

language experience you have had and how that experience, in retrospect, was a "turning point" in your life.

On a second level, reading provides you with information, ideas, and perspectives for developing your own paper. In this way, you respond to what you read, using material from what you've read in an essay. For example, after reading Diane Ravitch's essay on the "language police," you might want to elaborate on what she has written, drawing on your own experiences and either agreeing with her examples or generating better ones of your own. You could also qualify her argument or take issue with it. The Debates in Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of *Language Awareness* offer you the opportunity to read extensively on focused topics—"Should Learning Be Censored?," "Should English Be the Law?," and "What's All the Fuss about Natural, Organic, Local Foods?"—and to use the information and opinions expressed in these essays as resources for your own thesis-driven paper.

On a third level, active reading can increase your awareness of how others' writing affects you, thus making you more sensitive to how your own writing will affect your readers. For example, if you have been impressed by an author who uses convincing evidence to support each of her claims, you might be more likely to back up your own claims carefully. If you have been impressed by an apt turn of phrase or absorbed by a writer's new idea, you may be less inclined to feed your readers dull, worn out, and trite phrases. More to the point, however, the active reading that you will be encouraged to do in *Language Awareness* will help you to recognize and analyze the essential elements of the essay. When you see, for example, how a writer like Susanne K. Langer uses a strong thesis statement about how language separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom to control the parts of her essay, you can better appreciate the importance of having a clear thesis statement in your writing. When you see the way Deborah Tannen uses transitions to link key phrases with important ideas so that readers can recognize clearly how the parts of her essay are meant to flow together, you have a better idea of how to achieve such coherence in your own writing. And when you see the way Donna Woolfolk Cross uses a division and classification organizational plan to differentiate clearly the various categories of propaganda, you see a powerful way in which you too can organize an essay using this method of development.

Finally, another important reason to master the skills of critical reading is that you will be your own first reader and critic for everything you write. How well you are able to scrutinize your own drafts will powerfully affect how well you revise them, and revising well is crucial to writing well. Reading others' writing with a critical eye is a useful and important practice; the more you read, the more practice you will have in sharpening your skills. The more sensitive you become to the content and style decisions made by the writers in *Language Awareness*, the more skilled you will be at making similar decisions in your own writing.

WRITING IN COLLEGE

Whenever you write in college, you are writing as a member of a community of scholars, teachers, and students. By questioning, researching, and writing in company with other members of the college community, you come both to understand college material and to demonstrate your knowledge of it.

Relatively early on in your college career, you will likely begin to focus on a specific discipline—English, history, philosophy, psychology, nutrition, or biology, for example—that belongs to one of several larger curricular groups (traditionally, languages and literature, humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences). You'll notice that writers in your discipline employ particular methods, resources, evidence, language, and stylistic and formatting conventions that differ from those used in other disciplines. Your credibility as a writer in your discipline, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of your communication, will depend in large part on your adherence to these conventions.

In addition to adhering to the conventions of your discipline, however, you need to meet core standards of well-written academic prose. Most of your instructors will agree, for example, that a good academic paper, regardless of its length, is purposeful and well organized. Writers do not rely on luck or inspiration to produce an effective piece of writing. Instead, good writers plan what they have to say, write a rough draft, revise that draft, edit their work, and proofread the final copy. In short, they follow what is commonly called the writing process.

GETTING YOUR THOUGHTS IN WRITING

The advice below is intended to help you master the core elements that all instructors expect in academic writing, whatever the discipline. As you develop any writing project, be sure that you do all of the following:

1. Understand the writing assignment.
2. Find a subject and topic.
3. Establish your thesis or controlling idea.

4. Determine your organizational plan.
5. Support your thesis with evidence.
6. Be aware of your audience.
7. Acknowledge your sources.
8. Take steps to avoid plagiarism.

1. Understand the Writing Assignment

Much of your college writing will be done in response to specific assignments from your instructors or research questions that you develop in consultation with your teachers. Your environmental studies professor, for example, may ask you to write a report on significant new research on carbon dioxide emissions and global warming; your American history professor may ask you to write an analysis of the long-term effects of Japanese Americans' internment during World War II. From the outset you need to understand precisely what your instructor is asking you to do. The keys to understanding assignments such as these are *subject* words (words that focus on content) and *direction* words (words that indicate your purpose for and method of development in writing). For example, consider what you are being asked to do in each of the following assignments:

Tell about an experience you have had that dramatically revealed to you the importance of being accurate and precise in your use of language.

Many languages are lost over time because speakers of those languages die. When a language is lost, the particular culture embodied in the language is also lost. Using an extinct language and culture as an example, explain how the language embodies a culture and exactly what is lost when a language becomes extinct.

Advocates of the English-only movement want to see English adopted as our country's official language. Argue for or against the philosophy behind this movement.

In the first example above, the subject words are *experience* and *importance of being accurate and precise in your use of language*. The direction word is *tell*, which means that you must share the details of the experience so that your readers can appreciate them as if they were there, sharing the experience. The content words in the second example are *languages*, *culture*, and *extinct language and culture*. The direction word is *explain*. In the third example, the content words are *English-only movement* and *our country's official language*. The direction word is *argue*. In each case the subject words limit and focus the content, and the direction words dictate how you will approach this content in writing.

The words *tell*, *explain*, and *argue* are only a few of the direction words that are commonly found in academic writing assignments. The

following list of additional direction words and their meanings will help you better understand your writing assignments and what is expected of you.

- Analyze*: take apart and examine closely
- Categorize*: place into meaningful groups
- Compare*: look for differences, stress similarities
- Contrast*: look for similarities, stress differences
- Critique*: point out positive and negative features
- Define*: provide the meaning for a term or concept
- Describe*: give detailed sensory perceptions for a person, place, or event
- Evaluate*: judge according to some established standard
- Identify*: recognize or single out
- Illustrate*: show through examples
- Interpret*: explain the meaning of a document, action, event, or behavior
- Prove*: demonstrate truth by logic, fact, or example
- Synthesize*: bring together or make meaningful connections among elements

After reading an assignment several times, check with your instructor if you are still unsure about what is being asked of you. He or she will be glad to clear up any possible confusion before you start writing. Be sure, as well, that you understand any additional requirements of the assignment, such as length or format.

2. Find a Subject and Topic

Although your instructor will sometimes give you specific writing assignments, you will often be asked to choose your own subject and topic. In a course in which you are using *Language Awareness*, you would in this case first select a broad subject within the area of language studies that you think you may enjoy writing about, such as professional jargon, dialects, political speeches, advertising language, or propaganda. A language issue that you have experienced firsthand (discrimination, for example) or something you've read may bring other subjects to mind. You might also consider a language-related issue that involves your career ambitions, such as the areas of business (avoiding exaggerated advertising claims), law (eliminating obscure legal language), nursing (communicating effectively with patients), or journalism (reporting the news objectively). Another option is to list some subjects you enjoy discussing with friends and that you can approach from a language perspective: music (gender bias in hip-hop lyrics), work (decoding insurance policies and medical benefits), and college life (speech codes on campus). In the student essay that concludes

this chapter, for example, Tara Ketch combined her interests in children's literature and book banning as she tried to better understand the arguments for and against censorship.

Next, try to narrow your general subject until you arrive at a topic that you think will be both interesting to your readers and appropriate for the length of your paper (and the time you have to write it). The following chart shows how the general areas of jargon, journalism, and television commercials might be narrowed to a specific essay topic. (If you're having trouble coming up with general subjects or specific topics, try some of the discovery techniques discussed in the next section.)

<u>General Subject Area</u>	<u>Narrowed Topic</u>	<u>Specific Essay Topic</u>
Jargon	Medical jargon	Medical jargon used between doctors and terminally ill patients
Journalism	Slanted language in newswriting	Slanted language in newspapers' coverage of international events
Television commercials	Hidden messages in television commercials	Hidden messages in television commercials on children's Saturday morning programs

3. Establish Your Thesis or Controlling Idea

Once you have chosen a subject and topic and generated sufficient ideas and information, you are ready to organize your material and establish a thesis or controlling idea. The *thesis* of an essay is the point you are trying to make. The thesis is often expressed in one or two sentences called a *thesis statement*, such as the following example:

There is no better place to see language change take place than in the area of student slang.¹

A thesis statement should be

- the most important point you make about your topic;
- more general than the ideas and facts used to support it;
- focused enough to be covered in the space allotted.

1. The thesis statement should not be confused with a *purpose statement*. While a thesis statement makes an assertion about your topic, a purpose statement addresses what you are trying to do in the paper. For example,

I want to learn how much slang is used on campus and in what areas of student life slang is most prevalent.

Generally speaking, purpose statements should not appear in formal academic essays (though they are appropriate in outlines, in proposals, and in many written reports in the applied and natural sciences).

A thesis statement should not be a question but an assertion. If you find yourself writing a question for a thesis statement, try to answer the question. Your answer will provide the basis for a thesis statement you can use in your essay. An effective strategy for developing a thesis statement is to begin by writing *What I want to say is that . . .*, as in this example:

What I want to say is that unless language barriers between patients and health-care providers are bridged, many patients' lives will be in potential jeopardy.

Later, you can delete the formulaic opening, and you will be left with the thesis statement:

Unless language barriers between patients and health-care providers are bridged, many patients' lives will be in potential jeopardy.

The thesis statement usually comes near the beginning of an essay, after a writer offers several sentences that establish a context for the piece. One common strategy is to position the thesis statement as the final sentence of the first paragraph. Occasionally, the thesis is stated elsewhere in an essay, even sometimes at the very end.

Is Your Thesis Solid?

Once you have a possible thesis statement in mind, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does my thesis statement take a clear position on an issue? (Could I imagine someone agreeing or disagreeing with it? If not, it might be a statement of fact, instead of an arguable thesis.)
- Will I be able to find evidence that supports my position? Where? What kinds? (If you're unsure, it wouldn't hurt to take a look at a few secondary sources at this point.)
- Will I be able to make my claim and present sufficient evidence to support it in a paper of the assigned length, and by the due date? (If not, you might need to scale back your claim to something more manageable.)

4. Determine Your Organization

There are several organizational patterns you might follow in drafting an essay. Most of you are already familiar with the most common one—*chronological order*. In this pattern, which is often used to narrate a

story, explain a process, or relate a series of events, you start with the earliest event or step and move forward in time.

In a comparison-and-contrast essay, you might follow a *block* pattern or a *point-by-point* organization. In a block pattern, a writer provides all the information about one subject, followed by a block of comparable information about the other subject. In a point-by-point comparison, on the other hand, the writer starts by comparing both subjects in terms of a particular point, then compares both on a second point, and so on. In an essay comparing two dialects of American English, for example, you could follow the block pattern, covering all the characteristics of one dialect and then all the characteristics of the other. Alternatively, you could organize your material in terms of defining characteristics (for example, geographical range; characteristics of speakers; linguistic traits), filling in the details for each dialect in turn.

Other patterns of organization include moving from *the general to the specific*, from *smallest to largest*, from *least important to most important*, or from *the usual to the unusual*. In an essay about medical jargon, for instance, you might cover its general characteristics first and then move to specifics, or you might begin with what is most usual (or commonly known) about doctors' language and then discuss what is unusual about it. Whatever order you choose, keep in mind that what you present first and last will probably stay in the reader's mind the longest.

After you choose an organizational pattern, jot down the main ideas in your essay. In other words, make a scratch outline. As you add more information and ideas to your scratch outline, you may want to develop a formal, more detailed outline of your paper. In writing a formal outline, follow these rules:

1. Include the title of your essay, a statement of purpose, and the thesis statement.
2. Write in complete sentences unless your meaning is immediately clear from a phrase. Whether you use sentences or phrases, be sure to use them consistently throughout your outline.
3. If you divide any category, make sure there are at least two subcategories. The reason for this is simple: You cannot divide something into fewer than two parts.
4. Observe the conventions of formal outlining. (See below.)

Notice how each new level of specificity is given a new letter or number designation by student Tara Ketch in the following outline of the essay that appears later in this chapter (pp. 32–38).

Title: "Kids, You Can't Read That Book!"

Purpose: To argue for an approach teachers can use to deal with controversial material

Thesis: A review of the reasons for challenges to books suggests that educators concerned about censorship might forestall outright bans by more attention to

age-appropriateness and to the kinds of guidance given to students who are reading challenging material.

- I. Introduction: censorship
 - A. Definition of censorship
 - B. Relevant Supreme Court rulings
- II. Reasons books are banned in schools: community, family, and religious values
 - A. Offensive language
 - B. Sexual explicitness
 - C. Gay/lesbian content
 - D. Challenges to religious views
 - E. Racism and sexism
- III. Considerations for educators in dealing with controversial material
 - A. Age-appropriateness and access
 - B. Guidance and support for students
- IV. Conclusion

5. Support Your Thesis with Evidence

The types of evidence you use in your academic writing will be determined to some extent by the discipline in which you are working. For example, for a research project in psychology on the prejudice shown toward people with unusual names, you will almost certainly rely heavily on published studies from peer-reviewed journals. Depending on the assignment, however, you might also devise an experiment of your own or interview people with unusual names to gather firsthand accounts of their experiences. For an argument essay on the same topic in a composition course, as in many courses in the humanities, languages, and literatures, you would cite a wide range of sources, perhaps including—but not limited to—peer-reviewed journals. Depending on the assignment, you might also include your own experience and informal observations.

To support her argument on book banning, Tara Ketch derives most of her evidence from an array of experts, as in the following example, where she cites scholar Henry Reichman:

Henry Reichman writes that in 1990, Frank Mosca's *All-American Boys* (1983) and Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind* (1982), two books with gay themes, were donated to high schools in Contra Costa, California; at three of these high schools, the books were seized by administrators and then "lost" (53).

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES. In general, researchers and writers work with two types of evidence: primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary sources in the humanities and languages/literatures are works that grow out of and are close to a time, place, or culture under study. These can include documents such as letters, speeches, interviews, manuscripts, diaries, treaties, maps; creative written works such as novels, plays, poems,

songs, and autobiographies; and three-dimensional artifacts such as paintings, sculptures, pottery, weaving, buildings, tools, and furniture. Primary sources in the social, natural, and applied sciences are the factual reports and descriptions of discoveries, experiments, surveys, and clinical trials.

Secondary sources in the humanities and languages/literatures restate, analyze, and interpret primary sources. Common secondary sources include analyses, critiques, histories, and commentaries in the form of books, articles, encyclopedia entries, and documentaries. Secondary sources in the sciences analyze and interpret discoveries and experiments and often comment on the validity of the research models and methods and the value of those discoveries and experiments.

Writing in a specific discipline requires that you use the most authoritative and reliable source materials available for that discipline. Your instructors can help you in this regard by either providing you with a list of resources commonly used in their fields or directing you to such a list in your library or on the Internet. Many academic libraries include helpful subject study guides on their home pages as well.

For a brief guide to finding, evaluating, and documenting sources in print and online, see pages 607–622.

FACTS, STATISTICS, EXAMPLES, AND EXPERT TESTIMONY. The evidence you use in your academic writing should place a high value on facts and statistics, examples and illustrations, and the testimony of experts. You must be accurate in your use of facts and statistics, and you must check and double-check that you have cited them correctly. Be sure that you carefully consider the examples and illustrations you use to support your thesis: Use those that work best with your subject and the audience you have in mind. Finally, be selective in citing the works and comments of experts in your discipline. If you choose wisely, the works of respected scholars and experts will be immediately recognizable to others familiar with the subject area, and your argument will have a much better chance of succeeding.

The following passage illustrates how Tara Ketch uses examples in her paper on banned books in the schools:

In a debate about Katherine Paterson's 1977 novel *Bridge to Terabithia*, one Lincoln, Nebraska parent protested the use of the words *snotty* and *shut up* along with *Lord* and *damn*, saying, "Freedom of speech was not intended to guarantee schools the right to intrude on traditional family values without warning and regardless of the availability of non-offensive alternatives" (Reichman 47-8).

6. Be Aware of Your Audience

The more effectively you take your audience into consideration, the better your argument will be. You need to anticipate your readers'

reactions to your overall point and the kinds of evidence you use to support it, especially if you are presenting controversial or unusual ideas and evidence. You should try to anticipate objections to your argument, take them into account, and either accommodate them (that is, admit their validity) or refute them convincingly. Doing so demonstrates that you are comprehensive, thoughtful, fair, and reasonable—all traits that are required in persuasive academic writing.

Recognizing that not all readers are of the same mind on every issue, Tara Ketch attempts to recognize both sides of the issues she presents:

Defenders of [*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*] point out that such criticism ignores context and intent—Twain was writing specifically to draw negative attention to the South's racist attitudes and practices. Nevertheless, some critics claim that *any* use of such offensive terms, particularly in a text presented as a classic, can do more harm than good.

ESTABLISHING AN APPROPRIATE TONE. Tone—the degree of formality established between you and your audience—is largely a function of the vocabulary you use and the complexity of your sentences. Formal writing creates a greater distance between you and your readers by using third-person pronouns (*he, she, it, they*). Although it is more customary, and indeed often necessary, to use first-person pronouns (*I, we*) in personal narratives, it is best to avoid them in academic writing where you are aiming to write objectively. By all means, avoid abbreviations and any usage that derives from the informality of e-mail, text messages, and instant messages.

No matter how valid or convincing you think your argument is, you should always write with respect for your audience's intelligence and with appreciation for the time they are spending trying to understand your point of view. Don't attempt to bully the reader with aggressive language or typography (for example, CAPITAL LETTERS or excessive punctuation!!!). Instead, let the strength of your argument and evidence speak for itself.

Tara Ketch assumes a nonstrident, rational attitude toward her subject and a moderate tone that complements her attempt to be understanding about the issues surrounding the frequently contentious subject of censorship. Notice, for example, how she concludes her essay:

The efforts to censor what children read can generate potentially explosive conflicts within schools and communities. Understanding the reasons that people seek to censor what kids are reading in school will better prepare educators to respond to those efforts in a sensitive and reasonable manner. More importantly, educators will be able to provide the best learning environment for children, one that neither overly restricts the range of their reading nor exposes them, unaided, to material they have neither the experience nor the intellectual maturity to understand.

USING DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE. The point of discipline-specific language, sometimes referred to as professional language or even jargon, is not to make a speaker or writer sound like a scientist, or a humanities scholar, or a geologist. Rather, discipline-specific language provides a kind of "shorthand" means of expressing complex concepts. Its proper use will grow from your knowledge of the discipline, from the reading you have done in the field, and from the hours you have spent in the company of your teachers and peers.

While the meaning of some disciplinary language will become clear to you from context as you read and discuss course material, some of it, left undefined, will present a stumbling block to your understanding of the material. Glossaries of disciplinary terms exist for most disciplines: Make use of them. Also, never be shy about asking your instructor or more experienced classmates for help when you're unsure of the meaning of a term.

CONSIDERING OPPOSING ARGUMENTS. You will likely not have trouble convincing those who agree with your argument from the outset, but what about those who are skeptical or think differently from you? You need to discover who these people are by talking with them or by reading what they have written. Do your research, be reasonable, and find common ground where possible, but take issue where you must. To refute an opposing argument, you can present evidence showing that the opposition's data or evidence is incomplete or distorted, that its reasoning is faulty, or that its conclusions do not fit the evidence.

For example, notice how Tara Ketch acknowledges an opposing argument and takes issue with it:

Many would rightly question whether young adults should be exposed to extremely violent novels such as Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, given that they are still too young to put what they read into proper context. Does this mean, however, that such books should be removed altogether from school libraries? Perhaps not.

Libraries and classrooms should be resources for children to broaden their horizons. Students need to learn about the range of human experience in order to make judgments about it; leaving them guessing, or gleaning what information they can from schoolyard conversations, will lead to misunderstood, or perhaps worse, half-understood "facts" of life.

7. Acknowledge Your Sources

Whenever you summarize, paraphrase, or quote a person's thoughts and ideas, and when you use facts or statistics that are not commonly known or believed, you must properly acknowledge the source of your information. If you do not properly acknowledge such ideas and information, you are guilty of plagiarism.

KNOWING WHAT TO DOCUMENT. You must document the source of your information whenever you do the following:

- quote a source exactly (word for word)
- paraphrase or summarize information or ideas from a source
- cite statistics, tables, charts, or graphs

You do *not* need to document these types of information:

- your own observations, experiences, and ideas
- factual information available in a number of reference works (known as "common knowledge")
- proverbs, sayings, and familiar quotations

QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, AND SUMMARIZING. Quotations from sources are word-for-word transcriptions from an original source. They are ordinarily used when both the idea or information and the precise language of the original are important. If the language is *not* highly distinctive, itself worthy of analysis, or otherwise notable, you should probably paraphrase instead.

Quotations must begin and end with quotation marks. They must be completely accurate, down to the punctuation, and the way in which you integrate them into your paper must not misrepresent their intended meaning. However, if you need to omit some material because it is not relevant to your paper, you may substitute an ellipse (three spaced periods). (Again, be very sure that omitting material does not alter the original source's intended meaning.) Similarly, if you need to make any changes to a quotation—adding a word in order to clarify a reference, or making minor alterations in order to make the quote fit grammatically into your sentence—you may place your added material in brackets ([]). Tara Ketch does both in the sentence below:

As Natalie Goldberg writes, "When we know the name of something . . . [i]t takes the blur out of our mind" (5)—and isn't that the purpose of an education?

A **paraphrase** is a restatement of an idea or information that is roughly the same length as the original. Paraphrase is ordinarily used when the idea or information in the source is important but the language is unremarkable. A paraphrase must be a restatement *in your own words* and in your own style. It does not require quotation marks, but it does require proper citation. Do not substitute synonyms for a handful of words and call it paraphrase—that would be plagiarism (see pp. 27–30).

A **summary** is a restatement of an idea or information that is considerably shorter than the original. Summary is ordinarily used when the original material is too long to reproduce either as a quotation or as a paraphrase. Like a paraphrase, a summary must be in your own words and

in your own style; it does not require quotation marks, but it does require full and proper citation. As with paraphrase, do not replace a handful of words with synonyms and call it summary—that would be plagiarism (see pp. 27–31).

CITING CORRECTLY. A reference to the source of borrowed information is called a *citation*. Different disciplines use different systems for presenting citations; in most cases, your instructor will tell you which style to use. In English and the humanities, the documentation style recommended by the Modern Language Association (MLA) is commonly used. In the social sciences, the American Psychological Association (APA) style is generally used. For more information on documentation styles, consult the appropriate manual or handbook. (For MLA style, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. [New York: MLA, 2009]. You may also check MLA guidelines on the Internet at www.mla.org.)

In MLA style, there are two components of documentation: *in-text citations* are placed in the body of your paper; the *list of works cited* provides complete publication data for your in-text citations and is placed at the end of your paper. Both are necessary for complete documentation.

In-Text Citations (MLA Style)

In-text citations, also known as parenthetical citations, give the reader partial citation information immediately, at the point at which it is most meaningful. Rather than having to turn to a footnote or an endnote, the reader sees the citation as a part of the writer’s text.

Most in-text citations consist of only the author’s last name and a page reference. Usually the author’s name is given in an introductory or signal phrase at the beginning of the borrowed material and the page reference is given in parentheses at the end. If the author’s name is not given at the beginning, it belongs in parentheses along with the page reference. The parenthetical reference signals the end of the borrowed material and directs your readers to the list of works cited should they want to pursue a particular source. Treat electronic sources as you do print sources, keeping in mind that some electronic sources are not paginated or may use paragraph numbers instead of page numbers. Consider the following examples of in-text citations, followed by the works cited entries to which they refer.

Citation with author’s name in the signal phrase	Every day Americans are bombarded with an assortment of advertising for everything from cars, clothing, and vacations to cosmetics, foods, and over-the-counter medicines. Unless people know how advertising language works, they are at the mercy of Madison Avenue. Advertisers, as William Lutz asserts, manipulate us with weasel words, words that “appear to say one thing when in fact they say the opposite, or nothing at all” (443). For example, when
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Citation with author’s name in parentheses

we hear the word *helps* as in “helps relieve pain,” we think “relieves pain.” Not necessarily true. And to make matters worse, a consumer advocate says, “these unreliable claims require no approval—in practice, that may mean no evidence” (Liebman 594).

Works Cited

- Liebman, Bonnie. “Crazy Claims: Which Can You Believe?” *Language Awareness*. Ed. Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark. 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009. 588–594. Print.
- Lutz, William. “Weasel Words.” *Language Awareness*. Ed. Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark. 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009. 442–451. Print.

List of Works Cited (MLA Style)

Listed below are the general MLA guidelines for creating a works cited list. For a list of commonly used works cited entries, see pp. 617–622. For more specific questions about entry format, consult either the *MLA Handbook* or the Bedford/St. Martin’s research Web site: dianahacker.com/resdoc

General Guidelines

- Begin the list on a new page following the last page of text.
- Organize the list alphabetically by author’s last name. If the entry has no author name, alphabetize by the first major word of the title.
- Double-space within and between entries.
- Begin each entry at the left margin. If the entry is longer than one line, indent the second and subsequent lines one-half inch.
- Do not number entries.

For a list of works cited for Tara Ketch’s student paper, see page 38.

8. Take Steps to Avoid Plagiarism

The importance of honesty and accuracy in doing library research cannot be stressed enough. In working closely with the ideas and words of others, intellectual honesty demands that we distinguish between what we borrow—acknowledging it in a citation—and what is our own. Any material borrowed word for word must be placed within quotation marks and be properly cited. Any idea, explanation, or argument you have paraphrased or summarized must be properly cited, and it must be clear where the paraphrase or summary begins and ends. In short, to use someone else’s ideas, whether in their original or altered form, without proper acknowledgment is to be guilty of plagiarism. The Council of Writing Program Administrators offers the following helpful definition of plagiarism in academic settings for administrators, faculty, and students: “In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses

someone else's language, ideas, or other (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source."

Accusations of plagiarism can be upheld even if plagiarism is unintentional. A little attention and effort can help to eliminate this possibility. While taking notes, check and recheck all direct quotations against the wording of the original, and be sure you've labeled them clearly as quotations. Double-check your paraphrases to be sure that you have not used the writer's wording or sentence structure.

While writing your paper, make sure that you put quotation marks around material taken verbatim, and double-check the text against your note card—or, better yet, against the original—to make sure that the quotation is accurate. When using paraphrases or summaries, be sure to cite the source.

To learn more about how you can avoid plagiarism, go to the "Tutorial on Avoiding Plagiarism" at bedfordstmartins.com/plagiarismtutorial. There you will find information on the consequences of plagiarism, tutorials explaining what sources to acknowledge, how to keep good notes, how to organize your research, and how to appropriately integrate sources. Exercises are included throughout the tutorial to help you practice skills like integrating sources and recognizing acceptable paraphrases and summaries.

The sections that follow provide examples of appropriate use of quotation, paraphrase, and summary.

USING QUOTATION MARKS FOR LANGUAGE BORROWED DIRECTLY. Again, when you use another person's exact words or sentences, you must enclose the borrowed language in quotation marks. Even if you cite the source, you are guilty of plagiarism if you fail to use quotation marks. The following example demonstrates both plagiarism and a correct citation for a direct quotation.

Original Source

In the last decade, Standards departments have become more tolerant of sex and foul language, but they have cracked down on violence and become more insistent about the politically correct presentation of minorities. Lately, however, they seem to be swinging wildly back and forth between allowing everything and allowing nothing.

—TAD FRIEND, "You Can't Say That: The Networks Play Word Games," *New Yorker* Nov. 19, 2001, page 45.

Plagiarism

In the last decade, Standards departments have become more tolerant of sex and foul language, but, according to social commentator Tad Friend, they have

cracked down on violence and become more insistent about the politically correct presentation of minorities. Lately, however, they seem to be swinging wildly back and forth between allowing everything and allowing nothing (45).

Correct Citation of Borrowed Words in Quotation Marks

"In the last decade, Standards departments have become more tolerant of sex and foul language," according to social commentator Tad Friend, "but they have cracked down on violence and become more insistent about the politically correct presentation of minorities. Lately, however, they seem to be swinging wildly back and forth between allowing everything and allowing nothing" (45).

USING YOUR OWN WORDS IN PARAPHRASE AND SUMMARY. When summarizing or paraphrasing a source, you must use your own language. It is not enough simply to change a word here or there; you must restate the idea(s) from the original *in your own words*, using your own style and sentence structure. In the following example, notice how plagiarism can occur when care is not taken in the wording or sentence structure of a paraphrase.

Original Source

Stereotypes are a kind of gossip about the world, a gossip that makes us prejudge people before we ever lay eyes on them. Hence it is not surprising that stereotypes have something to do with the dark world of prejudice. Explore most prejudices (note that the word means prejudgment) and you will find a cruel stereotype at the core of each one.

—ROBERT L. HEILBRONER, "Don't Let Stereotypes Warp Your Judgment," *Reader's Digest* Jan. 1962, page 254.

Unacceptably Close Wording

According to Heilbroner, we prejudge other people even before we have seen them when we think in stereotypes. That stereotypes are related to the ugly world of prejudice should not surprise anyone. If you explore the heart of most prejudices—beliefs that literally prejudice—you will discover a mean stereotype lurking (254).

Unacceptably Close Sentence Structure

Heilbroner believes that stereotypes are images of people, images that enable people to prejudge other people before they have seen them. Therefore, no one should find it surprising that stereotypes are somehow related to the ugly world of prejudice. Examine most prejudices (the word literally means prejudgment) and you will uncover a vicious stereotype at the center of each (254).

Acceptable Paraphrase

Heilbroner believes that there is a link between stereotypes and the hurtful practice of prejudice. Stereotypes make for easy conversation, a kind of shorthand that enables people to find fault with others before ever meeting them. Most human prejudices, according to Heilbroner, have an ugly stereotype lurking somewhere inside them (254).

Preventing Plagiarism

Questions to Ask about Direct Quotations

- Do quotation marks clearly indicate the language that I borrowed verbatim (word for word)?
- Is the language of the quotation accurate, with no missing or misquoted words or phrases?
- Do the brackets or ellipsis marks clearly indicate any changes or omissions I have introduced?
- Does a signal phrase naming the author introduce each quotation? If not, is the author's name in the parenthetical citation?
- Does a parenthetical page citation follow each quotation?

Questions to Ask about Summaries and Paraphrases

- Is each summary and paraphrase written in my own words and style?
- Does each summary and paraphrase accurately represent the opinion, position, or reasoning of the original writer?
- Does each summary and paraphrase start with a signal phrase so that readers know where my borrowed material begins?
- Does each summary and paraphrase conclude with a parenthetical page citation?

Questions to Ask about Facts and Statistics

- Do I use a signal phrase or some other marker to introduce each fact or statistic that is not common knowledge so that readers know where the borrowed material begins?
- Is each fact or statistic that is not common knowledge clearly documented with a parenthetical page citation?

Finally, as you proofread your final draft, check your citations one last time. If at any time while you are taking notes or writing your paper you have a question about plagiarism, consult your instructor for clarification and guidance before proceeding.

A SAMPLE STUDENT PAPER

As a young adult, Tara Ketch read just about everything that the popular children's writer Judy Blume wrote. While a student at the University of Vermont and a major in elementary education, Ketch took a course in children's literature and was asked to write a term paper on some aspect of the literature she was studying. She thought she might be able to reflect on some of her reading of Blume's books. She also knew that she would soon be looking for a teaching position and realized that any teaching job she accepted would bring her face-to-face with the difficult task of selecting appropriate reading materials.

In her course, Ketch had read both Natalie Goldberg's "Be Specific" (pp. 4-6) and Diane Ravitch's "Language Police" (pp. 506-517), among other essays, and she was generally interested in their discussions of language and how young people learn to read and write. In choosing a specific topic to write about, Ketch decided to delve into the subject of censorship in elementary education. She was interested in learning more about why people want to censor certain books so that she could consider an appropriate response to their efforts. In a way, she wanted to begin to develop her own teaching philosophy with respect to text selection and to argue for a sensible course through what she perceived to be a potentially troublesome area for her as a teacher.

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Tara E. Ketch

Professor Rosa

English 111

April 30, 2008

Kids, You Can't Read That Book!

Title is centered.

Censorship is the restriction or suppression of speech or writing.

Definition of censorship

In schools, debates about censorship arise when school officials,

librarians, parents, or other adults in the community attempt to keep

students from gaining access to particular books. Such attempts

present serious questions for educators. How should educators decide

what materials are fit for American schoolchildren? On what basis

should they decide? A review of the reasons for challenges to books

suggests that educators might forestall outright bans on books by

paying more attention to age-appropriateness and to the kinds of

guidance given to students who are reading challenging material.

The federal government has not set clear limits on censorship

in the schools. In the 1968 case of *Epperson v. Arkansas*, the

Supreme Court stated, "Public education in our Nation is committed

to the control of state and local authorities. Courts do not and

cannot intervene in the resolution of conflicts which arise in the

daily operation of school systems and which do not directly and

sharply implicate basic constitutional values" (Reichman 3). Yet in

1982, the Supreme Court ruled that "local school boards may not

remove books from school library shelves simply because they dislike

the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to

prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or

other matters of opinion" (Reichman 4). Different interpretations of

rulings such as these have led to frequent efforts to ban children's

books in school systems for a wide variety of reasons. Generally

In-text citation—author named in parentheses

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speaking, most attempts to ban books from school systems stem from the perception that the books offend community, family, or religious values.

Challenges based on "offensive" or profane language are especially common in the area of adolescent literature. In the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom's (OIF) list of the most frequently challenged books from 1990–2000,

J. D. Salinger's 1951 novel *Catcher in the Rye*, a perennial target of would-be censors, took the number thirteen slot, largely because of objections to its language, including the "F-word" (Office for Intellectual Freedom). In a debate about Katherine Paterson's 1977 novel *Bridge to Terabithia* (number nine on the OIF's list), one Lincoln, Nebraska, parent protested the use of the words *snotty* and *shut up* along with *Lord* and *damn*, saying, "Freedom of speech was not intended to guarantee schools the right to intrude on traditional family values without warning and regardless of the availability of nonoffensive alternatives" (Reichman 47–8). The school board in this case decided that the book had a value that transcended the use of offensive language.

Examples of challenges based on sexual content

Other challenges come from adults' idea that children should be protected from sexual content. Maya Angelou's 1969 autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (number three on the OIF's list) portrays rape, among other frankly sexual topics, and has since publication been banned from many school libraries and curricula. On what some would consider the opposite end of the spectrum, Maurice Sendak's 1970 illustrated book *In the Night Kitchen* (number twenty-five on the OIF list) shows a naked little boy, and although there is no explicit sexual content, many people have found the book offensive. According to an online exhibit at the site of the University of Virginia Libraries, "[i]n Springfield,

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Missouri, the book was expurgated by drawing shorts on the nude boy" ("Through the Eyes"). In New York, in 1990, parents tried to have the book removed from an elementary school, and, in Maine, a parent wanted the book removed because she felt it encouraged child molestation (Foerstel 201).

Many of Judy Blume's books have likewise come under fire for their portrayal of sexual themes: In fact, Blume has authored a total of five of the books on the OIF's top 100 list. *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (number sixty-two) has been banned for its frank discussion of menstruation and adolescent development. *Forever*, which discusses intercourse and abortion, comes in at number eight. These topics are clearly disturbing to many adults who grew up in environments where sex was not openly discussed and who may worry that these books will encourage sexual activity.

A related source of debate is gay and lesbian content. (The OIF categorizes challenges based on homosexual content separately from those based on sexual explicitness.) Two children's books designed to explain gay lifestyles to children, Michael Willhoite's *Daddy's Roommate* and Leslea Newman's *Heather Has Two Mommies*, rank as number two and number eleven, respectively, on the OIF list: Henry Reichman writes that in 1990, Frank Mosca's *All-American Boys* (1983) and Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind* (1982), two books with gay themes, were donated to high schools in Contra Costa, California; at three of these high schools, the books were seized by administrators and then "lost" (53).

Religion, not surprisingly, has been the focus of many challenges to literature in the schools. The Bible's presence in the classroom has generated criticism from both religious and nonreligious groups: Those arguing from a religious perspective have objected when the Bible has been taught as literature, rather than

Examples of challenges based on gay/lesbian content

In-text citation—authors named in signal phrase

Examples of challenges based on religion

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as a sacred text, and those arguing from a secular perspective have objected to its being taught on any basis (Burress 219). Some critics speaking from a religious perspective object to portrayals of the occult in books. The Harry Potter series (collectively number seven on the OIF list) is perhaps the most famous recent target of such objections, the latest of which was leveled by a Gwinnett County, Georgia, parent in 2005, whose lawsuit to have the books removed from county schools was dismissed in 2007 ("Harry Potter").

Examples of challenges based on racism and sexism

Another frequently cited reason for challenges to books is their portrayal of content considered to be racist or sexist. Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (number five on the OIF list), the source of perhaps the most heated controversy of this type, has often been challenged and banned outright because of its use of racist language. Defenders of the text point out that such criticism ignores context and intent—Twain was writing specifically to draw negative attention to the South's racist attitudes and practices. Nevertheless, some critics claim that *any* use of such offensive terms, particularly in a text presented as a classic, can do more harm than good.

Transition

Return to central questions

Return to thesis (age-appropriateness)

This brief review of some of the reasons used to ban children's books leaves us with the questions "How should educators decide what materials are fit for American schoolchildren?" and "On what basis should they decide?" It might be that the issue of age-appropriateness—the third most frequent reason given for challenges to books over the last decade and a half, according to the OIF—requires more attention than it gets from educators. A relatively large number of concerned adults seem interested not in banning books, necessarily, but in ensuring that the right books reach the right audiences in our schools.

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Appeals to common ground

Most educators likely agree that it is possible to identify age-appropriate (and age-inappropriate) themes in many of the books under discussion. Most would probably agree that elementary school children should not be exposed to the issues of rape and abortion present in some young-adult fiction. Many would rightly question whether young adults should be exposed to extremely violent novels such as Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, given that they are still too young to put what they read into proper context. Does this mean, however, that such books should be removed altogether from school libraries? Perhaps not.

Assumption: censorship is contrary to aims of education.

Libraries and classrooms should be resources for children to broaden their horizons. Students need to learn about the range of human experience in order to make judgments about it; leaving them guessing, or gleaning what information they can from schoolyard conversations, will lead to misunderstanding, or perhaps worse, half-understood "facts" of life. As Natalie Goldberg writes, "When we know the name of something . . . [i]t takes the blur out of our mind" (5)—and isn't that the purpose of an education?

Return to thesis (guidance)

While outright censorship defeats the purpose of an education, educators must guide children in choosing age-appropriate material and then aid them in understanding material that might prove challenging. As Diane Ravitch writes, "Teachers

Support (expert opinion)

have a responsibility to choose readings for their students based on their professional judgment of what students are likely to understand and what they need to learn" (506). If a child independently seeks out a controversial novel, educators should oversee the process, in order to give context to what might otherwise be a bewildering experience. In the case of a novel like

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Catcher in the Rye, which most critics agree has literary merit, but whose message is couched in profanity, it is the job of school educators to teach students how to read such literature critically and to understand the distance between the world of the novel and the student's own reality.

Examples of appropriate introduction of controversial literature

Similarly, novels like Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which have strong sexual content, need to be introduced to students old enough to understand something about mature sexual behavior, and discussion needs to focus on the meaning of the content within the world of the novel. Books with content deemed racist or sexist should likewise not automatically be banned: Provided they have intrinsic merit, such books can be useful tools for increasing understanding in our society. Finally, while volatile religious topics are possibly best left outside of classroom discussion, children should have access to religious materials in school libraries in order to allow them to explore various systems of belief.

Conclusion

The efforts to censor what children read can generate potentially explosive conflicts within schools and communities. Understanding the reasons that people seek to censor what kids are reading in school will be better prepare educators to respond to those efforts in a sensitive and reasonable manner. More importantly, educators will be able to provide the best learning environment for children, one that neither overly restricts the range of their reading nor exposes them, unaided, to material they have neither the experience nor the intellectual maturity to understand.

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