevant chapters in Parts Two to Six of The Guide. For example, when students are writing a remembered event essay (Chapter 2), you might want to use in class or refer them to Chapter 14: Narrating and Chapter 15: Describing. When students are writing an essay taking a position on a controversial issue (Chapter 6), they could refer to parts of Chapter 19: Arguing. When students are doing research for any assignment, they should rely on Chapter 23: Library and Internet Research and Chapter 24: Using Sources.

Single-Semester Course Plan

Week
1    Ch. 1: Introduction and Ch. 2: Remembering an Event
2    Ch. 2 (continued)
3    Ch. 2 (continued)
4    Ch. 3: Writing Profiles or Ch. 4: Explaining a Concept
5    Ch. 3 or 4 (continued)
6    Ch. 3 or 4 (continued)
7    Ch. 4: Explaining a Concept or Ch. 5: Finding Common Ground
8    Ch. 4 or 5 (continued)
9    Ch. 4 or 5 (continued)
10   Ch. 6: Arguing a Position or Ch. 7: Proposing a Solution
Two-Semester Course Plan

First Semester

Week

1  Ch. 1: Introduction and Ch. 2: Remembering an Event
2  Ch. 2 (continued)
3  Ch. 2 (continued)
4  Ch. 2 (continued)
5  Ch. 3: Writing Profiles
6  Ch. 3 (continued)
7  Ch. 3 (continued)
8  Ch. 3 (continued)
9  Ch. 4: Explaining a Concept
10 Ch. 4 (continued)
11 Ch. 4 (continued)
12 Ch. 4 (continued)
13 Ch. 5: Finding Common Ground
14 Ch. 5 (continued)
15 Ch. 5 (continued)

Second Semester

Week

1  Ch. 6: Arguing a Position
2  Ch. 6 (continued)
3  Ch. 6 (continued)
4  Ch. 6 (continued)
5  Ch. 7: Proposing a Solution
6  Ch. 7 (continued)
7  Ch. 7 (continued)
8  Ch. 7 (continued)
9  Ch. 8: Justifying an Evaluation
10 Ch. 8 (continued)
### Single-Quarter Course Plan

**Week**

1. Ch. 1: Introduction and Ch. 2: Remembering an Event
2. Ch. 2 (continued)
3. Ch. 2 (continued)
4. Ch. 4: Explaining a Concept
5. Ch. 4 (continued)
6. Ch. 4 (continued)
7. Ch. 6: Arguing a Position
8. Ch. 6 (continued)
9. Ch. 6 (continued)
10. Ch. 6 (continued)

### Two-Quarter Course Plan

**First Quarter**

**Week**

1. Ch. 1: Introduction and Ch. 2: Remembering an Event
2. Ch. 2: (continued)
3. Ch. 3: Writing Profiles
4. Ch. 3 (continued)
5. Ch. 3 (continued)
6. Ch. 4: Explaining a Concept
7. Ch. 4 (continued)
8. Ch. 5: Finding Common Ground
9. Ch. 5 (continued)
10. Ch. 5 (continued)

**Second Quarter**

**Week**

1. Ch. 6: Arguing a Position
2. Ch. 6 (continued)
3. Ch. 6 (continued)
Course Plan Based on Research

In this plan, students do field, library, and Internet research and write informational as well as argumentative essays. The first writing activity is a profile essay based on field research. After completing relevant exercises, students write an essay explaining a concept. They then turn to writing an essay finding common ground on a controversial issue. Next, they write a position paper on the same issue. Finally, they write a proposal or a causal analysis, and conclude with a literary analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ch. 1: Introduction and Ch. 3: Writing Profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ch. 3 (continued) and Ch. 22: Field Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ch. 3 (continued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ch. 4: Explaining a Concept and Ch. 13: Cueing the Reader and Ch. 16: Defining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ch. 4 (continued), Ch. 23: Library and Internet Research, and Ch. 24: Using Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ch. 5: Finding Common Ground and Ch. 25: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ch. 5 (continued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ch. 6: Arguing a Position and Ch. 19: Arguing</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ch. 6 (continued)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Ch. 7: Proposing a Solution or Ch. 9: Speculating about Causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ch. 7 or Ch. 9 (continued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ch. 7 or Ch. 9 (continued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ch. 10: Analyzing Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ch. 10 (continued)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several complete readings in composition studies are available on The St. Martin’s Guide, ninth edition, companion Web site. Visit bedfordstmartins.com/theguide and click on Instructor Resources to access the readings.

**Histories of Rhetoric and the Teaching of Writing**


Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric and Discourse Theory


Genre Theory


**Responding to and Evaluating Student Writing**


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Technology and Composition


Community Service Learning


Writing in the Disciplines


### Gender, Class, Ethnicity


Acknowledgments


