Part Three: Research and Argumentation

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Section Introduction: Research and Argumentation

“Fake news” is a phrase you’ve probably encountered way more than you would have liked since the 2016 U.S. presidential election. While this phrase has gained more and more momentum and traction, it holds different purposes and meanings in different contexts. Across all these different rhetorical situations, though, we can agree that the popularization of the phrase speaks to an increased skepticism toward the bodies of knowledge that surround us.

For me, such distrust points to the oversimplified dichotomy of fact vs. opinion. The gray area between fact and opinion is much broader than we like to believe, and often we present deeply entrenched opinions as if they were facts. (Whether or not it is intentional, this phenomenon has serious consequences.) As Michael Kinsley points out in his 1995 essay, American individualist ideology dictates that citizens be “omni-opinionated”—at the expense of having many poorly informed opinions. It is crucial, Kinsley says, that we take two steps to confront the “intellectual free lunch”:

a) Develop increased humility about what we can and do know to be true; and
b) Increase the intensity and frequency of our critical interrogation of truth (or what seems to be true).

Because yes, there is a lot of fake news out there. And there’s a lot of real news that certain people insist is fake. How do we mobilize skepticism to produce a more ethical world, rather than letting it undermine the pursuit of truth?

In Section 1 of this text, you explored your own truth through personal narrative; in Section 2, you interrogated the truths embedded in a certain text. Here, in Section 3, you will learn how to encounter a body of texts, then develop an argument that synthesizes diverse truths. Writing in a research-based context means exploring and interrogating the broad, complex networks of rhetoric and knowledges that you have always been a part of. It means situating yourself in an interconnected world of discourse, and carefully bringing your own voice into that world.

To induct you into this mode of rhetoric production, this section focuses on research concepts and techniques, as well as traditional methods of argumentation. Section 3 concludes with a persuasive research essay assignment in which you will synthesize your ability to research, interpret, and argue in a formal writing situation.
Chapter Seven
Argumentation

To a nonconfrontational person (like me), argument is a dirty word. It surfaces connotations of raised voices, slammed doors, and dominance; it arouses feelings of anxiety and frustration.

But argument is not inherently bad. In fact, as a number of great thinkers have described, conflict is necessary for growth, progress, and community cohesion. Through disagreement, we challenge our commonsense assumptions and seek compromise. The negative connotations surrounding ‘argument’ actually point to a failure in the way that we argue.

Check out this video on empathy: it provides some useful insight to the sort of listening, thinking, and discussion required for productive arguments.

Now, spend a few minutes reflecting on the last time you had an argument with a loved one. What was it about? What was it really about? What made it difficult? What made it easy?

Often, arguments hinge on the relationship between the arguers: whether written or verbal, that argument will rely on the specific language, approach, and evidence that each party deems valid. For that reason, the most important element of the rhetorical situation is audience. Making an honest, impactful, and reasonable connection with that audience is the first step to arguing better.
Unlike the argument with your loved one, it is likely that your essay will be establishing a brand-new relationship with your reader, one which is untouched by your personal history, unspoken bonds, or other assumptions about your intent. This clean slate is a double-edged sword: although you’ll have a fresh start, you must more deliberately anticipate and navigate your assumptions about the audience. What can you assume your reader already knows and believes? What kind of ideas will they be most swayed by? What life experiences have they had that inform their worldview?

This chapter will focus on how the answers to these questions can be harnessed for productive, civil, and effective arguing. Although a descriptive personal narrative (Section 1) and a text wrestling analysis (Section 2) require attention to your subject, occasion, audience, and purpose, an argumentative essay is the most sensitive to rhetorical situation of the genres covered in this book. As you complete this unit, remember that you are practicing the skills necessary to navigating a variety of rhetorical situations: thinking about effective argument will help you think about other kinds of effective communication.
# Chapter Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>argument</td>
<td>a rhetorical mode in which different perspectives on a common issue are negotiated. See Aristotelian and Rogerian arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristotelian argument</td>
<td>a mode of argument by which a writer attempts to convince their audience that one perspective is accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audience</td>
<td>the intended consumers for a piece of rhetoric. Every text has at least one audience; sometimes, that audience is directly addressed, and other times we have to infer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>call-to-action</td>
<td>a persuasive writer’s directive to their audience; usually located toward the end of a text. Compare with purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethos</td>
<td>a rhetorical appeal based on authority, credibility, or expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kairos</td>
<td>the setting (time and place) or atmosphere in which an argument is actionable or ideal. Consider alongside “occasion.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logical fallacy</td>
<td>a line of logical reasoning which follows a pattern of that makes an error in its basic structure. For example, Kanye West is on TV; Animal Planet is on TV. Therefore, Kanye West is on Animal Planet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logos</td>
<td>a rhetorical appeal to logical reasoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multipartial</td>
<td>a neologism from ‘impartial,’ refers to occupying and appreciating a variety of perspectives rather than pretending to have no perspective. Rather than unbiased or neutral, multipartial writers are balanced, acknowledging and respecting many different ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pathos</td>
<td>a rhetorical appeal to emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rhetorical appeal</td>
<td>a means by which a writer or speaker connects with their audience to achieve their purpose. Most commonly refers to logos, pathos, and ethos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogerian argument</td>
<td>a mode of argument by which an author seeks compromise by bringing different perspectives on an issue into conversation. Acknowledges that no one perspective is absolutely and exclusively ‘right’; values disagreement in order to make moral, political, and practical decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syllogism</td>
<td>a line of logical reasoning similar to the transitive property (If a=b and b=c, then a=c). For example, All humans need oxygen; Kanye West is a human. Therefore, Kanye West needs oxygen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Techniques

“But I Just Want to Write an Unbiased Essay”

Let’s begin by addressing a common concern my students raise when writing about controversial issues: neutrality. It’s quite likely that you’ve been trained, at some point in your writing career, to avoid bias, to be objective, to be impartial. However, this is a habit you need to unlearn, because *every text is biased* by virtue of being rhetorical. All rhetoric has a purpose, whether declared or secret, and therefore is partial.

Instead of being impartial, I encourage you to be *multipartial*. In other words, you should aim to inhabit many different positions in your argument—not zero, not one, but many. This is an important distinction: no longer is your goal to be unbiased; rather, it is to be balanced. You will not provide your audience a neutral perspective, but rather a perspective conscientious of the many other perspectives out there.

Common Forms of Argumentation

In the study of argumentation, scholars and authors have developed a great variety of approaches: when it comes to convincing, there are many different paths that lead to our destination. For the sake of succinctness, we will focus on two: the Aristotelian argument and the Rogerian Argument. While these two are not opposites, they are built on different values. Each will employ rhetorical appeals like those discussed later, but their purposes and guiding beliefs are different.

*Aristotelian Argument*

In Ancient Greece, debate was a cornerstone of social life. Intellectuals and philosophers devoted hours upon hours of each day to honing their argumentative skills. For one group of thinkers, the Sophists, the focus of argumentation was to find a distinctly “right” or “wrong” position. The more convincing argument was the right one: the content mattered less than the technique by which it was delivered.

In turn, the purpose of an *Aristotelian argument* is to persuade someone (the other debater and/or the audience) that the speaker was correct. Aristotelian arguments are designed to bring the audience from one point of view to the other.
In this diagram, you can observe the tension between a point and counterpoint (or, to borrow a term from German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, “thesis” and “antithesis.”) These two viewpoints move in two opposite directions, almost like a tug-of-war.

Therefore, an Aristotelian arguer tries to demonstrate the validity of their direction while addressing counterarguments: “Here’s what I believe and why I’m right; here’s what you believe and why it’s wrong.” The author seeks to persuade their audience through the sheer virtue of their truth.

You can see Aristotelian argumentation applied in “We Don’t Care about Child Slaves.”

**Rogerian Argument**

In contrast, Rogerian arguments are more invested in compromise. Based on the work of psychologist Carl Rogers, Rogerian arguments are designed to enhance the connection between both sides of an issue. This kind of argument acknowledges the value of disagreement in material communities to make moral, political, and practical decisions.

Often, a Rogerian argument will begin with a fair statement of someone else’s position and consideration of how that could be true. In other words, a Rogerian arguer addresses their ‘opponent’ more like a teammate: “What you think is not unreasonable; I disagree, but I can see how you’re thinking, and I appreciate it.” Notice that by taking the other ideas on their own terms, you demonstrate respect and cultivate trust and listening.

The rhetorical purpose of a Rogerian argument, then, is to come to a conclusion by negotiating common ground between moral-intellectual differences. Instead of
debunking an opponent’s counterargument entirely, a Rogerian arguer would say, “Here’s what each of us thinks, and here’s what we have in common. How can we proceed forward to honor our shared beliefs but find a new, informed position?” In Fichte’s model of *thesis-antithesis-synthesis*, both debaters would pursue synthesis. The author seeks to persuade their audience by showing them respect, demonstrating a willingness to compromise, and championing the validity of their truth as one among other valid truths.

You can see Rogerian argumentation applied in “Vaccines: Controversies and Miracles.”

The **thesis** is an intellectual proposition. The **antithesis** is a critical perspective on the thesis. The **synthesis** solves the conflict between the thesis and antithesis by reconciling their common truths and forming a new proposition.
Position | Aristotelian | Rogerian
--- | --- | ---
Wool sweaters are the best clothing for cold weather because they are fashionable and comfortable. Some people might think that wool sweaters are itchy, but those claims are ill-informed. Wool sweaters can be silky smooth if properly handled in the laundry. | Some people might think that wool sweaters are itchy, which can certainly be the case. I've worn plenty of itchy wool sweaters. But wool sweaters can be silky smooth if properly handled in the laundry; therefore, they are the best clothing for cold weather. If you want to be cozy and in-style, consider my laundry techniques and a fuzzy wool sweater.

Before moving on, try to identify one rhetorical situation in which Aristotelian argumentation would be most effective, and one in which Rogerian argumentation would be preferable. Neither form is necessarily better, but rather both are useful in specific contexts. In what situations might you favor one approach over another?

*Rhetorical Appeals*

Regardless of the style of argument you use, you will need to consider the ways you engage your audience. Aristotle identified three kinds of rhetorical appeals: *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*. Some instructors refer to this trio as the “rhetorical triangle,” though I prefer to think of them as a three-part Venn diagram. The best argumentation engages all three of these appeals, falling in the center where all three overlap. Unbalanced application of rhetorical appeals is likely to leave your audience suspicious, doubtful, or even bored.

**Logos**
You may have inferred already, but *logos* refers to an appeal to an audience’s logical reasoning. *Logos* will often employ statistics, data, or other quantitative facts to demonstrate the validity of an argument. For example, an argument about the wage gap might indicate that women, on average, earn only 80 percent of the salary that men in comparable positions earn; this would imply a logical conclusion that our economy favors men.
However, stating a fact or statistic does not alone constitute *logos*. For instance, when I show you this graph[^92], I am not yet making a logical appeal:

Yes, the graph is “fact-based,” drawing on data to illustrate a phenomenon. That characteristic alone, though, doesn't make a logical appeal. For my appeal to be logical, I also need to *interpret* the graph:

As is illustrated here, there is a direct positive correlation between ice cream consumption and deaths by drowning: when people eat more ice cream, more people drown. Therefore, we need to be more careful about waiting 30 minutes after we eat ice cream.

Of course, this conclusion is inaccurate; it is a logical fallacy described in the table below called “post hoc, ergo propter hoc.” However, the example illustrates that your logic is only complete when you’ve drawn a logical conclusion from your facts, statistics, or other information.

There are many other ways we draw logical conclusions. There are entire branches of academia dedicated to understanding the many kinds of logical reasoning, but we might get a better idea
by looking at a specific kind of logic. Let’s take for example the logical syllogism, which might look something like this:

Pretty straightforward, right? We can see how a general rule (major premise) is applied to a specific situation (minor premise) to develop a logical conclusion. I like to introduce this kind of logic because students sometimes jump straight from the major premise to the conclusion; if you skip the middle step, your logic will be less convincing.

It does get a little more complex. Consider this false syllogism: it follows the same structure (general rule + specific situation), but it reaches an unlikely conclusion.

This is called a logical fallacy. Logical fallacies are part of our daily lives. Stereotypes, generalizations, and misguided assumptions are fallacies you’ve likely encountered. You may have heard some terms about fallacies already: red herring, slippery slope, non sequitur. Fallacies follow patterns of reasoning that would otherwise be perfectly acceptable to us, but within their basic structure, they make a mistake. Aristotle identified that fallacies happen on the “material” level (the content is fallacious—something about the ideas or premises is flawed) and the “verbal” level (the writing or speech is fallacious—something about the delivery or medium is flawed).
It’s important to be able to recognize these so that you can critically interrogate others’ arguments and improve your own. Here are some of the most common logical fallacies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fallacy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post hoc, ergo propter hoc</td>
<td>“After this, therefore because of this” – a confusion of cause-and-effect with coincidence, attributing a consequence to an unrelated event. This error assumes that correlation equals causation, which is sometimes not the case.</td>
<td>Statistics show that rates of ice cream consumption and deaths by drowning both increased in June. This must mean that ice cream causes drowning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non sequitur</td>
<td>“Does not follow” – a random digression that distracts from the train of logic (like a “red herring”), or draws an unrelated logical conclusion. John Oliver calls one manifestation of this fallacy “whataboutism,” which he describes as a way to deflect attention from the subject at hand.</td>
<td>Sherlock is great at solving crimes; therefore, he’ll also make a great father. Sherlock Holmes smokes a pipe, which is unhealthy. But what about Bill Clinton? He eats McDonald’s every day, which is also unhealthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw Man</td>
<td>An oversimplification or cherry-picking of the opposition’s argument to make them easier to attack.</td>
<td>People who oppose the destruction of Confederate monuments are all white supremacists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad hominem</td>
<td>“To the person” – a personal attack on the arguer, rather than a critique of their ideas.</td>
<td>I don’t trust Moriarty’s opinion on urban planning because he wears bowties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Slippery Slope  An unreasonable prediction that one event will lead to a related but unlikely series of events that follows.  If we let people of the same sex get married, then people will start marrying their dogs too!

False Dichotomy  A simplification of a complex issue into only two sides.  Given the choice between pizza and Chinese food for dinner, we simply must choose Chinese.

Learn about other logical fallacies in the Additional Recommended Resources appendix.

Pathos
The second rhetorical appeal we’ll consider here is perhaps the most common: *pathos* refers to the process of engaging the reader’s emotions. (You might recognize the Greek root *pathos* in “sympathy,” “empathy,” and “pathetic.”) A writer can evoke a great variety of emotions to support their argument, from fear, passion, and joy to pity, kinship, and rage. By playing on the audience’s feelings, writers can increase the impact of their arguments.

There are two especially effective techniques for cultivating *pathos* that I share with my students:

- Make the audience aware of the issue’s relevance to them specifically—“How would you feel if this happened to you? What are we to do about this issue?”
- Tell stories. A story about one person or one community can have a deeper impact than broad, impersonal data or abstract, hypothetical statements. Consider the difference between

  About 1.5 million pets are euthanized each year

  and

  Scooter, an energetic and loving former service dog with curly brown hair like a Brillo pad, was put down yesterday.

  Both are impactful, but the latter is more memorable and more specific.
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

*Pathos* is ubiquitous in our current journalistic practices because people are more likely to act (or, at least, consume media) when they feel emotionally moved. Consider, as an example, the outpouring of support for detained immigrants in June 2018, reacting to the Trump administration’s controversial family separation policy. As stories and images like this one surfaced, millions of dollars were raised in a matter of days on the premise of *pathos*, and resulted in the temporary suspension of that policy.

**Ethos**

Your argument wouldn’t be complete without an appeal to *ethos*. Cultivating *ethos* refers to the means by which you demonstrate your authority or expertise on a topic. You’ll have to show your audience that you’re trustworthy if they are going to buy your argument.

There are a handful of ways to demonstrate *ethos*:

- **By personal experience:** Although your lived experience might not set hard-and-fast rules about the world, it is worth noting that you may be an expert on certain facets of your life. For instance, a student who has played rugby for fifteen years of their life is in many ways an authority on the sport.
- **By education or other certifications:** Professional achievements demonstrate *ethos* by revealing status in a certain field or discipline.
- **By citing other experts:** The common expression is “Stand on the shoulders of giants.” You can develop *ethos* by pointing to other people with authority and saying, “Look, this smart/experienced/qualified/important person agrees with me.”

A common misconception is that *ethos* corresponds with “ethics.” However, you can remember that *ethos* is about credibility because it shares a root with “authority.”
Sociohistorical Context of Argumentation

This textbook has emphasized consideration of your rhetorical occasion, but it bears repeating here that “good” argumentation depends largely on your place in time, space, and culture. Different cultures throughout the world value the elements of argumentation differently, and argument has different purposes in different contexts. The content of your argument and your strategies for delivering it will change in every unique rhetorical situation.

Continuing from *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, the notion of *kairos* speaks to this concern. To put it in plain language, *kairos* is the force that determines what will be the best argumentative approach in the moment in which you’re arguing; it is closely aligned with rhetorical occasion. According to rhetoricians, the characteristics of the *kairos* determine the balance and application of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.

Moreover, your sociohistorical context will bear on what you can assume of your audience. What can you take for granted that your audience knows and believes? The “common sense” that your audience relies on is always changing: common sense in the U.S. in 1950 was much different from common sense in the U.S. in 1920 or common sense in the U.S. in 2018. You can make assumptions about your audience’s interests, values, and background knowledge, but only with careful consideration of the time and place in which you are arguing.

As an example, let’s consider the principle of logical noncontradiction. Put simply, this means that for an argument to be valid, its logical premises must not contradict one another: if $A = B$, then $B = A$. If I said that a dog is a mammal and a mammal is an animal, but a dog is not an animal, I would be contradicting myself. Or, “No one drives on I-84; there’s too much traffic.” This statement contradicts itself, which makes it humorous to us.

However, this principle of non-contradiction is not universal. Our understanding of cause and effect and logical consistency is defined by the millennia of knowledge that has been produced before us, and some cultures value the contradiction rather than perceive it as invalid. This is not to say that either way of seeing the world is more or less accurate, but rather to emphasize that your methods of argumentation depend tremendously on sociohistorical context.
Activities

*Op-Ed Rhetorical Analysis*

One form of direct argumentation that is readily available is the opinion editorial, or op-ed. Most news sources, from local to international, include an opinion section. Sometimes, these pieces are written by members of the news staff; sometimes, they’re by contributors or community members. Op-eds can be long (e.g., comprehensive journalistic articles, like Ta-Nehisi Coates’ landmark “The Case for Reparations”) or they could be brief (e.g., a brief statement of one’s viewpoint, like in your local newspaper’s Letter to the Editor section).

To get a better idea of how authors incorporate rhetorical appeals, complete the following rhetorical analysis exercise on an op-ed of your choosing.

1) Find an op-ed (opinion piece, editorial, or letter to the editor) from either a local newspaper, a national news source, or an international news corporation. Choose something that interests you, since you’ll have to read it a few times over.

2) Read the op-ed through once, annotating parts that are particularly convincing, points that seem unsubstantiated, or other eye-catching details.

3) Briefly (in one to two sentences) identify the rhetorical situation (SOAP) of the op-ed.

4) Write a citation for the op-ed in an appropriate format.

5) Analyze the application of rhetoric.
   a. Summarize the issue at stake and the author’s position.
   b. Find a quote that represents an instance of *logos*.
   c. Find a quote that represents an instance of *pathos*.
   d. Find a quote that represents an instance of *ethos*.
   e. Paraphrase the author’s *call-to-action* (the action or actions the author wants the audience to take). A call-to-action will often be related to an author’s rhetorical purpose.

6) In a one-paragraph response, consider: Is this rhetoric effective? Does it fulfill its purpose? Why or why not?
VICE News Rhetorical Appeal Analysis

VICE News, an alternative investigatory news outlet, has recently gained acclaim for its inquiry-driven reporting on current issues and popular appeal, much of which is derived from effective application of rhetorical appeals.

You can complete the following activity using any of their texts, but I recommend “State of Surveillance” from June 8, 2016. Take notes while you watch and complete the organizer on the following pages after you finish.

What is the title and publication date of the text?

Briefly summarize the subject of this text.

How would you describe the purpose of this text?
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

Pathos

Provide at least 3 examples of *pathos* that you observed in the text:

How would you describe the overall tone of the piece? What mood does it evoke for the viewer/reader?

Logos

Provide at least 3 examples of *logos* that you observed in the text:

In addition to presenting data and statistics, how does the text logically interpret evidence?
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

Provide at least 3 examples of ethos that you observed in the text:

How might one person, idea, or source both enhance and detract from the cultivation of ethos? (Consider Edward Snowden in “State of Surveillance,” for instance.)

Audience Analysis: Tailoring Your Appeals

Now that you’ve observed the end result of rhetorical appeals, let’s consider how you might tailor your own rhetorical appeals based on your audience.

First, come up with a claim that you might try to persuade an audience to believe. Then, consider how you might develop this claim based on the potential audiences listed in the organizer on the following pages. An example is provided after the empty organizer if you get stuck.

Claim:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience #1: Business owners</th>
<th>What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Logos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pathos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience #2: Local political officials</th>
<th>What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Logos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pathos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience #3: One of your family members</td>
<td>What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logos</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathos</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience #4: Invent your own</th>
<th>What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logos</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathos</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Claim:</strong></th>
<th>Employers should offer employees discounted or free public transit passes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience #1: Business owners</strong></td>
<td>What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logos</strong></td>
<td>They are concerned with profit margins – I need to show that this will benefit them financially: “If employees are able to access transportation more reliably, then they are more likely to arrive on time, which increases efficiency.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathos</strong></td>
<td>They are concerned with employee morale – I need to show that access will improve employee satisfaction: “Every employer wants their employees to feel welcome at the office. Does your work family dread the start of the day?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
<td>They are more likely to believe my claim if other business owners, the chamber of commerce, etc., back it up: “In 2010, Portland employer X started providing free bus passes, and their employee retention rate has increased 30%.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience #2: Local political officials</strong></td>
<td>What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logos</strong></td>
<td>They are held up by political bureaucracy – I need to show a clear, direct path to executing my claim: “The implementation of such a program could be modeled after an existing system, like EBT cards.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part Three: Research and Argumentation

| **Pathos** | They are concerned with reelection – I need to show that this will build an enthusiastic voter base: “When politicians show concern for workers, their approval rates increase. If the voters are happy, you’ll be happy!” |
|**Ethos** | They are more likely to believe my claim if I show other cities and their political officials executing a similar plan – I could also draw on my own experiences because I am a member of the community they represent: “As an employee who uses public transit (and an enthusiastic voter), I can say that I would make good use of this benefit.” |

<p>| <strong>Audience #3: One of your family members</strong> | What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe? |
|<strong>Logos</strong> | My mom has to drive all over the state for her job – I could explain how this will benefit her: “If you had a free or discounted pass, you could drive less. Less time behind the wheel means a reduction of risk!” |
|<strong>Pathos</strong> | My mom has to drive all over the state for her job – I could tap into her frustration: “Aren’t you sick of a long commute bookending each day of work? The burning red glow of brakelights and the screech of tires—it doesn’t have to be this way.” |
|<strong>Ethos</strong> | My mom might take my word for it since she trusts me already: “Would I mislead you? I hate to say I told you so, but I was totally right about the wool sweater thing.” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience #4: Invent your own Car drivers</th>
<th>What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logos</strong></td>
<td>They are concerned with car-related expenses – I need to lay out evidence of savings from public transit: “Have you realized that taking the bus two days a week could save you $120 in gas per month?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathos</strong></td>
<td>They are frustrated by traffic, parking, etc. – I could play to that emotion: “Is that a spot? No. Is that a spot? No. Oh, but th—No. Sound familiar? You wouldn’t have to hear this if there were an alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
<td>Maybe testimonies from former drivers who use public transit more often would be convincing: “In a survey of PSU students who switched from driving to public transit, 65% said they were not only confident in their choice, but that they were much happier as a result!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model Texts by Student Authors

Effective Therapy Through Dance and Movement

Two chairs, angled slightly away from one another, a small coffee table positioned between them, and an ominous bookshelf behind them, stocked with thick textbooks about psychodynamic theory, Sigmund Freud, and of course, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist’s typical clinical set-up. Walking into the room, your entire body feels tense—rigid with stress as you enter the therapist’s office only to find the aforementioned sight. Your heartbeat reverberates throughout your body, your throat tightens ever-so-slightly, and your mouth goes dry as an overwhelming sense of nervousness sets in.

Now, imagine instead walking into a beautiful studio, wearing your most comfortable clothing. You take off your shoes, and put your hands in the pockets of your sweatpants as you begin to slip and slide around the sprung hardwood floor whilst a childish smile creeps across your face. Your therapist is not there necessarily to dissect your personality or interpret your behavior, but instead to encourage your mental and physical exploration, leading you on a journey of self-discovery. This is the warm and encouraging environment that dance/movement therapy (DMT) may take place in.

In its essence, DMT is the therapeutic use of physical movement—specifically dance in this context—to encourage and support emotional, intellectual, and motor functions of the mind and body. The focus of the therapy lies within the connection and correlation between movement and emotion (“About”). Unlike so-called “normal” therapies, which are set in a clinical environment, and are conducted by somebody with an extensive background in psychology, DMT is generally practiced by individuals whose background is primarily in dance and the performing arts, with psychology or psychotherapy education falling second. Although some may argue otherwise, I believe that DMT is a viable form of therapy, and that dance and movement can act as the catalyst for profound mental transformation; therefore, when dance and therapy are combined, they create a powerful platform for introspection along with interpersonal discovery, and mental/behavioral change.
Life begins with movement and breathing; they precede all thought and language. Following movement and breath, gesture falls next in the development of personal communication and understanding (Chaiklin 3). Infants and toddlers learn to convey their wants and needs via pointing, yelling, crying, clapping. As adults, we don’t always understand what it is they’re trying to tell us; however, we know that their body language is intended to communicate something important. As a child grows older, a greater emphasis is placed on verbally communicating their wants and needs, and letting go of the physical expression. Furthermore, the childish means of demonstrating wants and needs become socially inappropriate as one matures. Perhaps we should not ignore the impulses to cry, to yell, or to throw a tantrum on the floor, but instead encourage a channeled physical release of pent-up energy.

I personally would encourage what some would consider as emotional breakdowns within a therapeutic setting. For example, screaming, sobbing, pounding one’s fists against the floor, or kicking a wall all seem taboo in our society, especially when somebody is above the age of three. There is potential for said expressions to become violent and do more harm than good for a client. Therefore, I propose using dance and movement as a method of expressing the same intense emotions.

As a dancer myself, I can personally attest to the benefits of emotional release through movement. I am able to do my best thinking when I am dancing, and immediately after I stop. When dancing, whether it is improvised movement or learned choreography, the body is in both physical and mental motion, as many parts of the brain are activated. The cerebrum is working in overdrive to allow the body to perform certain actions, while other areas of the brain like the cerebellum are trying to match your breathing and oxygen intake to your level of physical exertion. In addition, all parts of the limbic system are triggered. The limbic system is comprised of multiple parts of the brain including the amygdala, hippocampus, thalamus, and hypothalamus. These different areas of the brain are responsible for emotional arousal, certain aspects of memory, and the willingness to be affected by external stimuli. So, when they are activated with movement, they encourage the endocrine system—specifically the pituitary gland—to release hormones that make you feel good about yourself, how you
are moving, and allow you to understand what emotions you’re feeling and experiencing (Kinser).

As a form of exercise as well, dancing releases endorphins—proteins that are synthesized by the pituitary gland in response to physiologic stressors. This feeling is so desirable that opioid medications were created with the intent of mimicking the sensation that accompanies an endorphin rush (Sprouse-Blum 70). Along with the beta-proteins comes a level of mental clarity, and a sense of calm. Dance movement therapists should utilize this feeling within therapy, allowing participants to make sense of crises in their life as they exist in this heightened state.

Similar to the potential energy that is explored in physics, when set to music, physical movement manifests a mental state that allows for extensive exploration and introspective discovery. DMT is effective as a therapy in that it allows clients to manifest and confront deep psychological issues while existing in a state of nirvana—the result of dance. Essentially, DMT allows the participant to feel good about him or herself during the sessions, and be open and receptive to learning about their patterns of thought, and any maladaptive behavior (“About”).

Playing specifically to this idea of finding comfort through one’s own body, a case study was done involving an adolescent girl (referred to as “Alex”) who struggled with acute body dysmorphic disorder—a mental illness whose victims are subject to obsession with perceived flaws in their appearance. The aim of the study was to examine “the relationship between an adolescent female’s overall wellness, defined by quality of life, and her participation in a dance/movement therapy [DMT]-based holistic wellness curriculum” (Hagensen 150). During the six-week-long data-collection and observation period, Alex’s sessions took place in a private psychotherapy office and included normal dance and movement based therapy, along with a learning curriculum that focused on mindfulness, body image, movement, friendships, and nutrition. Her therapist wanted not only to ensure that Alex receive the necessary DMT to overcome her body dysmorphic disorder, but also to equip her with the tools to better combat it in the future, should it resurface.

In total, the case study lasted four months, and included nine individual therapy sessions, and a handful of parental check-in meetings (to get their input on her
progress). Using the Youth Quality of Life-Research Version (YQOL-R) and parent
surveys, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected that revealed that Alex did
indeed learn more about herself, and how her body and mind function together. The
psychologists involved concluded that the use of DMT was appropriate for Alex’s case,
and it proved to be effective in transforming her distorted image of herself (Hagensen
168).

Some may dispute this evidence by saying that the case of a single adolescent
girl is not sufficient to deem DMT effective; however, it is extremely difficult to limit
confounding variables in large-scale therapeutic experiments. In the realm of
psychology, individual studies provide data that is just as important as that of bigger
experiments. To further demonstrate DMT’s effectiveness on a larger scale though, I
turn to a study that was conducted in Germany in 2012 for evidence.

After recruiting 17 dance therapists and randomly selecting 162 participants, a
study was conducted to test the efficacy of a 10-week long DMT group and whether or
not the quality of life (QOL) of the participants improved. Ninety-seven of the
participants were randomly assigned to the therapy group (the experimental group),
whilst the remaining 65 were placed on a waitlist, meaning that they did not receive any
treatment (the control group) (Bräuninger 296). All of the participants suffered from
stress, and felt that they needed professional help dealing with it. The study utilized a
subject-design, and included a pre-test, post-test, and six-month follow-up test. As
hypothesized, the results demonstrated that participants in the experimental DMT group
significantly improved the QOL, both in the short term (right after the sessions
terminated) and in the long term (at the six-month follow-up). The greatest QOL
improvements were in the areas of psychological well-being and general life in both the
short- and long-term. At the end of the study, it was concluded that, “Dance movement
therapy significantly improves QOL in the short and long term” (Bräuninger 301).

DMT does prove to be an effective means of therapy in the cases of body
dysmorphic disorder and stress; however, when it comes to using DMT in the treatment
of schizophrenia, it seems to fall short. In an attempt to speak to the effectiveness of
dance therapy in the context of severe mental illnesses and disorders, a group of
psychologists conducted a study to “evaluate the effects of dance therapy for people
with schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like illnesses compared with standard care and other interventions” (Xia 675). Although DMT did not do any harm, there was no identifiable reduction in the participant’s symptoms, nor was there an overall improvement in mental cognition. It was concluded that the results of the study did not affirm nor deny the use of dance/movement therapy amongst the group of schizophrenic participants (Xia 676).

I believe that the aforementioned case study brings to light something key about DMT: the kinds of people and mental illnesses that it can be successful for. As demonstrated by the study conducted on schizophrenic patients, DMT isn’t necessarily effective for the entire spectrum of mental illness. DMT has been shown to be more effective for those dealing with less serious mental illnesses, or are simply struggling to cope with passing crises in their life. For example, problems with stress, self-image, family, time management, and relationships are ideal issues to deal with in a DMT setting (Payne 14). Studies have shown that these are the most successfully resolved personal conflicts in this therapy.

Although DMT may not be an effective treatment for certain people or problems, it is unlikely that it will cause detriment to patients, unlike other therapies. For example, it is very common for patients in traditional verbal therapy to feel intense and strong emotions that they were not prepared to encounter, and therefore, not equipped to handle. They can have an increased anxiety and anxiousness as a result of verbal therapy, and even potentially manifest and endure false memories (Linden 308). When a client is difficult to get talking, therapists will inquire for information and ask thought-provoking questions to initiate conversation or better develop their understanding of a patient’s situation. In some cases, this has been shown to encourage the development of false memories because the therapist is overbearing and trying too hard to evoke reactions from their reluctant clients. These negative side effects of therapy may also manifest themselves in DMT; however, this is very unlikely given the holistic nature of the therapy, and the compassionate role of the therapist.

Along with its positive effects on participants, another attribute to the utilization of DMT is that a holistic curriculum may be easily interwoven and incorporated alongside the standard therapy. Instead of participation only in standard therapy sessions, a
therapist can also act as a teacher. By helping participants learn about mindfulness and introspection techniques, along with equipping them with coping skills, the therapist/teacher is able to help their clients learn how to combat problems they may face in the future, after therapy has ended. Like in the case of Alex, it is helpful to learn not just about thinking and behavioral patterns, but what they mean, and techniques to keep them in check.

A holistic curriculum is based on “the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace” (Miller). In other words, when instilled in the context of DMT, participants learn not only about themselves, but also about their interactions with others and the natural world. Although some find such a premise to be too free-spirited for them, the previously mentioned connections are arguably some of the most important one’s in an individual’s life. Many people place too great of an emphasis on being happy, and finding happiness, but choose to ignore the introspective process of examining their relationships. By combining DMT and a holistic curriculum, one can truly begin to understand how they function cognitively, what effect that has on their personal relationships, and what their personal role is in a society and in the world.

Finally, DMT is simply more practical and fun than other, more conventional forms of therapy. It is in essence the vitamin C you would take to not just help you get over a cold, but that you would take to help prevent a cold. In contrast, other therapy styles act as the antibiotics you would take once an infection has set in—there are no preventative measures. When most people make the decision to attend therapy, it is because all else has failed and speaking with a therapist is their last resort. Since DMT is a much more relaxed and natural style of therapy, learned exercise and techniques can easily be incorporated into daily life. While most people won’t keep a journal of their dreams, or record every instance in the day they’ve felt anxious (as many clinical therapists would advise), it would be practical to attend a dance class once a week or so. Just by being in class, learning choreography and allowing the body to move, one can lose and discover themself all at the same time. DMT can be as simple as just improvising movement to a song and allowing the mind to be free for a fleeting moment.
(Eddy 6). And although short, it can still provide enough time to calm the psyche and encourage distinct moments of introspection.

DMT is an extremely underrated area of psychology. With that being said, I also believe it can be a powerful form of therapy and it has been shown to greatly improve participants’ quality of life and their outlook on it. As demonstrated by the previous case studies and experiments, DMT allows clients to think critically about their own issues and maladaptive behaviors, and become capable of introspection. Although DMT may not be effective for all mental illnesses, it is still nonetheless a powerful tool for significant psychological change, and should be used far more often as a form of treatment. Instead of instantly jumping to the conclusion that traditional psychotherapy is the best option for all clients, patients and therapists alike should perhaps recognize that the most natural thing to our body—movement—could act as the basis for interpersonal discovery and provide impressive levels of mental clarity.

Teacher Takeaways

“This is a good example of Rogerian argument. Rather than taking a confrontational position that might alienate those who disagree, the author acknowledges the grounds for disagreement while explaining why opponents’ concerns may be misplaced. Logos and ethos are both successfully employed in that process. However, the use of pathos is largely limited to the first two paragraphs, where the reader is invited to imagine two radically different therapy scenarios. That works well, but using pathos more broadly might vary the tone of the essay and engage the reader more directly in the argument.”

– Professor Dunham

Works Cited


**We Don’t Care About Child Slaves**

When you walk into the mall or any department store, your main goal is to snatch a deal, right? You scout for the prettiest dress with the lowest price or the best fitting jeans with the biggest discount. And once you find it, you go to the checkout and purchase it right away. Congratulations—now it’s all yours! But here’s the thing: the item that you just purchased could have possibly been made from the sweat, blood, and tears of a six-year-old child in Vietnam. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), one in ten Vietnamese children aged 5 to 17 are slave workers, and Vietnam is the second biggest source of imported goods to the US. This means that a lot of the things we get from Target, Walmart, and countless other stores are made by child slaves. The problem is that the bargain on that cute shirt we just got was too good for us to think twice—about where it came from, how it was made. As a society, we need to take action against child labor by being conscious of where we buy our goods so we don’t feed the system that exploits children.

When we think of child slavery, we are horrified by it. How can someone treat children in such a way? It’s horrific, it’s terrible, and it’s a serious crime! But then again, those shoes you saw in the store are so cute and are at such a cheap price, you must buy them! Even if they were made by child slaves, you can’t do anything about that situation and purchasing them won’t do any harm at all, right? The unfortunate reality is that we are all hypocritical when it comes to this issue. I’m pretty sure that all of us have some sort of knowledge of child slave workers in third-world countries, but how come we never take it into consideration when we buy stuff? Maybe it’s because you believe your actions as one person are too little to affect anything, or you just can’t pass up that deal. Either way, we need to all start doing research about where we are sending our money.
As of 2014, 1.75 million Vietnamese children are working in conditions that are classified as child labor according to the ILO (Rau). Most of these children work in crowded factories and work more than 42 hours a week. These children are the ones who make your clothes, toys, and other knick-knacks that you get from Target, Walmart, etc. If not that, they’re the ones who make the zippers on your coats and buttons on your sweater in a horrifying, physically unstable work environment.

How exactly do these children end up in this situation? According to a BBC report, labor traffickers specifically target children in remote and poor villages, offering to take them to the city to teach them vocational training or technical skills. Their parents usually agree because they are not aware of the concept of human trafficking since they live in an isolated area. Also, it gives the family an extra source of income. The children are then sent to other places and are forced to work in mostly farms or factories. These children receive little to no pay and most of the time get beaten if they made a mistake while working. They are also subject to mental abuse and at the worst, physically tortured by their boss. Another reason why children end up in the labor force is because they must provide for their family; their parents are unable to do so for whatever reason (Brown).

In 2013, BBC uncovered the story of a Vietnamese child labor victim identified as “Hieu.” Hieu was a slave worker in Ho Chi Minh city who jumped out of the third floor window of a factory with two other boys to escape his “workplace.” Aged 16 at the time, Hieu explained that a woman approached him in his rural village in Dien Bien, the country’s poorest province, and offered him vocational training in the city. He and 11 other children were then sent to the city and forced to make clothes for a garment factory in a cramped room for the next two years. “We started at 6AM and finished work at midnight,” he said. “If we made a mistake making the clothes they would beat us with a stick.” Fortunately for Hieu, he managed to escape and is one of the 230 children saved by The Blue Dragon Foundation, a charity that helps fight against child labor (Brown).

For the rest of the victims, however, hope is yet to be found. According to the US Department of Commerce, most of the apparel that is sold in the US is made overseas, and Vietnam is the second biggest source for imported goods right behind China.
Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka are also on the list of the top sources of US apparel imports. This means that the demand for goods from these countries is high; therefore, the need for child slave workers is increasing.

One of the biggest corporations in the world that has an ongoing history of the use of child slaves is Nike. According to IHSCS News, workers at Vietnam shoe manufacturing plants make 20 cents an hour, are beaten by supervisors, and are not allowed to leave their work posts. Vietnam isn’t the only place that has factories with dangerous working conditions owned by the athletic-wear giant (Wilsey). Nike also has sweatshops in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, and China, just to name a few, that have all been investigated by officials due to inhumane working conditions. Everything from clothing and shoes, to soccer balls are potentially made by child slaves in these countries (Greenhouse). Please keep this in mind the next time you visit your local Nike store.

Vietnam has actually been praised for its efforts in combating child slave issues. According to The Borgen Project, Vietnam has increased the number of prosecutions it holds to help end overseas gang activity (Rau). However, the country lacks internal control in child trafficking, and traffickers who are caught receive light punishments. The person who trafficked Hieu and the 11 other children only faced a fine of $500 and his factory was closed down, but he did not go to court (Brown).

Let’s be real: doing our part to fight against child labor as members of a capitalistic society is not the easiest thing to do. We are all humans who have needs and our constant demand to buy is hard to resist, especially when our society is fueled by consumerism. However, big changes takes little steps. We can start to combat this issue by doing research on where we spend our money and try to not support corporations and companies that will enable the child labor system. We can also donate to charities, such as The Blue Dragon Foundation, to further help the cause. Yes, it is hard to not shop at your favorite stores and I can’t stop you from doing so. But all I ask is that you educate yourself on where you are spending your money, and hopefully your moral compass will guide you onto the right path. If you are horrified by the thought of a 5-year-old child being beaten and working 24 hours a day, do not be a part of the
problem. Keep Hieu—and the other 1.75 million children who are currently suffering in Vietnam—in mind the next time you buy something.

Teacher Takeaways

“This essay provides compelling information from credible sources and offers a mix of strategies, including anecdotal examples and more objective statistical information. These approaches complement each other by putting a human face to the problem while also demonstrating its extent and severity. I’d like to see better engagement with the opposing positions, though. It seems likely that many people are not aware of this issue, or are not aware of resources that would help them become more ethical consumers. By failing to anticipate the needs of the audience, the author risks frustrating or alienating readers rather than persuading them.”

– Professor Dunham

Works Cited


The year of 1955 was the year of many revolutionary names: you might remember the rise of Elvis or the valor of Rosa Parks that year. Some might recognize it as the birth year of two of the 20th centuries best and brightest: Mr. Jobs, and Mr. Gates. However, I recognize it as the birth year of a pair even brighter than that of Steve and Bill. A pair of golden arches that is: McDonald’s was founded April 15, 1955, and ever since then, the market for fast, greasy, and cheap food has been a staple in many countries around the world. Which has led to a steady rise in the consumption of meat and other animal products. This spells out disaster for not only personal health but the health of the environment. The direct link between the consumption of animal products and global warming is negatively effecting the health of this generation. If action isn’t taken by each of us, global warming will be hazardous for future generations who will be left with the burden of reversing the wastefulness of their greedy ancestors.

While there are many industries that contribute to global warming, the food and farming industry has one of the largest impacts on the environment. For starters, every step of the process, from the birth of the calf to the burger patty sizzling on the grill, produces near irreversible damage to the environment. All livestock, not only cows, passively contribute to global warming. “Livestock, especially cattle, produce methane (CH₄) as part of their digestion. This process is called enteric fermentation, and it represents almost one third of the emissions from the Agriculture sector” (“Greenhouse”). While this may seem insignificant to nice small farms with only a few cows, large corporations own thousands of cattle, all of which add up to significant amount of enteric fermentation. Not to mention, the thousands of gallons of gas that goes into transporting the cows and there are tons of coal or fossil fuels being burned to power big warehouses where cows and other various meat-producing animals are crammed into undersized cages, where they are modified and bred for slaughter.
Moreover, the driving of semis release carbon dioxide into the air. These trucks are used to haul the animals, their feed, and the final product, your food. The final number of trips, when all said and done, adds up to an enormous amount of gas being burned. “When we burn fossil fuels, such as coal and gas, we release carbon dioxide (CO2). CO2 builds up in the atmosphere and causes Earth’s temperature to rise” (“Climate”). In summary, the burning of gas and other fossil fuels in one major way the meat, and the entire food industry contributes to global warming. The rising of the earth’s temperature is like the flick of the first domino in the line. Heating of the Earth being the first domino leading to melting the ice caps and so on. Everyone has heard the spiel of melting ice caps and “saving the polar bears!”; however, there are many serious and harmful effects of such CO2 emissions. Some may rebuttal that “global warming doesn’t have any effect on me”, but there is a list of health problems caused by global warming that do negatively impact humans.

Unless people can come together and reduce, not just their CO2 footprint, but all greenhouse gas emissions there will continue to be an increase medical problems globally. The rising temperatures is causing longer allergy seasons and an increase in allergens or dust, pollen and other particles in the air. “Research studies associate fine particles [allergens] with negative cardiovascular outcomes such as heart attacks, formation of deep vein blood clots, and increased mortality from several other causes. These adverse health impacts intensify as temperatures rise” (Portier 14). For further explanation, polluting the atmosphere by burning gas and raising mass numbers of livestock is causing the global temperature to rise. These negative health issues are only the outcome of global warming. I have purposely omitted the health problems, though many, of eating red meat. Cutting meat out of your diet will improve your individual health, but more importantly, it will improve the health of the earth. Some critics might argue that eating just one burger can’t raise the entire Earth’s temperature. The simple answer is, it doesn’t. However, making the conscious decision to eat meat on a day to day basis adds up to a slew of health problems accompanied by a large personal carbon footprint.

Acidification of the oceans is one of the harmful effects on the environment caused by an inflated carbon footprint. This happens when the CO2 that is released into
the atmosphere, absorbs into the ocean, thus leading to a change in the pH level of the ocean. “High concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increase the amount that is dissolved into the ocean, leading to acidification… many [people on coastal regions] depend on marine protein for daily subsistence, the consequences of perturbing delicate ocean and coastal systems will be far-reaching” (Portier 6). This is problematic for any who live on coastal regions and may rely heavily on seafood in their diet but is also a problem for the fish as well. Disrupting an entire food chain could have many unforeseen consequences.

Meat lovers will interject: “well food other than meat is produced in factories, don’t those contribute to global warming too?” These arguments are not invalid; while the meat industry may cause much of the food and agriculture’s emissions, other methods of food production are outdated and harmful as well. The problem of global warming, is not solely the fault of the meat industry, the blame should be put onto anyone who produces more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. For example, the way rice is cultivated could very well be a place CO2 emissions could be cut. “A change in rice processing and consumption patterns could reduce CO2 emission by 2-16%” (Norton 42). The implementation made to reduce the footprint of rice cultivation, could then be remodeled to be effectively used to reduce the pollution of the food and agriculture sector as a whole.

However, more simple things than changing the way food is produced can help save the environment. It can be as simple as picking up a piece of litter off the ground to deciding to recycle all your bottles and cans. But for those looking to make a greater contribution to saving the world, stop eating meat. Or, if that is too difficult, reduce the amount of meat you eat. A paper published by the World Resources Institute “showed that reducing heavy red meat consumption, would lead to a per capita food and land use-related greenhouse gas emissions reduction of between 15 and 35 percent by 2050. Going vegetarian could reduce those per capita emissions by half” (Magill). As a vegetarian I gave up eating meat mainly for this reason. But not only can you save the environment by giving up meat, by doing so you can save more than just your life, but millions of lives; “switching to vegetarianism could help prevent nearly 7m premature deaths and help reduce health care costs by $1b” (Harvey). As mentioned, there are
multiple positive impacts of eliminating meat from your diet, and it is the best way to reduce your carbon footprint. In tandem, being aware of your carbon footprint is very important, because not monitoring individual emissions is causing greenhouse gases to reach dangerous levels. Which is beginning to cause a variety of health problems for many people which will only intensify if nothing is done on a personal and global level.

Not only do we have to worry about the changes to ocean and costal life, but life everywhere will get far worse if nothing is done to stop the warming of our planet. A world dominated by scientifically advanced greedy carnivores is not a world worth saving. The earth is on a slippery slope that is leading to extinction. The way we consume animal products is irresponsible because it poses a major threat to the environment and endangers humans. To respond to this, we need to develop new ways to combat ecological problems and change wasteful consumption habits. If we cannot stop our polluting and wasteful ways, we are destined to lose the planet that harbors everything we know.

To change the eating habits of an entire nation might be a feat all its own; changing the eating habits of an entire world seems impossible. I am confident that it all starts with one person making the right choice. I urge you to follow not only in my footsteps, but join the millions of others who are putting down their steak knives to fight climate change. I find it horrifying that some people would rather destroy their own race than change what goes on their plate. There is overwhelming evidence that illuminates the fiery connection between global warming and serious health problems. Now this generation and future generations will need to create regulations and invent new solutions to enjoy the same planet we have all called home.

**Teacher Takeaways**

“This essay is a good example of an Aristotelian argument; the author clearly presents their stance and their desired purpose, supporting both with a blend of logos, pathos, and ethos. It’s clear that the author is passionate and knowledgeable. I would say as a meat-eater, though, that many readers would feel attacked by some of the rhetorical figures included here: no one wants to be part of the group of ‘scientifically advanced greedy carnivores’ that will make our world uninhabitable, regardless of the truth of that statement. Additionally, the author seems to lose track of their thesis throughout paragraphs four and five. I would encourage them to make sure every paragraph begins and ends with a connection to the thesis statement.”

– Professor Dawson
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Chapter Eight
Research Concepts

We live in an age of immediate answers. Although we have not achieved parity in access to technology worldwide, information has never been easier to uncover. This is, of course, a double-edged sword: the proliferation of ideas due to the technological revolution enables new kinds of learning, but also has fundamentally changed the way we think and interact.

One of my friends refers to his iPhone as “The Wonder Killer”: because he has such quick access to answers through the miniature computer he carries everywhere, the experience of sustained curiosity is now very rare in his life. All kinds of questions are easily answered by googling—“Who was that guy in Back to the Future Part II?” “Do spiders hibernate?”—or a brief crawl through Wikipedia—“How has globalization impacted Bhutan’s economy?” “What life experiences influenced Frida Kahlo’s painting?” But the answers to these questions, though easily discovered, paint a very one-dimensional portrait of human knowledge.

TED-ed Video: How Simple Ideas Lead to Scientific Discoveries by Adam Savage

Take a look at this brief TED video from Adam Savage of MythBusters. For scientists and writers alike, the spirit of curiosity at once motivates individual learning and also the growth and progress of our collective knowledge. Your innate ability to be curious puts you in the league of the most brilliant and prolific scholars—people who were driven by questions, seeking to interrogate the world around them.

In this section, I add my voice to the chorus of writing teachers whose rallying cry is a renewed investment in curiosity. Hopefully, you too will embrace inquisitive fascination by rejecting easy answers and using writing as a means of discovery.
## Chapter Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>confirmation bias</td>
<td>a cognitive bias by which a person seeks only ideas which confirm their existing worldview, thus convincing themselves that that worldview is universal and/or truthful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inquiry-based research</td>
<td>research and research writing that is motivated by questions, not by answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ongoing conversation</td>
<td>an analogy for the network of discourse surrounding a topic, issue, or idea. Adopted from Kenneth Burke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research question/path of inquiry</td>
<td>a question, series of questions, or inquisitive topic that guides an inquiry-based research project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stakes</td>
<td>the potential value or consequence of an exploration or argument; what stands to be gained from investigation of a subject or advocacy for a position. Consider also “stakeholders,” the people or institutions that stand to gain from the outcome of an investigation or argument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Techniques

_Inquiry-Based Research_

It’s possible that you’ve already written research papers by this point in your academic career. If your experience has been like mine was, writing these papers went one of two ways:

- c) The teacher assigns a specific topic for you to research, and sometimes even a specific thesis for you to prove.
- d) The teacher provides more freedom, allowing students to choose a topic at their own discretion or from a set of options.

In both situations, my teacher expected me to figure out what I wanted to argue, then find research to back me up. I was expected to have a fully formed stance on an issue, then use my sources to explain and support that stance. Not until graduate school did I encounter inquiry- based research, which inverts this sequence.

Put simply, inquiry-based research refers to research and research writing that is motivated by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Inquiry-Based Research</th>
<th>Inquiry-Based Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your research begins with an answer and seeks out evidence that confirms that answer.</td>
<td>Your research begins with a question, reviews all the evidence available, and then develops that answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example, a murder occurs and I get a bad vibe from the butler. I look for all the clues that confirm that the butler did it; assuming I find what I need, I can declare that the butler did it.</td>
<td>For example, a murder occurs. I look for as many clues that I can, then determine the most likely culprit based on that evidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s quite possible that the butler did do it, and both logical processes might lead me to the same conclusion. However, an inquiry-based investigation allows more consideration for the possibility that the butler is innocent.
Consider the difference this can make: if research is about **learning**, then an inquiry-based perspective is essential. If you only seek out the ideas that agree with you, you will never learn.

Even in the event that the investigation yields the same answers, their differences are crucial. The example in the table above demonstrates **confirmation bias**, or as we called it in Chapter Four, “projection.” (You might be familiar with this phenomenon from politicized social media spheres which tailor content to the user; you may have also identified it as the force behind many axes of prejudice, racialized police violence, and discrimination.) When we only look for answers that agree with our preexisting ideas, we are more likely to ignore other important ideas, voices, and possibilities.

Most importantly, confirmation bias inhibits genuine learning, which relies on challenging, expanding, and complicating our current knowledge and worldviews. Consequently, inquiry-based research is time-consuming and intensive: instead of only dealing with evidence that supports a certain answer or perspective, it requires the reasoner to encounter a great diversity of evidence and answers, which can be difficult to sift through.

This distinction has important implications for the kind of research and research writing for which this book advocates.

- **e)** You don’t have to—shouldn’t, in fact—have a thesis set in stone before starting research. In lieu of a thesis guiding your process, a research question or path of inquiry will motivate your research and writing. You might have a hypothesis or a working thesis, but you must be tremendously flexible: be prepared to pivot, qualify, nuance, or entirely change your answer as you proceed.

- **f)** In order to pursue your research question, you will need to encounter a lot of sources. Not all of the sources you encounter will make it into your paper, which is a new practice for some students. (When I engage in inquiry-based research, I would approximate that one in every twelve sources I encounter makes an appearance in my final draft. The other eleven may be interesting or educational, but might not have a place in my discussion.) This is a time-consuming process, but it leads to more significant learning, more complex thinking, and more interesting and effective rhetoric.

*“The art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge.”*  
– Thomas Berger
Imagine yourself arriving at a party or some other social gathering. You walk up to a circle of people chatting casually about *Star Wars*. It’s clear they have been on about it for a while. Some of them you know, some of them you’ve heard of but never met, and some of them are total strangers—but they all seem to have very strong opinions about the film franchise. You want to jump into the conversation, so when someone posits, “Jar Jar Binks was the worst character of the prequels, and maybe even the whole canon,” you blurt out, “Yeah, Jar Jar was not good. He was bad. He was the worst character of the prequels. He might even be the worst of the whole canon.” The circle of people turn to stare at you, confused why you just parroted back what the last person said; all of you feel awkward that you derailed the discussion.

Even writing that example makes me socially anxious. Let’s try option B instead: as you arrive to the group, you listen attentively. You gradually catch the flow and rhythm of the conversation, noticing its unique focus and language. After hearing a number of people speak regarding Jar Jar, you bring together their ideas along with your ideas and experiences. You ease yourself in to the conversation by saying, “I agree with Stan: Jar Jar is a poorly written character. However, he does accomplish George Lucas’s goals of creating comic relief for young audiences, who were a target demographic for the prequels.” A few people nod in agreement; a few people are clearly put out by this interpretation. The conversation continues, and as it grows later, you walk away from the discussion (which is still in full force without you) having made a small but meaningful contribution—a ripple, but a unique and valuable ripple.

This dynamic is much like the world of research writing. Your writing is part of an ongoing conversation: an exchange of ideas on a certain topic which began long before you and will continue after you. If you were to simply parrot back everyone’s ideas to them, you would not advance the conversation and it would probably feel awkward. But by synthesizing many different sources with your unique life experiences, from your unique vantage point (or, “interpretive position” viz. Chapter Four), you can mobilize research and research writing to develop compelling, incisive, and complex insights. You just need to get started by feeling out the conversation and finding your place.

**Developing a Topic**

Finding a conversation that you’re excited about and genuinely interested in is the first and most important step. As you develop a topic, keep in mind that pursuing your curiosities and passions will make your research process less arduous, more relevant, and more pleasant. Such
an approach will also naturally improve the quality of your writing: the interest you have for a topic will come across in the construction of your sentences and willingness to pursue multiple lines of thought about a topic. An author’s boredom results in a boring paper, and an author’s enthusiasm translates to enthusiastic writing.

Depending on the parameters your teacher has set, your research topic might need to (a) present a specific viewpoint, (b) focus on a specific topic, or (c) focus on a certain theme or set of ideas. It’s also possible that your teacher will allow complete autonomy for one or all of your research assignments. Be sure you review any materials your instructor provides and ask clarifying questions to make sure your topic fits the guidelines of their assignment.

To generate ideas, I recommend completing some of the activities included later in this chapter. I find it most productive to identify areas of interest, then develop questions of all sizes and types. Eventually, you will zero in on a question or combination of questions as your path of inquiry.

What makes for a good research question or path of inquiry? Of course, the answer to this question will depend on your rhetorical situation. However, there are some common characteristics of a good research question in any situation:

- **It is answerable, but is not easily answerable.** Engaging and fruitful research questions require complex, informed answers. However, they shouldn’t be so subjective, intricate, or expansive that they simply cannot be answered in the scope of your rhetorical situation.
- **It is specific.** By establishing parameters on your scope, you can be sure your research is directed and relevant. More discussion of scope and focus continues below, and you can try the exercise titled “Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope” later in the chapter to learn more.
- **It matters to someone.** Research questions and the rhetoric they inform are valuable only because they have stakes: even if it’s a small demographic, the answers to your research question should impact someone.
- **It allows you to say something new or unique.** As discussed earlier in this chapter, inquiry-based research should encourage you to articulate a unique standpoint by synthesizing many different voices, interpreted from your individual perspective, with your life experiences and ideas. What you say doesn’t have to be groundbreaking, but it shouldn’t just reiterate ideas, arguments, histories, or perspectives.

It is difficult to find a question that hits all these marks on your first try. As you proceed through research, pre-writing, drafting, and revising, you should refine and adjust your question(s). Just like any other part of writing, developing a path of inquiry is iterative: you’ve got to take a lot of chances and work your way toward different results. The activity titled “Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope” in this section can help you complicate and develop your question along a variety of axes.
To hear a different voice on developing research questions, check out this short video from Wilfrid Laurier University.

In order to find the best version of your research question, you should develop “working questions”—questions of all sizes and types that are pertinent to your subject. As you can see below, you can start with a handful of simple working questions that will eventually lead to a viable research question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Question</th>
<th>Working Research Question</th>
<th>Revised Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too easy to answer, low stakes, not specific enough:</td>
<td>Higher stakes, more specific:</td>
<td>More complex answers, higher stakes, very specific:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do people eat in Vietnam?</td>
<td>What does Vietnamese food reflect about Vietnamese culture?</td>
<td>How does Vietnamese cuisine reflect a history of colonialism?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too straightforward, not specific enough:</td>
<td>More specific:</td>
<td>More complex answers, higher stakes, very specific:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are people in the United States more obese than they used to be?</td>
<td>Have obesity rates increased in the United States over the last 100 years?</td>
<td>Is there a correlation between obesity rates and economic instability in the United States over the last 100 years?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not specific enough, difficult to answer in-depth:
What is the role of religion in the Middle East?

More specific, easier to answer:
How has religion influenced politics in the Middle East in the last 50 years?

Very specific, higher stakes, more complex answers:
How has religion’s influence on government impacted the day-to-day lives of Qatari citizens?

As you hone your path of inquiry, you may need to zoom in or out in terms of scope: depending on your rhetorical situation, you will need different degrees of focus. Just like narration, research writing benefits from a careful consideration of scope. Often, a narrower scope is easier to work with than a broader scope—you will be able to write more and write better if your question asks for more complex thinking.

It’s important to be flexible throughout your research project. Be prepared to pivot topics, adjust your research question, change your opinions, and confront unanticipated challenges.
Consider the diagram above. As you build a working knowledge of your topic (get the feel for the conversation that began before you arrived at the party), you might complicate or narrow your working questions. Gradually, try to articulate a research question (or combination of questions). Remember to be flexible as you research though: you might need to pivot, adjust, refocus, or replace your research question as you learn more. Consider this imaginary case study as an example of this process.

Ahmed began his project by identifying the following areas of interest: racism in the U.S.; technology in medicine and health care; and independent film-making. After doing some free-writing and preliminary research on each, he decided he wanted to learn more about racially motivated police violence. He developed working questions:

- Are police officers likely to make judgments about citizens based on their race?
- Have police forces instituted policies to avoid racism?
- Who is most vulnerable to police violence?
- Why does it seem like police officers target people of color?
- Who is responsible for overseeing the police?

He realized that he needed to narrow his focus to develop a more viable path of inquiry, eventually ending up with the research question,

- Over the last thirty years, what populations are most likely to experience police violence in the U.S.?

However, after completing more research, Ahmed discovered that his answers came pretty readily: young Black men are significantly more vulnerable to be victims of police violence. He realized that he’s not really saying anything new, so he had to tweak his path of inquiry.

Ahmed did some more free-writing and dug around to find a source that disagreed with him or added a new layer to his answers. He discovered eventually that there are a handful of police organizations that have made genuine efforts to confront racism in their practices. Despite the widespread and normalized violence enacted against people of color, these groups were working against racial violence. He reoriented his research question to be,

- Have antiracist police trainings and strategies been effective in reducing individual or institutional racism over the last thirty years?

Writing a Proposal

Bigger research projects often require additional steps in preparation and process. Before beginning an extended meditation on a topic—before rushing into a long-term or large-scale research project—it’s possible that your teacher will ask you to write a research proposal. The most effective way to make sure your proposal is on the right track is to identify its rhetorical
purpose. Are you trying to process ideas? Compile and review initial research? Demonstrate that you’re pursuing a viable path of inquiry? Explain the stakes of your subject?

Although every rhetorical audience will value different parts of the proposal, there are a handful of issues you should try to tackle in any proposal.

- **Your subject.** Introduce your topic with a general introduction to your topic—not too general, but enough to give the reader a sense of grounding.

  Too general: Education is something that happens in every facet of our lives.
  Better: Access to education is a major concern for people living in a democratic society.

- **Your occasion.** When you developed your research question, you chose an issue that matters to someone, meaning that it is timely and important. To establish the significance of your topic, explain what’s prompting your writing and why it matters.

  Since Betsy Devos’ nomination for U.S. Secretary of Education, the discussion surrounding school choice has gained significant momentum. Socioeconomic inequality in this country has produced great discrepancies in the quality of education that young people experience, and it is clear that something must be done.

- **Your stakes and stakeholders.** Although you may have alluded to why your question matters when introducing your occasion, you might take a sentence or two to elaborate on its significance. What effect will the answer(s) you find have, and on whom?

  Because educational inequality relates to other forms of injustice, efforts to create fairness in the quality of schools will influence U.S. racial politics, gender equality, and socioeconomic stratification. For better or for worse, school reform of any kind will impact greater social structures and institutions that color our daily lives as students, parents, and community members.

- **Your research question or path of inquiry.** After introducing your subject, occasion, and stakes, allow the question guiding your research to step in.

  Some people believe that school choice programs are the answer. But is it likely that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds can experience parity in education through current school voucher proposals?

- **Your position as a working thesis.** Articulate your position as a (hypo)thesis—a potential answer to your question or an idea of where your research might take you. This is an answer which you should continue to adjust along the way; writing it in the proposal does not set your answer(s) in stone.
In my research, I will examine whether school choice programs have the potential to create more equitable schooling experiences for all students. Even though proponents of school choice use the language of freedom and equality to justify school vouchers, recent propositions for school choice would likely exacerbate inequality in education and access.

- **The difficulties you anticipate in the research and writing process and how you plan to address them.** In your proposal, you are trying to demonstrate that your path of inquiry is viable; therefore, it is important to show that you’re thinking through the challenges you might face along the way. Consider what elements of researching and writing will be difficult, and how you will approach those difficulties.

  There are a vast number of resources on school choice, but I anticipate encountering some difficulty in pursuing my guiding question. For example, many people discussing this topic are entrenched in their current viewpoints. Similarly, this issue is very politicized, dividing people mostly along party lines. I also need to do more preliminary research: I'm not certain if there have been school choice experiments conducted on any significant scale, in the U.S. or elsewhere. Finally, it is difficult to evaluate complex social phenomena of inequality without also considering race, gender, disability status, nationality, etc.; I'll need to focus on socioeconomic status, but I cannot treat it as a discrete issue.

- **Optional, depending on your rhetorical situation:** A working list of sources consulted in your preliminary research. I ask my students to include a handful of sources they have encountered as they identified their topic and path of inquiry: this shows that they are working toward understanding their place in an ongoing conversation.

  Works Cited

Combining these examples, we can see our proposal come together in a couple of paragraphs:

**School Vouchers: Bureaucratizing Inequality**

Access to education is a major concern for people living in a democratic society. Since Betsy Devos’ nomination for U.S. Secretary of Education, the discussion surrounding school choice has gained significant momentum. Socioeconomic inequality in this country has produced great discrepancies in the quality of education that young people experience, and it is clear that something must be done. Because educational
inequality relates to other forms of injustice, efforts to create fairness in the quality of schools will influence U.S. racial politics, gender equality, and socioeconomic stratification. For better or for worse, school reform of any kind will impact greater social structures and institutions that color our daily lives as students, parents, and community members. Some people believe that school choice programs are the answer. But is it likely that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds can experience parity in education through current school voucher proposals?

In my research, I will examine whether school choice programs have the potential to create more equitable schooling experiences for all students. Even though proponents of school choice use the language of freedom and equality to justify school vouchers, recent propositions for school choice would likely exacerbate inequality in education and access.

There are a vast number of resources on school choice, but I anticipate encountering some difficulty in pursuing my guiding question. For example, many people discussing this topic are entrenched in their current viewpoints. Similarly, this issue is very politicized, dividing people mostly along party lines. I also need to do more preliminary research: I’m not certain if there have been school choice experiments conducted on any significant scale, in the U.S. or elsewhere. Finally, it is difficult to evaluate complex social phenomena of inequality without also considering race, gender, disability status, nationality, etc.; I’ll need to focus on socioeconomic status, but I cannot treat it as a discrete issue.

Works Cited

As you develop your own proposal, I encourage you to follow these steps, answering the questions listed above. However, in order to create a more cohesive proposal, be sure to revise for fluency: your proposal shouldn’t read like a list of answers, but like a short essay outlining your interests and expectations.
Activities

*Idea Generation: Curiosity Catalogue* and Collaborative Inquiry

This exercise encourages you to collaborate with other classmates to develop a topic, working questions, a path of inquiry, and a baseline of communal knowledge. You should complete Part One independently, then gather with a small group of two or three other students for Part Two, and a different small group of two or three other students for Part Three: Small Group. (If you are working on this exercise as a full class, complete Part One, Part Two, and Part Three: Gallery Walk.) Before you get started, divide three large sheets of paper (11x17 is best) into columns like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Part One

Create a catalogue of topics you are personally curious about—things that you want to learn more about. These don’t have to be revolutionary things right away; it’s more important that they’re meaningful to you. First, choose three of the following broad topic headings:
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

Politics     Sports     Social Justice
Science and Technology     Music and Art     The Environment and Sustainability
Food     Other Cultures and Nations     Health and Disease
Education     Business and Economy

On your first sheet of three-column paper, write those three topic headings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Music and Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The electoral college</td>
<td>Mexican food</td>
<td>Public art movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy relations with other countries</td>
<td>Healthy eating</td>
<td>Learning musical instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your immigration</td>
<td>Processed foods and added sugars</td>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Food anxiety</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to economy</td>
<td>Mexican food and culture</td>
<td>Performance art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, underneath each topic heading, write bulleted lists of as many subtopics or related ideas that come to mind that interest you. (Try not to censor yourself here—the idea is to generate a large number of bullet points. To some extent, this is an exercise in free association: what are the first things that come to mind when you think of each topic?) Spend ten to fifteen minutes on your lists. Then, take a five-minute break away from your lists and clear your head; return to your lists for three more minutes to make any additions that you didn’t think of at first.

Read over your lists, making note especially of items that surprised you. Choose the three items from the full page that most interest you. You can choose one from each column, three from the same, or any combination of lists, so long as you have three items that you care about.
Part Two
Begin to develop a working knowledge by collaborating with classmates to consider the topic from several perspectives beyond your own.

Write your three favorite list items from Part One in the headings for your second piece of three-column paper. Sit in a circle with your groupmates; each student should pass their three-column paper one position clockwise. For five minutes, each student will free-write what they already know about each topic using prose, lists, or illustrations. Then, rotate your papers another step—repeat until you have your original sheet of paper back.

Review the knowledge your groupmates compiled on your sheet. Have they offered anything that surprises you—stuff you didn’t know already, conflicting perspectives, or connections to other ideas or topics?

Part Three: Small Group
Begin to develop working and research questions by collaborating with your classmates to explore different curiosities. (This part of the exercise is designed for a small group of three or four total students, including you, different from the group in Part Two. If you are completing this part of the exercise with your whole class, skip to Part Three: Gallery Walk.)

Write your three favorite list items from Part One, potentially modified by insights from Part Two, in the headings for your third piece of three-column paper.

Sit in a circle with your groupmates; each student should pass their three-column paper one position clockwise. For five minutes, each student will free-write questions about each topic. No question is too big or small, too simple or complex. Try to generate as many questions as you possibly can. Then, rotate your papers another step—repeat until you have your original sheet of paper back.

Review the questions your groupmates compiled on your sheet. Have they offered anything that surprises you—issues you haven’t thought of, relationships between questions, recurring themes or patterns of interest, or foci that might yield interesting answers?
Part Three: Gallery Walk

Begin to develop working and research questions by collaborating with your classmates to explore different curiosities. (This part of the exercise is designed for an entire class of students of about twenty to twenty-five students, including you. If you are completing this part of the exercise a small group of three to four total students, including you, return to Part Three: Small Group.)

Write your three favorite list items from Part One, potentially modified by insights from Part Two, in the headings for your third piece of three-column paper. Every student should tape their papers to the classroom wall, just below eye-level, such that it forms a circular shape around the perimeter of the room. Each student in the class should stand in front of their paper, then rotate one position clockwise. At each new page, you will have two minutes to review the headings and free-write questions about each topic. No question is too big or small, too simple or complex. Try to generate as many questions as you possibly can. Then, rotate through clockwise until you’ve returned to your original position.

Review the questions your classmates compiled on your sheet. Have they offered anything that surprises you—issues you haven’t thought of, relationships between questions, recurring themes or patterns of interest, or foci that might yield interesting answers?

After completing all three parts of this exercise, try to articulate a viable and interesting research question that speaks to your curiosity. Make sure its scope is appropriate to your rhetorical situation; you can use the exercise “Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope” later in this chapter to help expand or narrow your scope.

If you’re still struggling to find a topic, try some of other idea generation activities that follow this, or check in with your school’s Writing Center, your teacher, or your peers.

Idea Generation: Mind-Mapping

By organizing and exploring your current knowledge, you might find an area of interest for your research project. A mind-map, also known as a “web” or “cluster,” is a graphic representation of your thought processes. Since this form allows for digressions, free association, and wandering, it allows for organic thinking and knowledge-building.

Start out by putting a general subject area in the middle of a blank piece of paper in a circle—for the example below, I started with “education.” (If you don’t have any immediate ideas, try Part One of the Curiosity Catalogue exercise above.) Then, branch out from this general subject to more specific or connected subjects. Because this is a pre-writing activity, try to generate as many associations as you can: don’t worry about being right or wrong, or using standardized
grammar and spelling. Your goal is to create as many potential topics as possible.

Once you’ve finished your mind-map, review the idea or clusters of ideas that seem to demand your attention. Did any of your bubbles or connections surprise you? Do you see any patterns? Which were most engaging to meditate on? From these topics and subtopics, try to articulate a viable and interesting research question that speaks to your curiosity. Make sure its scope is appropriate to your rhetorical situation; you can use the exercise “Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope” later in this chapter to help expand or narrow your scope.

**Idea Generation: Internet Stumbling**

In addition to its status as an ever-expanding repository of knowledge, and in addition to its contributions to global human connection, the Internet is also an exceptional free association machine. Through the magic of hyperlinks and social media, random chance can set us in the right direction to develop a research topic. Spend fifteen to twenty minutes clicking around on the Internet, using one of the following media for guidance, and jot down every potential topic that piques your interest.
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

• **Wikipedia:** Go to the Wikipedia homepage and check out the “featured article” of the day, or choose “Random Article” from the sidebar on the far left. Click any of the hyperlinks in the article to redirect to a different page. Bounce from article to article, keeping track of the titles of pages and sections that catch your eye.

• **StumbleUpon:** Set up a free account from this interest randomizer. You can customize what kinds of pages, topics, and media you want to see.

• **An Instagram, Facebook, reddit, or Twitter feed:** Flow through one or more social media feeds, using links, geotags, user handles, and hashtags to encounter a variety of posts.

After stumbling, review the list you’ve made of potentially interesting topics. Are you already familiar with any of them? Which surprised you? Are there any relationships or intersections worth exploring further? From these topics and subtopics, try to articulate a viable and interesting research question that speaks to your curiosity. Make sure its scope is appropriate to your rhetorical situation; you can use the exercise “Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope” later in this chapter to help expand or narrow your scope.

**Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope**

At this point, you have hopefully identified some topic or path of inquiry for your research project. In order to experiment with scope, try complicating your research question(s) along the different dimensions in the following table. A completed table is included as an example after the blank one.
Your current topic or research question(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope dimension:</th>
<th>More narrow</th>
<th>More broad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Time (When?)

Place (Where?)

Population (For whom?)
Connections
(Intersections with other issues)

Other... (Topic-specific adjustments)

Model:

<p>| Your current topic or research question(s): | Should marijuana be legalized nationally? |
| Scope dimension: | More narrow | More broad |
| Time | What do trends in marijuana consumption in the last twenty years indicate about legalization? | How has marijuana been treated legally over the last 100 years? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Should marijuana be legal in our state?</th>
<th>Should marijuana be legalized internationally?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Should marijuana be legalized for medical users?</td>
<td>Should marijuana be legalized for all citizens of and visitors to the country?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Does marijuana legalization correlate to addiction, economy, or crime?</td>
<td>How does marijuana compare to legal pharmaceutical drugs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other...</td>
<td>Should marijuana sales be organized by government?</td>
<td>Should all drugs be legalized nationally?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model Texts by Student Authors

Pirates & Anarchy

(Research proposal – see the annotated bibliography here and final essay here)

My inquiry has to do with piracy and its relationship with anarchist culture. There seem to be two tipping points to the life cycles of piratical and anarchist cultures. First, there is the societal inequality and/or economic stagnation that cause groups to lose faith in established power structures (Samatar 1377). This disenfranchisement leads to groups’ choosing to take self-guided action, to meet needs not satisfied. It is a bid for freedom. The other shift appears to be when the actions of the group become predatory upon vulnerable groups. What begins as notions of self-sufficiency become violent victimizations of other segments of society (Wilson ix).

The current guiding questions that I am following are these: What societal breakdowns lead to groups subscribing to anarchist philosophies? Are pirates and anarchists synonymous? Do the successes and/or failures of pirate organizations create any lasting change in the societies from which they spring?

Piracy has been around for a very long time and has taken on many forms. One of these incarnations was the seafaring sort terrorizing ships during the golden age of piracy in the seventeenth century. Another example was the Somali pirates preying on the African coast in the early 2000s. Information pirates in cyberspace and anarchist protestors in political activism are current forms. The relevance of why individuals turn to piracy is important to explore.

Political polarization continues to freeze up the government, rendering them ineffectual. Worse, elected officials appear more concerned with ideology and campaign funding than the plight of the common man, leaving their own constituents’ needs abandoned. Citizens may turn to extreme political philosophies such as anarchy as a way to take piratical action to counteract economic disparity. A pervasive sense of powerlessness and underrepresentation may lead to the splintering of societal structure, even rebellion. Of import is understanding whether acts of piracy lead to societal erosion via this loss of faith and turn to violence, shrugging off accountability to the system as a countermeasure to what is seen as government’s inability to provide a free
and fair system. This may be seen as empowering. It may also signal a breakdown of centralized government.

There are several difficulties I anticipate. Dedicating time in an efficient manner is the main concern with managing this project. This topic will require a lot of exploration in research. At the same time, writing and revising need their fair share of dedication. I’m looking to find that balance so each aspect of the process gets its due. I will handle this by utilizing the strategy of setting a timer for research and then for writing. A little of both will get done each day, with greater allotments of time given to writing as I go along.

Also of concern is narrowing this topic further. The phenomenon of piracy is so interesting to me, especially in the context of history. However, considering how this topic may be relevant in the current shifting political landscape, it seems important to dwell on the now as well as the past. Much has been written already on piracy, so I’ll be going into the research looking for a more focused place where I can contribute to the subject matter. I’m going to set up a couple of writing center appointments to get some guidance as I go along.

Finally, I want to be watchful of wandering. Many side paths are open to inspection with this topic. Not only will this waste time, but it will also weaken my argument. Once I tighten up the thesis, I want to make sure my research and writing stay focused.

Teacher Takeaways

“The proposal introduces the subject well and identifies guiding questions (and some context) clearly. However, the questions are not yet specific or complex enough to act as the essay’s central research question; the main components (pirates and anarchy) are still too general. Choosing a type of piracy (and perhaps a location), for instance, would lend context and definition to “anarchy” as it is considered here. Then the stakes may be clearly determined. Everything rides on greater specificity. That said, the author has done well to convert an interest into a compelling and unique line of inquiry — an important first step.”

— Professor Fiscaletti
A Case of Hysterics

(Research proposal – see the annotated bibliography here and final essay here)

The concept of female Hysteria was a medical recognition dating back to the 13th century that has been diagnosed by physicians quite liberally until recent times. The diagnosis and treatment of Hysteria were routine for hundreds of years in Western Europe, as well as the United States. Symptoms that indicated Hysteria were broad and all encompassing: nervousness, sexual desire, faintness, insomnia, irritability, loss of appetite, depression, heaviness in abdomen, etc. These symptoms were said to be caused by a “wandering womb,” described as a kind of living creature that sought to disrupt biological processes, disrupt breathing, and cause disease.

The number of diagnosed cases of hysteria slowed as medical advancements proceeded, and in the early 1960s (coinciding with the popularization of feminism) the “disease” ceased to be considered a true medical disorder. In modern medicine, however, the treatment and diagnosis of female medical issues continues to be vague and potentially harmful due to lack of knowledge. Does the concept of female hysteria have continuity today?

Although the vocabulary has changed, it is clear that the practice of ignoring serious medical ailments based on sex remains prominent in the world of medicine. It is not uncommon for a physician to diagnose a woman with chronic stress or
psychosomatic issues, and then later discover a disease like lupus, fibromyalgia, or polycystic ovarian syndrome, all of which are still commonly dismissed because it is likely the patient is experiencing the chronic pain in their heads. Because of sexism in the medical field, many women are receiving subpar healthcare. In my research, I will examine the past culture of Hysteria as well as the current state of misdiagnoses of women’s health issues and how this reinforces gender norms in today’s society; this will demonstrate the need for eliminating bias and sexism in medicine.

In my research process, I imagine I will encounter difficulties in finding detailed scientific research in the misdiagnoses of women’s health, despite having found multiple accounts on non-scientific platforms. I also anticipate a possible attitude of mistrust coming from the audience because of this topic; it is common nature to trust doctors blindly, as well as the norm in our culture to assume women are irrational and excessive. Finally, it will be difficult to attribute sexism and bias simply to the idea of misidentification of ailments. While this is common, sexism has also contributed to, plainly, a lack of research and knowledge of female healthcare. Therefore, willful ignorance plays a role in the imbalance between male and female medicine as well. I will mention this concept briefly in my essay, but continue to focus on the idea of frequent female misdiagnosis and how this perpetuates preconceived notions of feminine temperament in society.

### Teacher Takeaways

“The author takes the time to give historical context, and that is important for building the analogy referenced in the research question. However, the question itself, and the following discussion, lack some precision. What does ‘continuity’ mean here? What ‘notions of feminine temperament’ will be examined? Are they a cause or an effect of misdiagnosis? The author may already have a (hypo)thesis in mind, but the terms of the question must first be clarified. Still, the context and the discussion of gender theory and medicine indicate a researcher who is eager to synthesize information and join a larger discussion.”

— Professor Fiscaletti
Wage Transparency and the Gender Divide\textsuperscript{106}

Discussing salaries with neighbors and especially colleagues is often an unthinkable offense against social mores in the United States. Pay secrecy has long been the norm in most of Western society, but it comes with an information imbalance during any salary negotiations. Lately, wage transparency has gained some legal foothold at the national level as a tool to combat gender wage disparity for equal work. Is pay transparency an effective tool to close the gender pay gap, or will it only succeed in making colleagues uncomfortable?

States have been successively passing local laws to reinforce prior national legislation protecting employees' rights to share salary information, and recent hacks have made information public involuntarily. In some situations, like in Norway, wage transparency has been the law for years. Norway also has the third smallest wage gap in the world. Compensation also has an impact on self-esteem and performance, so the wage gap could be causing a systematic decrease in self-worth for women in the workforce relative to their male counterparts. I plan to research whether increased wage transparency would cause a decrease in the gender pay gap.

There are many readily available statistics on the wage gap, although it may be difficult to avoid politically polarized sources. I'm not sure how available analytical studies of pay transparency will be, although sites like Glassdoor have published some admittedly self-serving studies. It will be difficult, although interesting, to assess the issue of pay transparency and the wage gap, as they are both complex sociological issues.

\begin{teacher_takeaways}

"This student has chosen an interesting and focused topic for their inquiry-based research paper. I appreciate their anticipation of difficulties, too. Although I expect their understanding of the issue will evolve as they learn more about it, I would still encourage this author to spend some more time in this proposal hypothesizing about the connection between gender discrimination and pay secrecy; it's not 100% clear to me how those important topics are related to each other. This is germane to my other major concern—that the student doesn't appear to have done any research at this point. A couple of preliminary sources may provide guidance as the student wrestles with complex ideas."

— Professor Dawson

\end{teacher_takeaways}
Chapter Nine
Interacting with Sources

Less than one generation ago, the biggest challenge facing research writers like you was tracking down relevant, credible, and useful information. Even the most basic projects required sifting through card catalogues, scrolling through endless microfiche and microfilm slides, and dedicating hours to scouring the stacks of different libraries. But now, there is no dearth of information: indeed, the Internet has connected us to more information than any single person could process in an entire lifetime.

Once you have determined which conversation you want to join, it’s time to begin finding sources. Inquiry-based research requires many encounters with a diversity of sources, so the Internet serves us well by enabling faster, more expansive access. But while the Internet makes it much easier to find those sources, it comes with its own host of challenges. The biggest problems with primarily Internet-based research can be boiled down to two issues:

- There is too much out there to sift through everything that might be relevant, and
- There is an increased prominence of unreliable, biased, or simply untrue information.

This chapter focuses on developing strategies and techniques to make your research and research writing processes more efficient, reliable, and meaningful, especially when considering the unique difficulties presented by research writing in the digital age. Specifically, you will learn strategies for discovering, evaluating, and integrating sources.
### Chapter Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Vocabulary</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>annotated bibliography</td>
<td>a research tool that organizes citations with a brief paragraph for each source examined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believer</td>
<td>a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to appreciate, understand, and agree with the text they encounter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>block quote</td>
<td>a direct quote of more than four lines which is reformatted according to stylistic guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bootstrapping</td>
<td>the process of finding new sources using hyperlinked subject tags in the search results of a database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citation mining</td>
<td>the process of using a text’s citations, bibliography, or notes to track down other similar or related sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claim of evaluation</td>
<td>an argument determining relative value (i.e., better, best, worse, worst). Requires informed judgment based on evidence and a consistent metric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claim of phenomenon</td>
<td>an argument exploring a measurable but arguable happening. Typically more straightforward than other claims, but should still be arguable and worth discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claim of policy</td>
<td>an argument that proposes a plan of action to address an issue. Articulates a stance that requires action, often informed by understanding of both phenomenon and evaluation. Often uses the word “should.” See call-to-action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAAP Test</td>
<td>a technique for evaluating the credibility and use-value of a source; researcher considers the Currency, Relevance, Accuracy, Authority, and Purpose of the source to determine if it is trustworthy and useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>credibility</td>
<td>the degree to which a text—its content, its author, and/or its publisher—is trustworthy and accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct quote</td>
<td>the verbatim use of another author’s words. Can be used as evidence to support your claim, or as language to analyze/close-read to demonstrate an interpretation or insight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doubter</td>
<td>a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to challenge, critique, or undermine the text they encounter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evidence</td>
<td>a part or combination of parts that lends support or proof to an arguable topic, idea, or interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the naysayer’s voice</td>
<td>a voice that disagrees with the writer or speaker included within the text itself. Can be literal or imaginary. Helps author respond to criticism, transition between ideas, and manage argumentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paraphrase</strong></td>
<td>author reiterates a main idea, argument, or detail of a text in their own words without drastically altering the length of the passage(s) they paraphrase. Contrast with summary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>primacy effect</strong></td>
<td>a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the opening statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they leave a ‘first impression’ in the audience’s memory. Contrast with recency effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>recency effect</strong></td>
<td>a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the concluding statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they are more recent in the audience’s memory. Contrast with primacy effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>signpost</strong></td>
<td>a phrase or sentence that directs your reader. It can help you make connections, guide your reader’s interpretation, ease transitions, and re-orient you to your thesis. Also known as a “signal phrase.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>summary</strong></td>
<td>a rhetorical mode in which an author reiterates the main ideas, arguments, and details of a text in their own words, condensing a longer text into a smaller version. Contrast with paraphrase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>thesis (statement)</strong></td>
<td>a 1-3 sentence statement outlining the main insight(s), argument(s), or concern(s) of an essay; not necessary in every rhetorical situation; typically found at the beginning of an essay, though sometimes embedded later in the paper. Also referred to as a &quot;So what?&quot; statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>use-value</strong></td>
<td>the degree to which a text is usable for your specific project. A source is not inherently good or bad, but rather useful or not useful. Use-value is influenced by many factors, including credibility. See credibility and CRAAP Test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Techniques

Research Methods: Discovering Sources

Let’s bust a myth before going any further: there is no such thing as a “good” source. Check out this video from Portland Community College.

![Video: Evaluating Sources to Find Quality Research by PCC Library](image)

What makes a source “good” is actually determined by your purpose: how you use the source in your text is most important to determining its value. If you plan to present something as truth—like a fact or statistic—it is wise to use a peer-reviewed journal article (one that has been evaluated by a community of scholars). But if you’re trying to demonstrate a perspective or give evidence, you may not find what you need in a journal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Position</th>
<th>A Supporting Fact (Something you present as factual)</th>
<th>An Example that Demonstrates Your Position (Something that you present as a perspective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
If you want to showcase a diversity of perspectives, you will want to weave together a diversity of sources.

As you discover useful sources, try to expand your usual research process by experimenting with the techniques and resources included in this chapter.

The first and most important determining factor of your research is where you choose to begin. Although there are a great number of credible and useful texts available across different search platforms, I generally encourage my students begin with two resources:

- Their college or university’s library and its website, and
- Google Scholar.

These resources are not bulletproof, and you can’t always find what you need through them. However, their general search functionality and the databases from which they draw tend to be more reliable, specific, and professional. It is quite likely that your argument will be better received if it relies on the kind of sources you discover with these tools.

Your Library

Although the following information primarily focuses on making good use of your library’s online tools, one of the most valuable and under-utilized resources at your disposal are the librarians themselves. Do you know if your school has research librarians on staff? How about your local library? Research librarians (or, reference librarians) are not only well-versed in the research process, but they are also passionate about supporting students in their inquiry.
It’s also possible that your library offers research support that you can access remotely: many colleges and universities provide librarian support via phone, text, instant message/chat, or e-mail. Some libraries even make video tutorials and do-it-yourself research tips and tricks.

The first step in learning how your library will support you is to investigate their website. Although I can’t provide specific instruction for the use of your library website—they are all slightly different—I encourage you to spend ten minutes familiarizing yourself with the site, considering the following questions especially:

- Does the site have an FAQ, student support, Librarian Chat, or DIY link in case you have questions?
- Does the site have an integrated search bar (i.e., a search engine that allows you to search some or all databases and the library catalogue simultaneously)?
- How do you access the “advanced search” function of the library’s search bar?
- Does your account have an eShelf or reading list to save sources you find?
- Is your library a member of a resource sharing network, like ILLiad or SUMMIT? How do you request a source through this network?
- Does your library subscribe to multimedia or digital resource services, like video streaming or eBook libraries?
- Does the site offer any citation management support software, like Mendeley or Zotero? (You can find links to these tools in the Additional Recommended Resources appendix.)

Depending on where you’re learning, your school will provide different access to scholarly articles, books, and other media.
Most schools pay subscriptions to databases filled with academic works in addition to owning a body of physical texts (books, DVDs, magazines, etc.). Some schools are members of exchange services for physical texts as well, in which case a network of libraries can provide resources to students at your school.

It is worth noting that most library websites use an older form of search technology. You have likely realized that day-to-day search engines like Google will predict what you’re searching, correct your spelling, and automatically return results that your search terms might not have exactly aligned with. (For example, I could google *How many bucketball players on Jazz roster* and I would still likely get the results I needed.) Most library search engines don’t do this, so you need to be very deliberate with your search terms. Here are some tips:

- Consider synonyms and jargon that might be more likely to yield results. As you research, you will become more fluent in the language of your subject. Keep track of vocabulary that other scholars use, and revise your search terms based on this context-specific language.

- Use the Boolean operators ? and * for expanded results:
  - wom?n yields results for woman, women, womyn, etc.
  - medic* yields results for medic, medicine, medication, medicinal, medical, etc.

- Use the advanced search feature to combine search terms, exclude certain results, limit the search terms’ applicability, etc.

When using library search engines, be very deliberate with your search terms.
Advanced search fields like these allow you to put more specific constraints on your search. Your library website’s search feature will likely allow you to limit the results you get by year of publication, medium, genre or topic, and other constraints.
You may also be able to refine your first set of results using filters (typically on the left side of the page and/or above the results). For instance, if your teacher requires you to use a peer-reviewed source, your library database may allow you to limit your results to only peer-reviewed journals, as illustrated here.

JSTOR, Academic Search Premier, and EBSCO are three databases that most schools subscribe to; they are quite broad and well established. Especially if your school’s library doesn’t have an integrated search function, you may need to access these databases directly. Look for a link on your library website to “Databases” (or something to that effect) to find specific networks of sources.
Google Scholar
Because Google Scholar is a bit more intuitive than most library search engines, and because it draws from large databases, you might find it easier to use. Many of the results you turn up using Google Scholar are available online as free access PDFs.

That said, Scholar will often bring up citations for books, articles, and other texts that you don’t have access to. Before you use Google Scholar, make sure you’re logged in to your school account in the same browser; the search engine should provide links to “Find it @ [your school]” if your institution subscribes to the appropriate database.

If you find a citation, article preview, or other text via Google Scholar but can’t access it easily, you return to your library website and search for it directly. It’s possible that you have access to the text via a loaning program like ILLiad.

Google Scholar will also let you limit your results by various constraints, making it easier to wade through many, many results.

- **Google Tricks That Will Change the Way You Search** by Jack Linshi
- “Refine web searches” and “Filter your search results” from Google’s help section
Wikipedia

A quick note on Wikipedia: many instructors forbid the use of Wikipedia as a cited source in an essay. Wikipedia is a great place for quick facts and background knowledge, but because its content is user-created and -curated, it is vulnerable to the spread of misinformation characteristic of the broader Internet. Wikipedia has been vetting their articles more thoroughly in recent years, but only about 1 in 200 are internally rated as “good articles.” There are two hacks that you should know in order to use Wikipedia more critically:

- It is wise to avoid a page has a warning banner at the top, such as:
  - This article needs to be updated,
  - The examples and perspective in this article deal primarily with the United States and do not represent a worldwide view of the subject,
  - The neutrality of this article is disputed,
  - This article needs additional citations for verification,
  - This article includes a list of references, but its sources remain unclear because it has insufficient inline citations.

- If your Wikipedia information is crucial and seems reliable, use the linked citation to draw from instead of the Wikipedia page, as pictured below. This will help you ensure that the linked content is legitimate (dead links and suspect citations are no good) and avoid citing Wikipedia as a main source.

Other Resources

As we will continue to discuss, the most useful sources for your research project are not always proper academic, peer-reviewed articles. For instance, if I were writing a paper on the experience of working for United Airlines, a compelling blog post by a flight attendant that speaks to the actual working conditions they experienced might be more appropriate than a data-driven scholarly investigation of the United Airlines consumer trends. You might find that a TED Talk, a published interview, an advertisement, or some other non-academic source would be useful for your writing. Therefore, it’s important that you apply the skills and techniques
Additional Techniques for Discovering Sources

All it takes is one or two really good sources to get you started. You should keep your perspective wide to catch as much as you can—but if you’ve found a handful of good sources, there are four tools that can help you find even more:

- The author of that perfect article probably got some of their information from somewhere else, just like you. **Citation mining** is the process of using a text’s citations, bibliography, or notes to track down other similar or related sources. Plug the author’s citations into your school’s library search engine or Google Scholar to see if you have access.

- Web of Science is like reverse citation mining: instead of using a text’s bibliography to find more sources, you find other sources that cite your text in *their* bibliographies. Web of Science is a digital archive that shows you connections between different authors and their writing—and not only for science! If you find a good source that is documented in this database, you can see other texts that cite that source.

- **Bootstrapping** is a technique that works best on search engines with detail features, like your library search engine. As you can see in the screenshot below, these search engines tag each text with certain subject keywords. By clicking on those keywords, you can link to other texts tagged with the same keywords, typically according to Library of Congress standards.
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

• WorldCat is a tremendous tool that catalogs the most citations of any database I’ve ever seen. Even though you can’t always access texts through WorldCat, you can figure out which nearby libraries might be able to help you out.

The first and most important piece of advice I can offer you as you begin to dig into these sources: stay organized. By taking notes and keeping record of where each idea is coming from, you save yourself a lot of time—and avoid the risk of unintentional plagiarism. If you could stand to brush up on your notetaking skills, take a look at Appendix A: Engaged Reading Strategies.

Research Methods: Evaluating Sources

If there’s no such thing as an inherently “good” or “bad” source, how do we determine if a source is right for our purposes? As you sift through sources, you should consider credibility and use-value to determine whether a source is right for you. Credibility refers to the reliability and accuracy of the author, their writing, and the publisher. Use-value is a broad term that includes whether you should use a text in your research paper, as well as how you will use that text. The CRAAP Test will help you explore both credibility and use-value.
Currency

How recently was the text created? Does that impact the accuracy or value of its contents, either positively or negatively?

Generally, a text that is current is more credible and useful: data will be more accurate, the content will reflect more up-to-date ideas, and so on. However, there are some exceptions.

- A text that is not current might be useful because it reflects attitudes of its publication era. For instance, if I were writing a paper on sexism in the office environment, it might be convincing to include a memo on dress codes from 1973.
- A text that is current might not be useful because the phenomena it discusses might not have existed long enough to have substantial evidence or study. For instance, if I were writing a paper on nanorobotics, it would be difficult to evaluate long-term impacts of this emergent technology because it simply hasn’t been around long enough.

Relevance

Is the text closely related to your topic? Does it illuminate your topic, or is it only tangentially connected?

A text that is relevant is generally more useful, as you probably already realize. Exceptions to this might include:

- A text that is too relevant might not be useful because it might create overlap or redundancy in your argument. You should use texts like this to pivot, complicate, or challenge your topic so you are not just repeating someone else’s ideas.
- A text that is only slightly relevant might be useful in providing background knowledge, drawing out an analogy, or gesturing to important questions or ideas you don’t have room to discuss in the scope of your paper.

Accuracy

Is there any reason to doubt the validity of the text? Is it possible that the information and ideas included are simply untrue?
You might start out by relying on your instincts to answer these questions, but your evaluation of accuracy should also be informed more objectively by the other elements of the CRAAP Test (e.g., if a text is outdated, it might no longer be accurate). Of course, the importance of this element depends on your use of the source; for instance, if I were writing a paper on conservative responses to Planned Parenthood, I might find it useful to discuss the inaccurate videos released by a pro-choice group several years ago.

**Authority**

Who is the author? Who is the publisher? Do either or both demonstrate ethos through their experience, credentials, or public perception?

This element also depends on your use of the source; for instance, if I were writing a paper on cyberbullying, I might find it useful to bring in posts from anonymous teenagers. Often, though, academic presses (e.g., Oxford University) and government publishers (e.g., hhs.gov) are assumed to have an increased degree of authority when compared with popular presses (e.g., *The Atlantic*) or self-published texts (e.g., blogs). It may be difficult to ascertain an author and a publisher’s authority without further research, but here are some red flags if you’re evaluating a source with questionable authority:

- There is no author listed.
- The website hosting the webpage or article is incomplete, outdated, or broken.
- The author seems to use little factual evidence.
- The author is known for extreme or one-dimensional views.
- The source has a sponsoring organization with an agenda that might undermine the validity of the information.

**Purpose**

What is the author trying to achieve with their text? What are their motivations or reasons for publication and writing? Does that purpose influence the credibility of the text?

As we’ve discussed, every piece of rhetoric has a purpose. It’s important that you identify and evaluate the implied and/or declared purposes of a text before you put too much faith in it.

Even though you’re making efforts to keep an open mind to different positions, it is likely that you’ve already formed some opinions about your topic. As you review each source, try to read
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

both with and against the grain; in other words, try to position yourself at least once as a doubter and at least once as a believer. Regardless of what the source actually has to say, you should (a) try to take the argument on its own terms and try to appreciate or understand it; and (b) be critical of it, looking for its blind spots and problems. This is especially important when we encounter texts we really like or really dislike—we need to challenge our early perceptions to interrupt projection.

As you proceed through each step of the CRAAP Test, try to come up with answers as both a doubter and a believer. For example, try to come up with a reason why a source’s Authority makes it credible and useful; then, come up with a reason why the same source’s Authority makes it unreliable and not useful.

This may seem like a cumbersome process, but with enough practice, the CRAAP Test will become second nature. You will become more efficient as you evaluate more texts, and eventually you will be able to identify a source’s use-value and credibility without running the entire test. Furthermore, as you may already realize, you can eventually just start eliminating sources if they fail to demonstrate credibility and/or use-value through at least one step of the CRAAP Test.

**Interpreting Sources and Processing Information**

Once you’ve found a source that seems both useful and credible, you should spend some time reading, rereading, and interpreting that text. The more time you allow yourself to think through a text, the more likely your use of it will be rhetorically effective.

Although it is time-consuming, I encourage you to process each text by:

- Reading once through, trying to develop a global understanding of the content
- Re-reading at least once, annotating the text along the way, and then copying quotes, ideas, and your reactions into your notes
- Summarizing the text in your notes in casual prose
- Reflecting on how the text relates to your topic and your stance on the topic
- Reflecting on how the text relates to others you’ve read

You need not perform such thorough reading with texts you don’t intend to use—e.g., if you determine that the source is too old to inform your work. However, the above list will ensure that you develop a nuanced and accurate understanding of the author’s perspective. Think of this process as part of the ongoing conversation: before you start expressing your ideas, you should listen carefully, ask follow-up questions to clarify what you’ve heard, and situate the ideas within the context of the bigger discussion.

**The Annotated Bibliography**

So far, you have discovered, evaluated, and begun to process your sources intellectually. Your next steps will vary based on your rhetorical situation, but it is possible that your teacher will
ask you to write an annotated bibliography before or during the drafting process for your actual essay.

An annotated bibliography is a formalized exercise in the type of interpretation described throughout this section. An annotated bibliography is like a long works cited page, but underneath each citation is a paragraph that explains and analyzes the text. Examples are included in this section to give you an idea of what an annotated bibliography might look like.

Annotated bibliographies have a few purposes:

a) To organize your research so you don’t lose track of where different ideas come from,

b) To help you process texts in a consistent and thorough way, and
c) To demonstrate your ongoing research process for your teacher.

This kind of writing can also be an end in itself: many scholars publish annotated bibliographies as research or teaching tools. They can be helpful for authors like you, looking for an introduction to a conversation or a variety of perspectives on a topic. As an example, consider the model annotated bibliography “What Does It Mean to Be Educated?” later in this chapter.

Although every teacher will have slightly different ideas about what goes into an annotated bibliography, I encourage my students to include the following:

- A brief summary of the main ideas discussed in the text and/or an evaluation of the rhetoric or argumentation deployed by the author.
  a) What are the key insights, arguments, or pieces of information included in the source? What is the author’s purpose? How does their language pursue that purpose?

- A consideration of the text’s place in the ongoing conversation about your topic.
  a) To what other ideas, issues, and texts is your text responding? How would you describe the intended audience? Does the author seem credible, referencing other “speakers” in the conversation?

- A description of the text’s use-value.
  a) Is the text useful? How do you predict you will use the text in your work?

You might note that your work in the CRAAP Test will provide useful answers for some of these questions.

Sometimes, I’ll also include a couple of compelling quotes in my annotations. Typically, I request that students write about 100 words for each annotation, but you should ask your teacher if they have more specific guidelines.

Your annotated bibliography will be an excellent tool as you turn to the next steps of research writing: synthesizing a variety of voices with your ideas and experiences. It is a quick reference
Research Methods: Drawing from Sources and Synthesizing

Finding Your Position, Posture, and Perspective

As you begin drafting your research essay, remember the conversation analogy: by using other voices, you are entering into a discussion that is much bigger than just you, even bigger than the authors you cite. However, what you have to say is important, so you are bringing together your ideas with others’ ideas from a unique interpretive standpoint. Although it may take you a while to find it, you should be searching for your unique position in a complex network of discourse.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself as you consider this:

- How would I introduce this topic to someone who is completely unfamiliar?
- What are the major viewpoints on this topic? Remember that very few issues have only two sides.
- With which viewpoints do I align? With which viewpoints do I disagree? Consider agreement (“Yes”), disagreement (“No”), and qualification (“Yes, but…”).
- What did I know about this issue before I began researching? What have I learned so far?
- What is my rhetorical purpose with this project? If your purpose is to argue a position, be sure that you feel comfortable with the terms and ideas discussed in the previous section on argumentation.

Articulating Your Claim

Once you’ve started to catch the rhythm of the ongoing conversation, it’s time to find a way to put your perspective into words. Bear in mind that your thesis statement should evolve as you
research, draft, and revise: you might tweak the wording, adjust your scope, change your position or even your entire topic in the course of your work.

Because your thesis is a “working thesis” or “(hypo)thesis,” you should use the following strategies to draft your thesis but be ready to make adjustments along the way.

In Chapter 6, we introduced the T3, Occasion/Position, and Embedded Thesis models. As a refresher,

- A T3 statement articulates the author’s stance, then offers three supporting reasons, subtopics, or components of the argument.
  Throughout history, women have been legally oppressed by different social institutions, including exclusion from the workplace, restriction of voting rights, and regulations of healthcare.
- An Occasion/Position statement starts with a statement of relevance related to the rhetorical occasion, then articulates the author’s stance.
  Recent Congressional activity in the U.S. has led me to wonder how women’s freedoms have been restricted throughout history. Women have been legally oppressed by many different institutions since the inception of the United States.
- An Embedded Thesis presents the research question, perhaps with a gesture to the answer(s). This strategy requires that you clearly articulate your stance somewhere later in your paper, at a point when your evidence has led you to the answer to your guiding question.
  Many people would agree that women have experienced oppression throughout the history of the United States, but how has this oppression been exercised legally through different social institutions?

Of course, these are only three strategies to write a thesis. You may use one of them, combine several of them, or use a different strategy entirely.

To build on these three strategies, we should look at three kinds of claims: three sorts of postures that you might take to articulate your stance as a thesis.

- **Claim of Phenomenon**: This statement indicates that your essay will explore a measurable but arguable happening.
  Obesity rates correlate with higher rates of poverty.
  Claims of phenomenon are often more straightforward, but should still be arguable and worth discussion.

- **Claim of Evaluation**: This statement indicates that your essay will determine something that is better, best, worse, or worst in regard to your topic.
  The healthiest nations are those with economic safety nets.
Claims of evaluation require you to make an informed judgment based on evidence. In this example, the student would have to establish a metric for “healthy” in addition to exploring the way that economic safety nets promote healthful behaviors—What makes someone “healthy” and why are safety nets a pathway to health?

- **Claim of Policy**: This statement indicates that your essay will propose a plan of action to best address an issue.

  State and federal governments should create educational programs, develop infrastructure, and establish food-stamp benefits to promote healthy eating for people experiencing poverty.

Claims of policy do the most heavy lifting: they articulate a stance that requires action, from the reader or from another stakeholder. A claim of policy often uses the word “should.”

You may notice that these claims can be effectively combined at your discretion. Sometimes, when different ideas overlap, it’s absolutely necessary to combine them to create a cohesive stance. For instance, in the example above, the claim of policy would require the author to establish a claim of phenomenon, too: before advocating for action, the author must demonstrate what that action responds to. For more practice, check out the activity in the following section titled “Articulating Your Claim — Practicing Thesis Development.”

**Situating Yourself Using Your Research**

While you’re drafting, be diligent and deliberate with your use of other people’s words, ideas, and perspectives. Foreground your thesis (even if it’s still in progress) and use paraphrases, direct quotes, and summary in the background to explain, support, complicate, or contrast your perspective.

Depending on the work you’ve done to this point, you may have a reasonable body of quotes, summaries, and paraphrases that you can draw from. Whether or not you’ve been collecting evidence throughout your research process, be sure to return to the original sources to ensure the accuracy and efficacy of your quotes, summaries, and paraphrases.

In Section 2, we encountered paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing for a text wrestling essay, but let’s take a minute to revisit them in this new rhetorical situation. How do you think using support in a research paper is different from using support in an analysis?

A **direct quote** uses quotation marks (" ") to indicate where you’re borrowing an author’s words verbatim in your own writing. Use a direct quote if someone else wrote or said something in a distinctive or particular way and you want to capture their words exactly.

Direct quotes are good for establishing ethos and providing evidence. In a research essay, you will be expected to use some direct quotes; however, too many direct quotes can overwhelm your thesis and actually undermine your sense of ethos. Your research paper should strike a
balance between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing—and articulating your own perspective!

**Summarizing** refers to the action of boiling down an author’s ideas into a shorter version in your own words. Summary demonstrates your understanding of a text, but it also can be useful in giving background information or making a complex idea more accessible.

When we **paraphrase**, we are processing information or ideas from another person’s text and putting it in our own words. The main difference between paraphrase and summary is scope: if summarizing means rewording and condensing, then

paraphrasing means rewording without drastically altering length. However, paraphrasing is also generally more faithful to the spirit of the original; whereas a summary requires you to process and invites your own perspective, a paraphrase ought to mirror back the original idea using your own language.

Paraphrasing is helpful for establishing background knowledge or general consensus, simplifying a complicated idea, or reminding your reader of a certain part of another text. It is also valuable when relaying statistics or historical information, both of which are usually more fluidly woven into your writing when spoken with your own voice.

Each of these three tactics should support your argument: you should integrate quotes, paraphrases, and summary in with your own writing. Below, you can see three examples of these tools. Consider how the direct quote, the paraphrase, and the summary each could be used to achieve different purposes.

---

**Original Passage**

It has been suggested (again rather anecdotally) that giraffes do communicate using infrasonic vocalizations (the signals are verbally described to be similar—in structure and function—to the low-frequency, infrasonic “rumbles” of elephants). It was further speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production. Moreover, particular neck movements (e.g. the neck stretch) are suggested to be associated with the production of infrasonic vocalizations."\(^{107}\)
Some zoological experts have pointed out that the evidence for giraffe hums has been “rather anecdotally” reported (Baotic et al. 3). However, some scientists have “speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production” (Ibid. 3).

Giraffes emit a low-pitch noise; some scientists believe that this *hum* can be used for communication with other members of the social group, but others are skeptical because of the dearth of research on giraffe noises. According to Baotic et al., the anatomy of the animal suggests that they may be making deliberate and specific noises (3).

Baotic et al. conducted a study on giraffe hums in response to speculation that these noises are used deliberately for communication.

These examples also demonstrate additional citation conventions worth noting:

- A parenthetical in-text citation is used for all three forms. (In MLA format, this citation includes the author’s last name and page number.) The purpose of an in-text citation is to identify key information that guides your reader to your Works Cited page (or Bibliography or References, depending on your format).
- If you use the author’s name in the sentence, you do not need to include their name in the parenthetical citation.
- If your material doesn’t come from a specific page or page range, but rather from the entire text, you do not need to include a page number in the parenthetical citation.
- If there are many authors (generally more than three), you can use “et al.” to mean “and others.”
- If you cite the same source consecutively in the same paragraph (without citing any other sources in between), you can use “Ibid.” to mean “same as the last one.”

There are infinite ways to bring evidence into your discussion, but for now, let’s revisit a formula that many students find productive as they find their footing in research writing: **Front-load + Quote/Paraphrase/Summarize + Cite + Explain/elaborate/analyze.**
Set your reader up for the quote using a signpost (also known as a “signal phrase”). Don’t drop quotes in abruptly: by front-loading, you can guide your reader’s interpretation.

Use whichever technique is relevant to your rhetorical purpose at that exact point.

Perhaps most importantly, you need to make the value of this evidence clear to the reader. What does it mean? How does it further your thesis?

This might feel formulaic and forced at first, but following these steps will ensure that you give each piece of evidence thorough attention.

What might this look like in practice?

(1) Humans and dolphins are not the only mammals with complex systems of communication. As a matter of fact, (2) some scientists have “speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production” ((3) Baotic et al. 3). (4) Even though no definitive answer has been found, it’s possible that the structure of a giraffe’s head allows it to create sounds that humans may not be able to hear. This hypothesis supports the notion that different species of animals develop a sort of “language” that corresponds to their anatomy.

1. Front-load
   Humans and dolphins are not the only mammals with complex systems of communication. As a matter of fact,

2. Quote
   some scientists have “speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production”

3. Cite
   (Baotic et al. 3).

4. Explain/elaborate/analyze
   Even though no definitive answer has been found, it’s possible that the structure of a giraffe’s head allows it to create sounds that humans may not be able to hear. This hypothesis supports the notion that different species of animals develop a sort of “language” that corresponds to their anatomy.
Extended Quotes

A quick note on block quotes: Sometimes, you may find it necessary to use a long direct quote from a source. For instance, if there is a passage that you plan to analyze in-depth or throughout the course of the entire paper, you may need to reproduce the whole thing. You may have seen other authors use block quotes in the course of your research. In the middle of a sentence or paragraph, the text will break into a long direct quote that is indented and separated from the rest of the paragraph.

There are occasions when it is appropriate for you to use block quotes, too, but they are rare. Even though long quotes can be useful, quotes long enough to block are often too long. Using too much of one source all at once can overwhelm your own voice and analysis, distract the reader, undermine your ethos, and prevent you from digging into a quote. It’s typically a better choice to

- abridge (omit words from the beginning or end of the quote, or from the middle using an ellipsis [...]),
- break up (split one long quote into two or three shorter quotes that you can attend to more specifically), or
- paraphrase

a long quote, especially because that gives you more space for the last step of the formula above.

If, in the rare event that you must use a long direct quote, one which runs more than four lines on a properly formatted page, follow the guidelines from the appropriate style guide. In MLA format, block quotes are:

(a) indented one inch from the margin, (b) double-spaced, (c) not in quotation marks, and (d) use original end-punctuation and an in-text citation after the last sentence. The paragraph will continue after the block quote without any indentation.
Readerly Signposts

Signposts are phrases and sentences that guide a reader’s interpretation of the evidence you are about to introduce. Readerly signposts are also known as “signal phrases” because they give the reader a warning of your next move. In addition to foreshadowing a paraphrase, quote, or summary, though, your signposts can be active agents in your argumentation.

Before using a paraphrase, quote, or summary, you can prime your reader to understand that evidence in a certain way. For example, let’s take the imaginary quote, “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”

[X] insists, “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”
Some people believe, naively, that “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”
Common knowledge suggests that “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”
[X] posits that “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”
Although some people believe otherwise, the truth is that “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”
Although some people believe that “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick,” it is more likely that...
Whenever conspiracy theories come up, people like to joke that “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”
The government has conducted many covert operations in the last century: “The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick.”

What does each signpost do to us, as readers, encountering the same quote?

A very useful resource for applying these signposts is the text They Say, I Say, which you may be able to find online or at your school’s library.
Addressing Counterarguments

As you recall from the chapter on argumentation, a good argument acknowledges other voices. Whether you’re trying to refute those counterarguments or find common ground before moving forward, it is important to include a diversity of perspectives in your argument. One highly effective way to do so is by using the readerly signpost that I call the naysayer’s voice.

Simply put, the naysayer is a voice that disagrees with you that you imagine into your essay. Consider, for example, this excerpt from Paul Greenough:

It appears that tigers cannot be accurately counted and that uncertainty is as endemic to their study as to the study of many other wildlife populations. In the meantime, pugmark counting continues. … In the end, the debate over numbers cannot be resolved; while rising trends were discernible through the 1970s and 1980s, firm baselines and accurate numbers were beyond anyone’s grasp.

CRITIC: Are you emphasizing this numbers and counting business for some reason?

AUTHOR: Yes. I find it instructive to compare the degree of surveillance demanded by the smallpox eradication campaign…with the sketchy methods sufficient to keep Project Tiger afloat. …

CRITIC: Maybe numbers aren’t as central to these large state enterprises as you assume?

AUTHOR: No, no—they live and die by them.109

Notice the advantages of this technique:

- Greenough demonstrates, first and foremost, that the topic he’s considering is part of a broad conversation involving many voices and perspectives.
- He is able to effectively transition between ideas.
- He controls the counterargument by asking the questions he wants to be asked.

Give it a shot in your own writing by adding a reader’s or a naysayer’s voice every few paragraphs: imagine what a skeptical, curious, or enthusiastic audience might say in response to each of your main points.

Revisiting Your Research Question, Developing an Introduction, and Crafting a Conclusion

Once you’ve started synthesizing ideas in your drafting process, you should frequently revisit your research question to refine the phrasing and be certain it still encompasses your concerns. During the research and drafting process, it is likely that your focus will change, which should motivate you to adjust, pivot, complicate, or drastically change your path of inquiry and working thesis. Additionally, you will acquire new language and ideas as you get the feel for the conversation. Use the new jargon and concepts to hone your research question and thesis.
Introductions

Introductions are the most difficult part of any paper for me. Not only does it feel awkward, but I often don’t know quite what I want to say until I’ve written the essay. Fortunately, we don’t have to force out an intro before we’re ready. Give yourself permission to draft out of order! For instance, I typically write the entire body of the essay before returning to the top to draft an introduction.

If you draft out of order, though, you should dedicate time to crafting an effective introduction before turning in the final draft. The introduction to a paper is your chance to make a first impression on your reader. You might be establishing a conceptual framework, setting a tone, or showing the reader a way in. Furthermore, due to the primacy effect, readers are more likely to remember your intro than most of the rest of your essay.

In this brief section, I want to note two pet peeves for introductions, and then offer a handful of other possibilities.

Don’t

Avoid these two techniques:

• **Starting with fluffy, irrelevant, or extremely general statements.** Sometimes, developing authors make really broad observations or facts that just take up space before getting to the good stuff. You can see this demonstrated in the “Original” version of the student example below.

• **Offering a definition for something that your audience already knows.** At some point, this method became a stock-technique for starting speeches, essays, and other texts: “Merriam Webster defines $x$ as....” You’ve probably heard it before. As pervasive as this technique is, though, it is generally ineffective for two reasons: (1) it is hackneyed—overused to the point of meaninglessness, and (2) it rarely offers new insight—the audience probably already has sufficient knowledge of the definition. There is an exception to this point, though! You can overcome issue #2 by analyzing the definition you give: does the definition reveal something about our common-sense that you want to critique? Does it contradict or overlook connotations? Do you think the definition is too narrow, too broad, or too ambiguous? In other words, you can use the definition technique as long as you’re doing something with the definition.

Do

These are a few approaches to introductions that my students often find successful. Perhaps the best advice I can offer, though, is to try out a lot of different introductions and see which ones feel better to you, the author. Which do you like most, and which do you think will be most impactful to your audience?

• **Telling a story.** Not only will this kick your essay off with pathos and specificity, but it can also lend variety to the voice you use throughout the rest of your essay. A story can
also provide a touchstone, or a reference point, for you and your reader; you can relate your argument back to the story and its characters as you develop more complex ideas.

- **Describing a scene.** Similarly, thick description can provide your reader a mental image to grasp before you present your research question and thesis. This is the technique used in the model below.

- **Asking a question.** This is a common technique teachers share with their students when describing a “hook.” You want your reader to feel curious, excited, and involved as they start reading your essay, and posing a thought-provoking question can bring them into the conversation too.

- **Using a striking quote or fact.** Another “hook” technique: starting off your essay with a meaningful quote, shocking statistic, or curious fact can catch a reader’s eye and stimulate their curiosity.

- **Considering a case study.** Similar to the storytelling approach, this technique asks you to identify a single person or occurrence relevant to your topic that represents a bigger trend you will discuss.

- **Relating a real or imaginary dialogue.** To help your readers acclimate to the conversation themselves, show them how people might talk about your topic. This also provides a good opportunity to demonstrate the stakes of the issue—why does it matter, and to whom?

- **Establishing a juxtaposition.** You might compare two seemingly unlike ideas, things, or questions, or contrast two seemingly similar ideas, things, or questions in order to clarify your path of inquiry and to challenge your readers’ assumptions about those ideas, things or questions.

Here’s an example of a student’s placeholder introduction in their draft, followed by a revised version using the scene description approach from above. He tried out a few of the strategies above before settling on the scene description for his revision. Notice how the earlier version “buries the lede,” as one might say—hides the most interesting, relevant, or exciting detail. By contrast, the revised version is active, visual, and engaging.

**Original:**

Every year over 15 million people visit Paris, more than any other city in the world. Paris has a rich, artistic history, stunning architecture and decadent mouth-watering food. Almost every visitor here heads straight for the Eiffel Tower (“Top destinations” 2014). Absorbing the breathtaking view, towering over the metropolis below, you might notice something missing from the Parisian landscape: tall buildings. It’s easy to overlook but a peculiar thing. Around the world, most mega cities have hundreds of towering skyscrapers, but here in Paris, the vast majority of buildings are less than six stories tall (Davies 2010). The reason lies deep below the surface in the Paris underground where an immense cave system filled with dead bodies is attracting a different kind of visitor.110
On a frigid day in December of 1774, residents of a small walled district in Paris watched in horror as the ground before them began to crack and shift. Within seconds a massive section of road collapsed, leaving behind a gaping chasm where Rue d’Enfer (Hell Street) once stood. Residents peeked over the edge into a black abyss that has since become the stuff of wonder and nightmares. What had been unearthed that cold day in December, was an ancient tunnel system now known as The Empire of the Dead.

You may notice that neither of these model introductions articulates a thesis statement or a research question. How would you advise this student to transition into the central, unifying insight of their paper?

Conclusions

A close second to introductions, in terms of difficulty, are conclusions. Due to the recency effect, readers are more likely to remember your conclusion than most of the rest of your essay.

Most of us have been trained to believe that a conclusion repeats your thesis and main arguments, perhaps in different words, to remind the reader what they just read—or to fluff up page counts. This is a misguided notion. True, conclusions shouldn’t introduce completely new ideas, but they shouldn’t only rehearse everything you’ve already said. Rather, they should tie up loose ends and leave the reader with an extending thought—something more to meditate on once they’ve left the world you’ve created with your essay. Your conclusion is your last chance to speak to your reader on your terms based on the knowledge you have now shared; repeating what you have already established is a wasted opportunity.

Instead, here are few other possibilities. (You can include all, some, or none of them.)

- **Look back to your introduction.** If you told a story, shared a case study, or described a scene, you might reconsider that story, case study, or scene with the knowledge developed in the course of your paper. Consider the “ouroboros”—the snake eating its own head. Your conclusion can provide a satisfying circularity using this tactic.
- **Consider what surprised you in your research process.** What do those surprises teach us about commonsense assumptions about your topic? How might the evolution of your thought on a topic model the evolution you expect from your readers?
- **End with a quote.** A final thought, meaningfully articulated, can make your readers feel settled and satisfied.
- **Propose a call-to-action.** Especially if your path of inquiry is a matter of policy or behavior, tell the reader what they should do now that they have seen the issue from your eyes.
• **Gesture to questions and issues you can’t address in the scope of your paper.** You might have had to omit some of your digressive concerns in the interest of focus. What remains to be answered, studied, or considered?

Here’s an example of a placeholder conclusion in a draft, followed by a revised version using the “gesture to questions” and “end with a quote” approach from above. You may not be able to tell without reading the rest of the essay, but the original version simply restates the main points of each paragraph. In addition to being repetitive, the original is also not very exciting, so it does not inspire the reader to keep thinking about the topic. On the other hand, the revised version tries to give the reader more to chew on: it builds from what the paper establishes to provoke more curiosity and lets the subject continue to grow.

Original:

In conclusion, it is likely that the space tourism industry will flourish as long as venture capitalists and the private sector bankroll its development. As noted in this paper, new technology will support space tourism and humans are always curious to see new places. Space tourism is currently very expensive but it will become more affordable. The FAA and other government agencies will make sure it is regulated and safe.

Revised:

It has become clear that the financial, regulatory, and technological elements of space tourism are all within reach for humanity—whether in reality or in our imaginations. However, the growth of a space tourism industry will raise more and more questions: Will the ability to leave our blue marble exacerbate income inequity? If space tourism is restricted to those who can afford exorbitant costs, then it is quite possible that the less privileged will remain earthbound. Moreover, should our history of earthly colonization worry us for the fate of our universe? These questions and others point to an urgent constraint: space tourism might be logistically feasible, but can we ensure that what we imagine will be ethical? According to Carl Sagan, “Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere” (2).112
Activities

Research Scavenger Hunt

To practice using a variety of research tools and finding a diversity of sources, try to discover resources according to the following constraints. Once you find a source, you should make sure you can access it later—save it to your computer; copy a live, stable URL; request it from the library; and/or save it to your Library eShelf, if you have one. For this assignment, you can copy a URL or doi for digital resources or library call number for physical ones.

If you’re already working on a project, use your topic for this activity. If you don’t have a topic in mind, choose one by picking up a book, paper, or other written text near you: close your eyes and point to a random part of the page. Use the noun closest to your finger that you find vaguely interesting as a topic or search term for this exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Tool</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>A peer-reviewed journal article through a database</td>
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<tr>
<td>A source you bootstrapped using subject tags</td>
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<td>A newspaper article</td>
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<td>A source through Google</td>
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<td>A source originally cited in a Wikipedia article</td>
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<tr>
<td>A physical text in your school’s library (book, DVD, microfilm, etc.)</td>
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<td>A source through Google Scholar</td>
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identify fake news

Identifying Fake News

To think more about credibility, accuracy, and truth, read “Fake news 'symptomatic of crisis in journalism'” from Al Jazeera. Then, test your skills using this fake news quiz game.

Interacting with Sources Graphic Organizer

The following graphic organizer asks you to apply the skills from the previous section using a text of your choice. Complete this graphic organizer to practice critical encounters with your research and prepare to integrate information into your essay.
**Part Three: Research and Argumentation**

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**a. Discovering a Source:** Find a source using one of the methods described in this chapter; record which method you used below (e.g., “Google Scholar” or “bootstrapped a library article”).

---

**b. Evaluating Credibility and Use-Value:** Put your source through the CRAAP Test to determine whether it demonstrates credibility and use-value. Write responses for each element that practice reading with the grain and reading against the grain.

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<th>Currency</th>
<th>With Grain (Believer)</th>
<th>Against Grain (Doubter)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>“This source is great!”</td>
<td>“This source is absolute garbage!”</td>
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<td>Relevance</td>
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### Purpose

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**c. Citation:** Using citation and style resources like Purdue OWL for guidance, write an accurate citation for this source for a Works Cited page.

**d. Paraphrase/Quote/Summarize:** Choose a “golden line” from the source. First, copy the quote, using quotations marks, and include a parenthetical in-text citation.
Second, **paraphrase** the quote and include a parenthetical in-text citation.

Third, **summarize** the main point of the source and include a parenthetical in-text citation; you may include the quote if you see fit.
e. Integrating Information: Using your response from part d, write a sample paragraph that integrates a quote, paraphrase, or summary. Use the formula discussed earlier in this chapter (front-load + P/Q/S + explain/elaborate/analyze)
Articulating Your Claim – Practicing Thesis Development

To practice applying the strategies for developing and revising a thesis statement explored in this chapter, you will write and revise a claim based on constraints provided by your groupmates. This activity works best with at least two other students.

Part One – Write
First, on a post-it note or blank piece of paper, write any article of clothing. Then, choose one type of claim (Claim of Phenomenon, Claim of Evaluation, or Claim of Policy, introduced in “Research Methods: Drawing from Sources and Synthesizing”) and write “Phenomenon,” “Evaluation,” or “Policy” on a different post-it note or blank piece of paper.

Exchange your article of clothing with one student and your type of claim with another. (As long as you end up with one of each that you didn’t come up with yourself, it doesn’t matter how you rotate.) Now, write a thesis statement using your choice of strategy:

- T3 (Throughout history, women have been legally oppressed by different social institutions, including exclusion from the workplace, restriction of voting rights, and regulations of healthcare.)
- O/P (Recent Congressional activity in the U.S. has led me to wonder how women’s freedoms have been restricted throughout history. Women have been legally oppressed by many different institutions since the inception of the United States.)
- Embedded Thesis (Many people would agree that women have experienced oppression throughout the history of the United States, but how has this oppression been exercised legally through different social institutions?)

Your thesis should make a claim about the article of clothing according to the post-its you received. For example,

Now that it’s November, it’s time to break out the cold weather clothing. When you want to be both warm and also fashionable, a striped wool sweater is the best choice.
Part Two – Revise

Now, write one of the rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, or ethos) on a new post-it note. Exchange with another student. Revise your thesis to appeal predominantly to that rhetorical appeal.

Example:

Original:
Now that it’s November, it’s time to break out the cold weather clothing. When you want to be both warm and also fashionable, a striped wool sweater is the best choice.

Revised:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Finally, revise your thesis once more by adding a concession statement.

Example:

Original:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Revised:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Even though jackets are better for rain or snow, a sweater is a versatile and functional alternative. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Guiding Interpretation (Readerly Signposts)

In the organizer on the next page, create a signpost for each of the quotes in the left column that reflects the posture in the top row.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Complete faith</th>
<th>Uncertainty</th>
<th>Cautious disbelief</th>
<th>“Duh”</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are a nutritious part of a child’s lunch.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Most parents have wondered if “peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are a nutritious part of a child’s lunch.”</td>
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<td>“The bees are dying rapidly.”</td>
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<td>Even though some people argue that “the bees are dying rapidly,” it may be more complicated than that.</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
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<td>“Jennifer Lopez is still relevant.”</td>
<td>We can all agree, “Jennifer Lopez is still relevant.”</td>
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<td>“Morality cannot be learned.”</td>
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<td>It should be obvious that “morality cannot be learned.”</td>
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</tbody>
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Model Texts by Student Authors

What Does It Mean to Be Educated?¹¹³


This article shines a light on food and housing insecurity in higher education. It makes the argument that not having adequate meals or shelter increase the likelihood of receiving poorer grades and not finishing your degree program. There are a few examples of how some colleges and universities have set up food pantries and offer other types of payment plan or assistance programs. It also references a longitudinal study that follows a group of students from higher education through
college and provides supporting data and a compelling case study. This is a useful article for those that would like to bring more programs like these to their campus. This article is a good overview of the problem, but could go a step further and provide starter kits for those interested in enacting a change in their institution.


This article profiles a teacher in a small school in an impoverished area of Mexico. He has created a space where students are encouraged to learn by collaborating and testing, not by lecture. The article ties the current system of learning to being rooted in the industrial age, but goes on to note that this is negative because they have not adapted to the needs of companies in the modern age. This article is particularly useful to provide examples of how relinquishing control over a classroom is beneficial. It also has a timeline of alternative teaching theorists and examples of schools that are breaking the mold of traditional education. My only critique of the article is that, although it presents numerous examples of a changing education system, it is very negative regarding the prospects for education.


This meta-analysis from the RAND Corporation, a non-partisan think tank, reviews research done on the topic of education in correctional institutions. The facts show that when incarcerated people have access to education, recidivism drops, career prospects improve, and taxpayers save money. There are differences based on the type of education (vocational versus general education) and the methods (using technology had better outcomes). It is interesting that the direct cost of the education was offset by the reduced recidivism rate, to the point where it is more cost effective to educate inmates. This analysis would be particularly useful for legislators and correctional institution policy makers. I did not see in this research any discussion of student selection; I believe there may be some skewed data if the people choosing to attend education may already be more likely to have positive outcomes.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Wm. H. Wise & Co., 1929.

In this collection of writing, Emerson insists that primary inspiration comes from nature and education is the vehicle that will "awaken him to the
knowledge of this fact.” Emerson sees the nonchalance of children as something to aspire to, which should be left alone. He is critical of parents (and all adults) in diminishing the independence of children. This source is particularly useful when considering the alignment of educators and pupils. Emerson contends that true genius is novel and is not understood unless there is proper alignment between educators and pupils. I think this is a valuable source for pupils by increasing their level of “self-trust.”


Malcolm Gladwell generally has some interesting takes on the world at large. In this book he looks at what is considered a strength and where it may originate. The most interesting part of his argument, I believe, is that which states that a perceived deficiency, like dyslexia, may serve as a catalyst for increased ability in another area. Gladwell says that compensation learning can be achieved when there is a desirable difficulty. This book, and much of Gladwell’s work, can be especially useful for those which want to look beyond the surface of the world to make sense of seemingly random data. Much of the book rang true to me since I have had an especially hard time reading at an adequate speed, but can listen to an audiobook and recite it almost verbatim in an essay.


In his keynote speech, the speaker sets forth an argument for his understanding of an “educated” person. The six virtues he espouses are: understanding, imagination, strength, courage, humility, and generosity. These, he states, can lift a person past the baseline of human nature which is instinctively “ignorant, intellectually incompetent, weak, fearful of truth, proud and selfish” (3). I prefer this definition over any other that I have come across. I have been thinking a bit about the MAX attacks and how Micah Fletcher has responded to the attention he has received. I am proud to see a 21 year old respond with the level of awareness around social justice issues that he carries. These traits that he exemplifies, would not likely exist in this individual if it not for the education he has received at PSU.


This video profiles El Sistema. El Sistema was designed in Venezuela by José Antonio Abreu in 1975 as a method for teaching social citizenship. The method is to have groups of children learn how to play orchestral music. It is community-based (parents participate) and more experienced members of the group are expected to teach younger students. In Venezuela, this program is government-funded as a social program, not
an arts program. This video would be useful for those that are interested in how arts can be used for social change. I thought it was interesting that one of the first tasks that groups perform is to construct a paper violin. I am a fan of breaking down a complicated item, like the instrument, to its constituent parts.


This article is a meta-analysis of Scared Straight and similar crime deterrence programs. These programs were very popular when I was in high school and are still in use today. The analysis shows that these programs actually increase the likelihood for crime, which is the opposite effect of the well-meaning people that implement such programs. This is particularly useful for those that are contemplating implementing such a program. Also, it is a good example of how analysis should drive decisions around childhood education. I do remember programs like this from when I was in high school, but I was not because I was not considered high-risk enough at the time. It would be interesting to see if the data is detailed enough to see if selection bias affected some of the high rates of incarceration for these offenders.


In this video Ken Robinson simply states that creativity is as important as literacy. Creativity, he defines, as “the process of having original ideas that have value.” Robinson states that children are regrettably “educated out of creativity” and that is imperative that we do not stigmatize failure. To emphasize this point he gives an example of a cohort of children which would retire in 2065, but no one can possibly imagine what the world may look like then. This piece is particularly useful for the fact that it highlights the ways creativity may be stifled or encouraged. There are is a bit of conflating of creativity and ADHD in this video, but in either case the message is to listen and encourage the pupil as a whole being.

In Karen Smith’s essay, the purpose of education—at least the course entitled Queer Theories and Identities—is to “interrupt queer settler colonialism by challenging students to study the ways in which they inherit colonial histories and to insist that they critically question the colonial institutions through which their rights are sought” (469). This particular course is then, going beyond simply informing pupils, but attempting to interrupt oppressive patriarchal systems. This article is particularly useful as an example of education as social activism. This theme is not one that is explored greatly in other works and looks at education as a means of overthrowing the system, instead of pieces which may looking at increasing an individual’s knowledge or their contribution to society.

**Teacher Takeaways**

“This annotated bibliography fulfills its purpose well: it sets out to answer a question, then brings a variety of voices into conversation as a sort of ‘recommended reading.’ If the author continued to pursue this purpose, I would advise them to elaborate on how these sources might be applicable/useful. What would a classroom inspired by these texts look like? Although this AB is useful in answering its guiding question, this author would likely struggle with scope if they tried to use this AB as fodder for a research essay. The different sources offer a diversity of ideas, but they don’t speak to the same topic.”

– Professor Dawson

**Pirates & Anarchy**

(Annotated Bibliography – see the proposal here and the final paper here)

“About Rose City Antifa.” Rose City Antifa. [http://rosecityantifa.org/about/](http://rosecityantifa.org/about/).

The “about” page of Rose City Antifa’s website has no author or date listed. It is referenced as a voice in the conversation around current political events. This is the anarchic group that took disruptive action during the Portland May Day rally, turning the peaceful demonstration into a destructive riot. This page on their website outlines some core beliefs regarding what they describe as the oppressive nature of our society’s structure. They specifically point to extreme right wing political groups, so-called neo-nazis, as the antithesis of what antifa stands for. Along with this, they state that they acknowledge the frustration of “young, white, working-class men.” Antifa as a group intends to give these men a
meaningful culture to join that doesn’t include racism in its tenets, but seeks freedom and equality for all. Action is held in higher regards than rhetoric. This voice is important to this body of research as a timely and local consideration on how anarchy and anarchic groups relate to piratical acts in the here and now.


This very short news report documents the events at the Portland May Day Rally this past May 2nd. What began as a peaceful rally for workers’ rights became a violent protest when it was taken over by a self-described anarchist group. The group vandalized property, set fires, and hurled objects at police. This is an example of recent riots by local anarchist groups that organize interruptions of other political group’s permitted demonstrations in order to draw attention to the anarchist agenda. The value of this report is that it shows that anarchy is still a philosophy adopted by certain organizations that are actively seeking to cause disruption in political conversation.


Comparisons are drawn between Golden Age pirates and current intellectual pirates in this in-depth article looking at piracy over time. The authors offer a definition of piracy as “a form of morally ambiguous property seizure committed by an organized group which can include thievery, hijacking, smuggling, counterfeiting, or kidnapping” (675). They also state that pirates are “organizations of social bandits” going on to discuss piracy as a rebellion against capitalist injustices (696). The intentional anarchic nature of the acts committed are a response to being left behind economically by political structures. The authors conclude with a warning that “we might look for a surge in piracy in both representation and action as an indication that a major turn of the wheel is about to occur” (696) These anthropological ideas reflect the simmering political currents we are experiencing now in 2017. Could the multiple recent bold acts of anarchist groups portend more rebellion in our society’s future? The call for jobs and fair compensation are getting louder and louder in western countries. If political structures cannot provide economic stability, will citizens ultimately decide to tear it all down? The clarity of the definitions in this article are helpful in understanding what exactly is a
pirate and what their presence may mean to society at large.


This rather dense article is written around the question of the sustainability of anarchic organizations. The goals and activities are discussed in their most basic form in terms of resource gathering, distribution and defense. It does provide a solid definition of anarchy by stating, “anarchy is a social arrangement in which contenders struggle to conquer and defend durable resources, without effective regulation by either higher authorities or social pressures.” While social groups are connected in order to obtain resources, there is not hierarchy of leadership. The author does discuss the fragility of these groups as well. Agreement on a social contract is challenging as is remaining cohesive and resisting merging with other groups with different social contracts. This element of agreement on structure make sense in terms of piratical organizations. Captains are captains at the pleasure of the crew so long as his/her decision making enables the group as a whole to prosper. The anarchy definition is useful to bring understanding on what ties these groups together.


This book, which is a collection of essays, explores the idea of utopia. The editor describes it in the introduction as “an ideal place which does not exist”—a notion that there is in human nature a desire to discover the “perfect” place, but that location is not attainable (1). The desire itself is key because of the exploration it sparks. There are three parts to the book, the second being “Utopian Communities and Piracy.” This section mostly contains essays that relate to explorations for the New World and pirate groups’ contributions that either helped or hindered the success of such expeditions. While there is much that is interesting here, especially in terms of “utopia” as a motivator, there is not much that lends information on piratical exploits. I'll likely not use this source in my essay.


This podcast showcased three examples of pirates, discussing the circumstances surrounding their choice to enter that world and the consequences that befell them. One example was a gentleman pirate from the early 1700s who bit off more than he could chew. Another was a Somali-American who went back to Somalia to help reestablish government in the region and ended up tangled in the gray area between good intention and criminality. The final pirate is a female Chinese pirate
from the early 1800s who was so successful that she was able to remake the rules of piracy to her and her crew’s great advantage. The information offered in this podcast includes valuable information (especially regarding Somalia) on the opportunities or lack thereof that attract otherwise normal individuals to piracy. The vacuum of ineffectual governance and unfair economic practices both contribute to this. Citizens’ determination to be masters of their own destiny results from this lack of central societal structure. They choose desperate measures.


The economy of piracy in Somalia is addressed in this article. From the economic vacuum of a failed state leaving citizens to turn to desperate measures, to the eventual organization of piracy into burgeoning industry, perfect conditions existed for the normalization of criminal acts. The article goes on to elaborate on the costs to other industries in the region, to the social structure of Somalia, and the cost in lives lost. Finally, the author makes suggestions for counter-piracy strategies. Interestingly, those suggestions are similar to the efforts that ultimately led to the ending of piracy in Somalia, as referenced in the more recent podcast, “I Am Not a Pirate.” Published around 2011, this article predates the demise of the industry after 2012. The research value here is in the economic and social factors that led otherwise average citizens to violent criminality. The decentralization of government in particular leading to clans sanctioning piracy is especially interesting in terms of anarchic political structure.


This article is similar topically to the Otto article, though it is a much deeper dive into the historical and political events that led to the collapse of the Somali centralized government. It also describes various piratical incidents as the criminal industry became more rampant. There is a list of four conditions that precipitate the foundation of modern piratical groups with similar themes noted in other articles. These should be referenced in my essay. The author also states, “It appears that the patterns of piracy in East Asia, and West and East Africa shadow global economic cycles and reflect the contestation over resources between the powerful and the poor” (1379). The idea of “moral economy” is addressed as the argument is made that a certain portion of Somali pirates are practicing “defensive piracy.” This in particular is useful as it outlines the consequences when the people’s expectations of government are not met—those expectations
being a certain amount of livelihood and security. Citizens in poverty then believe it is their right to rebel when those in power shirk their responsibilities.


*The Devil’s Anarchy* is a small book of about two hundred pages that outlines the loose societal structures of seafaring pirate groups that shunned hierarchical systems in their ranks. The historical tales of several pirates, including Claes Compaen and Jan Erasmus Reyning, are told. These swashbuckling accounts are full of details describing pirate lifestyles. The truly useful portions of the book are the introduction and the final chapter entitled “The Politics of Piracy.” The preface by Peter Wilson discusses ideas of “freedom” as the primary motivator for those seeking this way of life, a dismissal of expected norms of society. The last chapter talks about the ways in which the anarchical approach both helped and hindered various pirate groups. These ideas will be helpful in drawing connections between anarchy and piracy.


This author of this article seeks to propose the application of anarchist perspectives onto network studies and theory. There is a shift of mind necessary to turn from hierarchical structures of management to one that is a linkage of groups acting collectively. Several points of direction are listed as suggestions for moving toward this perspective. Repeatedly, the author mentions the necessary strength in the linkages of groups, to provide stability and promote “dynamic” activity and sharing. More research is called for to discover what has made anarchy-oriented groups successful in the past. While this article isn’t specific to political groups, it does break down elements of anarchic social structure in a way that provides clarity to how they tend to be organized. There is similar ideas of collective action and sharing of resources, in this case information, and fairness in distribution and contribution of actors in these groups. This will be helpful for synthesizing information on anarchy in application to pirate groups.

This is a review of a text from the 1820’s called *The Florida Pirate*. The text tells the tale of a slave that escapes slavery and becomes a pirate—the oppressed becoming the oppressor. His ultimate demise comes when he chooses to set free some captives rather than kill them, which is rewarded with those captives betraying the ex-slave to the authorities. He is then executed. According to the author of the review, it is the slave’s personal journey through these incarnations of his personhood that were intended as a condemnation of the institution of slavery. The text was intended to compare slave-owners to pirates in an attempt to highlight the criminal nature of owning humans. While this is a fascinating read, and piques my interest in reading the original text, it is less relevant to my argument. It refers to a fictional work rather than factual events.

### Teacher Takeaways

“This annotated bibliography includes very detailed summary with accurate citations. I also like that the student is clearly considering how they will make use of the source in their research essay. If they were to keep working on the annotations, I would ask them to revise with attention to credibility; certainly these sources have different degrees of credibility, and I would like to see more explicit consideration of that.”

— Professor Dawson

### A Case of Hysterics

(Annotated Bibliography – see the proposal here and the final paper here)


This journal article looks into how society’s definition of gender has changed, and how medical sociology needs to change with it. The author proposes that that there is a need to bring feminist theory and gender-related research on health and illness within medical sociology much closer together than they are at present. Annandale argues that “Within this new single system the common experience of health-related oppression is produced differently, and experienced differently, through systematically driven processes of sex/gender fragmentation” (69). This source is unique because it addresses the concept that gender as we know it today is much different than what it was when Hysteria was a common phrase. Annandale recognizes that sexism in the medical field is prominent, and that sexism reinforces these exhausted gender stereotypes.

Upon researching for this paper, I’ve learned that Ellen Annandale is a very reputable source on the topics of feminism, sociology, and epidemiology. In this book, she discusses the relation between women’s health and their position in society at the time from the perspective of women writers and feminists. Because of the past negative appraisal of feminine capabilities, she argues that we have been forced into a binary society that is characteristic of our patriarchal past. She boldly defines the system of women’s health as a brand of patriarchal capitalism. Interestingly, she also brings forth the knowledge that the gender gap is decreasing in terms of life expectancy. Why has men’s life expectancy improved so greatly while women’s falls short? Ignorance. This has already proven useful in my research due to the addressing of current health issues that affect both men and women due to sexism.


This brief web article serves to loosely explain the history of Hysteria as a disease. The author begins with Plato and ends with the eradication of the term hysteria in the mid-1960s. While the article’s purpose is to explain where hysteria began and where it has come to, the author offers a brief acknowledgment that the practices are still with us in modern medicine. The author states that modern doctors have merely “cloaked old ideas behind new words.” While this source doesn’t offer a lot of thesis support, it is useful as a reliable source of facts on the history of Hysteria. This article will be helpful in creating a timeline for the practice of diagnosing women with the disease.


In this web article, Culp-Ressler analyzes the widespread and serious effects that gender stereotypes can perpetuate within the medical field. She utilizes individual accounts of women who experienced sexism when seeking medical attention, as well as current studies which further prove the gap that exists between male and female healthcare quality in the United States. Through these detailed experiences, Culp-Ressler argues that the frequent disregard for women’s knowledge of their own bodies contributes to both harmful gender stereotypes as well as deadly diseases that go untreated. She states that society is willfully ignorant in their knowledge of female medicine: “This has been going on for centuries... conversion, hysteria, the name changes but it’s still the same and it’s happening today.” This will be useful in that it presents a number of documented cases of misdiagnosis; especially with a common theme in being treated as a mentally ill patient rather than one experiencing pain.
This source follows my argument rather closely, and will be helpful in supporting my thesis.


The Yellow Wallpaper is an important narrative from the early 1900s that illustrates the delusional medical procedures placed onto women. Gilman herself experienced what was called the “rest cure,” which in essence confined women who were diagnosed with Hysteria or nervous diseases in a room to do nothing, limiting their “stressors”. They were forced to eat copious amounts of food to gain weight, and they were allowed no company. This story is told from the perspective of an insane person, as she herself admittedly nearly slipped into madness. If anything, this piece serves as a firsthand account of the damage done to women in a time when they had less rights, and when women’s medicine was seriously lacking. This will be helpful in understanding how these treatments were accepted by the public, as well as noting the unintended effects of said treatments.


This brief letter was meant to address the many inquiries that Gilman received about her story “The Yellow Wallpaper.” This letter is meant to explain that although she added little “embellishments and additions”, it remains a fully viable account of a woman who fell into madness because of unsound medical advice. Within, she details her nervous breakdowns. She also provides details of the lifestyle she was told to lead in order to keep her nerves at bay: she was given advice to “’live as domestic a life as far as possible,’ to ‘have but two hours’ intellectual life a day,’ and ‘never to touch pen, brush, or pencil again’ as long as I lived.” Of course, this didn’t work. Just as “The Yellow Wallpaper” is helpful in providing an in depth look at someone experiencing such a treatment, Gilman’s letter is useful in that it was written in a place where she had fully recovered due to not taking her physician’s advice. She also notes that a different physician read her book, and since had ceased prescribing “rest cures”. First-hand accounts of experiences such as these will help provide credibility to my argument.

Though this book has five authors contributing, the section titled “Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender” will be the most useful for this paper. In this essay, Elaine Showalter attempts to explain to the reader that although the term “hysteria” was used mainly by men toward females as a negative term, modern women are “reclaiming” the feminine right of hysteria. Feminism was coming more into the mainstream during the early/mid 90s, when this book was published. It is clear that Showalter’s views might not hold true today, because of more recent medical studies confirming the falseness of Hysteria. This piece is interesting because in her attempt to argue the reclamation of hysteria by modern feminists, she succumbs to the long-enforced stereotypes of patriarchal medicine and culture. This source would be helpful to demonstrate the extent to which sexism can reach, internalization of stereotypes is common. While this book might not help in furthering my argument, it is interesting to see women that view Hysteria as a right of femininity and something to be claimed.


This book’s title screams exactly what its purpose was: describing women’s health risks based on what part of life they were in (all parts centered around the presence or absence of a man). Limiting women to particular and confined social roles was the norm in the early 1900s. This book is so sexist, and so perfect for my paper. Not unlike Emily Post, Kellogg attempts to explain to women the necessary steps they ought to take in order to lead healthy, childbearing lives. Aside from being hilarious, this instruction manual is written by a man, for women, and perfectly demonstrates how sexism has continually permeated the medical field.


In this book, Andrew Scull covers a lot of ground as he moves through analyzing the history of Hysteria. His argument centers on a Freudian Hysteria, and how his views (or rather all psychoanalytical views) came to be seen as obsolete but Hysteria still lingers with new vocabulary. Scull also delves into the history of men being diagnosed with Hysteria, or nervous diseases, most specifically due to the Second World War. He notes that as Hysteria was seen as a feminine disease and an affliction of the imagination, these men received little to no treatment - similar to females diagnosed with hysteria. They were seen as cowardly and inferior.
for something that today would be easily recognizable as post-traumatic stress disorder. This source will be helpful in demonstrating that while the patients were male, they were seen as contracting a feminine disease that was “made up in the mind,” therefore hindering the help that they needed. This illustrates the bias that exists with illnesses associated with women.


This is a thought-provoking scientific look at the history of women being diagnosed with mental disorders (specifically nervous diseases like Hysteria) correlated to where in the world and at what historical time these diagnoses occurred. Tasca aims to inform the audience that perhaps the role of women in these different global locations contributes to firstly the opportunity to be diagnosed by a sexist male physician, as well as whether their emotions would be seen as varying from the norm. She further explains this by saying, “We have seen that both the symptomatic expression of women’s malaise and the culturally specific interpretation of the same malaise witness the changing role of women. From incomprehensible Being (and therefore mean of the Evil) to frail creatures that try, however, to manipulate the environment to their own ends (in Freud’s view) to creature arbiter of his fate (in the modern transformation from hysteria to melancholia), where the woman seems to have traded power with the loneliness and guilt.” This article has given me a new look at why and how these misdiagnoses are so common and continuing. It is helpful due to its extensive studies in multiple parts of the world, as well as Tasca’s analysis of the effect that the evolution of the role of women has on stereotypes.

### Teacher Takeaways

“This annotated bibliography shows that the student is thinking critically about their sources, but also approaching them with an open mind to avoid confirmation bias. Judging by the citations, this student has made good use of their library’s database subscriptions. They have also indicated how they intend to use certain sources in the essay they will write. If anything, I might say that these annotations are a bit too long: the density of each (especially in terms of summary) would make it difficult to use as a research tool.”

– Professor Wilhjelm
Planting the Seed: Norway’s Strong Investment in Parental Leave

Few experiences, if any, can match the power of becoming a parent, both in terms of sheer magnitude and pure happiness. Many parents consider the birth of their children their lives’ single greatest moments—the heart and purpose of human existence. From the instant a tiny, brand-new life is handed off to eager parents, overcome with awe and amazement at the sight of what they created together, friends, family and even strangers come forward bursting with excitement to pour out their deepest affection to the new arrival. To the world, a birth inspires hope and radiates joy, even for those who never have children of their own. But with it also come some intense fears. From worries over the ever-soaring prices of daycare to concerns about simply finding the time to properly raise a child amid work and other life obligations, welcoming a new baby gets frightening quickly. Time off from work to focus fully on the many challenges of baby-rearing can drastically ease the burden for moms and dads. New parents all across the world know this, but few actually experience it as strongly as those in Norway.

From low crime rates to accessible health care to high-quality education, all piled on top of immediately obvious breathtaking scenery, countless perks make it clear why Norway was ranked the happiest country in the world for 2017 (Hetter)—not the least of which is the country’s generosity toward new parents. Norway offers one of the best parental leave policies in the world, granting parents a liberal sum of both shared and individual paid leave so they can stop and concentrate on parenthood during their newborns’ critical early months, and fostering gender equality by allowing paid leave time for fathers. Meanwhile, many other countries, like the U.S., the world’s only industrialized nation to guarantee no paid parental leave whatsoever, place a lesser focus on time off for parents, seemingly without respect for the myriad struggles new families face. This could be to the disadvantage of not only moms and dads but also the economy at large, given the many benefits of parental leave—reduced infant mortality, better care for babies, reduced likelihood of mental illness for mothers and savings for businesses—most of which carry into the long-term (Wallace). Considering even a few advantages of parental leave, it’s easy to wonder why more countries don’t make leave
for parents a top priority, especially when countries like Norway are realizing its positive impacts.

While Norway (along with a small handful of other countries) currently leads the way when it comes to parental leave following a birth, the country once offered leave for working mothers that more so resembled what the U.S. offers today—which isn’t much. Before the introduction of new leave reform in 1977, Norway only gave mothers 12 weeks off after the birth of a child, and with no pay; today, however, mothers get about a full year of paid leave and an additional year of job protection (Carneiro). So what does that mean for the busy, modern-day working mother? For Else Marie Hasle, a 32-year-old marketing professional living in Oslo, Norway’s capital city, it meant 11 months at home with her infant daughter while collecting 80 percent of her salary (Grose). In an August 2014 interview with Slate Magazine, Hasle explained that she spent the three weeks at home before the birth of her daughter, Natalia, at home and remained home with Natalia until she was 10 months old (Grose). Mothers like Hasle also have the option of a shorter leave period with 100 percent of their pay. The choice of shorter leave with more pay, or vice versa, is up to the mother.

The permission for parents to choose their own terms makes Norway’s parental leave not only generous but also flexible. Right now, according to the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, or NAV for short, Norway offers parents 49 weeks at full salary or 59 weeks at 80 percent pay—one of the longest parental leave allowances in the world. This time includes three weeks of leave for the mother prior to the baby’s due date and 10 weeks each for the mother and the father—called “maternal quotas” and “paternal quotas,” respectively—as well as 26 or 36 weeks, depending on the terms the couple chooses (salary in full or at 80 percent), which may be distributed among the parents as they see fit (“Parental Benefit”). Parents who adopt a child younger than 15 years of age may also draw benefits. These numbers are only matched by a handful of other countries, which includes Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

The reality for American mothers paints a bleak contrast to the situation in northern Europe. In the U.S., which stands alone as the only developed country in the world to guarantee no paid leave to either parent following a birth, expectant mothers apply for time off through the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, which allows up to 12
weeks of job-protected and employee benefits-protected leave (“FMLA”). Unfortunately, mothers must spend this time taking a pay cut. Meanwhile, most of the rest of the world mandates some form of paid parental leave. Many countries also provide paid leave for fathers. Nearly half of 167 countries whose leave policies were examined in 2013 by the International Labor Organization offer paternity leave (Lord). The sad state of leave for new parents in the U.S. has remained a top issue of concern among politicians in recent years, oftentimes catching the common counter-argument that it simply costs businesses and the economy too much money. But while this is an important point, parental leave appears to be worth it in the long run.

A new mother leaving her place of work to dedicate time caring for a newborn continues to hold a position within the organization and to draw benefits, and, in countries that mandate paid maternity leave, to also receive a paycheck—all for no work. Considering the same circumstance for fathers as well spells double trouble for both productivity and revenue for businesses. Consider Christa Clapp, an American climate change economist living and working in Oslo with her husband, who took about a full year away from her job in 2016 to care for her son. But Clapp, writing for the “On Parenting” section of the Washington Post, argues that paid parental leave is actually a smart move for a country’s economy. The economic value of more mothers staying in the workforce full time, she claims, offsets the costs of the parental leave that makes it possible and results in an altogether more productive society (Clapp). Companies also save money on training and turnover costs because mothers are more likely to stay with the same employer after their leave (Wallace). What’s more, fathers taking their own paid leave creates a culture in which dads are more present in their children’s lives, and a more gender-equal and balanced workforce—a reality that fades in the U.S., where women often transition from employee to stay-at-home mom because it makes more economical sense for the family.

The benefits of parental leave appear to be strongest for mothers, like Clapp, and their children. In the immediate, obvious sense, the mother is home with the baby and free to devote her time to caring for and bonding with her child. But the benefits run deeper and last longer than what one can see at face value. A 2011 study of the leave policies in 141 different countries found that paid parental leave can actually reduce
infant mortality by as much as 10 percent; another study found that paid leave also increases the odds that babies will be seen regularly by a health care professional and receive vaccinations on time (Wallace). Paid parental leave also makes breastfeeding, the healthiest meal option for babies, more successful, with women who take leave generally breastfeeding about twice as long as those who don’t (Ibid.). Mothers who take paid parental leave also face a smaller likelihood of mental health challenges, such as depression, even as many as 30 years later in life (Ibid.). This means that not only is mom in better condition when caring for her infant under the protection of paid leave, but the relationship between mother and baby is also healthier. And these benefits are lasting.

Children continue to reap the benefits of paid parental leave even into their adult years. A team of researchers examined the long-term impacts of maternity leave in Norway since the country’s introduction of paid, job-protected leave time for mothers on July 1, 1977. The team compared the outcomes of children born both before and after July 1, 1977, when new reform began guaranteeing paid leave to mothers, and found that “reform had strong effects on children’s subsequent high school dropout rates and earnings at age 30, especially for those whose mothers had less than 10 years of education” (Carneiro). Thus, increased time at home with children—especially time during which mothers can relax without fear of sacrificing their income—can lead to success in the child’s life. These findings, taken with the numerous benefits to mothers, demonstrate that parental leave isn’t necessarily a financial liability for businesses, who end up paying employees for no work; rather, it’s a wise investment not only in the short-term future of the worker but also in the long-term future of the country’s broader economy. But while these benefits focus on mothers and children, as does much of the research on parental leave, paid time off for fathers following a birth has its perks as well.

One of the unique features of parental leave in countries like Norway is that it also allows fathers to break away from work for time with their new children. Fathers in Norway enjoy 10 weeks of paid parental leave—referred to as a “paternal quota”—and they may also take additional time that comes from a leave bank they share with their partners, depending on their agreement with their spouses (“Parental Benefit”). To
some, this may seem counterintuitive. For thousands of years, much of the world has believed that mothers exclusively—or at least mostly—handle newborn and infant care. Perhaps this is because, in the animal kingdom, it often makes the most sense, from the standpoint of survival. It once made sense for humans as well. But the human race of today is different, with fathers involving themselves more and more in their children’s lives from an early age—and to the benefit of both child and mother.

Currently, in many households, both parents work full-time. And despite a common theme throughout history of male superiority in the workplace—at least when it comes to salary—in 40 percent of families with children, the mother is the sole or primary provider of income (Livingston). This means that, more than ever, fathers are taking on childcare responsibilities. Aside from simply freeing dads up to shoulder the work of child-rearing equally with their spouses, leave for fathers results in stronger, lasting father-child bonds. Dads who take at least 10 days of parental leave are more likely than those who don’t take any leave at all to stay actively involved with child care; in Iceland, 70 percent of men who take parental leave are sharing care with their partners as far out as three years later (Wallace). Active fathers are a norm in Norwegian culture today, most likely because of parental leave.

Keeping dads active in child care, and in turn active in the child’s life altogether, is good for the whole family. Research has shown that a strong connection between father and child promotes social and emotional development, such as learning to regulate feelings and behaviors, and also results in better educational outcomes for the child (Oliker). Greater involvement of fathers also fosters gender equality in both the household and the workplace. Through shared and individual leave quotas, a father can help his spouse tackle childcare more like an equal; in doing so, he helps free his partner up to return to work and stay at work, evening the playing in the professional environment.

In the U.S., gender roles still largely represent traditional, more dated values and beliefs. Men are guaranteed no parental leave, paid or otherwise, and are therefore often less active and available in their children’s early months and years than their Norwegian counterparts. Gender inequity is accentuated and even mocked in the U.S.
This inequality could be the result of no paid parental leave policy for Americans, and it could also be what’s holding such a policy back.

At any rate, it’s a central, relevant problem, along with a host of other factors, like extreme individualism, which keeps Americans working 60- to 70-hour weeks just to climb the professional ladder. Thus, for Americans, the birth of a new baby is often scary and intimidating when it should be tender, happy and exciting. With paid leave for new parents, the event could hold the special joy it’s naturally meant to. The introduction of paid parental leave would likely mean a challenge to ingrained patriarchal ideologies, although ultimately for the hope of a better society. Change is seldom easy, but it’s necessary for progress.

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Teacher Takeaways

“The data presented here is well-integrated, and often supported by individual instances, which help to personalize what would otherwise seem like lifeless statistics and percentages. Sentences flow smoothly and main points are clear. However, the essay could use some reorganization and better transitions between sections. Overall, though, the argument benefits from a delayed thesis (a typical result of inquiry-based research); instead of outlining an argumentative stance in full at the beginning of the essay, the author waits until a thorough comparison is made between Norway and the United States, then allows for a natural progression to a final, persuasive conclusion.”

– Professor Fiscaletti


Pirates and Anarchy: Social Banditry Toward a Moral Economy\textsuperscript{117}

(Research essay – see the research proposal here and annotated bibliography here)

The power to prosper: is this not every human’s inalienable right? What happens when social, political, and economic systems conspire to limit the power of citizens to gain a fair share of resources? It may be that a government has sanctioned monopolistic practices to large corporate interests. It may be that racism or classism has damaged the ability of certain groups to exercise equal rights to education and employment. Perhaps the government structure has collapsed all together. The case
could be that government actors have exchanged the well-being of citizens for ideological power and financial gain. Time and again, these types of inequitable scenarios have supplied the basis for otherwise average people to rise up and seize control of their own destinies. They disown the system. For freedom, for self-sufficiency, for a fair livelihood, they turn to anarchy. They turn pirate.

Pirates can be characterized as rebels rejecting societal structures that disenfranchise those with less access to resources. There is a common element of anarchy as a guiding philosophy of piracy. It is scaffolding on which to attempt to define why pirates do what they do. Viewing current political events through this lens, there seem to be more and more examples recently of small acts of piracy perpetrated by citizenry. This has taken the form of message hijacking at otherwise peaceful protests, rebellious attitudes and actions toward established government structure, cyber-attacks, and far-left-wing demonstrations and violence. Examining various piratical groups over time may help shed light on what current rebellious acts by citizens may portend.

To that end, let us begin by pinning down what exactly constitutes a pirate. The swashbuckling high-seas crews depicted in movies capture one incarnation. Rather, they display one romantic idea of what pirates might have been. Stripped of those trappings though, pirates can be defined in much simpler terms. Dawdy and Bonni define piracy as: “a form of morally ambiguous property seizure committed by an organized group which can include thievery, hijacking, smuggling, counterfeiting, or kidnapping” (675). These criminal acts have to do with forceful fair distribution of resources. When small powerful segments of society such as corporations, the wealthy, and the well-connected hoard these resources, pirate groups form to break down the walls of the stockpiles to re-establish level ground (Snelders 3).

Put another way, pirate cultures arise when the benefits of obtaining resources outside the rule of law outweigh the risk of violating the laws themselves (Samatar et al. 1378). When resources are unfairly distributed across society, citizens lose faith in the system of government. They see it as their right to take action outside the law because the government in charge of that law has shirked their responsibilities to provide security and a moral economy (Ibid. 1388). When the scope of the world narrows to eating or starving, when there is no one coming to save the day, when there is no other
way out, when all that is left is survival, those are the moments that pirates are born. Citizens’ determination to be masters of their own destiny results from the lack of fair central societal structure. They choose desperate measures (“I Am Not”).

Piratical groups across time have other commonalities. They tend to be cohesive assemblies of displaced people. They have binding social agreements among members, such as work ethic and equal distribution of takings (Dawdy and Bonni 680-681). There tends to be an anti-capitalist agenda in the prizes sought as a bid for economic freedom. While locally sanctioned by average citizens, pirates act counter to the rule of law, especially when economic opportunity within societal norms becomes scarce (Dawdy and Bonni 677). Pirates act in defiance of government.

In fact, parallels can be drawn between piratical groups and the philosophy of anarchy. Indeed, as noted above, pirates emerge out of the void left when hierarchical governments either collapse or abandon their responsibilities to citizens. Anarchy is the antithesis of centralized government. It is governance by social networks (Wachhaus 33).

The *English Oxford Living Dictionary* defines anarchy as “A state of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of authority or other controlling systems” (Anarchy). However, Hirshleifer provides a more robust explanation by stating “anarchy is a social arrangement in which contenders struggle to conquer and defend durable resources, without effective regulation by either higher authorities or social pressures” (27). The lack of an overarching power structure is the main idea in both definitions, but in the latter, the motivations and activities of such groups are considered.

In a system of anarchy, groups must act collectively to seize and defend resources. Dissolution of ties between members is always a threat dependent on the individual profits of fighting for and defending resources (Hirshleifer 48). Cohesion then is contingent on mutual success.

There is a shift of mind necessary to turn from hierarchical structures of management to one that is a linkage of groups acting communally. Without decisive leaders in the power structure, social contracts can be difficult to construct and manage (Hirshleifer 48). The fluid nature then of anarchic group organization leaves them fragile. Group members must agree on goals and methods in order to achieve stability.
Agreement on a social contract is challenging as is remaining cohesive and resisting merging with other groups with different social contracts (Hirshleifer 48). Fairness in distribution of holdings and contribution of actors in these groups is essential (Wachhaus 33-34). The constraints on authority within anarchic structures and the social agreements necessary for actionable goal achievement, mean that these groups are small and locally oriented. They must focus on the here and now of meeting the needs of members.

The anarchic element of agreement on structure makes sense in terms of piratical organizations as well. Captains are captains at the pleasure of the crew so long as his/her decision-making enables the group as a whole to prosper. His/her skills are useful only if plunder is acquired regularly and allotted equally. Crews are successful so long as they maximize skill sets and cooperate to compete with other groups to seize resources and to defend them. Therein lies their strength. A resistance of submission to anything but self-rule is, of course, paramount. To illustrate this, let us now explore some cases of pirates over time.

Piracy has been in existence throughout the ages and has taken on many forms. It is beyond the scope of this paper to cover the detailed history from its inception to current times. However, a few examples will be described that help to showcase the idea of societal inequalities leading to anarchy and piracy.

One of these incarnations was the seafaring sort terrorizing ships during the Golden Age of Piracy. This was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reaching an extreme height of activity from 1690 to 1730 (Skowronek and Ewen 2). This exacerbation began after a combination of economic factors. First, the British Royal Navy released thousands of sailors by 1715 following the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (Snelders 168). Employment competition for these skilled seamen was fierce. Available posts were minimal and working conditions poor. This left many to turn to a life of piracy as a way to find occupation and freedom from oppressive maritime companies. Also, government sanctioned monopolization of trade mercantile companies caused damage to local economies. Smaller operations were not allowed to compete. The glut of unemployed sailors gave rise to piracy as economic protest (Dawdy and Bonni 681-682; Snelders 168). In fact, piracy in the early 1700s worked to throw trade
into turmoil (Dawdy and Bonni 681). They robbed ships specifically to clip the metaphorical purse strings of enterprises such as the East India Company, which held a monopoly on maritime trade. Pirates during this time believed that their practices, violent though they were, were justified. It was their right to find their fortune outside the societal structure that would have them live in poverty.

Piracy was therefore a bid for freedom (Wilson xi). They were “organizations of social bandits,” rebelling against capitalistic injustices (Dawdy and Bonni 675). The intentional anarchic nature of the acts committed were a response to being left behind economically by political structures. They were fleeting and yes, floating communities involved in this social banditry intent on “Redistribution of economic wealth that would otherwise flow to merchant capitalists and state bureaucracies” (Snelders 3). They acted to balance the scales, though it should be said that those with even less access to resources also suffered at the hands of the pirates. Though this paper will not be going into specific details of exploits, it should be acknowledged that not all groups during the Golden Age of Piracy acted for the good of the moral economy.

Each of these pirate operations had its own micro-culture. To say they were all the same would be reductive. However, there was a generalizable pirate code during this time. Many of the elements of anarchy discussed above apply to the structure of these brotherhoods. Pirates created their own societies with their own agreed upon rules (Snelders 3). Pirate cultures demanded “mutual discussion, agreement upon goals, strategy, and tactics, and a fair distribution of the plunder” (Ibid. 162). Fraternal bonds were powerful. Without country or refuge, they had only their brotherhood by which to bind themselves (Ibid. 198). Home was a ship. Family was their crew. All the world their country. Pirate life was short and violent. They spent their shared plunder and celebrated often as if it were their last day on earth (Ibid. 198). The fact was that that might just be the case.

The pirate industry of the Golden Age of Piracy could not last. They had flouted their lawlessness and power too much. They had inflicted massive damage on the fortunes of the East India Company. Governments resolved to hunt down pirate operations (Skowronek and Ewen 2). Some slipped away to anonymity, but the majority
were captured and hung as criminals. The Golden Age thus faded to legend. However, this was not the end of piracy.

An example of piracy in more modern times was the Somali pirates that preyed on ships skirting the Eastern African coast from 2008 to 2013. Many elements came together for this to take place. The crumbling state, a non-functioning government, clan rule, and tribal warfare all were contributors. Samatar et al. outline the following conditions that lead to modern piracy:

1) the existence of a favourable topographic environment; 2) the prevalence of ungoverned spaces—either as the result of legal dispute between states or simply because of their absence; 3) the existence of weak law enforcement or weak political will of governments or a cultural environment that is not hostile to piracy; and 4) the availability of great rewards for piracy while the risks are minimal. (1378)

All of these elements came together in Somalia to propagate piracy as a normalized practice. The downfall of the Somali government was the final catalyst for the emergence of piracy in the region (Samatar et al. 1384). State institutions became non-functioning, leaving instability in its wake (Otto 46). Without the structure of a central government, citizens were left to fend for themselves.

Piracy originated as ordinary Somali fishermen defending against foreign interests illegally looting fish from the coastline, depriving them of a valuable resource during desperate times (Otto 46; Samatar et al. 1387). There was no government force to prevent fish from being poached by adversarial enterprises seeking to capitalize on undefended waters. It fell to Somali citizens to maintain security.

What became evident was that there was a larger prize than fish as an economic resource. Protecting the waters became fining or taxing for territory invasion. This in turn became kidnapping and ransoming (“I Am Not”; Otto 46). According to Otto, “a single ransom can generate up to US $10 million” (47). In 2010 alone, 1000 people were taken hostage (“I Am Not”). In the vacuum that was Somalia’s economy at the time, ransom piracy became the main industry in the region. Without a centralized government, clans ran the country in a network of warring tribes (Ibid.). Warlords and other clan members helped in the recruitment and coordination of pirate groups (Otto
Locals could invest in piracy and expect returns. The pirates grew well-funded and well-armed (“I Am Not”).

Eradication of piracy was a long and complicated process. A slow to strengthen central government reformed and began working with clans to end the ransom industry through a three step plan. A condensed look at this goes like this: religious pirate shaming, creation of alternative economic incentives, and rehabilitation of pirates (“I Am Not”). They were, after all, at a basic level, fishermen in need of employment. These were the efforts on land. This combined with seaward endeavors by foreign navies, increased security on shipping industry vessels, along with the practice of sailing farther from the coast allowed for the elimination of the pirate activity (Ibid.). By 2013, the industry of piracy in Somalia was ended.

Somalia remains economically fragile. Clans still maintain a level of power. A re-emergence of rogue efforts to acquire resources doesn’t seem far-fetched. Piracy arises in this area of the world when global economic cycles leave the poor without proper access to economic participation (Samatar et al. 1379). It is a tried-and-true means of survival. Between piracy and community death by starvation, there is little choice. Now we will turn to a final and current piratical case.

This last example to be discussed is not a group of actors labeled as pirates. Rather they take action in a piratical manner. Self-identified anarchists, they are morally murky groups that utilize the practice of appropriating by force the protest demonstrations organized by other groups. This is done for the purpose of showcasing the anarchist agenda to which they subscribe (Farley). They seek to disrupt what they deem as society’s oppressive structure, particularly in terms of racism and fascism (“About Rose City”). These groups have become more active in defiance of the current political milieu in the United States.

At the Portland May Day Rally on May 2nd, 2016, what began as a peaceful and legally permitted rally for workers’ rights became a violent protest when it was taken over by an anarchist group (Chappell). Covered head to toe in black clothing complete with masked faces, the well-coordinated members of Rose City Antifa emerged from the crowd to sow chaos. The group vandalized property, set fires, and hurled objects at police.
Individual identities of members of anarchist groups are opaque. However, it is possible to find information on the belief system via their online presence. Rose City Antifa’s website outlines some core beliefs regarding what they describe as the oppressive nature of society’s structure. They see themselves in direct conflict with fascism. This is defined on their website as “an ultra-nationalist ideology that mobilizes around and glorifies a national identity defined in exclusive racial, cultural, and/or historical terms, valuing this identity above all other interests (ie: gender or class)” (About Rose City). The group points specifically to extreme right wing political organizations, so-called neo-nazis, as the antithesis of what Antifa stands for. Along with this is the acknowledgment of the frustration of “young, white, working-class men” in relation to economic opportunity. Antifa as a group intends to give these men a meaningful culture to join that doesn’t include racism in the tenets, but seeks freedom and equality for all. Action is held in higher regard than rhetoric. Thus the violent and destructive measures intended to send a strong and highly visible message.

Since the US election of 2016, citizens have become more politically engaged. Protests are once again growing normalized as the public seeks to have their political positions recognized by government representatives. Another anarchist group known as the Black Bloc create spectacle at a growing number of protests using militant tactics, especially property damage. They see political protests becoming more violent as a call out and call to arms to liberal citizens whom they feel are not taking right-wing activists with enough seriousness. The Black Bloc steadfastly believes in the righteousness of these tactics against fascism in the US, despite the illegality of such actions. They feel that they need to meet far right aggression with equal force in order to protect equal rights. Like other successful pirate operations, these anarchist groups have the will and the organization to take extreme measures (Farley).

The viewpoint is that this is standing up for the disenfranchised in a country where the centralized government has abdicated their duties. Freedom and facts being flouted by the current administration is stirring anarchist anger. The Black Bloc see themselves as rebelling against a system that is sanctioning a corrupt government (Farley).
Throughout this exploration of the above pirate groups, there is the thread of demanding a moral economy. One that provides an equal measure of opportunity and access to resources for all citizens in a nation. Samatar et al. explains it in this way:

> The essence of the moral economy argument is that peasants and the poor in general have a set of expectations that govern their sense of justice. When such values are violated they respond vigorously to protect their livelihood and their sense of fairness. (1388)

Pirates defy the rule of law under hierarchical governments that fail to provide a moral economy. They create their own rules and cultural norms. They take action rather than sit quietly while rights are violated. Yes, there is violence. Yes, other members of society suffer losses at the hands of pirates. However, looking from a distance, it is possible to see the arc of change that occurs due to piratical movements. Golden Age pirates were able to disrupt harmful monopolized trade practices. Somali pirates forced leaders to reform a centralized government. It is yet to be seen what anarchist groups in the US such as Rose City Antifa and the Black Bloc will accomplish. One thing is certain: they are drawing attention to difficult issues. Perhaps the multiple recent bold acts of anarchist groups portend more rebellion in our society’s future.

Pirates can be seen as oracles of change. Dawdy and Bonni warn that “we might look for a surge in piracy in both representation and action as an indication that a major turn of the wheel is about to occur” (696). These anthropological ideas reflect the simmering political currents we are experiencing now in 2017. The call for jobs and fair compensation are getting louder and louder. Political polarization continues to freeze up the government, rendering them ineffectual. Worse, elected officials appear more concerned with ideology and campaign funding than the plight of the common man. They leave their own constituents’ needs abandoned. Citizens may turn to extreme political philosophies such as anarchy as a way to take piratical action to counteract economic disparity. A pervasive sense of powerlessness and underrepresentation may lead to the splintering of societal structure, even rebellion. Shrugging off accountability to the system as a countermeasure to what is seen as government’s inability to provide a free and fair system. This may be seen as empowering to the public. It may also signal a breakdown of centralized government. If political structures cannot provide
economic stability, will citizens ultimately decide to tear it all down?

Teacher Takeaways

“The student makes great use of a variety of sources to provide complex and numerous perspectives on the issue, using both academic and non-academic sources, which allows us to see the topic from both historical and contemporary viewpoints. The student also synthesizes the information from these sources with their own ideas very well by paraphrasing and summarizing. Some of the shorter paragraphs seem as though they continue the ideas and thoughts of those around them and could likely be merged rather than allowed to stand on their own. It is also a little unclear what the student is arguing for. Is this an examination of piracy through history and in contemporary times? Or is it an argument that piracy is a symptom of failed governments that eventually benefit the oppressed? While the introduction and conclusion are engaging, captivating, and pose great questions, the student should revise with an eye toward giving a clear statement of what they are truly arguing for, or how their research throughout the body of the essay speaks to that argument.”

– Professor Dannemiller

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The Hysterical Woman

(Research essay – see the research proposal here and annotated bibliography here)

Hysteria was a medical recognition dating back to 1900 BC, diagnosed by physicians liberally until recent times. The term Hysteria comes from the Greek word “Hystera,” which literally translates into “uterus.” The diagnosis and treatment of Hysteria were routine for hundreds of years in Western Europe and the United States, mainly for keeping women in line. Symptoms that indicated Hysteria were broad and all encompassing: nervousness, sexual desire, faintness, insomnia, irritability, loss of appetite, depression, heaviness in abdomen, etc. The number of diagnosed cases of Hysteria slowed as medical advancements proceeded, and in the early 1960’s (coinciding with the popularization of feminism) the “disease” ceased to be considered a true medical disorder. In modern medicine, the treatment and diagnosis of female medical issues continues to be vague and potentially harmful due to lack of knowledge. Does the concept of female Hysteria have continuity today? Although the vocabulary has changed, it is clear that the practice of ignoring serious medical ailments based on sex remains prominent in the world of medicine, and contributes to the continuation of harmful gender stereotypes.
The beginnings of Hysteria can be followed back to ancient Egypt, around 1900 BC, when a “misplaced womb” was commonly thought to be the cause of the disease. Plato later expanded on this concept around 500 BC with his explanation of the womb as a living creature that sought to disrupt biological processes, impede breathing, limit emotional regulation, and cause disease (Adair). While Plato agreed with the prevailing theories of the time in regard to the effect of Hysteria, his ideas differed slightly on the cause. It was taken as fact that Hysteria was due to a hormonal imbalance within the female body, causing those afflicted to act out irrationally, or fall into a fit of anger. Plato, however, introduced the idea that Hysteria was due to a “moving psychological force, which arises from the womb: sexual desire perverted by frustration” (Adair). It is important to note that his theory, more insightful than anything that had been proposed before, would be opposed by physicians and commentators for nearly two thousand years following. A more sophisticated and medically forward concept of a psychiatric rather than physical affliction would not be seen for years to come.

The time and place that Hysteria saw its highest peak in relevance was around 1800-1900 in Western countries. Where Hysteria was previously diagnosed to females who “acted out” or showed signs of irritability, the diagnoses were given out for less specific symptoms in the 1800s. The women who attempted to deviate from the domestic standards of their gender, those who were depressed, and those who were irritable were now also labeled as “hysterical” (Culp-Ressler). Perhaps not so coincidentally was the simultaneous increase in frequency of Hysteria diagnoses and rise in popularity of Freudian psychoanalysis (Scull). This is necessary to consider because Freud himself placed a great deal of importance on gender roles and normative societal behavior of the sexes. It should then come as no surprise that both the stigma for being diagnosed with Hysteria, as well as the treatments and “cures” for the disease, were sexist during this time.

Women labeled “hysterical” in the 1800s and 1900s were placed in insane asylums, given the Rest Cure, and in some extreme cases given hysterectomies (Culp-Ressler). The main goal of the Rest Cure treatment was to confine women in rooms that were not distracting, over-feed them with the goal of weight gain, and allow them no visitors in order to limit their “stressors” and revive them back to their normal
temperaments. An article published within the *American Journal of Nursing* in 1936 describes the daily life of a Rest Cure patient: “I’m having a rest cure and I can’t see anybody ... and all I have to do is eat and sleep and not worry about anything. Just rest ... and that’s just what I’m doing. I may not look it but that’s just what I’m doing” (“The Rest Cure” 451). The article is just one of many accounts, fictional and otherwise, that provide a look into how women that were labeled “hysterical” were treated. It was believed that if women were able to limit their stressful tasks that they would be likely to remain delicate, proper, and feminine—desirable traits in a Victorian wife and mother. John Harvey Kellogg’s book titled *Ladies’ Guide in Health and Disease: Girlhood, Maidenhood, Wifehood, Motherhood* was a common source on explaining to women the necessary steps they ought to take in order to lead healthy, childbearing lives. On the topic of Hysteria, Kellogg notes that the common causes are “sexual excess, novel reading, perverted habits of thought, and idleness” (586). As Kellogg mentions that the disease is one of “morality”, he further shames women into lives free of hard work and free thinking. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, author of “The Yellow Wallpaper” (a fictional tell-all of her experience with the Rest Cure), once wrote a letter detailing the lifestyle she was told to lead in order to keep her unruly nerves at bay. She was given advice to “live as domestic a life as far as possible”, to “have but two hours’ intellectual life a day”, and “never touch pen, brush, or pencil again” as long as she lived (Gilman). As gender norms went unquestioned in the Victorian era, as did the sexism visible in the medical world.

Due to Hysteria’s feminine association, it was further deemed shameful and embarrassing. This stereotype was promoted after the Second World War, when many soldiers returning home from battle were diagnosed with nervous diseases, most specifically Hysteria (Scull). Due to nervous diseases being seen as feminine afflictions of the imagination, these men received little to no treatment—similar to females diagnosed with Hysteria. These men were seen as cowardly and inferior for a malady that today would be easily recognizable as post-traumatic stress disorder. While the patients were male, they were seen as contracting a feminine disease that was “made up in the mind” (Scull), therefore hindering the help that they needed. The lack of
attention shown to these soldiers reinforces the idea of a bias that exists with illnesses that are associated with women.

During the 1960s and 1970s, feminist writers were quick to isolate Hysteria’s literal definition in order to successfully convey criticisms of Freud’s psychoanalytic treatments of the “disease” (“Brought”). Women of this age began to critique the healthcare system, and were able to expose the effect of sexism in medicine. Because of fervent denunciations, the term slowly fell out of medical use but remained a common phrase in day-to-day conversations. Hysteria was officially removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1980 (Culp-Ressler), and is now considered a derogatory term. Many physicians and psychologists attempted to continue the diagnosis of the disease, but under new, more socially acceptable terms. Freud himself claimed to change focus to one’s “sexual conflicts” within (Scull), and the effects. He then created a way of disguising old ideas of Hysteria behind fresh words. This trend carries on today despite opportunities to change the culture.

One of the more surprising turns in the history of Hysteria as a concept, is the reclamation of the word by 1990s feminists. In striking contrast to the views held by progressive women of the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s, some ‘90s women sought to recover and take ownership of the inherently feminine rights of Hysteria. Elaine Showalter, an author of the 90s on the topics of Hysteria, gender, and feminism, claims that “for some writers, Hysteria has been claimed as the first step on the road to feminism, a specifically feminine pathology that speaks to and against the patriarchy” (286). Interestingly, prior to this time, Hysteria was dubbed a tool of the patriarchy and that notion held true amongst feminists. This insight from Showalter addresses the lengths that sexism can reach. Internalization of patriarchal views on sex is a common effect, especially with views that are enforced blindly without question. The concept of an irrational woman, or a woman possessed by emotion rang true for some women of the ‘90s, but they saw this falsehood as something to be proud of, and something to aspire to. In their attempts to argue the reclamation of Hysteria, they succumb to the long-enforced stereotypes that many fought to destroy. While emotion, passion, and vulnerability aren’t necessarily traits to be ashamed of, they were used through the trustful relationship of physicians as
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

a tool to suppress the social, economic, and personal growth of women through the diagnoses of nervous diseases.

Stereotypes of the feminine gender have made their way into modern medicine as well. As women are socialized from birth to be passive and to respect authority, more specifically male authority, it is uncommon for a woman to resist the diagnosis received from a physician. Typically, if a woman is told that she is a hypochondriac, or that her symptoms are psychosomatic (all in her head), she will most likely internalize the notion that she is imagining all of her issues. The term “psychosomatic” is a cover-all diagnosis commonly used by physicians to attribute to any symptoms that cannot be explained. As a result, many women continue suffering through treatable and preventable diseases because they are fearful of being told that they are overreacting (Culp-Ressler). This demonstrates that even within ourselves, women fear falling into the feminine gender stereotypes of irrational and excessive behavior—internalized misogyny presents itself here.

From this, we must ask why do we, as individuals and as a society, not trust women to know their own bodies? We see this in cases ranging from the extreme to the everyday—from the treatment of rape survivors to a typical visit to the doctor’s office. Aside from flaws in women’s reproductive health care, there is also a well-documented gap in the treatment of pain between men and women. Of the 25% of Americans suffering from chronic pain, women make up a disproportionate majority (Edwards). Not only are women more likely to suffer from chronic pain, but that pain is more likely to be categorized as “emotional,” “psychogenic,” or “not real”. Women are also less likely than men to receive aggressive treatment after being diagnosed with autoimmune diseases that cause chronic pain (Edwards). Multiple studies have found that women are far less likely to receive any kind of medical intervention to manage pain (Culp-Ressler). Why? Pain is self-reported and subjective, and treatment of pain fully relies on the idea that a physician trusts the patient reporting symptoms. However, trusting a woman to be a reliable source on her own body is still not the norm. This practice contributes to the long-standing cycle of attributing women’s pain to mental disorders, thus reinforcing the stereotype of the Hysterical Woman.
While many medical professionals would agree that there needs to be a shift in how we look at both the gender and sex dynamics of healthcare, there is little being done about it. Clinical trials are just one example. Women make up roughly half of the country’s population, but an astonishing majority of participants in clinical trials within the United States are men. According to the *Journal of Women’s Health*, in 2004, women made up less than 25% of all patients enrolled in clinical trials for that year (Moyer). The reasoning for this is that women present a less uniform sample population: they have menstrual cycles and hormones, making results more difficult to analyze. However, this does not eradicate the need for personalized care being available to women. This bias is decades-old, and leads doctors to preferentially study diseases and test drugs in male participants. A bias this prominent is a serious health risk for women, limits the reach of our preventative care and hinders growth of scientific knowledge. Another struggle presenting itself is the unwillingness of medical professionals to make use of what little sex-specific data has been found. For example, despite well-recognized sex differences in coronary heart disease management in critical care units, the guidelines for management are not sex-specific (Holdcroft). Unfortunately, guidelines rarely state that evidence has been mainly obtained from men; disregarding this information perpetuates inequality in treatment of disease and distribution of medication.

The limited scope of our current knowledge on gender/sex differences can be observed in newly discovered differences in disease symptoms, as well as the continuing decrease of the life expectancy gap. Biased medical research and practice focuses on gender differences, and therefore risks overlooking similarities. For example, coronary heart disease was once perceived as strictly affecting males; therefore, less research and attention was given to the possibility of women contracting the disease (Annandale). Now, perhaps as a result, coronary heart disease kills more women than men. Women in the 1960s and 70s lived markedly longer than men, but in recent years the gap has decreased (Ibid.), and shrunken more than one third since the early 80s. The exact cause of the decline in the gender life expectancy gap cannot be pinpointed due to a number of confounding variables. The increase in women working to retirement and the added stress of contributing financially as well as taking full
responsibility of children are just a few. One widely debated cause of the gap decrease is the fact that the quality of men’s healthcare is surpassing that of women’s. The standard of disregarding women from clinical trials creates an unhealthy environment of willful ignorance on the topic of women’s healthcare due to stereotypes, and the effects are measurable.

With the sex-biased culture of medicine so ingrained into its academia and practice, the task of eradicating it seems all the more important. This becomes more true as a greater percent of the population becomes aware of gender stereotypes and the harm that they cause. Unfortunately, due to fear of being labeled a hypochondriac, or neurotic, women refrain from telling their medical experiences and demanding quality care. With a majority of women experiencing patriarchal authority during doctor visits, and many women sharing similar stories of struggling with a lack of accurate diagnosis, it’s a shame that this topic isn’t discussed on a broad scope. If experiences were documented, it would be a faster way to make society more aware of this specific branch of inequality and how it contributes to negative gender stereotypes.

A practical way of accomplishing this would be to implement changes into the medical school curricula. We should seize the opportunity to implement the best practices for healthcare regardless of gender identification, as well as to establish evidence-based guidance that focuses on both gender and sex differences. Informing future physicians that it is not in the best interest of the patient to quickly jump to the conclusion that their symptoms are psychosomatic, or to share stories of specific experiences would eventually trickle down into the medical culture. Informing these students that it is within the realm of possibility that these women might be presenting symptoms to an affliction that is not well understood, even by modern medicine. The exercise of attributing the valid symptoms of women to mental disorders has been commonplace for centuries—Hysteria, Conversion, etc. While the name continues to change, the meanings behind them stay the same, and women continue to be subjected to sexism, and low-quality healthcare as a result. Acknowledging the bias within is the first and most important step to moving forward and increasing the quality of women’s healthcare.
Teacher Takeaways

“This student presents a solid and well-researched argument that builds off a clearly stated thesis in the introduction and returns to this thesis in the conclusion with a fully developed call-to-action and prompt for continued research. Each paragraph follows the path of the thesis’s spine, elaborating on the historical contexts the student first presents, to introduce new complexities and further evidence of how these claims add to the need for response to the bias against women in health care. Although the student synthesizes paraphrases, quotes, and summaries well most of the time, there are moments (mostly later in the essay) in which the student gives us information without clearly signaling or citing where that information is coming from.”

– Professor Dannemiller

Works Cited


Slate Magazine, 23 July 2010, 


Showalter, Elaine. “Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender.” Hysteria Beyond Freud, 
Assignment:
Persuasive Research Essay

In order to apply and extend the skills and techniques you’ve learned in this section on argumentation, research, and research writing, you will write an essay which synthesizes research on an arguable topic to create a well-informed and rhetorically impactful argument.

Assignment

Your task is to write an argumentative essay which takes a position on a topic, supports that position using credible sources, addresses counterarguments, and rebuts those counterarguments. Here’s a more detailed breakdown:

1. Choose a Topic
   Using the idea generation activities in Chapter Eight, identify a path of inquiry that is open-ended, focused, and—most importantly—interesting to you.

2. Write a Proposal
   Before beginning your research, identify your path of inquiry (research question) and your working thesis—this is your research proposal. Keep in mind, this is not set in stone, but is rather a starting point. Your proposal should be no fewer than 250 words. Consult the discussion of research proposals in Chapter Eight for guidelines.

3. Research and Write an Annotated Bibliography
   Using multiple resources (your school’s library, Google, Google Scholar, and beyond), identify the different perspectives on your topic. Consider:
   - What conversation already exists about this topic? Are you saying something new, or aligning with existing viewpoints?
   - Who are the authorities on this topic? What stance do they take? Who is weighing in?
   - What aspects of this topic make it arguable?
   - What other issues is this debate connected to?
   Try to gather a diversity of sources in order to catch the contours of a complex conversation. Be sure to document your research along the way to save yourself a headache when you begin your annotated bibliography.

   You should compile any sources you seriously consult (even if they do not seem useful at the time) in a bibliography using a citation style appropriate to your class. Then, you will evaluate them in the form of an annotated bibliography. Each annotation of roughly 100 words should:
   - briefly summarize the source,
   - attend to its use-value, and
Part Three: Research and Argumentation

384

c) consider its credibility and place in the ongoing conversation.
Your annotated bibliography is a research tool; you are not obliged to use all of the sources from this portion of the project in your essay. You may include any sources you’ve encountered for your annotated bibliography, even if you don’t plan on using all of them as evidence in your essay.

4. Write, Re-research, Revise, Revise, Revise!
   a. Write a first draft of your essay; this can be an outline, mind-map, draft, or hybrid of pre-writing. This will help you organize your ideas and research so your instructor knows you’re on track to write a successful final draft. Although a rough draft does not need to hit all these points, your final draft will include:
      o Your question and your stance
      o Justification for your stance, including sources
      o Opposing/varying stances, including sources
      o Your response to other stances
      o An ultimate conclusion on your topic
         *Note: this is not an outline or prescription, but a set of recommended subtopics.*
   b. Using feedback from your instructor, your peers, and the Writing Center—as well as new ideas you discover along the way—revise your first draft as many times as possible until it is ready to submit.

Your essay should be thesis-driven and will include evidence in the form of quotes, paraphrases, and summaries from sources to support your argument.
Before you begin, consider your rhetorical situation:

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How will this influence the way you write?

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How will this influence the way you write?
Assignment: Persuasive Research Essay

Each student will use inquiry-based research to write a persuasive essay informed by credible sources and relevant experiences and knowledges. The author will take a position on a topic using a clearly articulated thesis, support that position using evidence, acknowledge other perspectives, and rebut counter-arguments.

* This rubric is designed to score the final draft of the essay, but not the components that precede it (i.e., annotated bibliography and proposal).

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<th>Criteria</th>
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<td><strong>Ideas, Focus, and Content</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the author organized their argument around a central, unifying insight and/or research question? Is the scope of this thesis/question appropriate to the rhetorical situation? Does the author develop the contours of the ongoing conversation and locate themself within that conversation?</td>
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<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
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<td>Does the argument unfold logically and fluidly? Does each paragraph relate back to the path of inquiry clearly?</td>
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<td><strong>Style and Language</strong></td>
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<td>Does the author use an academic voice appropriate to the rhetorical situation? Does the author effectively integrate evidence by front-loading, punctuating, and explaining? Does the author employ logos, pathos, and ethos?</td>
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<td><strong>Depth, Support, and Analysis</strong></td>
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<td>Has the author provided a convincing amount of evidence to support their thesis? Does the author foreground their perspective, using research to support, elaborate, or nuance their thesis? Does the author demonstrate a complex understanding of the issue by integrating a diversity of sources?</td>
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<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
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<td>Does the essay read smoothly with minimal spelling/grammar/mechanical issues? Does it use proper format?</td>
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**Guidelines for Peer Workshop**

Before beginning the Peer Workshop and revision process, I recommend consulting the Revision Concepts and Strategies Appendix. In your Peer Workshop group (or based on your teacher’s directions), establish a process for workshopping that will work for you. You may find the flowchart titled “Establishing Your Peer Workshop” useful.

**Establishing Peer Workshop Process:**

Do you prefer written notes, or open discussion? Would you like to read all the drafts first, then discuss, or go one at a time? Should the author respond to feedback or just listen? What anxieties do you each have about sharing your writing? How will you provide feedback that is both critical and kind? How will you demonstrate respect for your peers?

**One Example of a Peer Workshop Process**

**Before** the workshop, each author should spend several minutes generating requests for support (#1 below). Identify specific elements you need help on. Here are a few examples:

I’m worried that my voice is being overwhelmed by other voices in the conversation. How do you think I can foreground my ideas?

Do you think my conclusion is convincing? What do you think my call-to-action should be?

Do you see anywhere that I could better cultivate *pathos*?
During the workshop, follow this sequence:

1. Student A introduces their draft, distributes copies, and makes requests for feedback. What do you want help with, specifically?
2. Student A reads their draft aloud while students B and C annotate/take notes. What do you notice as the draft is read aloud?
3. Whole group discusses the draft; student A takes notes. Use these prompts as a reference to generate and frame your feedback. Try to identify specific places in your classmates’ essays where the writer is successful and where the writer needs support. Consider constructive, specific, and actionable feedback. What is the author doing well? What could they do better?
   - What requests does the author have for support? What feedback do you have on this issue, specifically?
   - Identify one “golden line” from the essay under consideration—a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that resonates with you. What about this line is so striking?
   - Consult either the rubric included above or an alternate rubric, if your instructor has provided one. Is the author on track to meet the expectations of the assignment? What does the author do well in each of the categories? What could they do better?
     - Ideas, Content, and Focus
     - Structure
     - Style and Language
     - Depth, Support, and Reflection
     - Mechanics
   - What resonances do you see between this draft and others from your group? Between this draft and the exemplars you’ve read?
4. Repeat with students B and C.

After the workshop, try implementing some of the feedback your group provided while they’re still nearby! For example, if Student B said your introduction needed more imagery, draft some new language and see if Student B likes the direction you’re moving in. As you are comfortable, exchange contact information with your group so you can to continue the discussion outside of class.
Model Texts by Student Authors

The Advertising Black Hole

The little girl walked along the brightly lit paths of vibrant colors and enticing patterns. Her close friends watched her as she slowly strolled by. She made sure to inspect each one of them as she moved through the pathways, seeing if there was anything new about them, and wondering which one she was interested in bringing home. She did not know, however, that these so-called friends of hers had the potential to be dangerous and possibly deadly if she spent too much time with them. But she was not aware, so she picked up the colorful box of cereal with her friend Toucan Sam on the outside, put it in the cart and decided that he was her top choice that day. Many children have similar experiences while grocery shopping because numerous large corporations thrives on developing relationships between the young consumer and their products; a regular food item can become so much more than that to children. Due to the bonds that children and products are forming together, early-life weight issues have become an increasingly large issue. While marketing is not the leading or only cause of the obesity epidemic affecting children and teenagers, it does aid in developing and endorsing preferences of unhealthier food options sold in grocery stores, which can lead to higher weights if not controlled.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that up to 17% of children and adolescents, from ages zero to seventeen, are overweight in the United States. This comes out to approximately 12.7 million young individuals who are affected by the obesity epidemic (“Childhood Obesity”), and there is no projection of this number getting smaller any time soon, as the general population continues to increase. Without any significant changes with how food products are marketed to children and its influence on their food choices, one might predict that there will most likely not be a decline in obesity in kids and teens as populations continue to rise.

Today, large corporations like Oreo, Trix, and Yoplait, amongst others, spend great sums of money marketing to younger generations in hopes that they will want their products and, more importantly, grow an attachment to them. In 2009 alone, companies spent about $1.79 billion on the endeavor (“FTC Releases”). Leading businesses in the
food industry spend a lot of money on advertising so that they can establish an emotional connection between their products and fledgling consumers. They try to inspire feelings of familiarity, comfort, “coolness,” adventure, warmth, excitement, and many others that will attract kids and teenagers.

Through trials and studies, leading advertising agencies have found what types of pictures, words, and designs resonate the most with the younger audiences. It is not about selling a product, but creating an experience of joy and wonder for the child. While younger children especially are not aware of the premeditated enticements from the corporate end, they can still become highly engrossed in the products. Some research has shown that a child’s attraction to certain brand characteristics may actually be out of their conscious control (Keller 380).

Young children pick up on things very easily, whether something is specifically taught to them or not, and food preferences are no different. Toddlers as early as two or three can be affected by advertising (McGinnis 376) and can develop bonds to certain products. This shows that even without outside pressures from society or a knowledge of advertising, children can bond with food items just like they do people. This makes sense, as brands are created to be as relatable and welcoming as possible, just like a human being.

With this in mind, developing a specific personality for a brand is extremely important. Many advertising authorities believe that without a brand personality that a company would have an extremely hard time standing out from the crowd. In “Brand Personalities Are Like Snowflakes,” David Aaker, a well-known expert in his field, gives examples of large corporations that use branding to bring a likeability or specific personality type to the business in order to identify with certain groups of people, or to have a larger mass appeal. For example, Betty Crocker comes across as motherly, traditional, and “all-American” (Aaker 20). It makes sense why children and adolescents would develop a fondness for a product that seems homey and loving. If a company succeeds in gaining the interest of a child and creating an emotional connection with them, then it is not impossible or unusual that the individual could stay a brand loyalist into adulthood. But with unhealthy food companies being the source of some of the
most intelligent marketing techniques, it is easy for them to entice children to eat foods that are not good for them, all the while making them feel content about their choices.

Once a company comes up with a good branding technique or personality, they can start marketing their products, and the avenues in which companies share them is almost as important as the products themselves. In order for the item to become popular and generate high revenue, they need to reach as many people as possible. If the wrong methods are chosen and there is less of a consumer response, then money has been wasted. While marketing food to children has been very successful in the past, it is even more so now in the 21st century because of the prevalence of mobile devices. Kids and teens are very frequently exposed to advertising through websites, games, or applications that they are using on cell phones, tablets, and laptops. Corporations even collect meta-data from sites or applications that kids access on the device in order to figure out what their preferences are, and to further expose them to ads within their frame of interest, hopefully boosting their sales and likeability through repeated exposure (“Should Advertising”). Television has not been phased out by the internet, however, and it is still a huge contributor to advertising success, accounting for almost half of marketing costs (Harris 409). Movies, magazines and other print sources, sporting events, schools, displays in grocery stores, the boxes themselves, and many other routes are taken in order to create as much of a product “buzz” as possible.

Within these avenues, there are countless techniques that are used in order to gently sway a child or adolescent into wanting a product. Some of these methods are direct, but others are hardly recognizable. I decided to do a little investigating of my own at Fred Meyer’s, one of the leading supermarkets in the Portland area, and found many trends and practices that were used to promote kids’ food. One of the main techniques used is called cross-branding. Also called cross-promoting, this is where a specific product, like cereal for example, will sign an agreement with another company so that they can use each other’s popularity in order to sell more merchandise. The picture shown is a perfect example of this. Kellogg’s teamed up with Disney and Pixar in order to create a one-of-a-kind Finding Dory cereal. This example is actually different than most of the cross-promoting cereals or products, because this is a whole new item made just for the movie; it is not just a picture on a box for a cereal that had already
existed. Both companies will come out ahead in this case, since *Finding Dory* is beloved by children and so will bring revenue to both. Celebrity and sports endorsements are other forms of cross-branding, since they are promoting themselves and the product at the same time. While cartoon characters may be better suited for younger kids, movie and television stars, singers, and athletes help to draw in the pre-teen and teenage crowds.

Other identified advertising tools from the packages themselves might include sweepstakes to win prizes, toys inside, free games or applications with purchase, and collecting UPC codes for gifts. The picture shown to the right is another example from my personal research, which shows a Go-Gurt box. It not only shows cross-branding with the movie *Trolls*, but it also includes something for free. The top right-hand corner displays that inside of the box there is a special link for a free *Trolls* Spotify playlist. Prizes that used to be included with purchased goods before the onset of the internet were typically toys, stickers, puzzles, or physical games, whereas they are now mostly songs, videos, digital games, or free applications which generally include either the company’s branding mascot or the cross-promotion character they are using at the time. As a child, I remember that getting free gifts was a huge incentive for me to ask my parents for something at the store, and can vouch for how strong of an effect this can have on a kid's mind.

Not all tactics to gain consumer interests are as noticeable though, yet still appear to have positive effects on children. Bright colors, boldness of design, cartoon mascots, and catch phrases are all part of the overall enjoyable experience that corporations try to create for young customers. The location of the product on the shelves is also important. Most children’s products are kept on bottom shelves, especially in aisles of grocery stores where adult and child products are mixed. This way the items are in their direct line of sight and reach, creating a higher probability for purchase. Another method that is not so heavily researched, but is extremely convincing, comes from “Eyes in the Aisles: Why is Cap’n Crunch Looking Down at My Child?”, an article by Aviva Musicus and other scholars. This article breaks down the research study of whether eye contact with cartoon characters on cereal products creates a sense of comfort and trust, and if it affects the item’s purchase. Many cereal
characters’ eyes look down (as shown), typically looking at the product that pictured on the box—but also at the smaller people perusing the aisles, like children. Researchers wanted to determine if this tactic is intentional, and if so, if it is effective in selling more product. This tactic appears to be used mostly for cereal, but I was able to find similar artistry on Danimals yogurt drinks and some fruit snacks as well. It was concluded through the study that eye-contact by a friendly face in general creates feelings of trust and friendship. In applying this to product branding, the study confirmed with many of its subjects, that a welcoming glance for a child can essentially create positive feelings that make him or her feel more connected to the product and in turn choose it over others. The findings of the study for whether or not characters are designed to make eye contact were inconclusive, however (Musicus et al. 716-724).

While the amount of money that is spent on food advertising for children seems exorbitant to most, it is not necessarily the amount of money or the advertising in itself that is the problem for many Americans; instead, it is the type of food that is being promoted with such a heavy hand. Soda, fruit snacks, donuts, cereal, granola bars, Pop-Tarts, frozen meals, sugary yogurts, cookies, snack cakes, ice cream, and popsicles are some of the most branded items for children at grocery stores. Most of the things listed are not adequate snacks or meals, and yet it is proven that children want them the most due to their appealing containers. Depending on the age of the child, they may not even know what the product is but still want it, because of the color of the package or because their favorite character is on it. Experts agree that the majority of the highly advertised and branded food products are unhealthy and that they can contribute to higher weights if consumed in too large of quantities or too often. One such expert is Kathleen Keller, along with her research partners from various universities in the United States. They have found that the most marketed food items at the grocery store are generally high in fat, sodium, and sugar, which is easily confirmed with a look in your city’s popular supermarkets. Keller also determined that children who are enticed by “good” marketing and branding for unhealthy products often keep going back for more due to the addictive nature of those three main ingredients (409).

Keller and her team also conducted three different experiments, two of which I will discuss. It is important to add that Keller is not the only one that has conducted
these studies, but is being used as an example of the type of tests that have been executed in regards to branding, and the movements that have been made in the scientific field to try to help with the obesity epidemic. In the first study, Keller sought to determine whether actively watching commercials made young people eat more. She found that all of the children, regardless of age and weight, ate more food while watching advertisements about food than when they were not. Others researchers however, have had opposing viewpoints based on their collected data in similar studies, and the issue is that there are too many variables with this type of test. Age, type of food offered, advertisements watched, familiarity with the ads or characters used, and other factors all come into play and can skew the data. Some studies found that none of the children ate more while watching television advertisements about food, while others concluded that despite some children eating more, not all of them did like in Keller’s experiment. The issue with the variables are still being worked out in order to have more accurate data (Keller 380-381).

In the second trial, one test group was offered raw fruits and vegetables in containers with characters on the outside, such as Elmo, and included a sticker inside like many of the products that come with free gifts. Both groups consisted of children of different ages that regularly ate below the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, which is one to three cups a day depending on age. The kids who had containers with the characters increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables by approximately three servings from where they were before the test started, while the intake for the second group with the plain containers did not go up at all.

The most interesting part of the study is that when the experiment was over the children who were in the character test group continued on eating more fruits and vegetables despite the fact that they no longer had the original containers. This could potentially mean that once a child makes a connection with a product, that it becomes engrained in their minds and that they no longer need stickers, toys, or package designs in order to appreciate or crave a certain food. However, more testing would have to be done to confirm this (Keller 383-384). While this could be a negative thing in the context of unhealthy food product advertising, it also shows that cross-branding could be used to promote healthier alternatives. Keller’s results along with the responses of the
scientists that conducted like-studies, appear to have a general consensus that while there is correlational data between advertising, branding, and obesity, it is not a direct one, which is encouraging (Breiner 5). Advertising itself does not increase obesity, but rather the products being advertised and the methods by which they are advertised.

The good news is that since advertising and branding does not have a straight link to obesity then it should be possible to prevent some occurrences from happening, either from the government and food companies themselves, or from inside the home. On the governmental side, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) continue to partner up with each other, along with the leading food manufacturers, to discuss ways that companies can promote healthier eating. Some companies have already joined the fight by offering lower calorie, sugar, fat, or sodium versions of their popular foods by using whole grains or by limiting portion sizes (Wilks 66).

Another example of governmental efforts was in 2010, when Michelle Obama launched the campaign for “Facts Up Front” with the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA). The goal of this movement was to encourage food distributors to voluntarily put nutrition information on the front of the package. The act is to encourage label reading and awareness of what is being consumed, with labels being monitored by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to ensure that customers get accurate information (“Facts”). There are still many companies, however, that do not state their health facts on the front of the container though, and the FTC, HHS, and GMA are always pushing for more participation. As you can see in the picture I took at Fred Meyer’s, even companies that have sought action can have the same product with and without nutrition labeling sitting right next to each other on the shelves. In the photo, the nutrition label is on the bottom left of the package of Pop-Tarts in the right-hand photo, but is absent from the one on the left. It seems like this could occur if a company either began or stopped their contribution to the “Facts Up Front” movement and older stock was being sold alongside newer stock. It is possible as well that there could be inconsistent procedures in the company with packaging; however, this seems unlikely since companies would have to set up their machines to create varying products.
Hopefully, as more years pass, front-labeling will become the overall standard in the marketplace.

Another governmental organization that joined in the battle against obesity is the Institute of Medicine (IOM) at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). While the IOM does not have any direct say on what types of policies are enacted, they do conduct studies on childhood obesity and ways to prevent it, including advertising’s effects on eating patterns and weight. After they summarize their findings, they submit the information in a report to agencies like the FDA to see if they can encourage any change. In their report from 2009, they witnessed a correlation between advertising and early weight gain and acknowledged that advertising practices are not in line with healthy eating. The IOM states that food manufacturers should be more aware of what types of foods that they are advertising to children and adolescents. They do also recognize the groups that are working to make a change, like the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation (which works with the food industry to try to lower caloric content of current food products), as well as the Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (a non-profit that encourages advertising for nutritionally dense foods only and inspires healthy eating habits within households) (Breiner 6-9).

Examples of productive advertising could be using characters on packages of carrots, apples, milk, or any other healthy items, commercials that promote health and wellness for kids, and games or applications that are directed to teach kids about nutrition. However, many experts believe that any type of advertising and branding, even if it is to influence positive food choices, becomes negative as it continues to endorse a society based on consumerism. This is just a broad overview of what type of work is being done and what major players are involved, but because of the severity of the obesity epidemic, there is much more work going on behind the scenes than what is listed here.

The government is not the only entity that can make a change, however, and modifications can possibly be made inside the home to avoid excessive marketing control on young ones and their consumption of unhealthy food products. It is important to say, though, that not everyone may be able to make certain positive changes; those who can are encouraged to do so. As stated previously, there are many factors that go into children’s eating habits. Some of the most common reasons are that healthier
items are less expensive, and that fresh food goes bad faster, so purchasing nutritional options may not be possible for lower-income families. There is also the issue of research and education: some parents or guardians may not be well-informed of advertising’s effects on younger minds or how to serve well-rounded meals, and they may also not have a lot of access to resources that could help. It is unwise to say that all people in the United States have access to the same information, as this is just not the case.

But families that do have the means to purchase healthier products and are knowledgeable on the subjects of advertising and nutrition (or have ways learn about these subjects) are greatly encouraged to take small or big steps to implementing change at home. Some steps could be to limit time spent on mobile devices, so that kids and teens are not viewing as many advertisements each day, or to completely eliminate television viewing and the use of internet-based devices if a more extreme option was needed or wanted. If the cost of groceries is not a major issue, then encouraging the consumption of new fruits and vegetables each week is an easy place to start, as well as offering more lean proteins, healthy fats like olive oil and coconut oil, and less processed starches. Probably the most crucial element is to talk to kids about consumerism: how to be a smart and mindful customer, and how to not let advertisements influence our decision-making. They can also make a point to discuss portion control, and what healthy eating means for our bodies and our longevity of life. Since children develop preferences as early as two years old, it is best to start implementing healthier eating habits and interactive conversations as early as possible—but it is never too late to start.

It is encouraging to know that companies are making changes to their policies and product ingredients, and that governmental organizations, non-profits, and families continue to strive for a healthier country. There should be better protection of our youth, but what is hindering a more drastic movement for change of advertising techniques targeted to children and adolescents is the amount of variables in studies due to age, weight, background, mental health and capacity, etc. Because of these differences amongst children, studies are not consistent, which creates feeble evidence for marketing and branding’s effects on childhood obesity. But there is still hope for the
future of our country, as scientists continue to strive to establish better research techniques that can either solidly prove or deny the correlation between the two. In the meantime, households at the least can start having conversations with their children and teenagers about marketing’s effect on their preferences and choices, and can proactively work on breaking the hold that food corporations have over so many of them.

Teacher Takeaways

“I like how this essay combines extensive research with the author’s own direct observations. Together, these strategies can produce strong logos and ethos appeals, respectively. However, the author too often wants the information speak for itself, and because the findings of many of the studies were inconclusive or contradictory, they don’t support the author’s central claim. These studies certainly could still be used effectively, but this essay demonstrates the importance of actively engaging in argument—the author cannot just present the information, but needs to interpret it for the audience to demonstrate how the evidence supports the thesis.”

– Professor Dunham

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A Changing Ball-Game

LaVar Ball is changing the National Basketball Association’s shoe- and player-branding culture without playing a single NBA minute. His son, Lonzo, is a few short
weeks away from hearing his name among the first few called in the NBA Draft after a standout year playing basketball at UCLA. Lonzo has two younger brothers as well, one of whom, LiAngelo, will play at UCLA in the 2017-2018 season, and another, LaMelo, who committed to the same university as his brothers two years ago even though he was just an eighth-grader (Calle). The three Ball children played on the same high school team in Chino Hills, California, setting the world alight in early 2016 with their high-powered, free-flowing offense centered around the brothers. They would jack shots that “traditionalists would argue against” but after winning a national championship, “Chino Hills [had] proved its effectiveness in ways never seen before” (Calle). Since then, as the Balls have started to transition out of the world of children playing basketball and entered into the more adult level of college sports (and, soon, the NBA), the attention has shifted from the boys to their father. His outspokenness and demands for respect and inclusion are making waves across the basketball world, even possibly having lasting effects on athletes in every sport.

LaVar is attempting to influence everything around his sons, particularly Lonzo as he goes into the league: he is claiming his son will only play for certain teams and, most controversially, distancing himself and his sons from the major shoe companies in a way that an athlete’s camp rarely does at such an early stage in their professional career. What he is doing is undoubtedly risky, but it has clear upside too. If it works, it could clear a path for future athletes to be successful building and monetizing a brand that is not dependent on the sneaker industry. Even if it does not work, it will provide a rough blueprint upon which others can improve in order to become as big as the major signature athletes without having to depend on the corporations backing them.

Attacking the status quo is LaVar’s forte. When he and his family first moved into their home in the Alterra neighborhood in Chino Hills, he received grief from the homeowner’s association for attempting to paint his home white and not sticking with the peach color mandated by the association’s guidelines. Fast-forward to now, and President of the Alterra Homeowner’s Association LaVar Ball lives in a white home, proclaiming, “If Obama can have the White House, Goddamnit Big Baller can have a white house!” (Calle). LaVar’s haughty yet sometimes wildly ambitious statements about his family and esteemed symbols like the president have become a bit of a... thing, too.
To date, he has said that Lonzo would make the best team in the league (the Golden State Warriors) better if they somehow swapped him with Steph Curry, the back-to-back and first-ever unanimous NBA Most Valuable Player. Lavar has called Lonzo the best player in the world; he said that Lonzo would only play for the Los Angeles Lakers. Lavar said that he himself would beat Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest human basketball player to live on the planet Earth, in a one-on-one game. These comments, along with Lonzo’s campaign on the court and LaMelo’s highly controversial 92-point game at Chino Hills, have all coalesced into making the Balls the most (in)famous family in the basketball world’s recent memory. They have created a name for the family that is extraordinarily atypical in a time where players are coming in as more and more nondescript products to the league each passing year.

The Balls’ need to have creative control has not stopped at the painted house, either. In fact, the largest dispute surrounding their branding with shoe companies today is centered around their need for creative control. The types of deals that are available to NBA players are very structured and limited to three tiers. According to Yahoo! Sports’ NBA shoe insider Nick DePaula, undrafted rookies and fringe NBA players typically receive “merchandise” or “merch” deals from shoe companies that gives them sneakers and gear for them to play in. These deals amount to products around $50,000 to $100,000. That is just a baseline though—effectively the minimum wage a professional hooper can be paid to promote a brand like Nike, adidas, or Under Armour, rather than the player cutting a check from their own wallet for footwear.

The next tier of deal is called a “cash” deal, “where the majority of the league falls” (DePaula). Players with these deals will get a certain amount of cash, essentially a salary, over a set number of years according to the contract they sign with the company. On top of that, though, many of the best players in the league will get their own logos, phrases or ad campaigns along with colorways, known as player exclusives, of the shoes that Nike is running out that season to match their team’s jerseys or something connected to the player. The salaries are negotiated by agents and depend on how marketable the player is. Usually, “a rookie will sign a shoe deal with a brand that’ll last three or four years” and the “current shoe deal range for a marketable lottery pick [such as Lonzo Ball] can be anywhere to $200,000 to $700,000 [per year], with exceptions
every so often for what brands consider to be ‘can’t-miss’ endorsement stars” such as Andrew Wiggins, who signed an $11 million deal spread over five years with the bonus as being a key headliner for their new line of sneakers (DePaula). This is the same tier where Lonzo would probably find himself, given the fame the Balls have crafted for themselves coming into the draft. In an interview with ESPN Radio’s *The Dan Le Batard Show with Stugotz*, Lonzo confirmed that Nike, adidas, and Under Armour offered five-year deals worth $2 million per year.

The most exalted compensation a player can get for partnering with a sneaker company, though, is a signature sneaker. A signature sneaker deal offers more money, the status as one of the company’s premier athlete in the sport, and a shoe designed and marketed specifically for the individual player. This is only for the most elite of the elite and “will forever be the most sought after deal in basketball” (DePaula). There are only ten basketball players out of the current 450 active NBA players that have signature shoes with American brands: LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Kobe Bryant (now retired), and Kyrie Irving with Nike; Chris Paul, Russell Westbrook, and Carmelo Anthony with Nike’s subsidiary Jordan Brand; Derrick Rose, Damian Lillard, and James Harden with adidas; and Stephen Curry with Under Armour. Most of these superstars came into the NBA with cash deals and player exclusives and worked their way up to a signature. Signature shoes are so hard-earned that rookies are rarely awarded them for their first professional game. The last two times it happened were John Wall’s Reebok Zig Slash seven years ago and LeBron James’ Nike Air Zoom Generation in 2003, nearly a decade-and-a-half ago (DePaula). The two were surefire commodities, John Wall becoming a multiple time All Star and one of the best players at his position and LeBron James cementing himself as one of the greatest players in the history of the game. So, for someone to waltz into negotiations with sneaker company powerhouses and expect anything more than a cash deal—maybe a player exclusive colorway or two without being billed as a bona fide superstar—would be like a player walking up the court and launching shots up from 20 feet beyond the three-point line.

Of course, shooting shots like this are exactly what the Balls do, whether that is figuratively in LaVar’s comments or literally in LaMelo’s shot selection in games. There exists a subset of players in the league with cult-like followings because of the shots
they shoot. Earl “J.R.” Smith, Dion Waiters and others live in this beloved sphere despite their questionable added benefit to their teams. A wise man, Wayne Gretzky, once said, “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t shoot,” essentially stating that no inherent harm exists in attempting the unimaginable. Even wiser and less accomplished men boiled this down to the phrases “If You Don’t Hunt, You Don’t Eat” and “Shooters Shoot.” The Balls are shooters who walk into any room with two spoons in their holsters equipped to dine. In a widely circulated clip from a Chino Hills game earlier this year, LaMelo dribbled the basketball up from the backcourt, pointed at the half court line to indicate the spot he was going to shoot from and audaciously pulled up from the exact spot. The net subsequently swelled in the purest of ripples. LaVar did the same thing. He told the world that he would take nothing less than a billion—with a B—dollars for his sons to sign with a shoe company. The typical cash deal would not be enough, though, even if they met his billion dollar demands. Companies would need to absorb the family’s business, Big Baller Brand (or 3 Bs), rather than simply adding a swoosh or three stripes onto Ball products. They required co-branding, a partnership that would be more akin to Jordan Brand’s current relationship with Nike than to athletes like Kyrie Irving or Kevin Durant’s relationships with Nike. LaVar has said, “[We] aren’t looking for an endorsement deal…. We’re looking for… a true partner” (Rovell). This is relatively unprecedented with Jordan Brand being the only real comparison in the sneaker world and that only became independent towards the end of Michael Jordan’s esteemed career (Sole Man). Even LeBron, Jordan’s only active peer in terms of greatness, operates wholly under Nike when it comes to shoes and athletic-wear.

Naturally, all three of the major shoe companies rejected the Balls’ request (Rovell). Not only was the request itself unique but, “never in the history of modern-day shoe endorsements have the big companies all stepped away from a potential top pick nearly two months before the NBA draft” (Rovell). LaVar maintains that he does not care about the rejection and this is all for the greater good, part of the bigger plan. He said that he knew the companies would never agree to his terms but he had to get them to say no because he “wanted to make sure so when they make this mistake and they look back, they’re going to say ‘man, we should’ve just given that man a billion dollars’” (Le Batard). Some people, including FOX Sports’ Lindsey Foltin, have claimed that
despite the fact that “LaVar insists he’s doing what’s best for Lonzo, his behavior could end up costing his son millions.” Unsurprisingly, LaVar replied, “you goddamn right I’m costing him millions because it ain’t about millions with us. It’s about them Bs. Billions” (Le Batard).

Beyond the dollar figure and amount of zeros on the contract, the biggest and most important part of these public negotiations have been the extent of input the Balls have on their own brand. That is the essential aspect of co-branding: the retention of creative control. When it comes down to it, LaVar asserts that “as long as my son’s got a shoe, if I only made 50 shoes, they’re for him. It’s his own shoe” (Le Batard). The pride that he has in Lonzo and that the Ball boys can have in their product is vital, and that is something he says his young, unproven sons would never get from the giants Nike, adidas, and Under Armour.

Besides a father’s pride in his sons, an athlete’s control over their own brand is increasingly becoming a point of contention between the players and the shoe companies. In his seminal piece examining how and why Stephen Curry walked away at the expiration of his deal with Nike, Ethan Strauss discusses Curry’s own journey to create his own space in the sneaker and basketball worlds. A huge concern for Curry while negotiating a renewed deal with Nike, which he signed as a rookie before he became the superstar he is today, was whether he would get to lead his own Nike-sponsored camp for elite youth players. This not only lets young players learn from the best, but it also allows the professionals to tangibly affect the best up-and-coming talents, something much “more meaningful than strangers clamoring for autographs on the street” (Strauss). Nike, though, did not value Curry enough to give him this and put him on their second tier of athletes, the athletes without their own signature. Now, though, with Under Armour, Curry has both his camp and a signature sneaker and is a bigger, more unique star than he ever would be under Nike.

Curry is not alone in this, either. A player’s brand is inextricably linked to their footwear nowadays, perhaps more than the teams they play for and their on-court prowess. DePaula points out that shoe deals are actually negotiated in much the same way that free agent contracts are hashed out. He also writes, “[As] players of all levels enter the league, their eventual shoe deal continues to be secondary to team deals, but
sneaker contracts have become more lucrative and incentivized.” This has gotten so extreme that in the same offseason that LeBron signed a one-year contract with the Cleveland Cavaliers, he signed a lifetime deal with Nike worth more than half a billion (Strauss). ESPN Radio host Bomani Jones even argues that, because of this, many players’ first loyalties lie with the shoe companies instead of their teams: “your primary employer is who pays you the most money.... LeBron was Team Nike before he was a Cleveland Cavalier or a member of the Miami Heat or any of those things. We contextualize guys around the teams they play for because that’s the relevant variable for the kind of work that we do” (Strauss). In fact, Jones and Curry got into a minor spat on Twitter when Curry saw some jabs that Jones had poked at his Under Armour shoes. Curry took it very seriously and personally, said Jones, pointing out that “there doesn’t seem to be much space in his mind between himself and Under Armour” (Strauss). This is why many athletes, the Balls foremost among them, are becoming more and more concerned with their role in crafting their own brand and how it is all integrated into their overall image as public figures: “Curry and James aren’t just salvos in a battle between brands; it’s a personal war.... It’s a fight for something even bigger than a basketball career” (Strauss).

While this is all nice and well for players at the height of their basketball powers, LaVar is endeavoring to claim agency for himself and his family before any of them have stepped on a professional basketball court, a fact few critics have failed to point out. They have not earned this yet. Nobody’s ever tried to forge their own lane without already being great. But maybe this is not the case. In fact, LeBron began breaking out of the corporation-defined mold after just one year in the league, albeit an all-time great year. After his rookie year, “Mr. James did the almost unthinkable in the sometimes stuffy world of sports marketing — he handed his off-the-court businesses and marketing over to” his childhood friends Maverick Carter, Rich Paul, and Randy Mims (Thomaselli). LeBron was searching for the same self-definition that the Balls are now. Looking back, LeBron recalls, “I wanted to wake up in the morning and say I did it my way. I’m not being cocky and saying it’s my way or the highway; I just wanted to make a decision” (Thomaselli). It is nearly the same exact notion that LaVar and Lonzo are currently pushing more than a decade later. At the time, LeBron “and his friends also
wanted a new type of sports marketing. Rather than endorsements, he wanted partnerships” (Thomaselli). This reads almost verbatim to what LaVar is talking about now in the year 2017. History may not be repeating itself but it is, at the very least, rhyming.

Neither of these journeys—LeBron’s and the Ball family’s—are without speedbumps, though. LeBron and his people created their own management and media agency, LRMR, in Maverick Carter’s mother’s kitchen after firing LeBron’s agent (Torre). LRMR’s first major media project was “The Decision — the broadly consumed and deeply unpopular ESPN primetime special wherein James announced he was leaving the Cavs for the Heat” (Torre). This seemingly self-indulgent, look-at-me production made LeBron the most hated player in the league for quite some time (despite it raising tens of millions of dollars for charity). Similarly, the Ball family’s notoriety is coming at the expense of many criticisms of LaVar’s outspokenness. The resemblances between the two cases are uncanny; the Balls are just more pronounced in their desires while moving the timeline ahead a year. After all, LaVar did declare that they were never planning to “sign with a company and then wait around for five or six years for a shoe” (Rovell).

Now that LeBron has neared the mountaintop of basketball and dominates the sneaker world as well, he has set his sights to other avenues. He has continuously chosen partnerships—such as his with Warner Bros. that the studio called “unprecedented in scope”—that give greater creative control than their competing alternatives offered (Torre). LRMR has created Uninterrupted, a media outlet for players to connect directly with fans. Continuing to buck traditional sensibilities that hang on to the players’ teams as their primary allegiance, he headlines and works closely in this effort with Draymond Green, “James’ ostensible [Golden State] Warriors rival” (Torre). Notably, Draymond Green is also a Nike athlete, another hint to the waning importance of team conflicts as opposed to promotion of more personal undertakings. According to LeBron, the projects he is participating in now are all part of the “vision that [he] had 10-plus years ago” (Torre).

The Balls’ sights, while lofty in their own rights, have only been set on the sneaker industry as of now. Still, with their “Shooters Shoot” mentality and their
propensity to reject established and outdated standards, it is possible that their ventures will lead them to paths outside of shoes. They are branding themselves in a vastly different way than most everyone else has and, most importantly, they are doing it their own individual way. LaVar said a year-and-a-half ago that they are “doing some shit that has never been done before. We kind of march to our own beat in the fact that we make our own rules.... We jumped out the box and took a risk” (Calle).

In a similar vein, LeBron cited the television show *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, noting similarities between himself and Will Smith’s titular character:

> It was, [LeBron] admits, more than just a character on TV. More like an inspiration. ‘The guy makes it out of Philadelphia? I treated that as Akron, Ohio [LeBron’s hometown]. He makes it to Los Angeles with a rich family, but he can still be himself? That’s what I wanted to be. With the blazer inside out... All of that.’ (Torre)

The way players cling to this individuality within the often-starched backdrop is crucial and only growing in importance as values moves away from conventional team-based allegiances towards personal brands. LeBron’s circle mentioned how different things were in the early 2000s, when he came into the league, from the ‘80s, when Michael Jordan made his name because of the uprise of mass media and its use in making wider audiences more accessible (Thomaselli). This applies even more aptly in 2017 with social media’s advent, a huge advantage in marketing that has benefitted the viral-ness of many of the more eccentric shots LaVar has put up.

Frankly, the stakes are huge. It may be just sports, but the money exchanged on these playgrounds is massive. Stephen Curry’s

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**Teacher Takeaways**

“This essay is an impressive exploration of a current issue: I can tell how passionate the student is, and they develop a nuanced thesis about the Ball family’s influence on sports marketing and branding. While the essay is fluid, segueing from idea to idea pretty smoothly, the overarching organizational logic seems arbitrary. In other words, the structure feels fine while reading, but taking a step back makes the train of ideas blurry. I would encourage this student to make a reverse outline to clarify this issue. On a local level, I would also emphasize that the student should spend more time unpacking the quotes they use, rather than moving on right away. (Generally, you should avoid ending a paragraph with a quote, which this author does often).”

– Professor Wihjlem
“potential worth to [Under Armour] is placed at more than a staggering $14 billion” and business experts “peg total sneaker sales somewhere north of $20 billion annually, and rising” (Strauss).

Unsaid but assumed up until now, much of the Balls’ potential as transcendent difference-makers depends upon at least one of the Ball brothers (Lonzo, LiAngelo, and LaMelo) being exceptional at the game that allowed them to get here. They are using what LeBron has been doing for nearly 15 years and refining the blueprint, but LeBron has a leg up as one of the few unequalled players in the game’s history. So, let us hypothetically assume the worst—that the Balls all bust or wear upon the public’s nerves to the point of no return: the fact that they have gotten this far is nevertheless remarkable. This phenomenon has not occurred in a vacuum. Even if they end up being nothing more than a small blip in Nike’s, adidas’s, and Under Armour’s smooth-sailing Titanics, they matter. They have presented those who follow a longer runway to launch from than was there previously—a runway that does not rely on these major corporations’ backing. When recalling his time playing at Chino Hills High School, Lonzo reflected, “I felt like I helped change the culture over there” (Calle). Now, before he has had his name called at the NBA Draft, he and Big Baller Brand are changing have already changed the culture on an even larger scale.

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Every year billions of people get vaccinated for protection from diseases and illnesses. Before vaccinations, the flu ran rampant; measles would kill thousands yearly; polio would paralyze upwards of 15,000 people a year, and many other diseases would devastate societies (Offit 3). Even with the wonderful advancement of vaccines, people still opt out of getting them, endangering themselves and everyone around them. I have observed that the two most common reasons why people choose not to vaccinate are either that they claim vaccines do not work or that vaccines can even cause autism. These responses are derived from a place of being horribly misinformed. We will explore why these claims have become popular, and what the truth really is. Vaccines are essential for the health of an individual, the people directly around them, and societies overall. The evidence against the most common excuses is very strong and in
large quantity. Furthermore, there is absolutely no evidence supporting the autism claim or misunderstanding of vaccines not “working”, thus making these excuses invalid.

Sometimes misinterpreting something small can create a big wave of damage. When people say that vaccines do not “work”, they think that vaccines are a definitive solution to their health, and when they or someone still gets sick, then the vaccine did not work. This is a fair statement; however, this is not what vaccines actually do. Getting vaccinated is not an absolute healing technique; rather, it is for reducing the chances one will get a disease. It is much like wearing pads while riding a bike: your chances of injury goes down, but there is still a chance of getting hurt. As for vaccines, the chances of getting the flu after being vaccinated is usually reduced by 40-60% (“Vaccine”). Pair that with healthy habits like frequent washing of hands, and the odds go even more in your favor. An example of a highly successful vaccine is the chickenpox vaccine. It is over 95% effective in preventing severe chickenpox. And only 10-30% of vaccinated children may catch a mild case of chickenpox if they are around someone who has the disease (Hammond). What these statistics show is the benefits of vaccines, but they also show the limitations of them as well. The math is simple: getting vaccinated reduces your chances of disease greatly, and in doing so, you are fulfilling your responsibility to be a healthy individual in society.

In 1998 Andrew Wakefield conducted research to see if there was a link between the measles mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism. But he did not conduct honest research because he tampered with the medical records of all 12 of his test subjects to make the connection between autism and the MMR vaccine seem stronger (Chan). As if this weren’t enough, Wakefield was paid by lawyers to create a result they could use in their case to sue vaccine manufacturers. Not only that, but nobody has ever replicated his findings (Gorski).

It goes without saying that being paid to change records automatically terminates the authenticity of a study. Furthermore, if a result cannot be replicated, then the original finding is most likely incorrect. A good theory must be able to be tested and redone with the results being consistent. With Wakefield’s study, there are no findings supporting his claims but countless studies refuting them. One example is a study in the New England Journal of Medicine conducted in 2002 that had over 500,000 subjects. This large study
followed half a million children for seven years and found no link between the MMR vaccine and autism. Wakefield had his medical license revoked in 2010 (Chan).

Even though the Wakefield hoax has been debunked countless times, some parents still believe that the vaccine causes autism. They often claim they noticed signs of autism after the vaccine, but they usually do not know when autism becomes apparent. Autism is a genetic disorder with signs that become visible at 18 months of age. The MMR vaccine is usually given at 12-15 months of age, before anyone would even know if a child has autism (Bhandari). So, if a child has autism and is given the vaccine at 15 months, it is reasonable for a parent to notice symptoms of autism a couple months later and link them to the vaccine. But if that child did not get the vaccine, those same signs would show due to the genetic factors that cause autism.

Vaccines are known as miracles of medicine; nothing short of a colossal impact on modern society. But a much larger impact is not vaccinating at all. Japan is an example of a country that banned a specific vaccine, and with no surprise, an epidemic broke out. “In 2013, the recent serious measles outbreak was fueled by children who weren’t vaccinated a decade ago. The disease primarily affected teenagers but spread to infants who were too young to be vaccinated” (Larson). This is why vaccinating is a responsibility everyone has; one person has the disease, then passes it to the next, and on it passes to those who are too young to vaccinate. Would you be another stepping stone in the spreading of disease? Or would you be protected from the disease, thus slowing the spreading? Immunity is a group effort, and if a portion of the population is not participating in vaccination, then disease is bound to get out of control and infect individuals with no vaccine. This includes innocent infants who have not been vaccinated yet. Every individual is a part of the picture in group health.

Vaccines: the misinterpretations, conspiracies, and saved lives has sparked many of debates. Many believe that vaccines do not “work” and that they are for ultimate healing, but this is far from what vaccines do. Vaccines protect and reduce the chances of getting a disease and allow individuals to do their part in mass health. The conspiracy theory claiming that the MMR vaccine causes autism has been proven false by countless studies and rendered untrustworthy by the acts of the man who made the original claims. Vaccines are our tool in keeping ourselves and one another healthy.
I challenge you to do your part in preventing outbreaks and maintaining public health by getting your vaccinations.

Teacher Takeaways

“I appreciate the efforts this essay takes to establish a Rogerian argument: the author anticipates the current beliefs of their audience by organizing their exploration around common misconceptions about vaccines. In turn, the author does not reject these misconceptions as foolish, but just misinformed. This organizational choice could be made clearer, though, with stronger topic sentences and a thesis statement that previews the structure, like a road-map.”

– Professor Wihlehem

Works Cited


Complete citations are included at the end of the book.


88 Ibid., 253.

89 The Toulmin model of argumentation is another common framework and structure which is not discussed here.


91 I find this distinction especially valuable because there is some slippage in what instructors mean by “rhetorical triangle”—e.g., “logos, pathos, ethos” vs. “reader, writer, text.” The latter set of definitions, used to determine rhetorical situation, is superseded in this text by SOAP (subject, occasion, audience, purpose).

92 This correlation is an oft-cited example, but the graph is a fabrication to make a point, not actual data.

93 See Frederic Filloux’s 2016 article, “Facebook’s Walled Wonderland is Inherently Incompatible with News [Medium article].”

94 See “Power and Place Equal Personality” (Deloria) or “Jasmine-Not-Jasmine” (Han) for non-comprehensive but interesting examples.


95 Essay by Samantha Lewis, Portland State University, 2015. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

96 Essay by Jennifer Vo-Nguyen, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Perhaps best known in this regard is Bruce Ballenger, author of _The Curious Researcher_, a text which has greatly impacted my philosophies of research and research writing.

See Filloux.

Inspired by Kenneth Burke.

Burke, Kenneth. _The Philosophy of Literary Form_, University of California Press, 1941.

Depending on your rhetorical situation, you might also ask if your question is arguable, rather than answerable.

Teachers also refer to very complex or subjective questions as “not researchable”—so it’s likely that your research question will need to be both arguable and researchable.

This exercise is loosely based on Ballenger’s “Interest Inventory” exercise.


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One particularly useful additional resource is the text “Annoying Ways People Use Sources,” externally linked in the Additional Recommended Resources appendix of this book.

Greenough 215.


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 Ibid.


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