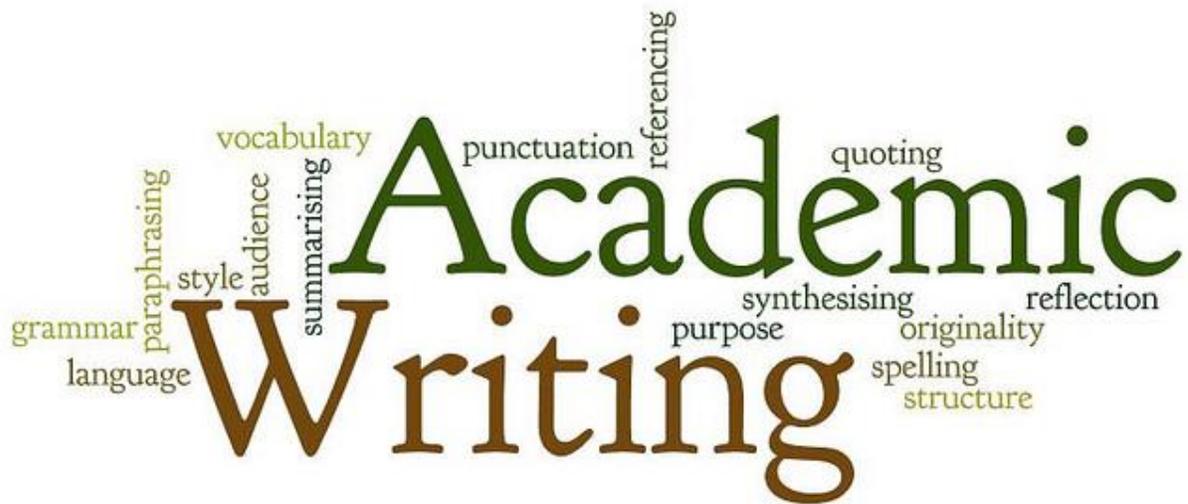


Study Skills Workshop:



[Career Services/Academic Advising](#), Student Life

For more information/questions

Place in Email Subject Line: 'Study Smart'

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

The Rhetorical Situation

The rhetorical situation is any set of circumstances that involves at least one person using some sort of communication to modify the perspective of at least one other person. It includes the:

Author: anyone who uses communication. Authors are affected by general constraints: purposes that guide their actions in communicating, attitudes which affect what and how they communicate, and backgrounds that inform the nature of their communication.

Audience: any recipient of communication. They read, hear, see, or feel different kinds of communication through different kinds of media. They are also affected by purposes, attitudes, and specific backgrounds.

Text: usually refers to a written or typed document but can be any form of communication.

Context: the time of author and audience, the place of both author and audience, and the community or conversation that authors and/or audiences engage in.

Academic Writing:

- requires reading, thinking, arguing, and writing in certain ways and coming to understand the expectations, conventions, and requirements of scholarship.
- is devoted to topics and questions that are of interest to the academic community.
- should present the reader with an informed argument.

Constructing an Informed Argument:

First consider what you know about your topic.

- What do I know about my topic? About the context of my topic?
- Can I answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, how?
- What historical or cultural influences do I know about that might be important?
- What seems important? less important? Why do I think so?
- How does this topic relate to other things that I know?
- What don't I know? What do I need to know? How can I find out?

Then consider what you think.

- Find a fresh observation, not summarize what is already known and talked about.
- Add something of your own to the conversation, create an informed argument.
- Your writing should be analytical not personal.

Moving from a Personal Response to Analytical Writing:

- Summarize: put the main ideas into your own words
- Evaluate: make judgments, assess the value
- Analyze: look for relationships, break the topic into parts, see how things work together

The Writing Process

Planning

- Pay attention to the requirements of an assignment.
- Choose an appropriate topic and one that interests you.
- Plan your time: for research; reading and note-taking; outlining and organizing; writing; revising; and editing.

Conducting Research

- Use sources to enlarge and refine your ideas.
 - Initial: get an overview of your topic; collect resources; see what's available.
 - In-depth research: start a working bibliography; read and take notes.
- Primary vs. secondary materials:
 - Actual subject of study (a play, movie, speech, document) vs. books, articles, etc. about the subject.

Creating an outline

- Start with a working outline: informal list of issue related to your topic.
- Develop a final outline: organize according to your purpose.

Considering Structure

- Choose a method suitable to your subject and the type of essay. One pattern may serve as the overall organizing framework; you can use a combination of strategies.
- Chronological order: Paragraphs separate the process or series of events into major stages.
 - Classification: Paragraphs divide the material into major categories & distinguish between them.
 - Increasing importance: Paragraphs are arranged so that the most important point comes last, thus building the essay's strength.
 - Cause and effect: Indicates causal relationships between things and events.
 - Comparison and contrast: Involves lining up related ideas for a detailed account of similarities and differences.

Drafting

- Write your rough draft. Write sections of the paper, following your outline.
- Questions to ask yourself as you write:
 - Have I imagined my audience?
 - What is my main idea? Is it a good one? How and where is it supported? Do I offer specific details? How is the material organized? Is it effective?
- Write an introduction and conclusion.

Revising

- Put your paper aside for a few days.
- Add or delete content to strengthen arguments or make connections.
- Read it aloud; have someone else read and comment on it.
- Questions to ask yourself:
 - Is the title informative and focused?
 - Does the paper make a point or does it just accumulate other people's ideas?
 - Are claims supported by evidence?
 - Are all the words and ideas of the sources accurately attributed?
 - Are the quotations introduced adequately? Are all of the long quotes necessary or can some be effectively summarized?
 - Does the paper advance in orderly stages?
 - Is the documentation in the correct form?

Editing

- Edit the content and organization:
 - Paragraphs should have one main idea with a topic sentence and supporting points.
 - Ensure your writing is clear and concise. Delete unnecessary words.
- Check the grammar.

Conducting Research Effectively

Making/taking notes

- Develop a system to organize and take notes.
- Use reference note cards and a research log.
 - Indicate information as a quote, paraphrase or summary.
 - Note the source, title, author and page number.
- Use critical thinking:
 - What is the main idea? What are the supporting points?
 - What is the author's purpose? What is fact? What is opinion?
 - Why is this important? What are the author's assumptions?
- Note your own thoughts and reactions.

Quoting, Paraphrasing and Summarizing

Use quotes, paraphrasing and summarizing to:

- Provide support for claims or add credibility to your writing,
- Give examples of several points of view on a subject,
- Call attention to a position that you wish to agree or disagree with,
- Highlight a particularly striking phrase, sentence, or passage by quoting the original,
- Expand the breadth or depth of your writing.

Quotations

- Must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.
- Proper citation method depends on documentation style used.

Paraphrasing

- Putting someone else's idea or fact into your own words.
- Usually shorter than the original passage, taking a broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.
- Copying vocabulary or structure is not paraphrasing: merely restating a source, changing words but proceeding phrase by phrase, offering synonyms is plagiarizing.
- Paraphrase properly and credit as you would for a direct quote.
 - Don't rely too heavily on source.
 - Don't distort meaning.

Summarizing

- Putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s).
- Attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

Avoiding Plagiarism

- Using another person's words or pictures without giving proper credit.
- Plagiarism can cost you your grade and may result in expulsion from school.
- Use appropriate citations.
- Avoid:
 - missing attribution: author of quote not identified,
 - missing quotation marks,
 - inadequate citation – no page number,
 - missing Reference page entry.
- Common knowledge exceptions:
 - would an intelligent person know this,
 - did you know it before you found it,
 - is it encyclopedia type info,
 - has it become general info.

Organizing Your Writing

Focusing: Developing a Thesis Statement

- A thesis statement is the point you are arguing, the position you are taking.
- A good thesis statement will usually:
 - take on a subject upon which reasonable people could disagree,
 - express one main idea,
 - assert your conclusions about a subject.
- Your focus may be:
 - analytical: you break the topic into parts, inspect and understand, restructure and present from your own perspective or,
 - argumentative/persuasive: you take a stand on an issue, use evidence to back it up.
- Questions to ask yourself:
 - Is it an intellectual question that will require a complex, thoughtful answer?
 - Is the question provocative? Startling? Controversial? Fresh?
 - Will you be able to answer this question adequately in a few pages? Or is the question too broad? If so how might you narrow it?

Finding a Rhetorical Stance

You must consider what you want to say and to whom you are saying it.

- Consider Your Position:
 - consider your relationship to your topic: in a paper, you take a stand on a topic, determine whether you are for or against, passionate or neutral.
- Consider Your Audience:
 - usually the professor or your classmates, although your professor may instruct you to write for a more particular or more general audience.
- Be sincere:
 - don't take an authoritative stance if you aren't confident about what you are saying.
- Don't avoid taking a position on a subject if you are of two minds - declare that to the reader. Make ambivalence your clear rhetorical stance.
- Consider The Other Side(s):
 - Acknowledge the other side(s) of an argument; consider what your opponents might say against your argument. Then determine where and how you want to deal with the opposition.

Organizing Your Paragraphs

Every convincing argument must have support. Your argument's support will be organized in your paper's paragraphs. They should be:

- Unified: declare a point, usually the topic sentence. Use transitional words (while, as well), specific details, facts and names combined to convey ideas,
- Organized: e.g. general to specific, past to present; cause to effect or vice versa; evidence to conclusion; enumerating the parts and studying each one,
- Coherent: connections between ideas; repeating key words.

Linking Paragraphs:

- use transition words such similarly, clearly, on the contrary, as a result, in other words, next, finally, etc

Introductions:

- declare your argument and place your argument within the larger, ongoing conversation about your topic.
- "Place" your argument for your reader by naming the text, the author, the issues it raises, and your take on these issues

Conclusions:

- Find a balance between leaving the reader with something to think about by pointing to a new idea or question, but not confusing them by introducing something irrelevant.

Using Appropriate Style and Language

Conciseness and Clarity

- Avoid wordiness and redundancy:
 - now (not: at this point in time)
 - because (not: due to the fact that)
- Choosing your words:
 - Avoid sexist language
 - Be specific.

Active vs Passive

- e.g. Leonardo da Vinci painted Mona Lisa.
Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

Use appropriate levels of formality

- avoid colloquialisms and slang

Use Correct Grammar, Punctuation and Sentence Structure

Formatting Your Paper

Documentation Styles

- Confirm with your professor which style to use
- Study a style manual for details on proper use of references and formatting

In-text Citations Examples:

APA

- frequently used in social science disciplines including political science, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education
- emphasizes the date of publication
e.g. According to Zukin (2004), teens often.....
“This is a direct quote” (Suzuki & Irabu, 2002, p. 404).

MLA

- frequently used in the humanities and fine arts
- emphasizes page number
e.g. According to Zukin, teens often.....(213)
“This is a direct quote” (Suzuki and Irabu 404)

Chicago

- frequently used in business, social sciences, fine arts, and humanities
- use of footnotes and endnotes

Online Resources

On Academic Writing

University of Winnipeg – [Writing Tutoring Centre](#)

Purdue University – [Online Writing Lab](#)

[University of Toronto](#) – check out the Writing Advice pdf Files

University of Calgary – [Online Writing Resources](#)

On Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

The University of Winnipeg – [Academic Misconduct Policy - Plagiarism](#)

York University – [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#)

Ryerson University – [Academic Integrity](#) – see Misconceptions and Episodes & Quizzes

Bates College – [Plagiarism Resource Site](#)

On Documentation Styles

Purdue University [APA Formatting and Style Guide](#), [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#)

American Psychological Association [\(APA\) Style](#)

[The Chicago Manual of Style Online](#)