

LITERATURE GUIDE

Essay Writing, Research, Presentations



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PART I
THE CRITICAL ESSAY

CHAPTER ONE: THE BASICS

1.1 PRELIMINARIES AND FIRST PRINCIPLES

The type of essay that you are expected to write for your literature seminars at the English Department, as well as for academic literary criticism in general is a so-called **critical essay** (and hence from now on will be referred to as such). This type of essay comes with certain specific conventions, which will be explained in detail in this guide. An essay is a treatise that deals with a literary or scientific question in a concise, exacting, and sophisticated manner with a logically developed argument (i.e. has a ‘roter Faden’). The adjective ‘critical’, furthermore, does not mean that you are asked to criticize or write a piece of criticism (of a novel, film etc.), but rather it positions you in a tradition of philosophical thinking. Criticism, then, is the evaluation of an object or an action on the basis of standards. As the philosopher Anne-Barb Hertkorn explains, critique is thus “a basic function of thinking reason and, insofar as it is applied to one’s own thinking, becomes an essential characteristic of the formation of judgement claiming validity.”¹ In other words, with the critical essay, we are training you as academics so that, with time, you will be part of that specific discourse yourself. This also means that the secondary texts and the theory texts you are reading during your time at university are not something ‘other’; with your own writing, you are responding to exactly these on the same level—they are the discourse you are writing yourself into. Accordingly, read these secondary and theoretical texts always also for *how* they are written as they can serve as excellent examples for your own writing.

While this *Literature Guide* applies specifically to the demands of the critical essay, most information is also useful for writing (in English) in general. Thus, the critical essay, the linguistics paper, as well as the language skills paper—the other two forms of papers that you will be asked to write at the ES—each have different functions and therefore require a different style and format:

- The **critical essay** presents a focused interpretation of a text or texts in the form of a **thesis, which is then developed as an argument**. In other words, the critical essay develops a central, arguable claim.
- The **linguistics paper** usually works with a **research question** and attempts to support or refute a hypothesis (i.e. a statement that can be proved or disproved) by analysing and interpreting a particular set of (empirical) data.
- The **language skills** paper is an argumentative essay where you **practice formal writing, correct English, and logical argumentation**.
- The **expository essay** serves to acquaint readers with a body of knowledge. In such an essay, you demonstrate your own knowledge of a given topic, but you would not try to make a novel claim.

Importantly, while this guide provides you with the necessary information on how to structure and write the essay, the actual writing is only the second half of the work. **First comes research and an extensive engagement with the primary text(s) that you are working on**. Only once you have concluded your research and analysed the text(s) that you are working on can you develop a thesis—i.e. only once you have figured out what the text(s) ‘are doing’ can you make an arguable claim about the text(s). For a good essay, you cannot cut this work short! **Thus, developing a thesis does not stand at the beginning of your work, but is located half way through the process.**

¹ Qtd. in (translation HS): Schischkoff, Georgi, editor. *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*. 20th Edition, Alfred Kröner, 1978, p. 371.

1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE CRITICAL ESSAY

The critical essay first and foremost presents an **argument**. A purely descriptive or summarizing essay is therefore inadequate. For instance, it is not sufficient to demonstrate the versification in a poem, nor is it enough to present a catalogue of information from secondary sources. Such elements are the analytical tools with which to support your overall argument, they do not replace it.

Furthermore, rather than consisting of individually labelled sections, the structure of a critical essay should be **internal** to the essay, **not external**. Such an internalized structure makes for a fluid argument, which will ultimately be more persuasive to your reader. Most importantly, however, this is the convention of writing in Anglo-American literary criticism. Thus, an essay consists of:

- an introduction with a thesis statement
- paragraphs that correspond to the steps of the argument
- a topic sentence to each paragraph
- paragraph transitions
- a conclusion

Regardless of the type of essay you are writing, switch into an **academic register**. This includes **formal language** (i.e. non-conversational, and no contractions) and a non-personal vocabulary. However, the use of first-person pronouns (i.e. writing from the 'I'-position) is accepted in English academic writing (less so, still, in German). Furthermore, begin the essay early so you have time to **revise** it before turning it in. The first draft of an essay will require not just correction (fixing mistakes), but also revision (rewriting according to argumentational and structural needs).

1.3 FORMAL LAYOUT OF THE CRITICAL ESSAY

If you have been taught the conventions of German-language composition, you may have to “unlearn” certain writing practices. This booklet will help to familiarize you with the textual norms and conventions that apply specifically to the Anglo-American critical essay. In a nutshell, the Anglo-American critical essay is distinguished from both the German-language composition and the linguistics paper by a **minimum of scaffolding**, i.e. no or limited use of table of contents, of enumerated headings, or of subsections.

- 1) **Title:** Papers of all lengths have a title that is ideally both informative and interest-awakening. The title contains basic information about your primary text(s) (i.e. author, title), as well as one or more keywords to describe the focus of your essay. Anglo-American writers often use two-part titles, in which the first part is an interest-awakening phrase—possibly even a quote—and the second part is informative (e.g. Hovey, Jaime. “Kissing a Negress in the Dark’: Englishness as a Masquerade in Woolf’s *Orlando*.” *PMLA*, 112. 3, 1997, pp. 393-404).
- 2) **Table of Contents:** A table of contents becomes necessary only if the work is long enough to be divided into chapters (e.g. the *MA Thesis*). In shorter papers, the thematic scope of your argument should become evident in the title and introductory paragraph(s). Do not, therefore, use a table of contents in any of the other literature papers you have to write at the English Department.
- 3) **Chapters:** A chapter is an organizational unit of a book or a monograph (i.e. a separate treatise on a specific theme). Chapters are conventionally 15–30 pages in length. An *MA Thesis* (50-90 pages or 150 000-270 000 characters) should be formatted like a book. It should be divided into chapters, including a separate introduction and conclusion, and have a table of contents. Each chapter, like longer critical essays, may itself be divided into sections (see points 4 and 5).

- 4) **Sections:** Separate sections are appropriate only in a paper of 15 or more pages, i.e. a BA Theses or an MA Research Paper, and, even then, they are still option. They can, however, be a useful organizational tool. These sections should be 4-or 5-page blocks held together by topic sentences and paragraph transitions in order to keep the argument fluid. Sections may be marked by headings alone, by headings after Roman numerals (i.e. I, II, etc.), or by Roman numerals alone. If you choose to have headings for each section, these headings should be thematic rather than functional (e.g. “The Role of the Unnamed Woman,” not “Introduction,” “Analysis,” or “Conclusion”).
- 5) **Subsections:** German-language composition favours subsections in papers of all lengths (e.g. 1.1, 1.2, 1.2.1, etc.), but this is not the case in the Anglo-American critical essay. In keeping with the conventions for the critical essay, do not use subsections.
- 6) **Introduction and Conclusion Headings:** In papers that are not long enough to have separate chapters, the introduction and conclusion take no separate headings. The essay simply begins with the introductory paragraph, and goes directly into the conclusion from the end of the development. If the introduction and conclusion in a longer paper are separate sections, they will take thematic headings (e.g. “Shakespeare’s Prose” or “Criticism, Fiction, and Ideology”).
- 7) **Basic formal Requirements:**
 - Your paper must be word-processed and **spell-checked** before you hand it in.
 - Use **1.5-line-spacing** throughout your paper (except in block quotes, see Part II: Source Acknowledgment), and **use a serif font** to make the text more legible.
 - Leave **margins of 2.5–3 cm** on both sides of the text.
 - **Indent the first line of each paragraph unless it follows a title** (i.e. do not indent the very first paragraph of the essay and the first paragraph of each section).
 - The **title page** should include the course title, the instructor’s name, and the title of your paper in the top half, and your name, address, e-mail address, phone number as well as the date (e.g. June 2020) near the bottom of the page.
 - **Do not paginate the title page:** begin **page numbers** on the first page of the text with “1”.

Summary:

The different categories of papers have different structural requirements. A **shorter paper** (< 15 pages) has a title, no table of contents, no sections, and no separate introduction and conclusion headings. A **longer paper** (15–25 pages) may have section headings, but should not have subheadings or separate introduction and conclusion headings.

Length of essays in literature at the English Department (unless stated differently by your instructor):

- **BA Seminar Paper:** 4’000 words
- **BA Thesis:** 10’000 words
- **MA Research Paper:** 8’000 words
- **MA Thesis:** 50-90 pages or 150’000-270’000 characters; has a table of contents, chapters (including separate introduction and conclusion), and perhaps (though not necessarily so) separate sections within the chapters.

1.4 THE READER

You write your essay for an **'ideal reader'**—this means that you assume a reader who is intelligent enough to follow your argument and who has basic familiarity with, but not detailed knowledge of the primary text(s). Writing for this kind of general reader will mean that you learn to write for a broader audience. In other words, **do not just write for your instructor**. Rather, write for an imagined community of fellow academics (i.e. as if you were to publish your paper in a journal for

Every reader notices different details in a text and thinks through these details differently, hence, you cannot assume that your reader already knows what you mean. This means that you can never expect that your reader, even if he or she is very familiar with the primary text, will have noticed the same network of textual facts or has had the same thoughts about them. Therefore, it is important that you **guide your reader** through your essay.

When writing your essay, you first have to prepare your reader to follow your argument by providing the context necessary; then you must take your reader through every step of your argument's development. Do not assume that the readers of your essay think in the same way that you do; assume instead that they are critical thinkers willing to be convinced by a compelling argument. Remember that writing is something you do in order **to be read by others** (who are all embodied in the concept of the 'ideal reader'). You should therefore always write with your ideal reader in mind. When you revise an essay, keep asking yourself, "is this clear?" and "is this interesting?" **from the ideal reader's point of view**. The aim of the critical essay is not just to present your argument persuasively, but also to **draw the ideal reader into thinking along with you**.

1.5 USING GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Using *he/his/him* as indefinite universal personal pronouns is obsolete. Here are three conventionalized ways to use gender-neutral pronouns, with comments about their respective advantages and disadvantages. It is best to choose one of these conventions and use it consistently in your writing.

- **He or She:** This is the oldest and most traditional way to indicate gender-neutrality in the indefinite personal pronoun. Rather than using just the male form, you also include the female form as a possibility: he or she, him or her, and his or her. The disadvantage of this method for many people is that the extra words tend to clutter up the text. ("Each student is expected to do thorough research on the topic of his or her essay before he or she starts writing.")
- **Rewrite:** Use the plural form of the indefinite personal noun wherever possible, thereby justifying the use of they, them and their (e.g. "Students are expected to do thorough research on the topic of their essay before they start writing." instead of "The student is expected...of his or her..."). Another option is to reformulate whenever possible so no pronoun is needed (e.g. "Before starting to write, each student is expected to do thorough research on the essay topic.").
- **They:** The plural third-person pronoun as the indefinite pronoun form of singular nouns (e.g. "What a crazy driver! Are they drunk?"/ "Someone left their book in the classroom.") is accepted also in (formal) written language. This form is now officially recognized as correct by the Chicago Manual of Style and the Associated Press, especially because it is gender inclusive beyond the male/female binary.

CHAPTER TWO: THE STRUCTURE OF THE CRITICAL ESSAY

2.1 ESSAY COHESION

Note that **the number and length of paragraphs will vary depending on the structural requirements of your argument**. Write as many individual paragraphs as you have individual ideas/points in order to make your argument. The **paragraphs** break your argument down into single argumentative steps and are usually between **half a page and three-quarters of a page**. If your paragraph is longer than a page it is probably too long, if it is just three sentences it definitively is too short. An essay consists of the following elements.

1) Introductory Paragraph(s):

- present(s) the problem or issue to be addressed
- provide(s) necessary background material
- state(s) the thesis

2) Developmental Paragraphs:

- break the thesis and the argument down into logically coherent topics or supporting reasons that
- are consistent with the thesis
- develop one main idea per paragraph
- cover all aspects of the thesis
- gather momentum (the least important points come first and the most important ones towards the end)

3) Concluding Paragraph(s):

- remain(s) consistent with the thesis, but do(es) not simply repeat it
- extend(s) the thesis to its logical conclusions
- “round(s) off” the essay

2.2 INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH(S)

An **introduction** serves four functions: a) to **attract the reader’s interest**, b) to **focus** that interest on the thesis, c) to **provide a context** for the thesis, and d) to make **the thesis statement**. Thus, it usually has an opening sentence which presents the topic and attracts the reader’s interest, followed by a contextualization of the argument, consisting of any necessary background information and a presentation of the terms or ideas central to the argument. The introductory paragraph culminates with your thesis statement—the key claim you are making for the entire essay.

Formal Requirements: The introduction should be approximately **10% of the essay**. This means, roughly, that a 5-to 10-page paper will have a one-paragraph introduction (between half a and a whole page in length), while a 15-to 25-page paper may have a 2- to 3-page introduction broken into a number of paragraphs.

The Opening Sentence: The opening sentence should primarily draw the reader into wanting to read the essay; this is more important than simply presenting information. It should be substantive, i.e. it

should *say* something. However, there are different ways of beginning a critical essay. For instance, you may choose to begin with an example which illustrates the central problem you address in your paper, or else you may begin by directly announcing the core research interest of the essay.

- Do not open your essay with a “planning” sentence, e.g. “In this paper I will analyse ...,” as such a sentence fails to interest the reader.
- Do not open your essay with a generalization, unless it serves as a springboard into a related, more particular point in the next sentence.
- “Over the centuries, *Hamlet* has generated many critical responses.” Alone, such a sentence fails to say anything, though it becomes acceptable if the next sentence refers to a specific critical response or critical debate about *Hamlet*.

Background Information: In the introduction, you should announce key concepts used in the paper that are crucial to your thesis but not self-explanatory or not part of common knowledge (these may range from an innocent phrase like “epic elements” to a brief overview of Wittgenstein’s notion of private language, if either of these are crucial to your argument). Use the “**Necessity Test**” for background information: Include whatever information the reader needs in order to accept the premise of your thesis, and no more.

- Provide definitions for the key concepts that are crucial to your thesis and not common knowledge. This is especially the case when you are using ‘technical’ or philosophical terms, or if there are diverging traditions of using a term.
- Only provide narrative/textual information which the reader needs to understand your thesis; you should never provide an entire plot summary in the introduction (or indeed anywhere).
- You may also furnish historical background, but only if it is relevant to your thesis.
- Do not provide a biographical sketch of the author (either in the introduction or later) unless it is entirely relevant to your thesis.

Do not construct your introduction out of promises, e.g. “In this paper I will discuss...; After a definition of ... I will talk about ...; An analysis of ... will follow.” Such a catalogue of planning statements tends to take the place of both substantive background information and a thesis statement. Worse, it teases your reader by holding out unsubstantiated promises rather than preparing the actual argument.

Sample Introductions:

Example 1:

September 11th, 2001 marks a shocking event in history that has frequently been portrayed in the media and literature in the past years. In one of these narratives, Mohsin Hamid portrays the fictive story of Changez, a Pakistani living and working in America, who reluctantly becomes a fundamentalist through the prejudice that left its mark on him. Here, fundamentalism is associated with “strict adherence to the basic principles of any specified doctrine, subject, or discipline; a movement or approach associated with this” (“Fundamentalism, n.”). Set in a café in Old Anarkali, Changez recounts his past to an unknown stranger. He had a promising career starting with a scholarship in Princeton, after which he worked for the renowned evaluation firm Underwood Samson & Company as a business analyst in New York. He worked for the firm up until, and for a short time after, the attacks on the Twin Towers, through which his views and experience, suffering from the aftermath of the attack, drastically changed and shaped his views. The story is told in the form of a dramatic monologue, characterized by “a single person who utters the speech that addresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the auditors’ presence and what they say and do, only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker” (Abrams 96). Consequently, the main effect that the dramatic monologue achieves is “to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances his interest, the speaker’s temperament and character” (96), which, in the context of Hamid’s narrative, serves to challenge the reader’s own understanding of prejudice. Hence, Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a novel that effectively plays with ambiguity by use of the form of the dramatic monologue in order to uncover the structuring mechanisms of prejudice.

Example 2:

It is not far-fetched to read the creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a symbol for anything deviant from the social norm and the treatment he receives from other people as society's reaction to anyone not conforming to ideas of normalcy. Therefore, the creature has often been linked to minority groups and especially to the community of disabled people who tend to be marginalised due to their otherness (cf. e.g. Davis). While acknowledging all of these claims as valid, there is one specific kind of disability, or disorder, to which the creature can be most reasonably linked—and not only in terms of his being an outcast rejected by society. The condition I am referring to is autism, a neurological disorder affecting especially social skills. The term autism spectrum disorder (ASD) covers different types of “lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder” (Joseph 1), including for example a mild form called Asperger Syndrome (Gundelfinger). Affected individuals lack skills in social interaction and communication and therefore often find it difficult to engage with their fellow-beings (Joseph 1). They have difficulties putting themselves in other people's position, reading between the lines or interpreting people's facial expression. These deficiencies lead to them perceiving social interactions as challenging and exhausting, and consequently many autistic people tend to avoid social gatherings. Another typical feature can be found in “highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity of focus” (Joseph 4; cf. also Gundelfinger). Moreover, such individuals are often highly sensitive to external stimuli and tend to feel quickly overwhelmed by too many impressions at once—a sensory overload (Gundelfinger; Joseph 4). While a number of recent academic texts have picked up on the idea that the creature displays character traits and behaviour that today we would associate with autism, what they overlook is that Victor himself exhibits many of the same features in his behaviour, language, and self-positioning in relation to society. The text, however, does more than simply feature characters which display autistic traits: It also shows how autism or, rather, the lack of comprehension and a proper handling of it, leads to failing communication, rejection by society and isolation for both the creature as well as for Frankenstein.

2.3 THE THESIS STATEMENT

The thesis statement is the **concise, specific, and arguable statement of the essay's central claim**. It makes the key point of the essay in 1-2 sentences and can often be broken down into three components: a) an observation, b) a claim, and c) the consequences of both the observation and the claim for our understanding of the text(s). In other words, a thesis statement has both focus and a direction, and states its relevance.

Academic literary work presents a **focused interpretation of a text or texts** developed in the form of a **thesis substantiated by an argument that brings forward examples and evidence** for why you can claim what you claim. In other words, in academic literary work (critical essay, presentations), we develop a **central, arguable claim; a thesis**.

The thesis statement forms the point of departure for but also the core of your argument. Your thesis statement should be **concrete, concise, and comprehensible**, making your point clear in 1-2 sentences. The thesis statement is conventionally located **at or near the end of the introductory paragraph** or, in a longer paper (≥ 20 pages), at the end of the introductory section.

With the thesis statement you **put it all out there**; it is the complete statement of the claim for the reading of the poem, text etc. that you propose. Do not keep parts of your claim for the end of the essay; while the essay will have a development over the course of the argument, the point is not to reveal something you did not mention at the end. Rather, the essay will generate development, because of the additional knowledge gained by your approach and the insight that your claim provides.

There are two good ways to test your thesis: For one, ask yourself whether it **is possible to challenge or oppose your claim**. Imagine showing your thesis statement to someone who is knowledgeable about your topic; from this statement alone, the two of you should be able to have a *debate*

about your thesis. If you cannot challenge and debate it, then it's not arguable and hence there is no argument to be made. For another, confront your thesis with the “so what?-question”—if you cannot say why it is relevant, it is probably too general and does not have an argument that is strong enough. This means you need to sharpen or clarify your claim. A good way of doing that is to start thinking of potential **follow-up questions and implications** that can actually already be addressed in the thesis.

The Thesis Statement IS:

- **intelligible and arguable;**
- the **point of departure** for but also **the core of your argument** and signals to your reader how you will interpret the significance of the topic you are discussing;
- **original**—you present an idea that is your own and not simply quote another person's work;
- **specific** to the argument of your essay—it should address only what your essay will cover and should be supported by specific evidence;
- **matches the scope of the paper** (i.e. a short essay can only convincingly develop a narrow argument, while a longer essay should make a broader claim).

The Thesis Statement IS NOT:

- **obvious**, thus, a statement beginning with “It is obvious that...” cannot be a thesis;
- a **judgment**, a **generalization**, or based on **unfounded assertions** and **associative assumptions**;
- a **summary**;
- **speculative** (i.e. making claims that cannot be founded in the text);
- a **grand general/philosophical claim**.

Try to be as specific and precise as possible and stick to what you can truly argue!

- **GOOD:** *Hamlet*, despite its title, is less a play about one man's moral and mortal uncertainty, than about the medieval court politics which positioned a few individuals as carriers of the historical moment.
- **BAD:** *Hamlet* shows Shakespeare's abundant skill at characterization and use of metaphor. (Problems: it is too general and it does not make an argument)
- **ALSO BAD:** The description of the imagery of swans will be the central point of this paper. (Problem: a description is not an argument)

Stylistic Suggestion: You do not need to precede the thesis statement with the phrase, “In this paper I will show/argue that [...]” This pointer is unnecessary if the thesis statement is a clear presentation of a strong argument. If the thesis presents a weak argument, on the other hand, then the pointer by itself will not strengthen it.

Elaborations on the Thesis Statement: Once you write **texts of the length of the BA Thesis or longer**, you may include a projected essay-organization at the end of the introduction, after the thesis statement, **but only as an elaboration of the thesis. Hence, it does not merely outline what you will do in your essay, but also why you will do it.** Note that, if your paper is structured well, such an essay plan may not be useful since the structure of your paper will become clear from the essay itself (and also from the table of contents).

- **THESIS:** Yeat's attitude to the Irish nation is infinitely more ambivalent than Edward Said describes, and in many ways Yeats seems to identify far more with a colonial than with a decolonizing stance. **ELABORATION:** In this essay, I shall trace two key aspects of post-colonial literatures—the concern with nation and the concern with the dismantling of the master narratives of the colonizers—through three of Yeats' final poems, in order to show where I feel the limitations of this post-colonial interpretation of Yeats lie.

2.4 ARGUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Argumentation in an essay can proceed in any number of ways, but in general you may opt for some form of a **logically linear development** (e.g. $A \leq B \leq C \leq D$) or an **associative development** (e.g. the paragraphs serve as examples of the thesis itself or exemplify related aspects of the thesis) or a combination of the two. In any case, **break your thesis down into components**, or steps, of the argument and devote one or more paragraphs to each step and make sure you have a clear ‘red thread’. This is where the **outline** becomes crucial. The outline forces you to think about your essay structure and the individual steps of the argument, so you do not end up with a text of random paragraphs that you then have to make fit somehow. Your argument will be more tightly organized if you know the relationship between each step **in advance** of the actual writing.

Suggestions for an Effective Argument Development:

- Indicate the logical or associative relation between two paragraphs in the paragraph transition.
- Think of the argument as cumulative, so that the most important point is developed in the last paragraph(s) before the conclusion and the least important point begins the argument in the first paragraph(s) after the introduction.
- Note that you may use the first paragraph(s) after the introduction as an “informational” paragraph where you present necessary background information in more detail than you were able to do in the introduction. This first developmental paragraph is a good place to put either an extended narrative summary or historical background, **if either is necessary to the development of your thesis**.

2.5 THE PARAGRAPH

The **paragraph is a unit of an essay that visually, structurally, and argumentatively corresponds to one step** or developmental point of your argument. A paragraph is usually between **half a page and three-quarters of a page**. If your paragraph is longer than a page it is probably too long, if it is just three sentences it definitively is too short.

The paragraph is the key organisational unit of a critical essay. Thus, you divide your essay up in as many paragraphs (i.e. individual steps=individual points) as necessary. Never combine multiple points you want to make into one paragraph, just so the essay adheres to a specific number of paragraphs—your argumentation determines the number of paragraphs, never the other way around. Each paragraph must have a **topic sentence** (see below), which introduces the topic or theme to be developed in the paragraph. Each sentence in a paragraph must follow **logically** from the previous sentence.

Elements of a Coherent Paragraph:

- 1) A strong **topic sentence** (i.e. central claim for this paragraph)
 - provides the main idea of the paragraph
 - delimits the idea developed in the paragraph (i.e. everything discussed in the paragraph should be consistent with the topic sentence)
- 2) **Elaborations, examples, or supporting points**
 - are consistent with the topic sentence
 - substantiate the claim you made with the topic sentence
 - develop the topic fully (cover all aspects put forward by the topic sentence)
 - are logically linked to each other according to the order in which they appear

3) A concluding sentence

- remains consistent with the topic sentence and supporting points
- “rounds off” the topic
- can already signal the transition to the next paragraph

Common Errors:

- Do not write a “mini-paragraph,” i.e. a few sentences, which thematically belong to the previous paragraph, but which mysteriously begin on a new line at the margin. You cannot, in other words, indicate a “mini-break” in the middle of a paragraph by beginning a sentence on a new line.
- Beware of writing a paragraph that contains only a few sentences (i.e. two or three). A paragraph has to fully develop a step in your argument. If the paragraph is shorter than, say, three sentences, you may have either failed to develop the point fully or the point may not be substantial enough to warrant a separate step in the argument of your essay.
- Do not leave a blank line between paragraphs to indicate a conceptual break (such as between the introduction and the beginning of the development of the argument).

Visual Form:

- The **first sentence of the paragraph should be indented** from the margin. Each sentence thereafter follows on the same line as the previous sentence. **Example:**

A _____

A _____

- **Exceptions:** Do not indent a new paragraph if it follows a title or a heading (i.e. the first paragraph of an essay will not be indented). After a block quotation, the next sentence will usually not be indented, because the paragraph should go on to elaborate the quotation. In the rare case of a paragraph ending with a block quotation, the new paragraph that follows will be indented.

2.6 THE TOPIC SENTENCE

The topic sentence introduces the **sub-claim to be developed in this paragraph**. A good topic sentence puts forward an arguable point and consists of two parts: 1) a **focus**, i.e. the topic itself, and 2) a **direction**, i.e. an indication of how the topic will be developed in the paragraph.

Conventionally, the topic sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph, though it may be the second sentence in those cases where a paragraph transition takes up the entire first sentence. It is a key element in guiding your reader through your argumentation and provides crucial orientation.

- GOOD: The wind can be understood as a symbol for the protagonist's desire (focus), though this desire fails to have a clear object (direction).
- BAD: The wind can be understood as a symbol for desire. (Problem: There is a focus but no direction.)
- BAD: The story opens with the protagonist in mid-conversation. (Problem: A topic sentence that describes a narrative situation has no clear focus.)

2.7 PARAGRAPH TRANSITIONS

A paragraph transition serves to **link the point developed in the previous paragraph with the point to be developed in the new paragraph and is crucial for the flow** of your essay. It can either be **part of the opening phrase** or clause of the new topic sentence, or it can be the **last sentence or clause of the previous paragraph**.

The first option of the two mentioned in the above definition is more conventional and safer, since a transition at the end of a paragraph must both introduce a new topic and remain consistent with the old topic sentence. Sometimes the entire first sentence of the new paragraph serves as a transition, thus pushing the topic sentence to the position of the second sentence.

- **GOOD:** Though the use of obsolete vocabulary in this text (topic of previous paragraph) may indicate an earlier era, the technological metaphors are contemporary if not futuristic (topic and direction of new paragraph).
- **BAD:** I will now discuss the technological metaphors.

Exceptions:

- Conventionally, you do not require a paragraph transition between the introduction and the first paragraph of the development, since the argument officially begins with the latter.
- You do, however, still need a paragraph transition from the last paragraph of the development into the conclusion.

Common Error:

- Do not use an “essay-plan” sentence as a paragraph transition (see the “bad” example), since such a sentence will not be able to indicate the direction to be developed by the new paragraph topic.

2.8 CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH(S)

The conclusion serves one simple function, namely to round off the essay. It can take numerous forms. The conclusion should **never simply repeat the thesis or summarize the argument**, but should **indicate that a development has taken place**.

Possible Forms:

- If your argument has been completed by the end of the development (i.e. you don't know what to conclude because you've already said “it”), then **broaden your argument**, that is, say something about the **larger context of the thesis** or provide a broader outlook.
- If the development of your argument has consisted of two or more separate strands (e.g. a comparison of texts or approaches), then **pull the various strands together, evaluate them** and draw a conclusion or conclusions from their juxtaposition.
- If the development of your **argument has been dense and detailed, then, and only then, summarize it**. (The reader may not be able to remember the various details.) Note that a summary is not merely a repetition of points you have already mentioned. Instead, such a summary should **emphasize the links** between the individual steps in your argument and point out how they relate to the claim made in the thesis statement.
- Move to a **metatextual level** (i.e. reflect on your own contribution).
- A **change of register** at the end of the conclusion can have great effect (e.g. move into a more poetic or philosophical tone); your final statement should resonate and stay with the reader.

- Do not end by stating what you did not do but could also have done (though this may be acceptable in some other subjects).

Common Errors:

- Do not summarize your argument if the points of the argument have already been made clearly. This is repetitive and bores your reader.
- Do not introduce a new detail of the argument in the conclusion.

CHAPTER THREE: GRADING

The following five subsections each contribute to the overall grade for your critical essay. Individual instructors may choose to grade each subsection separately and calculate the overall grade as a weighted average of the grades for the subsections.

- 1) **Formal Aspects:** layout (correct title page, no table of contents, first lines of paragraphs indented, page numbers); format of quotations; format of references in the text as well as footnotes; accuracy, consistency and completeness of the bibliography.
- 2) **Language:** correct grammar; punctuation and spelling; idiomatic language (no Germanisms, correct use of vocabulary etc.); appropriate range of vocabulary; academic style.
- 3) **Essay Structure:** coherent introduction that awakens the reader's interest and ends with a thesis statement; the introduction prepares the reader for the thesis statement and provides all the relevant information (i.e. all important components of the thesis statement are introduced properly); thesis statement; each paragraph in the main part of the essay contains a topic sentence that is arguable and has both a focus and a direction; each paragraph constitutes one basic step in the argument; clear links between the individual paragraphs; the argument is structured economically, i.e. no repetitive passages; the conclusion is more than just a summary (i.e. it also points out how the main arguments are related/broadens the scope of the argument/evaluates the findings in relation to the text(s) read and the criticism available).
- 4) **Quality and Extent of Criticism/Secondary Literature Considered:** adequate number of secondary texts for the type of paper; considers also more specialized/specific secondary texts and not just very general texts; the secondary texts are useful in the context of the argument; relevant types/schools of criticism have been considered (i.e. the types/schools of criticism typically address the questions raised by the argument); the secondary sources are discussed critically and are used to further the argument (and NOT to replace it).
- 5) **Argument Logic and Content:** The essay is argumentative (rather than descriptive); the argument is coherent (both individual parts and overall); there are original observations/ideas; the argument is intersubjective (i.e. NOT dependent on an author's entirely personal impressions); the claims are supported by pertinent examples from the primary text(s); the reading of the primary text(s) is correct and appropriate (e.g. adequate paraphrases, correct presentation of the plot/content, relevant aspects discussed); the author provides enough information about the primary text(s) to ensure that readers who do not know the text(s) very well would still be able to follow the argument; literary and critical terms are defined and used appropriately; the discussion of secondary literature reveals an awareness of a theoretical approach/of theoretical approaches (i.e. it outlines and situates itself within a scholarly debate); it becomes clear why it is interesting and/or useful to read the primary text(s) in the way that is suggested in the essay (i.e. the author explicitly and critically reflects on what is gained by his or her approach).

PART II

RESEARCH AND SOURCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH

1.1 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Modern literary studies generally distinguish between primary and secondary sources. In the context of an academic essay, **primary source** refers to the literary text that is the focus of attention. In other words, primary sources are texts that your essay aims to investigate. **Secondary sources** are the texts you consult and draw on in your analysis of the primary source; they deal, directly or indirectly, with either the primary source, or provide context, support, or conceptual frameworks for the argument you are making.

Consulting secondary texts is a vital for the process of writing a critical essay for two reasons:

- **Familiarizing yourself with a given primary text is a necessary and important part of your work.** Knowledge about the creation of a text, its place in the larger cultural and literary history, and existing reflections and theories related to the text will increase your expertise and therefore the foundation of your argument. It will help you flesh out your own claim and argumentative basis and might inspire you to look at the primary text from a different perspective.
- **You do not work in a vacuum.** As a scholar, your goal is to contribute to a larger body of research and writing, so it is part of your task to situate your contribution within the existing network of other scholars' thoughts, arguments, and concepts. You may cite other scholars to support your argument, or you may wish to develop, revise, or refute their ideas—either way, it is important that you respect this process of research and reflection.

As such, you should always try to invest at least as much time into consulting secondary sources as you do in analyzing and thinking about a primary text. In some instances, this may seem like a daunting task, for example, if you plan to write about a famous literary text like *Hamlet*, as you will be faced with a very broad range of research. However, even in such cases, there are helpful tools like critical overviews or bibliographies that can help you familiarize yourself with the critical history of a given text.

1.2 REFERENCING AND THE DANGERS OF PLAGIARISM

Referencing/Quoting/Paraphrasing: Since secondary sources will have such an important influence on your essay, it is vital that you **reference** them, i.e. that your essay explicitly points to the work of the scholars you have consulted. This means that your essay needs to formally mark every thought, idea, or argument that is not your own in order for the reader to realize that they are reading (about) someone else's ideas, either by **directly quoting** from the source or by **paraphrasing** it. For the formal guidelines of putting references in an academic essay, see Part II, Chapter Five.

Plagiarism: Should you quote, copy or paraphrase what you have read without providing adequate references, you commit plagiarism. **Plagiarism is a serious academic offence.** Consequences range from course failure to legal disciplinary action. In order to avoid committing plagiarism, make sure that you always remain conscious of the degree to which your own argument is indebted to or based on the thoughts of others. A good way of doing this is to keep a list of all the secondary sources you have consulted as well as to make summaries and take excerpts of their main arguments in order to become more aware of how and where others' ideas have influenced your own. The university runs all essays through a plagiarism detection software that easily spots such cases of plagiarism. For more detailed information on plagiarism, see Part II, Chapter Two.

1.3 AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY

It is crucial that you always critically reflect on the **reliability** of the secondary sources you are consulting and referencing. Reliability refers to the degree to which a secondary source is providing accurate, well-researched, well-referenced, and academically sound research. Secondary sources that are readily available (for example, on the internet) may not be the most reliable.

Another thing to consider is the **secondary text's date of publication**. Just because a text is (relatively) old, that does not mean that it is irrelevant, as it might be foundational for the development of certain schools of thoughts or concepts. However, it makes sense to consider whether the ideas advanced in that text are still relevant or whether they have been developed in a relevant way since its initial publication. It is also worth taking into account that more recent secondary texts dealing with a specific primary text or concept may include a discussion of existing research, thus pointing you to the current discourses on the subject at hand.

The **primary text's date of publication** should also be considered as it is unlikely that you will read a primary source in its original form of publication if it was published before the second half of the 20th century. Most primary sources nowadays are only available in edited form and published by modern-day presses, a fact that has both negative and positive consequences.

On the one hand, good modern-day editions include information that aid the reader in understanding a text's historical influences and allusions. In other words, modern editions often elucidate the primary text in a way that a mere facsimile publication of its original form never could. In addition, some texts, such as Shakespeare's plays, were never published in any authoritative edition during its author's lifetime, and as such, an editor is needed to establish a reliable version of its original form.

On the other hand, an editorial hand always constitutes a form of interference: it presents a primary text in a certain fashion and thereby steers the modern reader's perception of it in a way that the original text might not have done. As such, it is important that you always check who edited the text, as well as whether they have credentials that indicate reliability: for example, whether they written other academic publications on the text, or whether they have acted as editor of other works by the same author or of the same period. Reliable editions of primary texts also include some form of commentary on the editorial practice. Notes on the form and range of the editor's hand provides transparency and thereby fosters reliability. One of the best examples of reliable primary editions are the Arden editions of Shakespeare's plays. Their extensive editorial apparatus not only provides helpful commentaries; it also notes exactly where and how editors have altered the original text(s).

In order to make your encounter with secondary sources easier, the following is a short list of the three most common channels of availability, as well as a note on what to look out for in terms of their reliability:

Monographs: Printed books are generally very reliable since most book publishers invest resources into editing and peer-reviewing the works they choose to publish. Good examples are the presses of well-known universities. Exceptions are books printed by low-prestige academic publishers as well as self-published works. If you are in doubt concerning a book's credibility, it is best to look up the publisher on the internet, and to check whether they conduct peer-review (i.e. have publications reviewed by external experts). As a general rule, peer-reviewed sources are much more reliable than non-peer-reviewed ones. Another good way to check the reliability of an individual book is to check academic reviews in journals.

Articles or Essays: You will find articles and essays in journals and anthologies. They are less extensive in scope but also more focused than monographs. In addition, most of them present a short summary of existing secondary sources on a given text or topic, which can help you in gaining an overview over available research. As articles and essays are more numerous than monographs, however, you need to pay extra attention to the reliability of what you read. Generally, the same cautionary rule as with monographs applies. Journals published by well-known publishers, as well as those that use peer review, are much more

reliable than those that are published by obscure presses or publish without peer-reviewing. Checking the website of a journal/publisher is generally the best way of establishing its soundness.

Online Sources: When using secondary sources from the internet, it is important to make a distinction between digital versions of published sources (on websites like Project Muse or JStore) and sources that are published only on the internet. With respect to the former, the same criteria as with printed sources apply. In the latter case, it is crucial that you gain an overview over where the source comes from: Who wrote it? Who is in charge of the website? Is the content edited or peer-reviewed? If you find no information on these questions, the source is not reliable. A good example of a reliable online-only source is Romantic Textualities (www.romtext.org.uk). If you check the website you can see that it provides information about its individual authors and their affiliation, its editorial and advisory board, as well as its editing and reviewing practices. Such references are crucial in establishing a website's reliability. Another example is the University of Pennsylvania's Electronic Edition of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (knarf.english.upenn.edu).

Google Books: Google Books contains an immense amount of scanned or digitized versions of published sources. However, most newer books published on Google Books are only partially available, so that you will often have to get a physical copy of the book in question. However, many rare old books are available on Google Books in their entirety and can be downloaded as PDF files.

➔ Be careful with papers downloaded from networks such as **Acedemia.edu** or **Researchgate.com**, as users can upload whatever they wish, i.e. the work you find there may not have been peer-reviewed. Furthermore, **Wikipedia** may provide helpful introductory information, but since it is written largely anonymously, and neither edited nor reviewed by someone holding this official function, it is prone to containing errors and inaccuracies. This is why Wikipedia is not acceptable as a reliable secondary source in an academic essay (although it might point you to relevant sources if there are references.) Websites such as **SparkNotes**, **CliffsNotes**, **Gradesaver**, **Shmoop** etc. are also *never* acceptable as secondary sources.

1.4 SOME DOS AND DON'TS OF RESEARCH

Do:

- Pay attention and make sure that you always reference the secondary sources you are using. Carelessness does not excuse plagiarism.
- Check the Textual Analysis Bibliography for a list of helpful secondary sources that will facilitate your approach to a chosen topic (handbooks, companions, anthologies, literary histories).
- Use library catalogues as well as online databases (such as the MLA International Bibliography or the Rechercheportal) to find reliable and pertinent secondary sources for your chosen text/topic.
- Attend library tours, research workshops, or individual research consultation hours offered by the Zentralbibliothek Zürich (check website for details) and the library of the English Department
- Discuss research strategies/findings with other students. Help each other determine the reliability of secondary as well as primary sources.
- Use reliable dictionaries, such as the OED, when referencing meanings of words.

Don't:

- Never base your argument on information provided by secondary sources with questionable reliability. Never quote or paraphrase from unreliable sources.
- Never pass off someone else's work as your own.
- Never merely rely on the first couple of secondary sources you find (especially if they are older than ten or twenty years). Do a thorough research of existing secondary sources, and work with the ones that are most relevant to your argument.

1.5 USEFUL PLATFORMS FOR ONLINE RESEARCH

Please note that you will need to be working from within the University's network or using the VPN to access most of what these sites have to offer.

- **OED Online:** The authoritative online English dictionary
www.oed.com
- **Rechercheportal:** The online catalogue of the Swiss university libraries
www.recherche-portal.ch
- **Literature Online:** A meta-database combining several literature databases and resources
www.literature.proquest.com
- **MLA International Bibliography:** The most important database for English literature
www.mla.org/bibliography
- **Project Muse:** Digital library for books and journals in the humanities and social sciences from 200 university presses and scholarly societies
<https://muse.jhu.edu/>
- **JStore:** digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources
<https://www.jstor.org/>

- **Google Scholar:** Google's search engine for academic work
<https://scholar.google.com/>
- **Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek:** Index to search for journals that can be accessed to via the ZB or that are open access
<http://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit>
- **Google Books:** Large online library of rare old books that can be freely downloaded by searching and using the filter "Free Google eBooks"
www.books.google.com
- **Internet Archive:** Digital library of free e-books, especially old books that you may not be able to find in print
www.archive.org
- **Project Gutenberg:** Digital library of free e-books
www.gutenberg.org

CHAPTER TWO: PLAGIARISM

Every time you use somebody else's ideas, language, or key concepts, you have to acknowledge them as your source. If you fail to identify the source you are borrowing from, you are committing **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is dishonest, intellectually impoverishing, and unfair.

2.1 THREE DIFFERENT KINDS OF BORROWING

- 1) **Word-for-word quotation:** If you copy the exact words, phrases, or sentences from a source, make sure to use quotation marks at the beginning and the end of the borrowed passage and indicate the source of the borrowing by indicating the author and page number in parenthesis at the end of the quote.
 - "Naipaul's affection for the values of the English bourgeoisie in their imperial prime is expressive of an only half-concealed colonial nostalgia" (Nixon 36).
- 2) **Paraphrase:** If you use your own words to summarize or otherwise render the ideas of a secondary source, you must indicate the source by naming the author and page number in parenthesis. Avoid close paraphrase because you are treading on thin ice: "It is trickier to define plagiarism when you summarize and paraphrase. They are not the same, but they blend so seamlessly that you may not even be aware when you are drifting from summary into paraphrase, then across the line into plagiarism" (Booth, Colomb, and Williams 169).
 - Terry Eagleton's tirade against structuralism is tempered by the admission that this school of thought at least alerted readers and critics to the fact that any manifestation of language, including literature, was constructed, that its meaning was neither determined by individual experience nor resided in a god-given order of immanence (106-7).
- 3) **Borrowing of ideas:** If you use somebody else's ideas and key concepts, you have to credit the source. For instance, if you refer to the idea that something very basic changed in human society around the time of 1910, you have to indicate that this notion derives from Virginia Woolf, who wrote: "And now I will hazard a second assertion, which is more disputable perhaps, to the effect that in or about December 1910, human character changed" ("Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown", 320).
 - Revolutionary art does not go unnoticed by the public, and one could agree with Virginia Woolf, who said in "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown" that the character of humanity changed in a basic way around 1910 (320) because it was at exactly that time that the first exhibition of post impressionistic art was held in London.

2.2 SPOTTING AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

All student papers are routinely checked with and archived by a special plagiarizing application. In addition, instructors are very good at recognizing and spotting plagiarized sentences, passages and ideas. In other words, if you commit plagiarism, you will most likely not get away with it. **Those who try it are regularly caught and may have to repeat the respective course. At the very least, their papers are rejected or severely downgraded; in severe cases, legal disciplinary action and expulsion from the university can result.**

How to avoid plagiarism:

- **Have confidence in your own ideas:** If you invest sufficient time and work, the unique perspective

you want to convey has more to offer than pilfered ideas.

- **Be careful about googling** your subject of investigation (e.g. poem). If you read a great amount of text on the Internet, you might not remember the websites and mistake their ideas (or phrasing) for your own.
- **Take notes** when you read a text and mark very carefully which parts of your notes are direct **quotations**.
- Always write down **page numbers** when doing research.
- Begin **early enough** with your paper, as you will be prone to making mistakes if you have to rush in the end.

Please note that you are required to sign and hand in a *Selbständigkeitserklärung* for every paper you write. Once you are committed to source acknowledgment, you have to do so in a particular way. **Please follow the conventions outlined in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers***. (Some instructors may allow you to use other conventions as well, but MLA style will always be accepted.)

CHAPTER THREE: THE FORMAT OF TITLES

In English, the rules for **capitalization** in titles are different from the general rules for capitalization. Whenever you include the title of a work (e.g. article, short story, or novel) in a text or in the bibliography, you have to apply the rules outlined below. Titles are always formatted in exactly the same way, whether they occur in the bibliography or in the essay itself. The rules for capitalization, for instance, apply in both cases.

- 1) Capitalize the first and the last word of titles and subtitles
- 2) Capitalize all words except
 - definite and indefinite articles (e.g. a, the)
 - conjunctions (e.g. and, or, but)
 - deictic pronouns (e.g. this, those)
 - short prepositions (e.g. in, for, after)

Titles of **monographs** (i.e. books or treatises published separately) must be **italicized**; they have no quotation marks. This holds for all print and visual texts which appear in the world as separate units, i.e. film titles, CD titles, video titles, etc.

Titles of **articles, short stories etc.** must be placed **between quotation marks** and are not italicized. This holds for all print and visual texts which appear in the world as parts of a larger published unit, i.e. poem titles, song titles, TV shows, etc. (except if they were originally published as a separate unit and now appear in an anthology; see “Part II, Chapter Six: Bibliography”).

Main Body of Text:

- In “Turning the Screw of Interpretation,” Shoshana Felman uses concepts from psychoanalysis to analyze James’s novella. (The title is printed between quotation marks because the text was not published independently.)
- *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading Otherwise* is a collection of Felman’s most important essays. (The title is printed in italics because it was published independently.)

Bibliographical Entry:

- Felman, Shoshana. “Turning the Screw of Interpretation.” *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading Otherwise*, edited by Shoshana Felman, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins UP, 1982, pp. 94-207.

CHAPTER FOUR: QUOTATIONS

Quotations serve the purpose of illustrating, supporting, or contrasting your argument. Make sure to embed them well in your own prose. Don't let the external sources take away from you the leading role in writing the paper, otherwise your writing is of little originality. The amount of quotations compared to your own prose should not exceed 10-15%. Also, note that most quotations are not self-explanatory. You must both introduce a quote with a contextualizing lead-in and comment on it with a follow-up. Otherwise, your reader will struggle to understand why the quotation is important for your argument.

4.1 FORMS OF QUOTATION

Direct Quotation: Every direct quotation must be rendered **exactly** as it stands in the book, journal, newspaper, interview, etc. from which it was extracted. You must therefore reproduce punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc. exactly as you find it in the original source. **Any changes you make in the borrowed text must be marked in your paper by using square brackets [].** You may add a note saying "my emphasis" (see below) if you want to stress a word or a sentence by putting it in italics even though the original source does not have it italicized. As long as your quotation **does not exceed three lines, you incorporate it directly in your text** and put it in quotation marks.

- **Making changes:** "That structuralism has in some ways become complicit with the aims and procedures of [late capitalist] society is obvious enough in the reception it has received in England" (Eagleton 122). (The original reads "such" instead of "late capitalist".)
- **Adding emphasis:** "These relations, Lévi-Strauss considered, were inherent in the human mind itself, so that in studying a body of myth we are looking less at its narrative contents than at the *universal mental operations* which structure it" (Eagleton 104, my emphasis).

Block Quote: In prose, if the quotation runs more than three lines, you must present it as a block quotation. Block quotations are indented from the left-hand margin and **do not have quotation marks**. In addition, you should choose at least one of the following methods of separating the block quote from your own text: a) reduce the spacing between the lines, b) reduce the font size, c) indent from the right-hand margin, and/or d) add an extra line between the text and block quote before and after the quote.

- Terry Eagleton's view of structuralism is inspired by his commitment to Marxist literary theory. He cannot sympathize with an analytical procedure that brackets out the actual conditions of literary production and consumption:

Structuralism and phenomenology, dissimilar though they are in central ways, both spring from the ironic act of shutting out the material world in order the better to illuminate our consciousness of it. For anyone who believes that consciousness is in an important sense practical, inseparably bound up with the ways we act in and on reality, any such move is bound to be self-defeating. It is rather like killing a person in order to examine more conveniently the circulation of the blood. (109)

Eagleton's metaphors are telling; he considers the structuralist approach a destruction of the vital texture of consciousness rendered in literary works.

Embedded Quote: You may embed the borrowed language within your own prose, in which case you have to **adjust** your own syntax to the syntax of the quote.

- Terry Eagleton claims that structuralists are not interested in "relating the work to the realities of which it treated, or to the conditions which produced it, or to the actual readers who studied it [...]" (109), a view that is shared by most Marxist critics.

Fragmentary Quote: You may cut a quoted sentence in two (or more) pieces and insert your own words in between the fragments. In that case, always open and close the quotation marks within each part of the

quote. Add the page reference after the last quote in the sentence. Importantly, be careful not to distort the original meaning of the source in the process of fragmentation.

- Terry Eagleton's critique of structuralism hinges in part on his rejection of its postulated reader, someone who not only needs to be a "mirror-reflection of the work itself" but also a structuralist expert, "fully equipped with all the technical knowledge essential for deciphering the work" (121).

Internal Quotation: If you have a quote within a quote, use single quotation marks to indicate the internal quotation.

- "This is why Jakobson is able to say, in a famous definition, that 'The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination'" (qtd. in Eagleton 99).

Paraphrase: With due caution (see notes on plagiarism) you may choose to paraphrase a source by giving the gist of its argument in your own words. Still, it is paramount that you **identify the source** of your paraphrase so as not to commit plagiarism.

- Terry Eagleton's tirade against structuralism is tempered by the admission that this school of thought at least alerted readers and critics to the fact that any manifestation of language, including literature, was constructed, that its meaning was neither determined by individual experience nor resided in a god-given order of immanence (106-7).

The original source reads as follows: "Loosely subjective talk was chastised by a criticism which recognised that the literary work, like any other product of language, is a construct, whose mechanisms could be classified and analysed like the objects of any other science [...]. Meaning was neither a private experience nor a divinely ordained occurrence: it was the product of certain shared systems of signification" (Eagleton 106-7).

4.2 QUOTING POETRY OR DRAMA

Quoting Poetry: If you quote poetry in your essay, you must always indicate the line breaks, either by inserting a slash (/) between the verses and leaving a space on either side of the slash, or, if you quote **more than two lines**, by using a block quote. In the parentheses you should indicate the book, canto or other subdivision (if applicable) by a capital Roman numeral, followed by the verse numbers in Arabic letters. Write the author's last name in the parentheses **only** if it is not obvious from your discussion who wrote the quoted poetry.

- In saying that "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (I, 25455), Satan voices an idea that harmonizes with the individualist ethos of Protestantism.

When using block quote, start a partial first line where it begins in the original, i.e. shift the beginning of the sentence to the right so that it looks similar on the page. Add the parenthetical source reference on the same line with the last verse, if there's enough room on that line; otherwise give the source reference on the next line, flush with the left margin of the block quote.

- Satan's rebellion against God initially appears to be an act of liberation from an unjust imperial ruler:

Here at least
We shall be free; th'Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure, and in my choyce
To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n. (I, 258-63)

But when Milton later links Satan, figuratively, with a "great sultan" (I, 348) who is decorated with the products of "the gorgeous East" (II, 3) such as "barbaric pearl and gold" (II, 4), his own political rebellion becomes tainted with the power, the egotism, and the despotic nature of imperial aspiration.

If you want to leave out one or more lines in a poem, indicate the omission by three dots if the quotation

is no longer than two verses, and by a full line of dots if the ellipsis appears in a block quote:

- Satan's rebellion against God initially appears to be an act of liberation from an unjust imperial ruler:

Here at least
We shall be free; th'Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence.
[.....]
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n. (I, 258-63)

When quoting from recent or not (yet) canonical poetry, it is often more useful to indicate the page number of the volume of poems than the line numbers of a given poem.

- In poem number IV in *Midsummer*, Derek Walcott invokes the brutal world of imperialism by reference to the central figure of *Heart of Darkness*: "By the pitch of noon, the one thing wanting is a paddle-wheeler with its rusty parrot's scream, whistling in to be warped, and Mr. Kurtz on the landing." (14)

Quoting Drama: When quoting parts of a play, you may either integrate short excerpts in quotation marks in your text or use the format of the block quote if you want to render dialogues or soliloquies. In both cases, you should acknowledge the source by indicating the act with a capitalized Roman numeral, the scene with a lower-case Roman numeral, and the line numbers with Arabic numerals.

- After the ghost's disappearance from the battlements of Elsinore, Hamlet, lapses into a meta-theatrical discourse. The question "You hear this fellow in the cellarage" (I, v, 151) refers to the staging convention at the Globe Theatre where the ghost disappeared through a trap-door into the hollow space beneath the planks. By addressing the ghost "truepenny" (I, v, 150) and "old mole" (I, v, 162), Hamlet actually jibes at his fellow-actor impersonating the ghost rather than speaking to a semblance of his deceased father.

When quoting several lines of versified drama in your text, indicate the line breaks by slash (/), leaving a space on either side of the slash:

- Hamlet famously chides Horatio's rationalism by saying, "There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy" (I, v, 161-67).

When quoting dialogues, write the name of the character fully in caps (e.g. HAMLET) and indent the quotation from the left margin (like a block quote):

- GHOST: [Beneath] Swear.
HAMLET: Well said, old mole! Canst work i' the earth so fast?
HORATIO: Oh, day and night, but this is wondrous strange!
HAMLET: And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
 There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
 Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. (I, v, 161-67)

As in poetry, when you are quoting from contemporary or not (yet) canonized plays, it may be more useful to give the page number in parentheses instead of the act, the scene and the line, partly because (post)modern plays might not be subdivided by acts and scenes.

4.3 PUNCTUATION

Colon: Is used to introduce a quotation that follows a full sentence.

- Terry Eagleton understands that the principles of structuralism offended literary critics: "Structuralism scandalised the literary Establishment with its neglect of the individual, its clinical approach to the mysteries of literature, and its clear incompatibility with common sense" (180).

Partial Sentence: If the sentence preceding the quote is a partial sentence, use a comma after verb phrases or no punctuation where not necessary.

- Terry Eagleton asks aptly, "What kind of reader do the poem's tone, rhetorical tactics, stock of imagery, armoury of assumptions imply?" (120).

Question Mark or Exclamation Point: If the quoted sentence ends on a question mark or an exclamation point, the punctuation belongs inside the end-quotation mark. If the entire sentence is a question or an exclamation in which the quotation is embedded, the punctuation comes after the page reference. In other words, question marks and exclamation points belong inside the quotation marks if they are part of the quote, and outside the quotation marks if they are not. Compare the two following examples:

- Is it really true that “structuralism has in some ways become complicit with the aims and procedures of [late capitalist] society [...]” (Eagleton 122)? (The question mark does not belong to the quote.)
- Terry Eagleton asks aptly, “What kind of reader do the poem’s tone, rhetorical tactics, stock of imagery, armoury of assumptions imply?” (120). (The question mark belongs to the quote.)

If your quote begins with a capitalized letter, you must either leave that letter capitalized in order to signal the beginning of a sentence or a proper name in the original document, or use a lower-case letter in square brackets to signal that you altered the quotation:

- Terry Eagleton wonders “[w]hat kind of reader [...] the poem’s tone, rhetorical tactics, stock of imagery, armoury of assumptions” could be seen to imply (120). (Altered to lower case letter.)

Ellipsis (‘three dots’): You may choose to reproduce only a portion of a sentence in your quotation, if the original source contains words and phrases that are not essential to your purpose. This is called an ellipsis and can be achieved by either leaving away the beginning of the sentence, by omitting some words inside the sentence, or by breaking off the quotation before it reaches a full stop. In each case, indicate the omission by **three dots** (with or without square brackets; see below):

- “The ‘ideal’ or ‘competent’ reader is a static conception: it tends to suppress the truth that all [...] reading involves the mobilisation of extra-literary assumptions [...]” (Eagleton 125).

According to the MLA handbook, you only have to use square brackets if the three dots are already used in the original quotation (i.e. in order to distinguish your changes from the text of the original). However, it is also acceptable to always use square brackets. Nonetheless, **we strongly advise you to always use square brackets** to indicate that you made changes to the original quotation. This method is not only safer; it is also much easier.

If you leave out a whole sentence or more within a given quotation, indicate this gap with **an ellipsis plus a full stop** (i.e. four dots in total).

- **Without square brackets:** “Loosely subjective talk was chastised by a criticism which recognised that the literary work, like any other product of language, is a construct, whose mechanisms could be classified and analysed like the objects of any other science Meaning was neither a private experience nor a divinely ordained occurrence: it was the product of certain shared systems of signification” (Eagleton 106-7).
- **With square brackets:** “Loosely subjective talk was chastised by a criticism which recognised that the literary work, like any other product of language, is a construct, whose mechanisms could be classified and analysed like the objects of any other science [...]. Meaning was neither a private experience nor a divinely ordained occurrence: it was the product of certain shared systems of signification” (Eagleton 106-7).

CHAPTER FIVE: CITING REFERENCES

5.1 PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION (MLA STYLE)

All instructors will accept the MLA style of citing references (for more information: *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2016). Some instructors may also accept other styles.²

In the MLA style, every quotation needs to be accompanied by a reference that lets the reader know where to find the complete text from which the quote is extracted. This is done in the **parenthetical style**. In other words, you need to indicate in parentheses after the quotation the name of the author and the page number of the source. **The parenthetical references send your readers to the “Bibliography” (or “Works Cited,” or “Sources” list) appended at the end of your essay if they want to look up a particular source.**

- Whenever you quote or paraphrase another source, you must add a parenthesis containing the name of the author you quoted and the page number.
- You may omit the name of the author, if you have already introduced his or her name in your own prose. In that case, the page reference is sufficient.
- If the “Bibliography” (or “Works Cited” or “Sources” list) contains more than one text by the same author, you also have to add (part of) the title (see below).
- **In the main text**, the parenthesis always comes directly after the end quotes and is **followed** by a period/full stop (or comma or semi-colon, if that is the appropriate punctuation in the sentence). **In block quotations, the parenthesis is placed after the final period.**

Primary or Secondary Source: At the end of the quote, insert a bracket with the author’s name and the page number. Type the final period/full stop or any other punctuation mark after the closing bracket.

- “Naipaul’s affection for the values of the English bourgeoisie in their imperial prime is expressive of an only half-concealed colonial nostalgia” (Nixon 36).
- “And for the first time in my life I was one of the crowd. There was notion in my appearance or dress to distinguish me from the crowd eternally hurrying into Churchgate Station” (Naipaul 43).

If you are citing a primary or secondary source, after having named the author in the same passage or sentence, you indicate only the page number in brackets, without the author’s name, because the reader already knows whom you are quoting.

- Rob Nixon dismisses Naipaul’s appeals to a postcolonial state of permanent homelessness because, “From the outset, his colonial education had oriented him toward England [...]” (11).

Citing a Primary or Secondary Source by Multiple Authors: Indicate all the authors’ names if there are three or fewer authors, or the first author plus “et al.” if there are more than three authors.

- (Booth, Colomb, and Williams 20)

Volume and Page Numbers of a Multivolume Work: Indicate the volume number followed by a colon and the page number.

- (Abrams et al. 2: 1472-73)

Two or More Works by the Same Author(s): If you cite from more than one work by the same author in your paper, then indicate the author’s last name, followed by a comma, followed by the title of the

² e.g. the Chicago style, which is used in many journals. For more information: *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2017.

particular work (or a shortened version thereof) and the page reference. This holds true for books as well as articles.

- (Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 120)

Indirect Sources: If you cite a passage not from the source itself, but from someone else's quotation of that source, then attribute the quote to the work in which you found it, with "qtd. in" preceding the author's last name and the relevant page number(s). However, **it is always better to quote from the original source**, since this indicates that you are familiar with the context from which the quote is taken. We recommend that you cite indirect sources only if the original is not available or at least very difficult to find.

- "This is why Jakobson is able to say, in a famous definition, that 'The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination'" (qtd. in Eagleton 99).

Article on the Internet: Indicate the name of the author and the paragraph number, preceded by "par." or "pars.," counting from the top of the web page from which the quote is taken. We number Internet sources by paragraph rather than by page because different computer systems set to different national paper sizes scroll the same text differently, so that the paragraph is the only stable entity.

- Naipaul's reception in India has been mixed. While some Indian commentators laud *An Area of Darkness* (1964) for its "lapidary grace and piety" (Vaidyanathan par. 1), others deplore the "spiritual dislocation that [they] find so disturbing in Naipaul's relentless assault on the life and culture of the Third World countries" (Maini par. 5).

Electronic Sources (listed by title, e.g. on a database): Indicate simply the title of the entry (e.g. "Metaphor" from *Britannica Online* or "Satire" from *The Oxford English Dictionary* on CD-ROM) or the name of the database itself if there are not separately titled sections.

5.2 FOOTNOTES

The footnote reference in the text appears in smaller font, superscript, and is usually appended at the end of a sentence.³ You may choose to put all the footnotes into a separate section at the end of your paper (but before the bibliography), in which case they are preceded by the heading "Notes." Do not use any of the Latin abbreviations you may have come across in footnotes before ("ibid," "op.cit." etc.). They are obsolete.

In the MLA style, footnotes are used to convey information that is indirectly related to your argument, but would encumber the flow of your ideas, or that is of secondary relevance (but still relevant):

- The compulsion to isolate a structure, for instance the distribution of certain narrative 'functions' in myths, partakes of a discourse of generalisation that considers the elements in a system to be void of meaning as elements. Only in relationship to other elements do these units acquire meaning.⁴

³ In Chicago style, you acknowledge your sources in the footnotes. In addition, they can contain incidental information just like the MLA footnotes.

⁴ Terry Eagleton illustrates this point by 'inventing' a myth in which a father quarrels with his son, whereupon the son leaves the home, falls down a pit and is rescued by the father after the sun shines into the pit: "You could replace father and son, pit and sun, with entirely different elements – mother and daughter, bird and mole – and still have the same story" (95).

CHAPTER SIX: BIBLIOGRAPHY

After indicating the provenance of each quote or paraphrase in your text, you need to add a section containing the total bibliographical information of those sources. In this way, your readers will always be able to look up the sources themselves or to check the accuracy of your quotations.

There are three kinds of lists for bibliographical information. You must make an informed choice about which list you are going to include at the end of your paper.

- 1) **Works Cited:** This list only contains references to works from which you have actually quoted or which you paraphrased.
- 2) **Bibliography:** This list contains all the information of the “Works Cited” list, plus sources that you read but did not quote.
- 3) **Sources:** This list contains the information of the “Bibliography,” plus works that you did not read but which relate to the topic of your paper.

We recommend that you choose the “Works Cited” list for papers written in the course of your studies, and either the “Works Cited” list or the “Bibliography” for your MA Thesis. The order of names is **alphabetical**. The first line of each entry appears at the left-hand margin with all subsequent lines indented from the margin.

In the following, you will find examples for the most important types of **bibliographical entries in MLA style**. For more information, please consult the *MLA Handbook*. Some instructors may also accept other styles (e.g. Chicago style).

Always distinguish between “Primary Sources,” i.e. the text(s) you write about, and “Secondary Sources,” i.e. all the other texts that you cite, paraphrase, or consult.

6.1 BOOKS

The basic bibliographic entry is organized as follows (note that if the entry is longer than one line the second and following lines are indented):

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Publication date.

Last Name, First Name. “Chapter or Article”. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Publication Date.

Make sure to:

- **Italicize** titles of books.
- Place the titles of **chapters, articles, poems, and short stories in quotation marks**.
- In titles with **two parts, insert a colon** to separate the first part from the second.
- Follow the **rules for capitalization in titles** (see “Part II, Chapter 3”)
- If the entry runs over two or more lines, **indent all the lines except for the first one**.

➔ The abbreviations “U” and “P” stand for “University” and “Press”, respectively.

Book by a Single Author:

- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. U of Minnesota P, 1983.

If you want to **cite an introduction or a preface**, then list the bibliographic entry under the author of the introduction or preface. **Do not forget to include the page numbers**. Also, add the name of the author of the book (as well as the editor's, if there is one) after the title of the book.

- Leavis, Q. D. "Introduction". *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë. Edited by Q.D. Leavis, Penguin, 1966, pp. 7-29.

If the introduction or preface has a title, add the title of the introduction or preface in quotation marks:

- Baxandall, Michael. "Language and Explanation." Introduction. *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*, by Baxandall. Yale UP, 1985, pp. 1-11.

Anthology or Compilation: List the entry under the name of the **editor** (last name first), followed by a comma and the word "editor.":

- Kowalewski, Michael, editor. *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*. U of Georgia P, 1992.

If there is more than one editor, list the first editor last name first, and subsequent editors' first name first, with "and" preceding the name of the last editor, followed by the word "editors." If there are more than three editors, then only give the name of the first and add "et al., editors.":

- Bain, Carl E., Jerome Beaty, and J. Paul Hunter, editors. *The Norton Introduction to Literature: Combined Shorter Edition*. W. W. Norton, 1973.

Listing the introduction to an anthology or compilation:

- Kowalewski, Michael. "The Modern Literature of Travel." Introduction. *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, edited by Michael Kowalewski, U of Georgia P, 1992, pp. 1-16.

Listing an article or chapter from an anthology or compilation:

- Morris, Mary. "Women and Journeys: Inner and Outer." *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, edited by Michael Kowalewski, U of Georgia P, 1992, pp. 25-32.

Two or More Books by the Same Author: If you list more than one item by the same author, print three hyphens (---) directly underneath the name of the previous entry. Alphabetize the entries by title.

- Eagleton, Terry. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. Blackwell, 1996.
---. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. U of Minnesota P, 1983.
---. *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. Methuen, 1976.

Book by Two or More Authors: List the entry under the name of the first author (last name first), and then list all subsequent names first name first. If there are more than three authors, give only the name of the first, followed by "et al."

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. U of Chicago P, 1995.

Book in a Language other than English: The bibliographical information required and the format of the reference are exactly the same for books published in a language other than English.

- Döblin, Alfred. *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf*. dtv, 1965.

Book Published in a Series: Some books are part of a series, i.e. a continuing sequence of books that focus on a more or less clearly defined core theme. If the book is part of a series, the bibliographical entry must include the series title (and, if available, the series number):

- Stott, Andrew. *Comedy*. New Critical Idiom, Routledge, 2005.

Note that a series is published irregularly, whereas periodicals (i.e. journals, newspapers, weeklies, yearbooks, etc.) are published periodically (i.e. in regular intervals). The bibliographical entry for a

periodical is different from that for a book published in a series (see below).

6.2 STORIES, CHAPTERS, ARTICLES, AND EXCERPTS

If you cite only part of a book or journal, include the title of the story, chapter, poem, article, etc. in quotation marks, and the title of the book or journal in italics. In addition, **always provide the page numbers** (first to last page of the text).

Short Story:

- Joyce, James. "The Dead." *Dubliners*. Jonathan Cape, 1967, pp. 199-256.

Chapter in a Book by a Single Author:

- Woolf, Virginia. "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." *Collected Essays*. Hogarth, 1971, pp. 319-337.

Work or Article in an Anthology: The reference must provide the name of the author, the title of the work or article, and the title of the anthology, followed by the name(s) of the editor(s), publication information (press and year), and the page numbers of the work or article itself.

- Gledhill, Jane. "Impersonality and Amnesia: A Response to World War I in the Writings of H.D. and Rebecca West." *Women and World War I: The Written Response*, edited by Dorothy Goldman, Macmillan, 1993, pp. 169-187.

If the text you want to cite was originally published as an independent work (e.g. an entire novel, play, or epic poem), then give the title of the work in italics. The title of works that were not published independently is given in quotation marks. In both cases, you may add the date of original publication after the title of the work you cite.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* was originally published as an independent work. The edition that is reprinted in the Norton Anthology was originally published in 1674:

- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost. 1674. Norton Anthology of English Literature*, edited by M.H. Abrams et al., 6th ed., vol. 1. Norton, 1993, pp. 1475-1610.

However, this sonnet was not published independently:

- Milton, John. "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont." *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, edited by M.H. Abrams et al., 6th ed., vol. 1., Norton, 1993, p. 1473.

Article in a Reference Book: If the article is signed, then give the author first. If the article is unsigned, then give the title first and alphabetize according to the first word of the title which is not "the" or "a." If the reference book arranges the articles alphabetically you may omit the page numbers.

When the reference book is very well known, you do not have to give full publication information. The edition and the year of publication are sufficient:

- "Noon." *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1989.
- Mohanty, Jitendra M. "Indian Philosophy." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*. 15th ed., 1987.

For less familiar reference books, provide full publication information:

- La Patourel, John. "Normans and Normandy." *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, edited by Joseph R. Strayer, 13 vols., Scribner's, 1987.

Article in a Journal: The reference must provide the title of the journal, its volume and issue numbers, its year of publication, and the page numbers of the article itself:

- Dodd, Philip. "The Views of Travelers: Travel Writing in the '30s." *Prose Studies*, 5, 1, 1982, pp. 127-138.

Alternatively, in order to cut down on commas, you can also simplify volume and issue by writing them

down as follows:

- Dodd, Philip. "The Views of Travelers: Travel Writing in the '30s." *Prose Studies* 5.1, 1982, pp.127-138.

Article in a Newspaper: You should reference a newspaper article by giving the author's name and the title of the article in quotation marks, followed by the name of the newspaper in italics, the date, and the part (e.g. A1, B1, C3) where the article appeared. If the newspaper comes out in different editions, such as a national edition or a late edition, indicate that as well.

- Manegold, Catherine S. "Becoming a Land of the Smoke-Free, Ban by Ban." *New York Times*, 22 Mar. 1994, late ed., p. A1.

6.3 EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Edition: Many books are edited by the authors themselves, in which case no mention is made of an editor. But when someone else does the editing, this must be reflected in your bibliography. If an editor is stated on the title page of the book, include this in the reference after the title and before the publication information. In some cases, it is useful to add the year of original publication after the title (e.g. when the date is important to the argument of the essay).

- Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House*. 1852-1853. Edited by George Ford and Slyvere Monod, Norton, 1977.

Translation: The format is the same as for the edition, except that the translator's name is preceded by "Translated by." The year of publication is the year of the translated edition. If an editor is listed besides the translator, list the editor's name after the title and before the translator.

- Perec, Georges. *Life: A User's Manual*. Translated by David Bellos, David Godine, 1987.

6.4 A MULTIVOLUME WORK

If you refer to two or more books that are part of a **multivolume work**, include the total number of volumes:

- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes*. Edited by Owen Edwards, Oxford UP, 1993. 4 vols.

If the multivolume work **was issued over a number of years**, include the range of years after the publisher's name:

- Boswell, James. *The Life of Johnson*. Edited by George Birkbeck Hill and L.F. Powell, Clarendon, 1934-50. 6 vols.

If you cite **only one volume**, provide the exact number:

- Abrams, M. H., general editor. *Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 6th ed, vol.1, Norton, 1993.

6.5 ONLINE SOURCES

IMPORTANT:

A PDF file of a printed journal article with page numbers can be treated like a print source, even if it was actually accessed online

To list an online source, you have to indicate the name of the author, editor, or database (if available), as well as the newsgroup or the heading of the text you looked up. Further, since online information often changes, you must indicate the date on which the online page was last modified (this information is usually at the bottom of any given site) **as well as the date on which you accessed the website**. Include the URL (Universal Resource Locator, i.e. the Internet “address”) in your bibliographical entry. However, the MLA only requires the *www.* address, which means that you should eliminate all <https://> when citing a URL.

Book Online:

- Nesbit, Edith. *Ballads and Lyrics of Socialism*. London, 1908. *Victorian Women Writers Project*. Edited by Perry Willett, Indiana University, April 1997, www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/nesbit/ballsoc.html. Accessed 4 Oct. 2006.

E-Book:

- Twain, Mark. *A Double-Barrelled Detective Story*. 1902. E-book, Salt Lake City, Project Gutenberg, 2016.

Article in an Online Periodical:

- Simons, Jon. “The Dialectics of Diana as Empty Signifier.” *Theory and Event* 1.4, 1997, n. pag. Project Muse. muse.jhu.edu/article/32485. Accessed 29 Aug 2019.

Entry in an Online Dictionary or Encyclopaedia:

- “island, n.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/99986. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.
- “Metaphor.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., Dec. 2017, www.britannica.com/art/metaphor. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

Entire Website:

- *Project Gutenberg*. Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, 2019, www.gutenberg.org. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

Page on a Website:

- Fong, Jonathan. “DIY Back-to-School Cupcakes.” *eHow*, 20 Aug. 2019, www.ehow.com/13720849/diy-back-to-school-cupcakes. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

Image (e.g. Paintings and Photographs):

- Goya, Francisco. *The Family of Charles IV*. 1800. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. *Museo Nacional del Prado*, www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-family-of-carlos-iv/f47898fc-aa1c-48f6-a779-71759e417e74. Accessed 22 May 2006.

Podcast Episode:

- Heninger, Hayley, and Jamieson Ridenhour, creators. “Chapter One.” *Palimpsest*, episode 1, 2017, www.thepalimpsestpodcast.com/season-one-anneliese.html. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

If a podcast can only be accessed via a podcast app, you can leave out the URL:

- Cranor, Jeffrey, and Joseph Fink, creators. “Glow Cloud.” *Welcome to Night Vale*, episode 2, Night Vale Presents, 2012.

Tweet: The date of access is optional for cited tweets.

- @AdamSerwer. “Butters in a Jersey accent: ‘Can you believe this fuckin guy?’” *Twitter*, 27 Aug. 2019, 8:12 p.m., twitter.com/AdamSerwer/status/1166413350055682050.
- @ParkerMolloy. “2 of the top 5 trending topics in the US are about bed bugs. What a time to be alive.” *Twitter*, 27 Aug. 2019, 7:00 p.m., twitter.com/ParkerMolloy/status/1166394954970738688. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

YouTube Video: The date of access is optional for online videos. If the author’s name is the same as the uploader’s, only cite the author once.

- Ellis, Lindsay. “Death of the Author.” *YouTube*, 31 Dec. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGn9x4-Y_7A.
- Rugnetta, Mike. “Is Community a Postmodern Masterpiece? | Idea Channel | PBS Digital Studios.” *YouTube*, uploaded by PBS Idea Channel, 3 Apr. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=YanhEVEgkYI&t=349s.

Facebook Post: Unlike tweets, Facebook posts are often too long to cite in full in the bibliography. Thus, it’s sufficient to cite only the first few words of a post. Ideally, these words would already form a cohesive thought.

- Insee, Jay. “Here’s the truth...” *Facebook*, 22 Aug. 2019, www.facebook.com/jayinslee/posts/10157550234668466. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

Microblog other than Twitter (e.g. Instagram and Tumblr): The “first few words” guideline holds for most microblogging and microblogging-adjacent platforms other than Twitter, such as Instagram or Tumblr.

- Monáe, Janelle. (janellemonae). “Once Upon a Time in the Future...” *Instagram*, 18 Mar. 2019, www.instagram.com/p/BvKqTsjBNbn/. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

Note that for Tumblr posts, it’s the blog name, not the platform that is italicized after the post title:

- libechillbro. “Root beer floats are in honor of National Library Week...” *Oscr*, 18 Apr. 2013, 1:28 p.m., libechillbro.tumblr.com/post/125058827619/root-beer-floats-are-in-honor-of-national-library-week. Accessed 28 Apr. 2013.

Comment on a Website or Article: As with Tumblr and other online posts without a clearly identified author, use the username as the author.

- Tertulliano. Comment on “Live updates: Hurricane Dorian takes aim at Florida, may make landfall as Category 4.” *ABC News*, 29 Aug. 2019, 1:34 p.m., abcnews.go.com/US/hurricane-dorian-misses-puerto-rico-florida/story?id=65262135&cid=clicksource_4380645_null_hero_hed. Accessed 29 Aug. 2019.

6.6 FILMS AND TV SHOWS

Films: Sometimes, you may refer to a film in a very general way (i.e. not to a specific edition). In this case, you need to include the film’s title, the name of the director, the distributor, and the year of release. You may add other data that is important in the context of your essay, such as the names of the writers, performers, or cinematographer.

- *It’s a Wonderful Life*. Directed by Frank Capra, performances by James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell, RKO, 1946.
- *Like Water for Chocolate [Como agua para chocolate]*. Screenplay by Laura Esquivel, directed by Alfonso Arau, performances by Lumi Cavazos, Marco Lombardi, and Regina Torne, Miramax, 1993.

If you are citing the contribution of a particular individual, then begin with that person’s name:

- Hitchcock, Alfred, director. *Suspicion*. RKO, 1941.

TV Shows: If you are citing an entire TV show, your bibliographical entry will want to highlight the show's creators. It is up to you whether you use the year of the show's final season (2004 for *Friends*) or its entire run (1994-2004 for *Friends*) as its 'year of publication.'

- Crane, David, and Marta Kauffman, creators. *Friends*. Bright/Kauffman/Crane Productions and Warner Bros. Television, 2004.

However, if you are writing about a TV show, you will usually refer to individual episodes, with different aspects highlighted depending on the focus of your work (see "Films"):

- "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry." *Friends*, written by Andrew Reich and Ted Cohen, directed by Kevin Bright, Warner Brothers, 2000.

Sometimes it might make sense to help your readers locate the specific editions you consulted for your research and point them to the physical media or digital streaming sites you used:

- "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry." *Friends: The Complete Sixth Season*, written by Andrew Reich and Ted Cohen, directed by Kevin Bright, Warner Brothers, 2004.
- "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry." *Friends*, season 6, episode 14, NBC, 10 Feb. 2000. Netflix, www.netflix.com/watch/70274131.

PART III
PRESENTATIONS

CHAPTER ONE: PREPARING A PRESENTATION

Presentations are an opportunity for you to practice two important skills: a) to communicate information orally in such a way that it is accessible and convincing to your audience, and b) to learn to be confident and competent when you speak in English (which is not a native language for most students). To achieve these aims, you need to plan presentations as carefully as your essays. The following will give you an idea of what is expected from both individual and group presentations. Some of the recommendations will sound familiar to you, as **many basic considerations that are important for writing critical essays are also crucial when you prepare oral presentations. Most importantly, for both you need a thesis and for both you are required to do research.** However, you should be aware that oral presentations differ from written papers in certain ways.

Establishing the content:

- 1) Focus on the **essentials, i.e. select and make choices**. One or two convincing arguments are worth more than a series of unconnected observations or remarks.
- 2) Do not give a summary of the author's biography unless it is absolutely necessary for your argument.
- 3) If you refer to literary texts in your presentation, **indicate passages that support your argument** (e.g. quotations). In other words, provide examples with **exact references**.
- 4) **Incorporate relevant secondary literature** in your presentation (including references and critical discussion).
- 5) **Structure your argument logically** in such a way that the audience can follow you through your argument. Whereas repetition quickly becomes annoying in written papers, a certain amount of redundancy will help your audience to follow an oral presentation.
- 6) Think about **the type of audience** and design your talk towards your particular audience. (Who are they? What do they expect? What level of knowledge can you expect from them? Can you include elements that make it easier for the audience to relate to your topic, e.g. short anecdotes, shared knowledge, or visualizations?)
- 7) Make sure you understand all the concepts and terms you use in your presentation (whether orally or on slides and handouts). Look up things you do not know (meaning and pronunciation).
- 8) Include ideas and observations of your own in the presentation. If you only recount what others have thought about your topic, i.e. if there is no sense that you have an opinion of your own about the topic in question, then the presentation will be much less interesting—and thus less convincing—for your audience.
- 9) Contact your instructor in due time in order to discuss your plans.

Note: Just as with critical essays, you must include full bibliographical information in your presentations (see "Source Acknowledgment").

CHAPTER TWO: STRUCTURING THE PRESENTATION

It is important that you structure your presentation clearly and logically, and that at least the basic components of this structure are transparent to your audience (i.e. the audience must know whether you are still introducing the topic or already engaging in a critical discussion). The following steps outline one effective way of structuring presentations of ten minutes or more. For shorter presentations, such a detailed structure is inappropriate, since most of the available time would be used for purely formal information. Remember that the structure of a presentation is there to support the content of your argument, and not to replace it.

- 1) **Welcome:** Opening your presentation with a short welcoming remark is not only a matter of politeness, but will also give your audience time to adjust to your manner of speaking (e.g. pitch, rhythm, and pace).
- 2) **Introduction—Disclaimer, Aims, and Thesis Statement:** Tell the audience what you are talking about, and why this topic is relevant (in general, and particularly to the audience in question). For this reason, your presentations should always have a title, and you should give the audience a short outline of the structure of your presentation. Also, tell your audience whether you will answer questions in the course of the presentation (not advisable for talks that are shorter than ten minutes). Usually, presentations should be **argumentative rather than purely descriptive**. Therefore, as is the case with critical essays, your introduction should include a thesis statement that you then support with the argumentation in the main part of the presentation.
- 3) **Main Part:** This part of your presentation contains the main points of your argument as well as evidence to support it. Make sure that you define any specialized terms your audience may not know. Also, try to chunk your talk into recognizable subsections that a) circle around one central topic, b) add one main point to your argument, and c) are connected to the preceding and the following subsection of your talk.
- 4) **Conclusion 1—Preliminary Summary and Ideas for Discussion:** Your conclusion should be short and to the point. Do not repeat whole sections of the argument, but sum up the main finding(s). If possible, suggest some questions that arise from your presentation. In any case, end your presentation with a definite closure statement (e.g. “Thank you for your attention. Are there any questions?”).
- 5) **Question Time and Discussion:** Check whether the time frame for your presentation includes question time and discussion, or whether you will be allowed some extra-time for this section. Also, find out whether you yourself are supposed to lead the discussion, or whether your instructor will take over.
- 6) **Conclusion 2—Summary, Closing Remarks:** If you are expected to lead the discussion, you need to prepare a way of closing it, even if it means to cut the discussion off. Ideally, this second conclusion includes a summary that reflects the additional insights gained from the discussion as well as, again, a closing remark.

CHAPTER THREE: PRACTICING THE PRESENTATION

Practice the talk in advance is crucial, and ideally you go through the entire presentation at least twice. Make sure that a) you do not use significantly less time than you are allowed to, and b) that you never exceed the time limit; the former would create the impression that you did not make enough of an effort, and the latter would be unfair towards both the other students and the instructor, who would suffer the consequences of the delay that you caused. Moreover, preparing your presentation carefully will help you gain the confidence necessary to convince the members of your audience. Remember that a presentation is a performance and you should keep your audience interested and engaged.

- 1) **Speak freely** from carefully prepared notes (e.g. mind maps, list with key words) or use a set of flash cards. Do not simply read off a written text or the slides of a PowerPoint presentation.
- 2) Try to **make eye contact** with your audience, and do not talk when you have your back turned towards the audience.
- 3) Use the overhead projector, the blackboard, PowerPoint presentations, or another medium to **give visual support to your presentation** (important terms, pictures, quotations).
- 4) Always use **large font sizes** so the text is legible also from the back of the classroom.
- 5) **Do not put too much information on one slid**. The visuals should support your argument, not distract from it.
- 6) **Check out the room in which your presentation will take place**. (What kind of equipment is available? How does the equipment work? Is there a table where you can put your notes, or do you have to organize one? How much time will handling the equipment take?)
- 7) Check your slides and handouts for **spelling and grammar mistakes**. A good idea is to show them to a fellow student and ask him or her to correct them for you.
- 8) Do not worry if you are nervous before a presentation. Remember that being nervous means that your body is alert, and that this added attentiveness will help you to give your best in the course of your presentation.

PART IV

TIPS FOR STYLE AND LANGUAGE

CHAPTER ONE: PUNCTUATION

1.1 BASIC PUNCTUATION

Common Error: Avoid incomplete sentences, i.e. sentences without an independent subject or verb. The most unreadable form of the incomplete sentence in English is an unanchored relative or adverbial clause. *Examples:* “Which brings Hamlet to the point of despair.” / “Repressing instead of facing the conditions of his despair.”

Period/Full Stop: separates complete sentences, which must consist at least of a subject and a predicate.

Semi-colon (;): separates independent clauses, i.e. clauses made up of subject plus predicate which are not preceded by subordinating conjunctions or relative pronouns. A semi-colon indicates a closer relation between two independent clauses than a period/full stop does, but a stronger division than a coordinating conjunction. Think of the semicolon as the replacement of either a period or a conjunction. *Example:* “I found no reason not to believe him; he had always been straightforward with me.”

Colon (:): is shorthand for “for instance,” “to illustrate,” “that is,” etc. A colon in English is most commonly followed by a list of nouns or parallel phrases. Furthermore, they should never follow the main verb of a sentence. *Example:* “Growing up in the bad part of town, he had learned to do at least three things: fight, drink, and play a mean game of poker.”

Parentheses/Brackets: indicate an additional commentary which provides elaboration or secondary information. Parentheses often contain examples, preceded by “e.g.” or “for ex.” The material within parentheses may be a sentence fragment or a complete sentence. *Example:* “The first draft of an essay will require not just correction (fixing mistakes), but also revision (rewriting according to argumentational and structural needs).”

Dashes: indicate an interruption to the main idea of a sentence or an emphasized afterthought. (Think of the dash as the most extreme form of the comma.) They set off an interruption placed within a sentence, while a dash before a final phrase or clause in the sentence serves to add extra emphasis. Use such a device sparingly, since too much interruption or too much emphasis can quickly become tiresome for your reader. *Example:* “I arrived in the city with an abundance of good will—not that this was unusual for me.”

→ With many fonts, there is a difference between a **hyphen** (-) and a dash. Furthermore, there are also two versions of the dash, the shorter **En dash** –, or the longer **Em dash** —. A hyphen is used for compound words or separation across line breaks (e.g. “up-to-date”)—and not for afterthoughts or interruptions. There are two ways of inserting dashes. If you use the En dash, it is preceded and followed by a space. If you use the Em dash, then there are no spaces.

Punctuating Quotation Marks: **British** orthography places **all** punctuation outside the quotation marks (unless the question mark or exclamation point is part of the quotation itself). **American** orthography places the **comma** and **period/full stop** inside the quotation marks, and the **semi-colon** and **colon** outside. The **question mark** and **exclamation point** are placed outside the quotation marks if they belong to the sentence, and inside if they belong to the quotation. This *Study Guide* uses American punctuation and spelling, to remain consistent with the MLA style.

1.2 RULES FOR USING COMMAS

- 1) **Do not place a comma between the subject and verb or between the verb and object if one follows the other without interruption.** *Example:* “What is particularly important in this passage, (WRONG) is the attention devoted by the narrator to the protagonist's suffering. (“What is particularly important in this passage” is a subject phrase; therefore, no comma follows it before the verb.)
- 2) **Do not separate two independent clauses with a comma.** Two independent clauses, no matter how complex their structure, must be separated by a semi-colon or period/full stop, or connected by a conjunction. *Examples:* He went home, (WRONG) I stayed there. **RIGHT:** He went home; I stayed there.
- 3) **Do not place a comma before *that*,** whether it is used as a relative pronoun (e.g. “He has not yet found the road that leads to happiness”) or as a conjunction (e.g. “I have forgotten that I ever promised you anything”).
- 4) **Do not place a comma before *where, when, who, how, or why* clauses** which serve as the object of the verb. *Example:* “Don’t ask me, (WRONG) where he is. / He did not tell his mother, (WRONG) when he would arrive. (Both “where he is” and “when he would arrive” are direct object clauses and are therefore not preceded by a comma.)
- 5) Use commas around **relative clauses if**—and only if—they are non-defining, also known as non-restrictive, clauses. A “defining clause” contains information necessary to the meaning of the modified noun, while a “non-defining clause” contains information incidental to the meaning of the modified noun.
 - ➔ Test for the defining/non-defining clause rule: If you can leave the clause out without changing the meaning of the sentence, then use commas. If leaving the clause out changes the meaning of the sentence, then do not use commas.
 - **Example for a Non-Defining Clause:** “He did well in the competition, which was sponsored by a whiskey distillery.” (The relative clause provides incidental information about “the competition,” so it needs to be set off by a comma.)
 - **Example for a Defining Clause:** Though he performed badly on Wednesday, he did well in the competition which took place on Friday. (The relative clause provides defining information that answers the question “which competition?”, so it is not set off by a comma.)

1.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR USING COMMAS

Using Commas with Conjunctions:

- 1) In general, **place a comma** between independent clauses connected by coordinating conjunctions (**and, but, yet, for, so, or, nor**), especially in the following cases:
 - if the independent clauses have **different subjects**: “Jim found a hiding place for his letters, yet Jane came across them the next day.”
 - if the independent clauses are **quite long**: “We never go to the countryside without being enthralled by the pureness of air, and we never arrive back in the city without feeling poisoned.”
- 2) By extension, you **do not need to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction** in the following cases:
 - if the two independent clauses have **the same subject**: “She went for a walk and found a

stray dog.”

- if the two independent clauses **are short** (as is also true of the above example): “I bought the bread and my friend bought the cheese.”
 - if the sentence involves a **compound predicate** (i.e. multiple verbs with one subject): “He huffed and puffed and blew the house down.”
 - **Rule of thumb:** The longer the clauses (especially the clause which precedes the conjunction), the more you need to use a comma before the conjunction. Note, however, that commas before *and*, *or* and *nor* are always optional.
 - Do not place a comma after a conjunction, unless it is followed by a phrase which interrupts the clause as a whole. *Example:* “But, (WRONG) I didn't know you then.” **RIGHT:** I had only seen you across the room, but, despite not knowing you then, I already liked you.
- 3) In general, place a comma between independent and dependent clauses when the dependent clause begins with a subordinate conjunction (e.g. **if, although, while, since, as, whereas**, etc.).
 - 4) Do not use a comma before a dependent clause beginning with *because* unless the clause deserves special emphasis.

Using Commas with Adverbial Phrases:

- 1) In general, place a **comma after an introductory adverb or transitional phrase which begins a sentence** (however, nevertheless, on the one hand, on the other hand, as a result, instead, indeed, in fact, consequently, moreover, furthermore, also, fortunately, etc.):

Nevertheless, the motion passed in parliament.

- Place commas before and after a transitional adverb if it falls within the sentence: “I didn't like the look of him, moreover, so I just closed the door.”
 - Commas after the transitional adverbs *thus* and *therefore* at the beginning of a sentence are optional. Setting thus and therefore off with a comma makes them more emphatic: “Thus the reader is made to feel uncomfortable.” vs. “Thus, the reader is made to feel uncomfortable.”
 - Commas around *therefore* when it falls within the sentence are optional, but thus is never set off by commas in the middle of a sentence: “The reader, therefore, is made to feel uncomfortable. The reader is thus made to feel uncomfortable.”
- 2) In general, place **commas after introductory adverbial clauses and introductory participial phrases:** “As I walk to work, I find myself humming the tunes of songs I hate.” / “Walking to work, I find myself humming the tunes of songs I hate.” / “Depressed by the death of his dog, he decided to quit his job as a veterinarian.”
 - The comma is especially necessary if the introductory adverbial clause or phrase is long: “Considering the intricacy of my financial affairs and the fact that I couldn't afford a battle with the income tax bureau, I decided to hire a professional accountant.”
 - The comma is also especially necessary if the separation between the introductory clause and the independent clause is not clear: “As the day warms up, the tarmac begins to melt.” (**Without a comma, “the tarmac” may appear to be the object of “warms up,” as in “As the day warms up the tarmac.”**)
 - 3) When an adverbial clause or participial phrase ends the sentence, use the “defining vs. non-defining” rule to decide whether the clause or phrase should be preceded with a comma. (Note that this suggestion qualifies point no. 4 above):
 - when it's defining or necessary for the meaning, you do not use a comma: “I find myself

humming songs as I walk to work.” (“as I walk to work” defines when I hum songs = no comma) / “I picked up the heavy bag using only one hand.” (“using only one hand” is necessary to the meaning = no comma)

- if it provides additional information, you use a comma: “He found me on the road, walking to work.” (“walking to work” provides additional information = comma)
- The same holds true for adverbial clauses of time and place (e.g. when and where): “I went to London last week, where I have been many times before.” (incidental information = comma) vs. “I went to London when I had finally saved the money for the trip.” (defining information = no comma)

Interruptions with a Sentence:

- 1) Set off modifying phrases or clauses within a sentence with commas in the following cases:
 - if the interruption separates the subject and verb: “He, unlike the rest of his party, had never heard of the band they were going to hear.”
 - if the interruption is a non-defining relative clause (see “General Rules,” no. 5).
 - N.B.: An interrupting phrase or clause must be set off by commas **on both sides** of the phrase or clause. Make sure that you always use commas in parallel, unless the phrase or clause in question begins or ends the sentence. ***However* is always preceded and followed by a comma** (except at the beginning of a sentence, where it cannot, of course, be preceded by a comma).
- 2) Set off an interruption within a sentence with **dashes** in the following cases:
 - if it radically interrupts the sentence: “I didn’t go all that way—and I went a very long way—just for the fun of it.”
 - if the interruption itself includes commas: “All the nations of Central Europe—Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia—have at some point been in the middle of East-West battles.”

Commas in a Series:

- Use commas **to separate at least the first two elements in a series of three or more** words or phrases: “This will require money, time, and effort. I have not seen him looking so well, acting so confidently, or smiling so much in a long time.”
- The comma between the next-to-last and last elements in a series ending with “and” is optional (the so-called ‘Oxford comma’): “This will require money, time(.) and effort.”
- Use commas to **separate coordinate adjectives** (i.e. adjectives which each individually modify the noun): cold, dark, muddy waters (= cold waters, dark waters, muddy waters)
- **Do not use commas to separate cumulative adjectives** (i.e. adjectives which modify the entire adjective-noun phrase in front of them): severe economic difficulties (“severe” modifies “economic difficulties”; the meaning is not “severe difficulties, economic difficulties”)

CHAPTER TWO: SENTENCE ORGANIZATION

2.1 SENTENCE ENDINGS

In principle, place what you wish to **stress** at the **end** of the sentence. Logically, the emphasized point will be the **new information** introduced by the sentence. Apply the following techniques to make sure that sentences end with new information:

Delete unnecessary words at the end of a sentence, particularly those phrases which post-modify the emphasized point without adding anything new to it.

- **BAD:** “In the science-fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Philip K. Dick posits a world in which the boundary between human and machine is blurred by androids which are indistinguishable from humans but which are really machines.”
- **GOOD:** “In the science-fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Philip K. Dick posits a world in which the boundary between human and machine is blurred by androids which are indistinguishable from humans.” (stressed point: “indistinguishable from humans”)

Move unimportant phrases, particularly time and place indicators, to the beginning of the sentence in order to leave what you want to emphasize at the end of the sentence:

- **BAD:** “The U.S. Supreme Court reopened the legal debate on abortion in the 1980s.”
- **GOOD:** “In the 1980s, the U.S. Supreme Court reopened the legal debate on abortion.” (stressed point: “legal debate on abortion”)
- **BAD:** “Hamlet seeks to revenge the murder of his father in Shakespeare’s best-known tragedy.”
- **GOOD:** “In Shakespeare’s best-known tragedy, Hamlet seeks to revenge the murder of his father.” (stressed point: “revenge the murder of his father”)

Occasionally you may have to **separate a modifying phrase or relative clause** from its referent in order to place what you wish to stress at the end of the sentence:

- “I arrived in London on a cold, rainy morning, where the dirty streets reflected the dull grey of the clouds.” (“London” is separated from its relative pronoun “where”.)

Note that participial phrases which modify the subject usually provide background information and therefore come at the beginning of the sentence. It is possible, however, to position such a phrase at the end of the sentence in order to stress its point. The two examples below have slightly different meanings:

- **MEANING 1:** “Ashamed as he was of not being able to find a date, he introduced his mother at the party as his girlfriend.” (stressed point: “mother as his girlfriend”)
- **MEANING 2:** “He introduced his mother at the party as his girlfriend, ashamed as he was of not being able to find a date.” (stressed point: “not able to find a date”)

Avoid sentences which combine a very long subject phrase with a very short predicate. Very often such a sentence will end with the main verb in the passive form rather than with the important, new information. Rewrite such a sentence by changing the passive form to the active and shifting the verb to the earliest position it can occupy. English sentence structure can happily consist of a short subject phrase and a long predicate, **but not vice versa**. Avoid writing “top-heavy” sentences.

- **BAD:** “How the protagonist responds to his mother’s lament after he has been expelled from yet another school and returns home with a triumphant expression on his face must next be investigated.”
- **GOOD:** “We must next investigate how the protagonist responds to his mother’s lament after he has been expelled from yet another school and returns home with a triumphant expression on his face.”

2.2 SENTENCE TRANSITIONS

Make smooth sentence transitions by using either "consistent sentence topics" (model: AB/AC/AD) or the "anchor method" (model: AB/BC/CD) or, ideally, a combination of the two. Seen as using one or the other of these methods by itself will produce a coherent, but extremely mechanical-sounding paragraph, the best solution is to integrate these two methods.

The Anchor Method: Given that a sentence begins with the sentence topic and ends with new information, you may use the new information of one sentence to set up the sentence topic of the next one. This will produce an AB/BC/CD model, where A in the first sentence is the sentence topic and B is the new information, then B in the second sentence is the sentence topic and C is the new information, then C in the third sentence is the sentence topic and D is the new information, etc.

- On December 28, 1895, Auguste and Louis Jean Lumière, the inventors of the cinematographic pick-up unit, presented the first silent film scenes in public. These scenes amazed as well as entertained spectators, who had seen nothing like these "magic lantern" images before. Shortly thereafter, spectators began to throng to see the first narrative films, which quickly developed into a lucrative entertainment industry. This business flourished especially in the States, where former theater directors and producers made Hollywood the metropolis of film.

Consistent Sentence Topics: The topic of a sentence refers to the idea close to the beginning of a sentence which the rest of the sentence characterizes, expands, or elucidates. You can make smooth sentence transitions by using a sentence topic which is consistent (though NOT identical) with the topic of the previous sentence. We can schematize this as the AB/AC/AD model. Note in the "bad" example below that the radically inconsistent sentence topics make for an unreadable paragraph.

Forms taken by the sentence topic (underlined in the examples):

- the grammatical subject: "Private home ownership is coming under threat as property prices soar beyond the private citizen's means."
- the object of the verb shifted to the beginning of the sentence: "A house for myself is what I want."
- the subject of the introductory phrase: "As for the house deposit, it is not clear that I could ever save enough money."

Note that in the "bad" list of sentence topics, there is no consistent progression formed by the sequence of topics, largely because each topic is a new piece of information. In the "good" list, on the other hand, new information appears at the end of each sentence and is connected together by a consistent, and even progressive, chain of sentence topics.

- BAD: Finding the right lotions to keep the skin smooth is not all that is involved in maintaining youth and beauty. Larger social conditions inevitably affect one's concern with beauty. Personal investment or "natural" aesthetics have little to do with the maintenance of beauty; rather, people's anxieties about social belonging are fed by the powerful commercial imperative that drives them. The beauty enterprises and multinationals who want to maximize their corporate profit influence personal lives invisibly but effectively in this manner. Needs are stimulated in the first place by the beauty industry, to which the customers of beauty products respond. Such effects hurt women in particular, not least because they are the direct targets of beauty advertising. Advertisements for cosmetics notoriously make them feel inadequate, and the money spent on the advertised products is a result of this feeling.
- GOOD: Maintaining youth and beauty is more than just a question of finding the right lotions to keep the skin smooth. Inevitably, one's concern with beauty is caught up in larger social conditions. The maintenance of beauty has little to do with personal investment or "natural" aesthetics; rather, people are driven by a powerful commercial imperative designed to feed off of their anxieties about social belonging. In this manner, people's lives are influenced invisibly but effectively by the beauty enterprises and multinationals who want to maximize their corporate profit. The customers of beauty

products in fact respond to needs that are stimulated by the beauty industry in the first place. Women in particular suffer from such effects, not least because they are the direct targets of beauty advertising. Notoriously, they are made to feel inadequate by advertisements for cosmetics, a feeling which is then turned into money spent on the advertised products.

2.3 PARALLEL STRUCTURES

In English grammar, **parallel constructions** must have an **identical grammatical structure**. German has far more leeway, so do not let that deceive you when writing in English. However, making use of parallelism is highly recommended as it makes it easier to process information and is a useful rhetorical device.

- “He likes baking, swimming, and *to read*.” While all three are a correct continuation of “he likes”, the first two are gerunds, while the last is an infinitive, and hence the sentence lacks parallelism. The sentence can be corrected in two ways, either all parts are turned into gerunds or all into infinitives: a) “He likes to bake, to swim, and to read.” b) “He likes baking, swimming, and reading.”
- “The cat ran across the parking lot, snuck through the fence, and *sprinted away*.” The final phrase here lacks a definite location (such as “across the parking lot” or “through the fence”), which makes it awkward. It can be amended by adding “sprinted down the path”: “The cat ran across the parking lot, snuck through the fence, and sprinted down the path.”

APPENDIX

SAMPLE ESSAYS

What follows is a sample TA-paper by a student from the English Seminar. If you wish to study further outstanding examples of the critical essay, look at some or all of the following articles:

Brooks, Peter. "Freud's Masterplot." *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*. Eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. Second Edition. New York and London: Longman, 1989.

Johnson, Barbara. "Melville's Fist: The Execution of *Billy Budd*." *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. [Chapter Two in particular]

Torgovnick, Marianna. *Primitive Passions: Men, Women, and the Quest for Ecstasy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. [Chapter One in particular]

Hannah Schoch
Textual Analysis

**In/On the Moral Reader on/in
Robert Browning's "Porphyria's
Lover"**

The moral reader focuses on morality more than the average reader; their reading is more intuitive and affected than objective and distanced. Thus, when finishing Robert Browning's "Porphyria's Lover" the moral reader will be speechless. Without much of a transition, the reader is thrown from the romantic dream of a couple during a snowstorm into the horrors of a homicide, as well as necrophilia. The reader "witnesses" these events through the monologue of the murderer. While the reader may slip into the role of a passive listener in the beginning of the poem, the contrary happens after the killing; the moral reader is affected by the unpunished amorality of the speaker. Not only does the reader want to pass a verdict on the speaker, the poem encourages them to do so. For the moral reader that they are, a judgment requires consideration of the motives and the character of the speaker. Evidence for such motives can only be found within the monologue, but with the speaker's state of mind none of this evidence remains unambiguous. By withholding a definite reading of the character, the poem allows the reader to bring forth a personal understanding (Wagner-Lawler 288). With the freedom of interpretation, the reader can independently shape the speaker through their particular reading and can thus form any judgment. Just like the God in the poem, however, the speaker ultimately silences the reader by leaving the reader's urge to condemn the murderer unfulfilled on a textual level. Therefore, "Porphyria's Lover" is a meta-textual reflection on the moral judgment of the reader and its implications (or lack thereof) for the text.

Unlike most Victorian monologues, "Porphyria's Lover" does not have a diegetic, silent auditor, which enables the speaker of the poem to recite without opposition. On a first glance, it might seem as though it does not make a difference if an auditor is taciturn or entirely absent, but this detail does reflect in the speech situation. In order to understand the significance this absence has for the poem, one needs to examine the auditor's role in other Victorian monologues. While the auditor's silence is mandatory so that a monologue does not convert into a dialogue, the mere presence of an auditor changes the way a speaker constructs his monologue. A silent auditor can "dialogise the speech and imply the possibility of other perspectives than the one we are offered by the speaker" (Byron 20). Whereas in other Victorian monologues certain comments by the speaker imply interventions from the auditor (unheard by the reader) and "dialogise the speech", the speaker in "Porphyria's Lover" does not seem to be interrupted (22). This absence of a reactant allows the speaker to pose himself and his depiction of the events in the spotlight (Wagner-Lawler 287). Without any interruption, the speaker can continue his romantic illustration of the events even after the atrocious murder has happened: "About her neck; her cheek once more / Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss" (46/47). In his delusion

he perceives Porphyria as alive even after having killed her. Similarly, he does not offer an objective description of himself, he “accomplishes his own [...] narcissistic self-delineation” (Wagner-Lawler 287). His narcissism even approaches a God complex, shown when he describes Porphyria *worshipping* him on line 33, a verb often connoted with devotion to divinity. In consideration of how the speaker returns this worship, this self-depiction as God is a provocative blasphemy.

Although there is no auditor to react to this provocation, the “poem forces us from the role of the passive listener, who looks in from behind the shoulder to the role of the active reader” (Rader 48). Not only does the poem force us to be an active reader, but expects us to produce the judgment of a divine authority. Evidence for this can be found in the last three lines of the poem:

And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word! (57-60)

For the first time in the poem the speaker introduced the pronoun “we”, even though his love Porphyria has entered the scene before. “We” seems to be referring to more than just the couple, then. If the readers now turns the focus to themselves, it might well be they are sitting quietly during the reading, just as the couple is in front of the fireplace. The speaker seems to be conscious of the reader’s presence, nearly inviting the reader to sit down with them. “Not stirred” in this case then could also refer to the reader’s inability to move due to the shocking event they just witnessed. The speaker’s knowledge of the reader implies the speaker’s understanding of the reader’s role of the judge. In the last line the speaker makes this explicit, ridiculing the petrified reader who not only is unable to move, but also to speak. The reader will not simply accept such provocation: “It also tells us that we had better react and speak because the withdrawn God of the poem refuses to speak for us” (Maynard 74). With the absence of God, the moral reader becomes the supreme authority in the text and thus can condemn the speaker.

The moral judgment a reader ultimately makes depends on his or her understanding of the speaker. Generally, when one is looking for a just moral judgment, one will try to figure out the motives of the criminal and understand his character. Therefore, the reader will adopt a psychological approach to the text and evaluate the speaker. While a mental illness of a character might usually be analyzed through the evidence other characters offer of the mentally ill, the poem poses the problem of its form as a monologue without any

diegetic reactant. All the reader can deduce from is the unreliable depiction of the murder from the murderer himself (Wagner-Lawler 287). The reader is not only unsure about how reliably the speaker presents the events, but also himself, as there is no diegetic reactant offering a more objective view. Through this ambiguous depiction of the speaker, the reader is free to choose any understanding of the speaker and his illness, thereby forming the speaker. Based on this inserted understanding, the reader can then pass a verdict on the speaker. Considering the reader's freedom to judge the speaker grounded in an understanding chosen by the reader as well, one needs to ask: does the speaker lose his significance in his own monologue?

While the reader may become superior to the speaker in his or her interpretation, the speaker undermines this position by remaining unpunished on a textual level. Despite having the freedom to choose any reading of the speaker and thus a judgment, the reader will never exceed the limits of the text enforced by the speaker's monologue. The last line of the poem can then be read in an ironic way: No matter what the reader's judgment may be, in the end the speaker will not hear it either, silencing us just as effectively as God in the poem (Wagner-Lawler 291). The speaker ridicules the reader even more than before: As far as the text goes, the amoral speaker will go unpunished and continue sitting with the corpse in front of the fireplace, no matter if the reader condemns him or not. The speaker will literally always, in every possible reading, have the last "word" (60).

"Porphyria's Lover" comments on the problems a moral reader faces while reading the poem. The atrocious murder shocks the reader and evokes the desire to judge the murderer. The speaker lures the reader into indulging in this urge by pushing the reader into the role of God. This authority is only an illusion, though. No matter how free the reader is to choose a judgment, they ultimately remain subordinate to the speaker on the textual level, as no judgment outside the text can change the text itself. The poem shows this to the reader by simultaneously eliciting and dismissing a judgment; it poses an appalling speaker that the reader wishes to condemn, who in the end goes unpunished, and finally emphasizes this injustice. This problem of limitation is an experience most readers might have to endure at some point when they lose the objective distance to a text; it might often be the case that the intuitive reader feels the desire to punish an unjust character, but will have to endure the disappointment of the unjust character escaping punishment. Thus, the poem works as a reminder not to follow the reading of an affected moral reader.

[1430 words]

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