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WRITING

WITH A PURPOSE

A FIRST COURSE IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION

James M. McCrimmon
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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PREFACE

This book is written in the belief that the most useful approach to the problems of composition is through a serious concern with purpose. A clear grasp of his intention becomes the only criterion by which a writer can wisely choose between alternatives – between one form of organization and another, between different patterns of development, between formal and informal styles, between alternative usages in diction, grammar, and mechanics. These choices cannot intelligently be made apart from some frame of reference. The writer's knowledge of his purpose is that frame, and his decisions are wise or unwise as they are or are not appropriate to his purpose.

To say that writing should have a controlling purpose is to say something that is more obvious to the instructor than to the student. Except in an elementary sense, the notion of purpose is foreign to most students of freshman composition. They have had little experience in analyzing a writing problem or in thinking out what they want to do before they begin to write. Their concern with organization has hitherto been rudimentary or mechanical. Because of the emphasis on "correct" and "incorrect" writing in their previous training, they tend to look upon the conventions of grammar as absolutes and to regard questions of diction as choices between "proper" and "improper" words. In short, they have not yet developed enough self-confidence to understand that within certain limits they are not only free, but have an obligation to make their own judgments about what forms and usages are appropriate to their particular needs.

The emphasis on purpose in this book attempts to give the student a point of view from which he can see his writing problems in perspective. That emphasis hopes to achieve three related objectives. First, it seeks to make writing a more deliberate act, to free the student from the frustration of trying to get a result without first knowing clearly what result he wishes, and thus it helps to give him a sense of control over what he writes. Second, it tries to make him linguistically more mature by showing him that usage is relative, and thus it encourages him to adopt a more discriminating attitude toward his linguistic decisions.

Third, the failure of composition courses to develop a concern with purpose contributes to the common student notion that the problems

of composition are the problems of the composition course, and that once the course has been passed the problems are left behind. However much English instructors may regret it, a good many conscientious students see little relationship between "theme writing" and the kind of workaday communication required by essay-type examinations, reports on supplementary reading for various courses, and the demands of specialized writing courses, such as report writing. The tradition that "composition" is a special, impractical kind of writing dies hard, and perhaps those of us who teach composition are not entirely guiltless of keeping it alive. Be that as it may, the logic of making freshman composition a requirement would seem to dictate that the success of the course should be judged by the quality of the writing a student does in his other courses. Some way, therefore, must be found to make the student aware that writing a "theme" is merely a convenient way of gaining experience, skill, and confidence in using the writing process. A concern with purpose, by subordinating types of writing to an analysis of the particular needs of particular assignments, is one way to make the work of the composition class carry over into other courses and writing assignments.

This theme of purpose has been developed through each of the five main sections of the book. Part One deals with the writing process from the choice of subject through restriction, organization, and elaboration to the composition of paragraphs and sentences. While the emphasis is on exposition, the techniques apply to all kinds of writing. Part Two considers diction and incorporates the most generally useful principles of semantics with the conventional study of meaning and usage. Part Three is a summary of morphology, syntax, and the conventions of grammar and mechanics. This part is intended primarily for students who need remedial assistance in handling the conventions of educated usage. For ease of reference, the correction chart inside the front cover of the book gives the more common errors and refers the student to the pages dealing with those constructions. By this means the book attempts to provide the convenience of a handbook arrangement while avoiding the limitations of such organization. In this section and in Part Five (the Glossary), the judgments on usage take into account both the latest evidence of linguistic research and the effect that a formal or an informal style has on deciding appropriate usage. Part Four discusses a series of special assignments – summaries, research papers, essay-type examinations, and so on.

A word should be said here about the chapter on argument. The decision to make purpose the theme of the book made the conventional

fourfold classification of writing unnecessary. Therefore Exposition, Narration, Description, and Argument are not considered as special types of writing. Effective argument, however, requires some attention to evidence and types of reasoning as well as to techniques of composition. For this reason the study of argument has been placed in Part Four. Not all instructors will be able to afford the time for a thorough use of that chapter, but since students will write argumentative papers whether they are assigned or not, the chapter may at least make useful outside reading for those students who demonstrate the need for the kind of help it offers.

In the selected bibliography following this preface I have listed those works which I have found most helpful. I should like to acknowledge here a special obligation to Professor C. C. Fries's *American English Grammar* in my treatment of grammar, and to Dr. S. I. Hayakawa's *Language in Action* in my discussion of meaning. I owe thanks to those authors and publishers identified in the footnotes for permission to reprint illustrative material. To the many students whose work I have used as examples I am deeply grateful. For reasons which will at times be obvious, I have decided as an editorial policy not to identify student writers unless their work was taken from a published source, such as the *Green Caldron.* I here depart from that policy to offer my special thanks to Miss Virginia White, Mr. Cecil Abramovits, Mr. Fred Laderman, and Mr. Paul Silverman, formerly of the University of Toledo, and to Miss Alberta Kronfeld of the Galesburg Division of the University of Illinois for permission to print student essays.

I wish to express my gratitude to Professor George A. Gullette of the University of North Carolina for helpful discussion during the planning of the book; to Miss Betty Patterson of the University of Illinois for reading the chapter on the library and for helpful suggestions and information; to Professors Sarah S. Bissell and Ruby T. Scott of the University of Toledo, and to Professor Robert Y. Robb of Wayne University for selections of student writing; and to Miss Wanda Wheeler and Mrs. Margaret Fagan for their secretarial assistance.

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PART ONE

COMPOSITION: THE LARGER VIEW

1

INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT this book you will find one dominant assertion recurring in various forms: *All effective writing is controlled by the writer's purpose.* Except possibly when making a memorandum for himself, a writer is always addressing readers. He is trying to do something to those readers: to inform or convince or delight them, to explain something to them, or to make them see or feel what he has experienced. Each of these general purposes will exert its own influence on the selection and presentation of his material.

For example, two papers by the same author will differ considerably in content, organization, and style if one is written to provide students with a factual summary of the football team's record during the season and the other to praise the team for its fine work. In each paper the writer will select that particular material which his intention requires and will present it in a style that suits his purpose.

Writing, therefore, does not take place in a vacuum. When well done, it is always an attempt by one person to communicate to others, through the medium of words, those ideas, facts, or impressions that build up to the result *which the writer has intended to achieve.* The writer, therefore, must always begin with a clear sense of purpose. This means that before he starts to write he must give careful attention to two related questions: "What *precisely* do I want to do?" and "How can I best do it?" Answering these questions properly is the first step toward writing well.

These two questions are so closely related that a writer will sometimes know *what* he wants to do only when he has decided *how* he wants to do it. A simple analogy with golf will illustrate. Imagine an expert golfer on the point of attempting a twenty-foot putt on a rolling green. What is his purpose? To say that he wants to sink his putt is to describe his purpose in terms too general to be helpful. For him, the important decision is *how* the shot should be played. There-

fore he studies the contour of the green, observes the grain and texture of the grass, and plans the course which he wants his ball to follow. Only when he has thought out his problem in this way can he be said to know what he wants to do. His precise purpose, then, is to stroke the ball in such a way that it will follow the contour of the green in a *predetermined* path to the cup.

In much the same manner a writer must try to understand what is involved in making his writing do what he wants it to do. This means, first, that he must know precisely what his purpose is and, second, that he must be aware of how particular decisions about choice of material, organization, development, style, diction, and grammar will help or hinder that purpose. Those requirements are neither simple nor easy. Sometimes they impose on a writer a discipline from which he has an understandable desire to escape. But a writer who takes the easy way out and runs away from that discipline often pays a heavy price for his failure to face up to his obligations. Consider, for example, the following letter written to the editor of a city newspaper:

> Major Eliot wonders what an atomic bomb would do to New York City. Well, if I were in the city when a super atomic bomb exploded, I would not be interested in the buildings. As for building a ghost city, we can't even build homes for those who need housing.
>
> It has been said that the atomic bomb is only another bomb. At the same time, we read that new bombs are a thousand times more powerful; that the heat is over one million degrees.
>
> There are those who would choose Wall Street as a prime target.
>
> How can there be world peace when we cannot settle disputes among ourselves? We crash land our army and navy by Christmas, or tried to do so. Russia kept its forces intact, as far as I know. It has launched a five year plan to enlarge its army. Where does that place us?
>
> Don't depend on Washington. Move out to the country and dig a hole.[1]

There is evidence within the letter that its author is reasonably well educated. But what point is he trying to make? Is he trying to show what an atomic bomb would do to New York, or to denounce the housing program, Wall Street, demobilization, Russia, or our failure to achieve world security? If all these topics are related parts of a whole,

[1] From "Letters to the Editor," *Toledo Blade*, March 2, 1946. It need hardly be pointed out that in accordance with general practice, the editors of the *Blade* are not responsible for opinions expressed in letters which appear in the columns of their paper.

what whole and how are they related? Are we not forced to conclude that the author had no clear idea of what he wanted to do and that because he failed to define his purpose to himself he naturally could not succeed in communicating it to a reader?

Now, suppose the writer of this letter had asked himself, before he began to write, "Just what do I want to do in this letter?" He might then have seen that there were a number of things he could do. He might, for example, have chosen any one of the following purposes:

> To show that, in view of the improvements in the atomic bomb since 1945, any discussion of defensive measures must be based on the destructive capacities of the future bomb;
>
> To show that no large city can defend itself against the atomic bomb and that, if we cannot obtain reliable international agreement against the use of the bomb, we must decentralize our industrial and residential areas,
>
> To show that, considering the expense and the present housing shortage, all talk about building ghost cities as false targets for atomic bombs is unrealistic.

He might even have combined all three of these purposes into a broader one:

> To show that Major Eliot's discussion of defense against the atomic bomb is hopelessly superficial, and that we must either achieve effective international agreement to banish the bomb as an instrument of warfare or change our whole system of economy.

Any one of these purposes could be developed into an effective letter. Had the writer only made up his mind what point he wanted to make and then stuck to that point, he would have achieved two desirable results. First, his letter would have dealt with a unified subject and his ideas would have been concentrated on one topic. Second, though irrelevant statements might still creep in, the chance of their doing so would have been considerably decreased by the very fact that the writer knew what he was trying to do and could more easily have kept from getting off the track.

Since few, if any, college students would write so pointless a composition, let us consider one which is more characteristic of the kind of purposeless writing likely to occur in college classes. The following paper was written by a student who had a free choice of subjects. Presumably, therefore, she felt that the experience she was relating had sufficient value or interest to appeal to a reader.

A Fishing Trip

Even though my extent of travel is somewhat limited, I have had some very interesting and educational trips. My first venture from home took place about ten years ago when some friends asked me to accompany them to Canada on a two weeks' fishing trip. I must admit that at the time I knew nothing about fishing but I had all the enthusiasm to learn.

It was a bright, sunny day when we left Columbus in a tightly packed car for Sparrow Lake, Canada. Along the way we stopped at Niagara Falls to see one of nature's beautiful creations, and then continued to drive what seemed to be an endless distance. At last we arrived in Orillia, Canada, bought a few necessary supplies, and drove several miles down a typical washboard road till we arrived at our destination.

As I think back, I can still see that huge old brick home standing on top of the hill – not a tree around. After unpacking our clothes, and eating one of those delicious home cooked dinners, we sat around and talked to all the new people, and then prepared for a good night's sleep in preparation for the busy day ahead of us.

From that day on, most of our time was spent in the boat on the lake trying to catch muskies. Even though our luck was pretty good I just couldn't learn to like that rod and reel sport. Consequently I was bribed into steering the boat.

I found my pleasures in the evening, after dinner, in swimming and playing tennis. Many of us used to tow boats into the deeper part of the lake, dive, swim around, climb into the boat and row back to shore. I met many new friends and I am still writing to them.

I fully understand that a good fisherman could not imagine such a story, but it is a true one nevertheless. I'm sure I'll not accept another invitation to go on a fishing trip.

What is this paper trying to accomplish? The title indicates that it is going to be an account of a fishing adventure, yet the first and larger part of the paper is concerned with introductory material, and whatever fishing the student did is dismissed in the three short sentences of the fourth paragraph. The first paragraph – always an important part of a paper, since it usually suggests the author's purpose – identifies this particular excursion as a "very interesting and educational" trip; yet the student's main point – if she can truthfully be said to have one – seems to be that her total experience was most uninteresting; and, although she did visit Niagara Falls and Canada, she does nothing in the paper to show the educational features of the trip. In the concluding paragraph she tells us that the vacation was

so disappointing that she will never again accept an invitation to go fishing; yet, except for the fourth paragraph, her paper is full of pleasant remembrances!

In the face of this confusion it is clear that this student, like the writer of the letter to the editor, began to write with no adequate sense of purpose. She selected a general topic – her fishing vacation – but she gave no thought to what she wanted to do with that topic. She simply began at what seemed the beginning and set down details as they came into her mind, without bothering to consider whether these details had any relationship to each other or any value in her paper. The result of such purposeless writing is a paper which leaves the reader with the question. Why did she write it?

Had this student been more concerned about her purpose in writing, she might have decided that what she really wanted to do was to show that muskie-fishing is an overrated sport and that she personally found it exceedingly dull. With that purpose in mind, she might have felt that the best way to develop the paper was to contrast the excitement she had expected with the boredom she actually felt. The question of where to begin would then have been solved almost automatically. She would have ignored the trip to Sparrow Lake, the old brick house, the home-cooked food. She might even have ignored the pleasures of the evening, though she could legitimately have used them as a contrast to the dullness of fishing. In short, a little thought about what she wanted her writing to do would have given her a unified and effective essay.

This contrast between what the student did and what she might have done should suggest to you that there is probably no habit more useful to form at the beginning of your college career than the habit of asking yourself before you begin a piece of writing, "What exactly do I want to do in this paper?" The question will usually be easier to ask than to answer, for the answer may require you to plan in detail – as the golfer planned his putt – the way your paper must be written. But if you face the question squarely and refuse to be satisfied with a superficial answer, you will derive three very practical advantages: you will be able to avoid many of the false starts and pencil-chewing periods that make writing a frustrating ordeal for many students; you will be able to exert a firmer control over what you do write; and you will have a point of view which will serve as a guide through the complex of decisions which must be made at every stage of the writing. Let us consider these advantages.

Many students find it hard to get started on a writing assignment. They make a dozen desperate starts, hopeful that each succeeding one will turn out satisfactorily. But after an hour or two they have little to show for their efforts except a full wastebasket and a short temper. Now, when the ideas that a writer is dealing with are difficult, or when the writing problem is unusually subtle, some of these false starts are understandable. Even experienced writers make them. But too often the student's trouble is that he is trying to substitute the physical activity of pounding a typewriter or pushing a pen for the more strenuous effort of thinking. Writing is a product of thought, not a substitute for it. A student who tears up enough experimental pages will, it is true, often learn from his failures what it is that he wants to do. But he could get the same results more pleasantly and probably more quickly by thinking out his problem before trying to write about it. A half-hour's walk, during which he concentrated on getting clear in his mind exactly what he wanted to do, might give him the whole pattern of his paper and make the actual writing unexpectedly painless.

Second, a student who clearly understands his purpose is not likely to be trapped by an accidental sequence of ideas, for he will recognize when he is going astray. A good deal of writing is censorship – keeping irrelevant thoughts out of the paper. Many of the ideas that arise in our minds have little relation to the purpose of our writing, and the habit of following impromptu ideas may result in a jumble of pointless remarks. A student who knows his purpose can detect and reject any idea that interferes with his intention. But a student who has no practical understanding of what he is trying to do has no standard by which to judge good ideas from bad. He has therefore little control over what he writes and is likely to put down anything that comes to his mind. As the letter to the editor should remind you, unselected ideas sometimes come in a most confusing order.

Finally, a student with a clear sense of purpose has a point of view which gives him a consistent approach to all the problems of composition. Every writer, whether he is aware of it or not, is continuously facing the choice between alternatives. At successive stages of his work he must make decisions between alternative forms of organization, illustration, diction, grammar, and punctuation. If he has no adequate sense of purpose, his successive choices are likely to work against each other, making his writing awkward or confused. He may vary between a too-formal and a too-informal style, between pompous

diction and inappropriate slang, between pedantic and slovenly grammar, or between too much punctuation and too little. If, on the other hand, he understands the implications of what he is trying to do, his choices are more likely to be harmonious. His writing will be all of a piece. It will have unity of style as well as unity of subject.

2

CHOOSING A SUBJECT

IN MUCH of the writing that you are asked to do in college the question "What shall I write about?" never arises. When you are asked to describe an experiment or to explain the background of a particular historical event, or when you are asked to summarize the contents of an essay or to write a criticism of it, the very nature of the assignment has determined your general subject matter and established the main outlines of your purpose in writing.

Sometimes, however, the assignment will be so worded that it does not specify the subject, so that you must take this first step in determining your purpose for yourself. Thus, you may be asked to write a 2000-word paper based on outside reading or a 500-word essay explaining a process, describing an event, or relating an experience. Such assignments give you a good deal of freedom, but this freedom sometimes seems a doubtful blessing to a student who sits down before a blank sheet of paper to wrestle with the problem of what to write about.

A certain amount of cautious deliberation in choosing a subject is a sign of wisdom, but many students worry unprofitably and waste valuable time torturing themselves into a state of mental paralysis. Like the philosophical donkey which starved to death surrounded by haystacks because it could not decide where to begin, such students spend hours rejecting subjects, any one of which might be developed into an acceptable paper, and finally retreat behind the assertion that they have nothing to write about.

The student who makes this complaint cannot be taken seriously by an instructor. The teacher knows that college freshmen have not been living in a vacuum for the last eighteen years. He knows that they have been living moderately active lives, surrounded by hundreds of other people, in a world that is forever forcing its worries, disasters, hopes, and triumphs on their consciousness. He knows also that

good writing is not confined to subjects dealing with unusual experiences, that the everyday events of ordinary living can be recorded freshly and effectively by a student who knows how to exploit them for writing purposes.

As a simple illustration of this assertion, consider the following student essay:

Social Pressure

"Ginneeeeeee! Phone. It's a man."

"For me?" Anticipating a date, I dashed down the stairs of the dormitory to the phone booth.

"Hello."

"Hello, Ginny? This is Steven Conn. How would you like to go to the movies with me Friday night?"

"O.K."

"I'll be over to the house about 7:30 then?"

"All right."

"Good night."

I went back to my room and the girls who were congregated there wanted to know who, what, when, where, how, as they always did after a phone call from a male.

"It was Steve Conn. I'm going to the movies Friday night with him."

My roommate and Elsie, one of our best friends, exchanged meaningful looks. They grinned a little, then burst out laughing. Belligerently, I demanded to know why they were laughing. All they could manage to say was, "Steve Conn!", and off they went again into gales of laughter. I stamped my foot and insisted that they stop laughing and tell me why my going out with Steve was such a wonderful joke. Realizing that I was in earnest, they stopped laughing. Elsie offered an explanation. "Ginny, you just can't go out with him! He's such a queer. He can hardly talk English and he lisps. Besides he's only about five feet five. Everybody laughs at him. The guy's just a freak, that's all. You'll have to call him and tell him you can't go."

"I shall do no such thing!" I snatched up my books and stamped downstairs to the study room. But I couldn't study. All I could think of was the kids' reaction to my forthcoming date with Steve. Steve was a German refugee. His English was faulty, and besides he had a slight speech impediment which added to his language difficulties. At times he was absolutely incoherent and was forced to resort to gestures. He was quite ugly, had small eyes obscured by thick glasses, a large nose and

mouth, and bushy hair. His figure was short and squat; his clothes ill-fitting and worn. Neither the students nor the faculty liked him, for besides being a foreigner and an unpleasant looking one at that, he always interrupted class discussions to ask stupid questions. There were so many things that he didn't understand that everyone had grown impatient with him. Nearly everyone found him distasteful and avoided him as much as possible. He sat next to me in English, and because I was kind to him I suppose he decided to ask me for a date. I couldn't have refused him, for my heart went out to him. He was such a pathetic creature. I began to hate the girls for tormenting me, and I determined that not only should I go out with Steve, but I should do it proudly.

The days preceding the Friday date were a horror. The girls called me "Stevie's gal" and affected lisps and German accents every time I came around. By Friday the entire house knew that I was going out with Steve Conn; they thought it a huge joke. When he came to call for me, there was much snickering and remark-passing. The girl at the desk called up, "Ginneeeee, Stevie's here." A general giggle resulted.

Everybody on campus attended the Friday night movies, and as we started toward the auditorium the usual crowds filled the sidewalk. I suggested that we take a roundabout way to avoid the mob. But crowds didn't usually bother me! I was suddenly aware that the kids had won. I just didn't want people to see me with Steve. The rest of the evening I suffered. We sat back in a dark corner of the auditorium. I hoped fervently that no one would notice us. After the movies, I assured Steve that I didn't want anything to eat. I couldn't go in the Bee Hive with him. We returned to the house in the same roundabout way that we had gone. As I was saying good night to him on the porch, he asked me whether I had a date for Saturday. I said "Yes," hurriedly. It was a lie; I didn't have a date, but I knew I couldn't go out with him again. We said good night and with a sigh I went into the house. I had been defeated. I hated myself for being so weak, but it was no use; I couldn't fight so much opposition. The opinion of my house mates ruled me, and I knew it. I have not since doubted that social pressure is a potent force in determining individual action.

Nothing in the incident which this student is recording lies outside the experience of a normal freshman. Long before we have reached college age, we have all learned that in many ways we are influenced in our actions by the attitudes of our friends. Even if an individual had never experienced the particular sort of pressure which this essay illustrates, he could still develop the ideas expressed in the concluding sentence with evidence from his own past. All he would have to do would be to keep the last sentence in mind and think out its im-

plications in his own life. If he did so, he could not fail to uncover enough material for several essays.

Any student who feels that he has nothing to write about should sit down for an hour or two some evening early in the semester and make an inventory of subjects which could be drawn merely from his own experience. The more he analyses that experience, the more writing possibilities he will find in it. Consider, as an illustration, how many topics come out of the following general areas of experience.

The student's total experience:	*Topics derived from that experience:*
family	Life with father – On being the oldest (or youngest) child – Mother's pet peeves – The worst day in our family – Are sisters (brothers) worth while? – The mother's part in making a successful family life – Democracy in the family – Family reunions
friends	Fair weather friends – The best friend I ever had – Vacation friendships – Friends I have forgotten – And I thought she was my friend – That gang in high school – Are friends closer than parents?
neighborhood	The people next door – Death comes to our street – Halloween in our block – The neighborhood bully – How the neighbors have changed – The importance of the right neighborhood – Community events – The best fire our neighborhood ever had
hobbies and recreations	What stamp collecting teaches – When the hunting season opens – Overhauling the family car – A trunkful of scrapbooks – Keeping up with the movie stars – Why save autographs? – The best sport of all
hopes and ambitions	New Year's resolutions – What I'd really like to do with my life – The chance that college offers – How much money is enough? – Marriage or a career? – The house I'd like to build – What every man (woman) wants most – How mottoes have reflected my successive ambitions
fears and prejudices	Childhood fears – The things I still fear – The kind of man (woman) I detest – The origin of a prejudice – The worst kind of hurt – What I don't like about big cities

relations with people	What makes us self-conscious? – These things used to embarrass me – How my attitude towards boys (girls) has changed – Things parents forget – On being called upon to recite in class – People I envy – How important are the social graces? – What do people find to talk about on dates? – Does anyone really know us?
knowledge of how to do things	How to test a second-hand car – How to handle a skid – How to tell good music from bad – The part the orchestra leader plays – How to win radio contests – How not to argue – How to borrow the family car – What a balanced diet means – The best way to pay a compliment

The topics at the right are only a few of many which could be worked out. They are not unusual topics; indeed, they have been deliberately kept within the range of nearly everyone's experience. Any student, thinking of his own family, of real friends, or of an actual neighborhood could easily find more and, for him, perhaps better topics than the ones listed above – could find them, that is, if he would take the trouble to break down his total experience into its particular parts.

Many students overlook good topics because they fail to see that what they consider a single experience is really a series of experiences, any one of which might make an effective paper. This is particularly true of student accounts of vacation trips. Some students will write papers in which they summarize a week's visit to New York in three or four hundred words. If they could learn to see that such a visit is a complex event which includes a great many topics, they might understand that their problem was not how to find enough to say about the whole visit to fill a single essay, but how to pick out that phase of the total experience which seemed to promise the best essay. Often the surest way to do this is to make a list of the most prominent or interesting features of the trip. Look how "A Trip to New York" breaks down into twenty different topics:

The trip east	Driving through Pennsylvania
	Highways that invite speeding
	Billboard advertising as a cause of accidents
	Next time, try a tourist camp
In New York	Coming into a large city: first impressions
	The New York skyline
	Don't try to drive in New York City

My first subway ride
The view from the Empire State Building
Rockefeller Center – A city within a city
Chinatown
Harlem
The Great White Way
The Battery
My first sight of ocean liners
Eating in an automat
Inside the Stock Exchange
Shopping in New York
A night at a play
Are New Yorkers always in a hurry?

Any student about to write an essay on his vacation trip would have no worries about subject matter if he broke down his general topic in this manner. Moreover, the very act of making such a list will protect the student against one of the greatest weaknesses of freshman writing – the habit of presenting complex experiences in such general terms that the work communicates almost nothing to a reader. For example, had the girl who wrote the paper about fishing made such a list, she might have avoided the temptation to cram a series of unrelated experiences into a paper which should have been confined to a single experience.

It should now be evident that the student who complains that he has nothing to write about is confusing his real difficulty. What he lacks is not material, but practice in making use of it. He has not developed the ability to concentrate on one small phase of his experience and think out its implications. Without that discipline, his mind finds it easier to skip from subject to subject and reject them all than to settle on one topic, limit it to something within the range of his own experience, and say something purposeful and interesting about it.

The habit of concentrating on a subject until you develop its implications is not a God-given talent. It has to be cultivated. Almost any subject will support an effective piece of writing if the student will keep that subject in the forefront of his mind. Take, for example, the subject of fear. If you were asked to write a thousand-word essay on fear, your first reaction might be consternation. How, you might ask, can I write a thousand words about fear? What do I know about it? If you are a normal human being, you know a great deal about it, and if you were to keep the topic in your mind and to think about it whenever you had a chance, you would find out that you had more

and more to say on the subject. You would start by thinking back on your own fears, thus gathering a mass of material. The chances are that you would then begin to distinguish different kinds of fear: fear of the dark, fear of failure, fear of being conspicuous, fear of being disliked, fear of change, of insecurity, of people, of death. You would begin to remember examples of such fears in other people's experience as well as your own. You would find fresh examples in your reading and conversation. You would begin to speculate on the cause and significance of such fears. And the longer you thought about the subject, the more you would realize that you had so much to say about it that a thousand words were not nearly enough.

RESTRICTING THE SUBJECT

The very act of thinking out a general subject by breaking it into its parts has carried us into the second stage of determining the purpose of a projected essay. When we broke the subject, "A Trip to New York," into its sub-topics we were restricting the subject. Sometimes the restricted topic was still a broad one (Chinatown, for example). Sometimes (Rockefeller Center – A City Within a City) the restriction was so complete that it pretty clearly established the purpose of any paper written on the topic.

The difference between a restricted and an unrestricted topic may be further illustrated by contrasting the methods of two imaginary students each writing a 500-word autobiographical paper. The uncritical student pays little attention to the implications of the assignment. He thoughtlessly assumes that a paper about his life should begin with his birth; and having started with that event, he finds himself reluctant to dismiss it with the simple statement that he was born on June 10, 19–. He therefore traps himself into a labored account of how his father paced the hospital floors waiting for his arrival. Even if he has enough restraint to avoid the hoary jokes that cover this situation, he turns out a paragraph which is both artificial and terribly trite.

Having duly recorded his birth, he proceeds to a chronicle of his life. He touches lightly on his earliest years, then settles down to a paragraph on his grade-school career. High school seems even more important, and he may devote a separate paragraph to each of his four years there. Another paragraph may enumerate some of the part-time jobs he has held, and a paragraph or two is likely to be given to

hobbies, sports, and trips. Finally he rounds out his story with a paragraph on his expectations of college and his hopes for the future.

If the paragraphing, sentence structure, diction, grammar, punctuation, and spelling of his paper are adequate, our author may get a C for his efforts – scarcely more. And the chances are that he is going to feel hurt and puzzled. Why will such a paper get no more than a C? Briefly, because it has no clear-cut purpose. A mere chronicle of the events of one's life conveys nothing that is significant about the writer's personality, his character, or what makes him the kind of person he is. From such a record an instructor will catch no glimpse of the author as an individual. He will learn little more about the student than he could find out by consulting the data filed in the personnel office.

A more critical student would not plunge so quickly into the job of writing. He would recognize that he could not, in a mere five hundred words, make any survey of his whole life that would have real value. Even if he did not see the need of clearly establishing the purpose of his paper, he would understand that a summary of his whole life would be valueless. He would then see that the general subject could be broken into a number of specific topics and that a restricted topic would encourage a more detailed and effective treatment. Thus, he might confine himself to his relationship with his parents, or to the ways in which his dominant fears or ambitions had influenced his life. Or he might begin by saying, "Everyone ought to spend a year flat on his back on a hospital bed," and go on to show how that experience had shaped the subsequent pattern of his life.

Such an essay will stand a fair chance of coming alive, of revealing the writer as a person, not an abstraction. Moreover, from the point of view of the instructor, it will be a more effective composition, since it is organized around one central idea and develops that idea with some thoroughness. And though the writing will take more thought than would a mere listing of events, it will be vastly more rewarding. The writer will have the very real satisfaction of shaping his ideas into a pattern, of doing what is essentially a creative piece of writing, and of giving an interesting picture of himself.

You may, therefore, set it down as one of the cardinal rules of good composition that in general the narrower the subject, the greater are the chances of developing it effectively. The amount of restriction that is advisable depends, of course, on the nature of the assignment. But if you will bear in mind that the best papers in any class are likely

to be those that go into considerable detail, you will avoid the common mistake of summarizing a subject instead of developing it.

Restricting a subject not only reduces it to the scope that can be adequately dealt with in a short paper; it also forms a channel through which the author's ideas may flow. In other words, it helps him to discover his purpose. For instance, suppose that at the beginning of the term you are asked to write a paper on your impressions of the university. As you recall these impressions you find they are a chaotic jumble of often unrelated observations. If you were to put them down in note form in the order in which they occur to you, you might get some such hodge-podge as this:

> Many more students here than in high school. Appearance of the campus. Architecture. Lack of snobbishness in upper classmen. Variety of students. Experience at first freshman smoker. Difficulty of finding way to classes. Helpfulness of old timers. Many pretty girls. Some not so pretty. Faculty seems quite young. Class procedure different from high school. Instructors less formal. Being addressed as Mr. and Miss makes students feel more mature. Park on other side of creek makes pleasant addition to campus. Tennis courts conveniently located.

A skillful and experienced writer might, for psychological effect, take such a jumble of impressions and present them without reorganizing them, or without appearing to do so. But for most of us such a procedure might be disastrous. The only safe thing to do, then, is to decide, before you begin to write, which of these impressions you are going to use and in what order you will use them. To do this intelligently requires some principle of selection. The impressions you select will be determined by the purpose you expect your writing to achieve.

Suppose that, recognizing the chaotic condition of your impressions, you begin to think about your dominant or over-all impression of university life. As you do this, it occurs to you that college life is really quite different from what you had expected. You begin to see that your ideas about college had largely been formed from the movies and from occasional football games. You therefore decide to write a paper showing that college is not what Hollywood represents it as being. Now you not only have a basic idea that you want to develop but you have also a principle of selection that leads you to choose certain impressions and reject others. You have restricted your subject by taking a particular point of view toward it. Perhaps you write a paper something like this:

So This Is College

Although I had never been on a college campus until I enrolled here a week ago, I had gained a pretty clear notion of college life from the movies. A college, I thought, was a cluster of ancient, ivy-covered buildings, populated by beautiful coeds, broad-shouldered athletes, and gray-bearded or bald-headed professors, most of whom were notoriously absent-minded. Perhaps there are such colleges, but after one week on this campus I am forced to admit that this is not one of them.

This university bears little resemblance to a Hollywood campus. That doesn't necessarily mean that our campus is unattractive. True enough, that straggling little stand of ivy clinging so desperately to the back of the science building is not impressive. But I like the neatness of the well-kept lawns, I am impressed by the fine job of landscaping that has been done, and I am glad that whoever laid out the parking lot behind University Hall was artist enough to work it into the general scheme. And though there isn't any Hollywood lake on which to go canoeing on moonlit nights, the park on the other side of the creek, with its fine shade trees, will probably be a satisfactory substitute.

The students I have seen and talked with do not fit into the movie pattern. Perhaps the inevitable Joe College will make his appearance in time, and no doubt some of the girls I have met would be as glamorous as movie starlets if they dressed as Hollywood coeds do. But dressed as they are, they seem pretty much like the girls you would expect to see wherever several hundreds of them are brought together. A little more mature, perhaps, than the girls I knew in high school, a bit smoother, and a lot quieter, but still very much the same.

I am impressed, however, with the friendliness of students here. I had expected upper classmen to look down their noses at lowly freshmen. That is how it is in the movies. Here, not only do upper classmen fail to display any superiority towards the newcomers, but, if my experience is typical, they often go out of their way to be helpful. During the first few days I had difficulty finding my way around the buildings. Classrooms and offices had the habit of being elsewhere when I was due to appear in them. At first I didn't like to advertise my confusion, but I soon found that older students sensed my plight and were glad to direct me. In fact, I am beginning to think that one good way to make friends around here is to stand in the halls and look lost.

Perhaps it would be wiser not to mention it, but the faculty seems to me to be farthest removed from the Hollywood ideal. I have yet to see my first graybeard, and so far none of my instructors has shown any of the traditional signs of absent-mindedness. On the contrary, faculty members here look about as human and undistinguished as the men and women you might see at a convention of realtors or advertisers.

I like the way they address students as "Mr." and "Miss." Perhaps that is a concession to Hollywood, but it is a refreshing change from high school. I also like the informality of their classroom procedure. I have one instructor whose grammar is as informal as his habit of sitting on the edge of the desk. That sort of thing just isn't done in the movies.

First impressions may not always be true impressions. It may be that before the semester is over I will want to take back all that I have said in this paper. But, whatever my feelings may be then, right now I am sure of one thing: whatever college is like, it is not what it is in the movies.

If you compare this essay with the collection of impressions out of which it evolved, you will notice that not only did the purposeful restriction of the subject exclude many impressions that might otherwise have been used; it also brought forth new ones that were needed to support the contention that college life is not what the movies show it to be. This is a common occurrence. Once an author has his purpose clearly in mind, he has so concentrated his thinking that the facts and illustrations he needs spring up in his mind of their own accord. By clarifying his purpose he makes his thinking more efficient.

Students are often tempted to restrict an autobiographical subject merely by cutting the time it covers – that is, by confining themselves to a single year of their lives or to a particular summer vacation. Such restriction is often more nominal than real. The goal of restriction is to get a topic which can be completely developed within the limits of a single paper. Usually restriction in time alone does not achieve that goal. For example, the imaginary autobiography that we considered a few pages back would not have been significantly improved had it been confined to the author's senior year in high school or to his trip to New York. In either case the student would still have had a topic too large for complete development in a short paper.

On the other hand, a paper may deal with several years of the writer's life and still be thoroughly restricted, as long as the author is selecting from these years only those experiences that have a clear connection with the main idea he wants to discuss. Consider, for example, the following essay written by a University of Wisconsin student:

I Know the Value of Money [1]

My parents wanted me to grow up independent; capable of managing my possessions and my life. So when I was still a child, they began

[1] From "I Know the Value of Money," by Jean R. McDuffie in *Parents' Magazine* for May, 1941. Reprinted by permission of *Parents' Magazine*.

their training which has accomplished just the object they had in view.

On my twelfth birthday Mother and Daddy sat me down for a talk which I shall always remember. "It isn't just age that makes a person wise and capable," they told me. "Nor is it having lots of money and a fine social position. Knowing your own mind, your own affairs, and the value of money is one of the greatest things to which a person can aspire, and this is what we want to teach you."

So with $15 a month for my very own I began my life as a person within myself. With that money, $10 of which I got from Daddy the first of the month, and $5 from Mother on the fifteenth, I had to take care of all my expenses, clothes included. It was rather difficult at first, buying all my own things, but any important article I brought home and had Mother put on the final approval.

Fifteen dollars seemed enormous to me, but I soon discovered that I couldn't persist in eating sweets and ice creams to any great extent if I wanted to be dressed as well as the other girls and have my clothes in repair. Money just didn't go anywhere near that far. I was lucky to have a considerably well stocked wardrobe when I started out, for I didn't have to worry about needing such a thing as a coat, which would have been a little too expensive for me to know how to budget.

My parents took care of the expense of my school books, so I was relieved of that large burden. A typical monthly account for me from the ages of 12 to 14 was as follows.

Clothes	$10
Cleaning and repair	2
Spending	3
	$15

Through those years, my father was making a comparatively small salary, and I couldn't have had more even if it was merited. So when I was 14 years old and Daddy was given a raise, my allowance underwent a similar change.

As prices of wearing apparel went up considerbly at that time, my family felt I needed a little more to make ends meet, so I was given $5 more, making my monthly allotment $20. Despite clothes being more expensive, I contrived to buy fewer, thereby spending only slightly more for this item than I had in the previous two years.

I also learned to sew, and made four or five summer dresses each year, which carried me through the brunt of the season at a greatly reduced cost. By doing this I was able to have more during the winter, for I prodigiously saved whatever I could. From the time I was 14 until I reached 17, my expenses were:

Clothes	$13
Cleaning and repair	2
Spending	5
	$20

Daddy usually gave me a heavy coat at the beginning of the winter, and that was supposed to last clear through, but when I found I needed another for spring or fall, as a rule I bought one on the installment plan, paying $5 a month for it until the bill was paid. Only once did I have a charge account, and that was responsible for the only time I slipped up on my obligations.

There was a small all-purpose shop near where we lived, and there I did most of my shopping. For Christmas, I had many friends, aside from my family, to whom I wished to give presents.

Wanting to try my luck at a charge account some months before December, I opened one at the shop and proceeded to charge everything I bought. The end of the first month my pocketbook permitted the payment, but on the conclusion of the second month it was slightly in the reverse.

I wasn't a bit worried, for I figured I could stint through December and settle at the close of that month. There I didn't reckon with the Yuletide spirit, for when my bill came the second of January, I was $50 in debt. That was the only time I was forced to seek family aid. Daddy gave me $35 for a Christmas present and I added $15 to finish the charge account once and for all . . .

When I was 17 . . . I began to want more substantial articles. I saw a beautiful radio one day for $65, and nothing would do but I should have it. Have it I did, on the installment plan, and I thought I would never finish paying for it. To bolster my depleted pocketbook, I undertook to teach ballroom dancing lessons in the recreation room of our home. . . .

Making my own decisions was wonderful. My parents never gave me any advice on any of them. When I asked their opinions they simply discussed the case from both sides, leaving the ultimate issue to my own discretion. . . . From this management of my own money I felt that I know its value more than the average girl with whom I am in contact. Not one of my close associates has anywhere near my knowledge of just what money will buy, and how far it will go. I have learned how and where to shop to get the most for the smallest sum. I know good quality from poor, and I am sure that when I marry, no matter how little money my husband may have, I will be able to get along on it and handle it efficiently.

My parents wanted me to grow up independent, capable of managing my possessions and my life. They have accomplished their purpose.

Here is an excellent example of purposeful restriction. The author knew exactly what she wanted to do. She wanted to show her readers that she knew the value of money by showing them in detail how she learned its value. That purpose required her to relate her talk with her parents on her twelfth birthday. It also required her to show, through the years, her struggles to achieve financial responsibility: the temptations she encountered, the mistakes she made, the necessity of supplementing her income when she wanted things she could not afford, the ruthless way her parents forced her to make her own decisions. Moreover, the restricted purpose kept the paper unified. It acted as a safeguard against any tendency to digress into incidents which, however interesting, had no immediate connection with the title of her essay.

STATING THE PURPOSE

When a student has done a successful job of restricting his subject, he has usually come to a decision about his purpose. For example, a student who restricts such a general subject as "A Trip to New York" to the specific topic, "Rockefeller Center – A City Within a City," has committed himself, through his choice of title, to writing about Rockefeller Center from a particular point of view. That point of view will control the selection of his material. Of all the things he might say about Rockefeller Center he will select only those that develop the idea that it is a city in itself.

A good title, therefore, will often so restrict the topic that the title itself implies the purpose of the paper. Such titles as "How to Win Radio Contests," "The Part the Conductor Plays in the Orchestra," and "What to Do in Case of Serious Burns" may be considered as rudimentary statements of purpose. For short papers they will be sufficient in themselves to guide the student in the decisions he must make about selecting and presenting his material. For long papers, however, it will usually be wise for him to go one step farther – to make a formal statement of the purpose which his title implies.

Statement of Intention

Statements of purpose may take two forms. The simpler form, illustrated in the sentences that follow, states the purpose of the paper by declaring the writer's intention:

In this paper I intend to explain the operation of the Diesel engine.

The purpose of this paper is to reveal the events leading up to the Boston Tea Party.

This paper will summarize the rules of hockey.

A statement of intention may be considered as a further step in the process of purposeful restriction. Especially when the title is still fairly general, it helps the writer to sharpen his purpose and so guarantees him a greater control over the development of his paper. The statements of intention given below distinguish clearly between different ways in which the title could be developed.

Title	*Statement of Intention*
Driving in New York City	The purpose of this paper is to report the traffic regulations of New York City.
	I intend to show the difficulties which a visitor encounters if he tries to drive his car in New York City.
	In this paper I shall present my opinions of driving conditions in New York City.
New Year's Resolutions	This essay will show that the habit of making New Year's resolutions is evidence of our dissatisfaction with ourselves.
	In this paper I intend to prove that it is better to make New Year's resolutions and break them than not to make them at all.
	The purpose of this discussion is to illustrate the disastrous consequences that might result from taking our resolutions too seriously.

A good statement of intention has three characteristics: it is restricted; it is unified; it is precise. To be restricted, it must indicate which of several possible approaches to the subject the writer intends to use. For example, each of the statements already given about New Year's resolutions requires the writer to treat the general subject in a specific way and keeps him from doing other things. But the statement, "In this paper I intend to discuss New Year's resolutions," makes no such restrictions. That statement is comprehensive enough to include all three of the intentions already indicated, and several others besides. As a control over the writer's selection of his material, it offers no help that is not already provided by the title, "New Year's Resolutions." It is therefore quite useless as a statement of intention.

To be unified, a statement of intention must commit the writer to deal with only one central idea. Such a statement as, "In this paper I want to explain the organization of the UNO and show why it cannot prevent a major war," requires the writer to do two things, not one. A paper which actually carries out this intention will almost certainly consist of two parts which have little connection with each other. These parts could just as easily be presented as separate essays. If the writer believes that the organization of the UNO and its inability to prevent war are related, he should show that relation in his statement of intention — "The purpose of this paper is to show that the organization of the UNO makes it incapable of preventing a war between major powers." This statement restricts the discussion of organization to those particular features which make the UNO powerless to avert a major war, and by so doing it fuses the two parts into a unified purpose.

In the following statements the lack of unity at the left is removed by revision at the right:

In this paper I intend to show the development of printing and the social and cultural reforms it has made possible.	In this paper I intend to show how the development of printing has brought about social and cultural reforms.
The purpose of this paper is to trace the history of fraternities and to show that they fulfill a social need	The purpose of this paper is to show that fraternities have developed because they fulfill a social need.

In the first of these pairs, the statement at the left requires the writer to do two things: first, to recount the history of printing — a rather extensive job in itself — and then to show the social and cultural reforms which have resulted from the development of printing. The statement at the right rules out much of the history and restricts the writer to the single task of showing how certain social and cultural improvements were made possible by advances in printing. Similarly, the first statement about fraternities would make two papers — one a history of fraternities; the other a justification of them. But the revised statement merely uses selected evidence from the history to show that fraternities have flourished because they had a useful service to offer. A paper with this intention will be an argument which draws its evidence from the social value which fraternities have demonstrated in the past.

Finally, a statement of intention should be precise. It should state

the writer's point of view toward his topic in words which do not permit more than one interpretation. Specifically, it should avoid words and phrases which are so general that they have no exact meaning. A statement of intention which is not precise merely promises that the author will write "about" the subject; it does not require him to approach it from any single viewpoint.

Sometimes the word "about" may even be included in such a statement – "In this paper I want to write about Custer's last stand." More frequently the author intends to write "about" his topic without saying so. In the following statements the italicized words are so vague that they allow the writer to do almost anything which has any relation to the topic:

> The purpose of this paper is to *study* the character of Abraham Lincoln.
>
> In this paper I intend to *consider* professionalism in college athletics.
>
> This paper will *deal with* the advisability of working one's way through college.

What will the writer say about Lincoln or professionalism or working one's way through college? The door is wide open to praise or blame, attack, defense, to almost any attitude toward the topic, or to several attitudes at once. To serve as a useful control – and this, after all, is the function of a statement of intention – these sentences must be made more precise, as they are below:

> In this paper I want to show how Lincoln's character was misrepresented by his opponents.
>
> The purpose of this paper is to disprove the charges of professionalism in college athletics.
>
> In this paper I want to explain what a student loses when he works his way through college.

The use of figures of speech (metaphors and similes) in a statement of intention is undesirable. Figures of speech are excellent devices within the body of a composition, but in a statement of intention they often deceive a student into thinking that he has clarified his purpose when he has by no means done so. Consequently they cover up a confusion which might be exposed by a more literal statement. In the statements that follow, the figurative one could be developed into either of the two quite different purposes indicated in the literal statements:

Figurative	*Literal*
The purpose of this paper is to show that, where instructors are concerned, all that glitters is not gold.	The purpose of this paper is to show that the most helpful instructors are not always the most entertaining. The purpose of this paper is to show that the most accomplished scholars are not always the best teachers.

In a statement of intention clarity is more important than artistic effect. An apt or striking phrase may be desirable in a title, but rhetorical devices are out of place in a purpose statement.

The unsatisfactory statements which we have been studying have all been a result of failure to define clearly the purpose of the projected paper. It was pointed out in Chapter 1 that a serious concern with purpose requires a discipline which a writer will often wish to escape. A student who attempts to escape from this discipline by writing a statement of purpose which – because it is unrestricted, disunified, or vague – will fail to guide the development of his paper is merely deceiving himself that he has established his purpose. Nothing is gained by such self-deception. It is always wiser to thrash out the basic decision about purpose once and for all in the statement of intention.

The Thesis

The second type of purpose statement is one which expresses not the writer's intention but the central idea of his paper. It does not merely name his topic; it states precisely what he plans to say about it. Just as a composer first announces the theme of his composition and then elaborates that theme through the music, so the writer may make the purpose of his paper clear by stating in a sentence the *dominant idea* which he intends to develop. The following sentences illustrate this type of statement:

> The first requirement of a good speaker is a sense of confidence.
> Final examinations encourage cramming.
> All stories to the contrary, women drive as carefully as men.

Throughout this book we shall call such a statement the *thesis* of the paper.[2] The thesis is to the whole paper what the topic sentence is to the paragraph. It is the central idea of the whole composition.

Whether you should express your purpose as a statement of inten-

[2] The word *thesis* has been selected in an effort to avoid any ambiguity which might result from the use of the commoner word *theme*.

tion or as a thesis will depend on the nature of the paper you are writing. Many quite purposeful compositions present facts rather than ideas and, therefore, their purposes cannot be stated as theses. For example, if you want to explain how a Diesel engine operates, your purpose is best expressed by a statement of intention. Any attempt to force such a purpose into the form of a thesis – such as "The operation of a Diesel engine is complicated" – merely distorts your purpose. You do not intend to prove that the operation is complicated; you merely want to show what the operation is. Similarly, if you want to summarize the events leading up to the Boston Tea Party, there is no point in trying to shape that purpose into a thesis. Your paper will not have a central idea, and you will not give it one by changing your statement of intention into some such form as, "The events leading up to the Boston Tea Party are interesting."

If, however, you are going to develop a central idea, you may state your purpose either as a statement of intention or as a thesis. Compare the following theses with the statements of intention given for the same topics in earlier pages:

The development of printing has made possible certain social and cultural reforms.

Fraternities have developed because they fill a social need.

Lincoln's opponents misrepresented his character.

The most helpful instructors are not always the most entertaining.

When, as in these examples, the purpose is equally clear as a statement of intention or as a thesis, the two types of statement differ only in form, not in function. Usually, however, the thesis is the more useful form for a paper developing a central idea. For such a paper the thesis represents the final stage in the whole process of restriction, whereas a student may still further sharpen his purpose by changing a statement of intention into a thesis. Notice how the following statement of intention may be restricted into several theses, each of which would require the writer to select different material to achieve a particular emphasis:

In this paper I intend to present my opinions of driving conditions in New York City.

Driving in New York City is not so difficult as you might imagine.

If you must drive in New York City, keep one eye on the taxicabs.

Don't drive in New York City during the rush hours.

Next time I drive in New York City I will familiarize myself with the traffic system.

Of course there is always the danger that a student will restrict his intention too narrowly, so that he announces a thesis which he has not the material to develop. This danger may be avoided by asking — and answering — the question, "Is that really what I want to do?" But on the whole, students are likely to restrict too little, not too much; and often they do not see that their statement of intention is still not sharp enough until they are required to present it as a thesis. The thesis, therefore, states the purpose in its most restricted form and so offers the safest guide to an effective selection of material. A student is less likely to stray from his central idea when he has proclaimed that idea as the whole and single purpose of his paper.

Like a good statement of intention, a good thesis must be restricted, unified and precise. It will not be restricted if the idea it presents is too comprehensive to be adequately developed within the limits of the paper. It will not be unified if it contains two different ideas only superficially related within the thesis statement. It will not be precise if it contains figures of speech or terms which may be interpreted in a number of ways and thus fails to impose upon the writer the purposeful restriction which it was intended to achieve.

The statement of the thesis, therefore, is for many kinds of writing the final phase of the whole process of restriction. In practice the different steps will seldom be as distinct as we have been forced to represent them in this chapter. Sometimes a student will go directly from his general subject to his thesis, as was the case in "So This is College." Sometimes a well-chosen title will give him his thesis. Indeed, as in "I Know the Value of Money," the title itself may be the thesis. Only in long compositions such as the research paper will a student be likely to move successively through all the steps we have discussed. But whether it be done in one step or in several, the process of determining the purpose is a necessary prelude to effective composition.

SUMMARY

This chapter may be summarized briefly as four pieces of advice:

1. When, in choosing a subject, you find yourself flitting from topic to topic, pick the likeliest one and concentrate on it until you see its possible implications. Remember that your choice of subject is in the long run less important than what you do with that subject.

2. If your subject is a general one, restrict it, either by breaking it into its parts (*A Trip to New York*) or by adopting a point of view

toward it (*Rockefeller Center — A City Within a City*). Restriction from a point of view will determine your purpose more quickly.

3. When you are satisfied that your topic is sufficiently restricted, establish your purpose by writing a statement of intention. Make sure that the statement is restricted, unified, and precise. Test it by asking "What does it mean?" and "Is that what I really want to do?"

4. If your paper is going to develop a central idea, revise your statement of intention into a thesis. If your paper does not contain a central idea, your statement of intention will be sufficient.

Finally, the paper "So This Is College" and the discussion concerning it (pages 18-20) will, if reread in the light of the whole chapter, provide a practical demonstration of the process of purposefully restricting a subject and developing a thesis.

EXERCISES

A. The following list of topics is designed to serve two purposes: first, to suggest possible subjects to any student who finds such suggestions useful, second, to provide a common body of material for such class exercises and impromptu essays as the instructor wishes to assign.

From each of the first three parts of the following list, select one topic. Restrict each topic into a title which suggests the point of view which you intend to take toward the topic. Finally expand your title into a clear statement of intention. If your instructor wishes, these statements may be written on the board and subjected to class criticism.

I. Subjects drawn from Your Personal Experience

A. *Reminiscences*

1. My first encounter with education
2. How I learned the value of money
3. Circus days
4. Rugged individualist — aged 12
5. My first date
6. My struggle for self-confidence
7. Birthdays used to be fun
8. The disadvantages of being 17
9. All children are vandals
10. My experience with the English language
11. Factory job
12. An adventure in business
13. What music has meant to me
14. What parents forget
15. Thank you, Dad!
16. Learning the hard way
17. First impressions of college
18. Life in an army camp
19. Winter in the country
20. My son won't make those mistakes

B. *Descriptions of people*

1. My parents
2. The black sheep
3. He was more than a coach
4. High school big shot
5. Toughest kid in the block
6. A teacher I won't forget
7. Social climber
8. Freshman Romeo
9. A self-made man
10. The bravest man I ever knew
11. Top sergeants I have known
12. G.I. Joe
13. My favorite relative
14. The greatest champion of them all
15. Small time politician
16. A typical American
17. The man (or woman) I'd like to be
18. People I cannot stand

C. *Descriptions of places*

1. The county seat on Saturday night
2. County fair
3. My corner of the South
4. The ideal vacation spot
5. Yellowstone National Park
6. Rockefeller Center
7. Niagara Falls
8. Washington, D. C.
9. The city of tomorrow
10. My home town

D. *Descriptions of events*

1. My most embarrassing experience.
2. It couldn't happen, but it did
3. I witness an accident
4. A storm to remember
5. A terrifying experience
6. The best World's Series
7. A defeat that hurt
8. A lie that backfired
9. A case of stage fright
10. Mother knew best

II. Subjects Suggested by Your Reading

1. On reading the newspapers
2. The inspiration of biographies
3. History through the novel
4. Life in pioneer times
5. Religious persecution
6. Great inventions
7. Great moments in history
8. The conquest of disease
9. The history of sport
10. Splitting the atom
11. Public Opinion Polls
12. Li'l Abner — the all-American numbskull
13. The background of an election
14. The Bible as history
15. The Bible as a way of life
16. Poets vs. scientists
17. The struggle for world peace
18. The power of ideas
19. My favorite poet
20. The reality of fiction

III. Subjects Based on Your Knowledge of How to Do Things

1. What my hobby has taught me
2. You don't need money to travel
3. The art of outdoor cooking
4. Working your way through college
5. Being a good hostess
6. Farming at a profit
7. How to take an examination
8. What every salesman must learn
9. How the public is fooled
10. Editing a paper
11. Photography is an art
12. Football is a science
13. What the professional sees
14. Fun with a fly rod
15. How to get along with the opposite sex
16. If I were in high school again
17. Behind the scenes in student elections
18. How to give a party
19. The dangers of night fishing
20. Be your own interior decorator

IV. Subjects Dealing with Your Own Opinions and Beliefs

1. Do fraternities (sororities) do more harm than good?
2. Is an honor system practicable?
3. Does compulsory attendance protect the student?
4. What do students expect from college?
5. What does the college graduate owe society?
6. Should college football be emphasized less?
7. Should college football be subsidized?
8. Are student elections democratic?
9. Is faculty supervision of student activities necessary?
10. Does college education influence religious beliefs?
11. Do science and religion conflict?
12. How vital a force is the church today?
13. How democratic is the United States?
14. How free is free enterprise?
15. Is capitalism efficient?
16. Should colleges be propagandists for democracy?
17. Have we lived up to the constitution?
18. What do we mean when we say that all men are born free and equal?
19. The New Deal in retrospect
20. Roosevelt's place in history
21. What was World War II about?
22. Could World War II have been avoided?
23. Can the nations outlaw war?
24. Is the UN another League of Nations?
25. Imperialism at home and abroad
26. What does Russia want?
27. The case for or against strikes
28. Socialized medicine
29. Compulsory military service
30. Is lobbying justifiable?

31. Should movies be censored?
32. In defense of Hollywood
33. Radio commercials – necessity or nuisance?
34. Do newspapers distort the news?
35. Should there be any limits to freedom of expression?
36. What do we mean by tolerance?

B. The two papers which follow were written by different students to satisfy the assignment: "Write a 500-word essay in which you present a picture of your experience with the English language." Read both essays and answer the questions which follow them.

My Experience with the English Language

My experience with the English language began in my cradle with the customary baby talk. In grade school and high school I had the preliminary grammar and literature training. During my junior year in high school I entered into several "High School Forums." In writing my paper on the topic scheduled I found that I didn't know the English language as well as I thought I had. There was extensive required reading in the library, and usually those outside books contained words of four or five syllables and took half a line in spelling. This is where I first began to understand the value of a dictionary. I believe that since I have become acquainted with the dictionary I have learned more about vocabulary, pronunciation, and articulation. Actual experience with the study of words is of such great value that I have tried to train myself to use the dictionary often.

I have had some speech training which helped me a great deal in my English training. I remember during one program I slaughtered the English language. Since then I have tried to become aware of what I am saying.

My Mother Done Tole Me

I suppose it must have been some rather humiliating revelation of mine that led my mother to place me across her lap one day early in my life, hold me with one hand and spank me with the other, at the same time explaining that little boys should be seen and not heard. "Don't you know," she said crossly, "that everybody has just so many words to speak in his life, and if you use them all up now you won't have any left when you're a man? That's why you mustn't talk so much now. You must save all your words for the time when you really have something to say."

I had accepted everything that my mother had ever told me before; so I accepted this, too – accepted it and heeded it until I was thirteen years old and learned that the physical principle underlying speech production recognized no limitations upon either the quantity or length of words used by a human being. It is true that during those years I

wondered many times how it was possible for mother to have been so taciturn in her youth, and father so verbose; for in their frequent discussions mother seemed oblivious of any word quota and father all too keenly aware of it. But I never seriously doubted mother until a junior high school instructor, Miss Conlin, Piano-legs Conlin as we called her, unfolded to me the scientific basis of speech.

Perhaps that seven year embargo has influenced my use of English more than any other factor. I endeavored to make up for lost time by talking at every opportunity at school and at home. Not content with that, I determined to increase my truncated vocabulary. I spent many painful hours culling polysyllabic enormities from the biggest dictionaries our public library boasted, and actually used them, undismayed by the laughter that greeted my mispronunciations, until I could both utter and understand them without more than a few seconds distress. From thirteen to sixteen I was probably my family's chief source of amusement as I manfully strove to raise my level of speech to more sublime realms and revenge myself for mother's deceit.

I realize now that I was a pedantic prig, insufferable in my attitude and incomprehensible in my usage, with extreme youth my only saving grace. To me the purpose of speech was to impress rather than to inform; and the use of sesquipedalian words, albeit inappropriate and inexact, offered the best means of achieving that purpose. I was a freshman in college before I appreciated how sadly mistaken I had been, that communication was the destined goal of speech, and that, though my instructors' vocabularies easily exceeded mine, they always managed to make themselves clear without calling on any of my favorites unless such words were an inevitable choice.

Today I have partially curbed my juvenile megalomania, but privately I still retain an inveterate fondness for the biggies, and when exacerbated beyond endurance I am likely to utilize a string of expletives representing more than half a decade's labor. Occasionally, too, the sheer admiration and reverent devotion I have for such words make me unwilling to see them fall into desuetude. Thus impelled, I write them as I have in this paper. But if that weakness is regrettable now, it was deplorable five years ago. Let us hope that by the time I have shot down my first plane it will have disappeared altogether.

QUESTIONS

1. Which of these two papers gives the clearer picture of the student's experience with the English language? Write a paragraph to justify your verdict.

2. Does either of the papers show restriction of the general subject as it was given in the assignment? If so, what is the nature of the restriction — a restricted topic or a restricted viewpoint? Discuss the nature of the restriction in a short paragraph.

3. Does either paper contain a thesis? If no thesis is explicitly stated, is

one implied? Write out any thesis you can discover, either stated or implied in either paper.

4. Make a rough estimate of the length of each paper by counting the number of words in four or five lines, finding the average number of words in a line, and multiplying that average by the number of lines.

5. How do you explain the difference in the length of the papers? Do you think that one student had more unusual experiences than the other and therefore had more to write about, or do you see any relation between the length of each paper and the amount of restriction it reveals? Write a short paragraph developing an answer to this question.

6. Consider the diction in the second paper. Are the big words out of place? Are they attempts to show off? Or are they justified by the author's purpose? Write a short paragraph discussing the appropriateness of the diction.

7. Do you see any similarity between these two papers and the two imaginary autobiographical papers that were discussed on pages 16-17? If so, show the similarity in a short paragraph.

3

PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

IN ONE of his ballads Kipling observed that

> There are nine and ninety ways of constructing tribal lays,
> And every single one of them is right.

There are probably more than nine and ninety ways of developing a statement of purpose into an essay. Any kind of development is right if it does what it was intended to do. You, as the writer, are therefore free to decide for yourself what things you will do and in what order you will do them as you begin the composition of your paper. Your chances of deciding wisely will to a considerable extent depend on your knowledge of the most common patterns of development. This chapter will attempt to provide you with that knowledge by explaining and illustrating three basic patterns – the *chronological,* the *spatial,* and the *analytical.*

CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

In its simplest form chronological development offers little difficulty, since it is merely an arrangement of events in the order in which they occurred. Thus, if your purpose is to report a boxing match, you simply start with Round 1 and report successively the action of Rounds 2, 3, 4, and so on up to the knockout. As long as you take care to report all the action of one round before beginning the next, you need not worry about how your material should be organized. The numbers of the rounds mark the successive units of your report and serve as an outline for your paper.

Occasionally this straightforward chronological development can be varied to achieve a more dramatic effect. A writer may begin with the judges' decision and then go back to show the events leading up to that decision. Or he may begin with the most dramatic moment of the fight – say, a knockdown in Round 5 – and then return to Round 1

to report the whole fight in simple chronological order. The flashback, used so often in the movies, will provide numerous illustrations of these variations in a chronological development. They are often highly effective, and their successful use should suggest to you the advisability of considering one of these variations as an alternative to a straightforward chronological order. But even in such variations, the underlying order of events is a time order, though it is not always a consecutive time order.

Chronological development is not only the simplest pattern, it is also the most popular. It is generally suitable for any paper which may be developed as a narrative. It is therefore the favorite form for autobiographies, biographies, short stories, reports of events, descriptions of processes, and papers giving directions on how to do things. You have already seen this pattern used in "A Fishing Trip" in Chapter 1 and in "Social Pressure," "I Know the Value of Money" and "My Experience with the English Language" in Chapter 2. Here is an illustration of its use in describing a process.

Of all my experiences as a dental assistant, I think I most enjoyed seeing Doctor make a gold inlay. It is an operation calling for the utmost skill and dexterity of even the best dentist, and I consider Doctor one of the best.

After I had slapped a napkin around the would-be sufferer's neck and prepared the necessary instruments, Doctor took over. The first step was to prepare the tooth for the gold inlay; this requires a great deal of drilling and polishing, but isn't very painful. After such an interval I brought Doctor the blue wax, which he slightly heated and slipped into the prepared cavity. When the wax had been put into place carefully and had set, the tedious part of the business started. With an instrument not as large or as big around as a pin, Doctor attempted to remove the wax without injuring its shape. This is called "drawing the wax pattern." Successfully completing this, he dismissed the patient and told him to return several days later. For me, the fun was just beginning.

This tiny piece of blue wax, so perfect and delicate in form, must be transformed in some manner into a gold inlay, fit for a human mouth. The first time I saw this done, I watched open-mouthed as Doctor swiftly placed the wax pattern on a tiny pin-like sprocket attached to a small base. He heated a small bowl of plaster, a fine type used only by dentists, and began to place minute particles of it on the wax pattern with a brush. It was a difficult process, for there must be no air bubbles to mar the inlay's form. When a cylinder had been placed over the sprocket and completely filled with plaster, the job was turned over to me. The

plaster hardened and set. I then removed the tiny pin-like sprocket, and inverting the cylinder so that a tiny air passage reached up to the wax, I placed it on the electric stove. Here the wax melted and disappeared, leaving a perfect mold for the inlay.

Again Doctor took charge. He took several squares of gold, placed them in an asbestos-lined plaster dish and applied intense heat with a blowtorch. Meanwhile I had fastened the plaster mold to the centrifugal machine. Then, I turned to watch the melting gold. First it was a brilliant orange, but as the heat grew more intense, it finally turned into a beautiful molten, silver liquid. Doctor placed it in a little plaster dish with a tube leading to the entrance of the air passage of our mold, set in plaster. He then wound the machine around and around, much as a child winds himself in a swing. At a center point, Doctor suddenly let loose, and with a loud "swoosh" the gold was forced into the air passage and into the mold by the force of the unwinding machine.

The gold still sizzling hot, Doctor grasped the mold with forceps and dropped it into a pan of cold water. It sizzled and boiled for a few minutes, exploding the plaster mold and hardening the gold pattern simultaneously.

It was then my job to search through the pan for the gold inlay. After dunking it in acid, we finally had a complete gold inlay, an exact replica of the wax pattern we had drawn.[1]

If you study the organization of this paper you will see that the making of a gold inlay requires four successive steps:

1. Taking the wax impression.
2. Preparing the plaster mold.
3. Applying the gold.
4. Separating the inlay from the mold.

Since these steps are successive – one must be completed before the next is begun – a chronological development is inevitable. Once the writer has determined to show how a gold inlay is made, her purpose requires her to describe in turn each of the four steps. Chronological development was therefore implicit in her purpose.

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

Spatial development moves from area to area rather than from time to time. Thus a writer may develop a paper on "Who Will Win the

[1] Jo Ann Ator, "Gold Inlay." Reprinted with permission from *The Green Caldron*, a magazine of freshman writing (University of Illinois), April, 1945, pp. 26-27.

Next Olympic Games?" by taking up one country at a time and reporting on the records of its leading athletes. Or he may organize an essay on American dialects under the headings: Eastern, Midwestern, Southern. Or, as the following excerpt from a student essay shows, a writer may occupy a fixed point of view and describe what he sees as he turns his eyes in various directions:

> I seated myself in the barber chair, which was only a rickety, straight-backed affair made of bamboo placed on a wooden box in the center of the room. Directly in front of this throne hung a dingy, blurred mirror, suspended by ropes from the roof. To my right stood a square table, upon which rested the barber's only tools — a pair of clippers, a dirty-looking comb, and a razor. As I cast my eyes downward, I was somewhat surprised to find that the floor was still in its natural state — dirt. It also showed evidence that hair had been cut here before. I noticed now for the first time an opening at the rear, over which a piece of gray material was draped. Evidently this archway led into the living quarters of the barber.[2]

When the order is purely spatial — that is, when, as in a travel folder, the arrangement of the material is determined solely by geographical divisions — it presents no difficulties. All that is required of the writer is that he finishes what he has to say about one area before moving on to the next. He may move from east to west or from west to east. His movement is expected to be consistent — that is, he should not arbitrarily jump back and forth between east and west; but even this simple requirement may be varied if the results justify the variation. Thus, a writer describing a scene from a mountain top may picture different areas in the order in which they attracted his attention. The order of the paragraph about the barber shop was front, right, floor, rear. It would have been possible for the student to describe the floor before turning to the table at his right, but he did not happen to view the different areas of the barber shop in that order.

Spatial development is the favorite order of description, but it is not confined to descriptive writing. It is a useful pattern whenever the writer's purpose requires him to generalize about events happening over a wide area. It would be logical, for example, to write a summary of World War II in terms of the areas in which the fighting took place — War in Asia, War in Europe, War in Africa, with each of these large

[2] James Hiser, "Filipino Barber Shop." Reprinted with permission from *The Green Caldron*, a magazine of freshman writing (University of Illinois), December, 1946, p. 21.

spatial divisions broken down into smaller geographical units. Similarly, an account of the damage done by spring floods throughout the country or a prediction of next year's football champions might best be developed by the kind of survey that spatial development permits. Notice how conveniently this space order lends itself to the development of the complex purpose of Mr. Gunther's *Inside U.S.A.*:

> This book . . . is a study of democracy in action. Its central spine and substance is an effort . . . to show this most fabulous and least known of countries, the United States of America, to itself.
>
> We begin with California – its crackpotism, its climate intellectual and otherwise, its social and political topography – and proceed slowly up the Pacific coast. We inspect the Northwestern states, foaming with social energy, and continue in a broad eccentric circle through the giant West. We swing down the massive cordillera of the Rockies, emerge into the Great Plains, and penetrate to the vastness of the middle western states and their profuse galaxy of trends, issues, problems. We make an upward detour through what used to be the mother and father of us all, New England, and then reach the detonating and labyrinthine complex of New York, with its get-rich-quickism, its social and political contrasts without end, and its culture-on-the-make. We circle around the formidable pivot of Pennsylvania, proceed slowly down the Atlantic seaboard, inspect the unpredictable border states, and break into the pregnable, fast-changing world of the South, where we see everything from the Negro problem to the miracles established by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Finally, we come to a kind of geographical climax in the prodigious entity of Texas, and conclude at last in the new states of the Southwest which are still a veritable frontier.[3]

It is worth noticing that, unlike "Gold Inlay," the pattern of *Inside U.S.A.* was not inherent in the author's purpose. For example, Mr. Gunther might have organized his material around such topics as economic opportunities, social and racial attitudes, political preferences, attitudes toward foreign affairs. Had he done so, however, his book would have become a more formal study than he wished to make it. Similarly, had he chosen a chronological development he would have been forced to describe the United States from a historical point of view. The arrangement which he chose was not the only possible one, but, considering the nature of the material he wished to present, it was probably the best for his purpose.

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[3] John Gunther, *Inside USA.* (Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. ix. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers.

ANALYTICAL DEVELOPMENT

Analytical development is more complex – and usually more difficult – than either of these methods. It is essentially an arrangement according to a logical rather than a chronological or a spatial scheme. The writer moves from idea to idea rather than from time to time or from area to area. Since it is the favorite method of expository, critical, and argumentative essays, and since most college writing is of these kinds, it is the type of development which requires most attention in composition classes.

Two Major Patterns: Division and Elaboration

Papers developed analytically tend to follow one of two major patterns, which may be called *division* and *elaboration*. The first of these may be illustrated in its simplest form by the opening paragraph of Bacon's discussion of the "Idols of the Cave":

> There are four idols which beset men's minds. To these for distinction's sake I have assigned names. I call the first Idols of the Tribe; the second, Idols of the Cave; the third, Idols of the Market-Place, the fourth, Idols of the Theatre.[4]

After this opening you do not need to see the rest of the discussion to know what its organization will be. Since the thesis has four parts you expect it to be developed in four sections, each one discussing a particular idol. If the discussion is a long one, each of the four sections may contain several paragraphs; if it is very short, all four idols may be discussed successively in a single paragraph. But whatever its length, the composition will consist of four structural units. These units are inherent in the thesis, just as the structure of an oak is inherent in the acorn. If a mathematical metaphor may be permitted, we may say that in this kind of analytical organization the thesis is factored and each factor is discussed in turn.

But the factors may not always be explicitly stated in the thesis, and when they are not, the problem of organization is essentially one of finding them. For example, the thesis of "So This Is College" is that college life is not what it is in the movies. In order to develop that thesis the author had to factor the term "college life" into its parts. As you remember, he decided that the factors were the campus, the students, and the faculty. Having determined these factors, he had

[4] For the rest of this selection, see page 130.

only to take each in turn and show that it did not resemble the Hollywood model.

The following selection illustrates the same method at a more difficult level. The marginal analysis will help you to follow the order of development.

The Distinction Between War and Peace [5]

Thesis stated, with three factors indicated

The definition of war and peace may be approached from three different points of view. The first is deceptively clear, the second is significantly vague, and the third becomes clear only in perspective.

Development of first factor — the legal distinction

First, there is the legal aspect of the difference between war and peace. This is deceptively clear. In December 1941 Japan attacked the United States and declared war upon this country and Great Britain, and immediately thereafter Germany and Italy declared war upon the United States. In each case the United States reciprocated. The joint resolution declaring war upon Japan was adopted by Congress on the 8th of December and was signed by the President at 4:10 p.m. Eastern War Time. Under the Constitution of the United States, that was, for the American people, the legal change to war in place of peace. But by the time that signature became effective, every United States battleship based upon Pearl Harbor was already out of action. The legal inception of war did not correspond with the moment of war's physical impact, much less with its substantive reality. Yet that definite day, December 8, 1941, will be set down in all the books of history as the date for America's entry into the war. It corresponds with the legal status, but with no other; this is why, though it is clear, it is nonetheless deceptive. . . .

Transitional paragraph between first and second factors

The legal distinction between war and peace is not without significance; property rights and many interests are modified by it. But relative to the total pattern of life as affected by war, this excessively precise legal distinction is vastly less important than the political aspect.

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[5] From *Strategy of Peace*, by Henry M. Wriston. Reprinted by permission of the World Peace Foundation.

Development of second factor – the political distinction

By contrast, the political distinction between war and peace is significantly vague. People talk about the "white" war which preceded the "red" war. They refer to the economic war which preceded the battles. They speak of the "long armistice" between the Treaty of Versailles and the outbreak of this war, as though there never was an interval of genuine peace. Some regard the recent war as beginning in 1931 at the time of the Manchurian incident and the development of the Stimson Doctrine. Others say war began in 1934 when Japan denounced the Washington treaties. Still others think it started in 1935 when Italy attacked Ethiopia and defeated the concept of sanctions. Others would connect it with the German occupation of the Rhineland in 1936. Every person has his favorite time, some suggesting the civil war in Spain, others the *Anschluss*, yet others the Sudeten crisis. Each of those claims has a plausible basis. It is obvious that every act of aggression was part of a maturing crisis, the declaration of war is only a culminating step which completes the development.

Defining the state of war politically, therefore, is like inquiring when some functional disorder took on serious pathological qualities. It may start as some mild or benign affliction, but slowly or swiftly by unperceived degrees develop to a point where it menaces life itself. At what moment in that tragic sequence did the disease begin?

Peace comes politically in the same way as war itself. The peace treaty, whatever its legal effects, does not ensure political peace. Genuine peace, if it is ever achieved, will come through many channels over many long years. It will be a wise man indeed who can set a precise date upon which others, equally well informed, will agree.

Development of third factor – the military distinction

The third distinction between war and peace is military; it is clear only in long perspective. This last was called a global war, and many insist it was one war. But common sense makes it obvious that so long as the Soviet Union was not at war with Japan or the United States with Finland, the statement that there was a single war was imprecise.

The same difficulty appears when the chronology of the war is examined. The use of force

began with the Manchurian incident in 1931. The later phase of the war in China began in 1937. Fighting took place in Africa in 1935 with the conquest of Ethiopia, and on the continent of Europe with the occupation of Albania in the spring of 1939. In the period since the declaration of war by Great Britain against Germany on September 3, 1939, some thirty-five other nations have declared war and others have severed diplomatic relations with the Axis. Denmark and Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands, Italy, the Balkan States, the Soviet Union, Finland, Japan and the United States all became involved in the fighting at different times. . . .

Such military facts are characteristic of all war. The Hundred Years' War between France and Britain was by no means a period of uninterrupted fighting; the name could be applied to the era only in retrospect. Similarly, the Napoleonic wars were interrupted by truces, by reversal of alliances, and by treaties of peace which proved temporary. Yet in the long perspective the whole period had a certain unity, the successive phases of the lengthy series of struggles are now regarded as constituting one war. Those are illustrations of what is meant by the assertion that the military aspects of war and peace are comprehensible only in perspective.

Final restatement of thesis in light of discussion of all three factors

War is a legal, political, and military fact, its appearance is different when observed from those various points of view. Since the distinction between peace and war is legally clear, politically vague, and militarily plain only in perspective, the effort to roll all three types of description into one has resulted in confusion of thought.

In the light of this analysis we can describe the pattern of development by division as consisting of three steps:

1. Statement of the thesis to be developed.
2. Full discussion of each factor in turn.
3. Restatement of thesis as concluding summary.

These successive steps are not always so clearly marked as they were in the essay just given. Sometimes the thesis is not explicitly stated, but is merely implied. Sometimes the transition from one factor to the next is not clearly marked. Sometimes the thesis is not restated as a

conclusion. But the three steps given above may be accepted as a simplified form of analytical development by division.

The second major pattern – development by elaboration – can best be explained by an analysis of the following article.

It Is Never Too Cold to Snow

Too cold to snow?

As winter grips many parts of the world in sub-freezing temperatures, this age-old "true or false" poser bobs up to test the lore of weather-wise amateurs. It never gets too cold to snow, but it frequently gets too cold for snow to fall in "flakes."

Flakes fall when the air through which they pass is 32° Fahrenheit or slightly lower. At this temperature the air usually holds enough moisture to allow the flakes to become fat and mat together, and the fall is likely to be heavy.

As the temperature sinks lower, the air becomes drier, the snowfall lighter and more powdery. At temperatures below zero a heavy fall of snow is rare. The snow that does fall takes the form of ice spicules, ice needles, or fills the air with fine glittering diamondlike dust. The air at these subzero temperatures is too dry to produce flakes.

Snow has fallen in Little America with the thermometer at 65 below zero. Alaska temperatures well under 50 below have produced snow. In Eastern Siberia, temperatures which average under 40 below have been accompanied by snow. Verkhoyansk – the coldest spot in the world – with a recorded winter temperature of 94 below zero, is within this Siberian section where snowfall is apt to be light, but where snow can and does fall.[6]

The development of this selection may be summarized as follows:

Title: Explicitly states the thesis of the article.

¶1. Restates the thesis as a question.

¶2. The first sentence asserts the pertinence of the question and forms an attention-getting device. The second sentence restates the thesis and sets up the distinction on which the answer to the opening question depends.

¶'s 3-4. In these two paragraphs the author considers the sub-question, "Does it ever get too cold for snow flakes?" To answer this question he must show (*a*) how flakes are formed, and (*b*) why flakes do not form at low temperatures. He does (*a*) in paragraph 3 and (*b*) in paragraph 4.

¶5. So far the author has been concerned with a theoretical explanation. Now he gives a series of illustrations to show the theory in practice.

[6] By courtesy of *The World Almanac.*

As a result of our analysis we can describe the structure of the paper as follows:

1. Thesis stated (in title and opening question).
2. Thesis redefined to show its implications (¶2).
3. Thesis explained (¶'s 3-4).
4. Thesis illustrated (¶5).

Had this selection ended with such a sentence as, "No, it is never too cold to snow," it would have illustrated the complete pattern of development by elaboration, from statement through explanation, restatement and illustration to final restatement. The pattern may vary slightly in particular papers; one or more of the steps may be omitted; but, as the following student essay shows, the basic pattern always remains recognizable.

Title hints at thesis.

MORE THAN A SPORT

Thesis stated: Football teaches a man to cooperate with others and prepares him for citizenship.

Football is more than a sport. It is an invaluable teacher. In teaching a young man to cooperate with his fellows on the practice field and in scheduled games, it also shows him the necessity of team-work in society. It prepares him to be a better citizen and person.

Thesis explained in part by showing interdependency of individual and team.

The novice player first learns that football is not a one-man game, that he is but one member of an eleven-man team, and that in every play, either defensive or offensive, he has a particular job to do. If he fails to do it, the team suffers. If his task is to block the opposing right end, that job must be done. And he must do it alone, for every other man on the team has his own assignment in the play. The ends, tackles, guards, backfield men, and center must do their individual tasks if the play is to succeed.

Thesis illustrated.

While Red Grange was making football history at the University of Illinois in the 1920's, he monopolized sports stories about the Illini. He was "headline stuff," as the newspapermen put it, and the general public came to believe that he was a miracle man on the playing field. Certainly his long runs through tough opposition

suggested superman football ability. But football players everywhere knew better. They knew that Grange's starring role was made possible by the cooperation of ten teammates on the field. A modest fellow, Red admitted it, readily bestowing praise on his fellow Illini, particularly on two expert blocking backs, Wally McIlwaine and Earl Britton, who bowled over opposing backfield men once he had passed the line of scrimmage. The famed Galloping Ghost of the Gridiron said, "Only crack team-work enabled me to make my touchdown runs." He knew the value of cooperation. When Red's teammates fell down on the job, he failed too and was stopped for no gain or thrown for a loss.

Thesis restated and enlarged to include carry-over of cooperation from football to citizenship, ending with final restatement of thesis in concluding sentence.

Wherever football is played in the United States, on sand-lot, high school field, college gridiron or in professional stadium, the players learn the invaluable rough-and-tumble lesson that only by the cooperation of each man can the team win. It is a lesson they do not forget on the field. Off the field, they duly remember it. In society, the former player does not look upon himself as a lone wolf who has the right to create his individual moral code and observe his individual social laws. He understands his place in the scheme of things, he knows he is a member of society and must conduct himself as such. He realizes that only by cooperating, not shying off as a lone wolf, can he do his share in making society what it should be — the protector and benefactor of all. The man who has played football knows that team-work is essential in modern living and that every citizen must do his part if the nation is to prosper. So he has little difficulty in adjusting himself to his role in family life and in the business world, and to his duties as a citizen in city, state and nation. In short, his football training helps make him a better citizen and person.

Both these compositions clearly show the basic pattern — statement, explanation, illustration, and restatement — in relatively simple form. Not all examples are as easy as these. The task of elaborating a com-

plex or difficult thesis may require a writer to use several illustrations and explanations in an attempt to make clear what the thesis implies. The following selection is a much more difficult example of development by elaboration. You may need the assistance of the paragraph analysis that follows it in order to see the different steps in the elaboration.

Definition is ordinarily supposed to produce clarity in thinking. It is not generally recognized that the more we define our terms the less descriptive they become and the more difficulty we have in using them. The reason for this paradox is that we never attempt to define words which obtain a proper emotional response from our listeners. Logical definition enters when we are using words which we are sure "ought" to mean something, but none of us can put our finger on just what that meaning is. In such situations priestly-minded men believe that definition will make the meaning clearer. Most of this kind of definition occurs in the use of the polar words [words which have meaning only in relation to their opposites – good, bad; east, west, etc.] which we have just been describing.

We may illustrate with a homely example. There is no conflict in a farmer's mind about the meaning of the words "horse" and "duck." The one is not used as a polar term to the other. If you tell a farmer to bring you a horse, he never comes out of the barn leading a duck.

Suppose that the farmer attempted to define the difference. If he took the task at all seriously, he would find millions of differences. His definition would become so involved that he could no longer talk about the animals intelligibly. He would probably end up by thinking that horses were really ducks and vice versa, because this is an ordinary effect of the close concentration on particular pairs of terms; they tend to merge, and the distinctions between the two grow less and less sharp.

Of course, you say, the farmer would never attempt such a thing. This is true in the ordinary situation. But suppose that a conflict arose between an abstraction and a need which required the use of the words in pairs. We can easily imagine such a hypothetical situation.

Suppose, for example, we had a statute that taxed horses at ten dollars a head and ducks at ten cents. This does not create any conflict, because it seems to be a fair enough classification according to the prevailing folklore of taxation. However, suppose, in addition, that due to the automobile, or some other cause, horses became completely worthless and ducks became very valuable. Suppose that the original statute had been passed by ancestors of such great respectability that it would be tearing down the Constitution to repeal it and use new words. Obviously,

if we want to collect revenue in such a situation, we must begin to define the real essence of the difference betwen a horse and a duck. We set our legal scholars to work. They discover that there are all sorts of immaterial differences apparent to the superficial eye. The mind of the scholar, however, is able to penetrate to the real essence of the distinction, which is value. The horse is the more valuable animal. It is clear that the fathers thought that this was the difference, because Thomas Jefferson once remarked to his wife that his horses were worth much more than his ducks. Differences between feathers and hair were never mentioned by any of the founders. Therefore, it is apparent that the web-footed animals are really horses, and the creatures with hoofs are really ducks. (Such observations are called "research.")

This works all right so far as the taxing situation is concerned. Revenue begins to flow in again. However, scholarly definitions are supposed to go through the surface and to the core of things. Ordinary men feel a conflict, because deep down in their hearts they feel that there is something wrong somewhere. This conflict makes them celebrate the truth of the definition by ceremony. If the conflict is a minor one, a procession once a year in which ducks are led around with halters and equipped with little saddles will be sufficient. A supreme court is also helpful in such situations. However, if the conflict is sufficiently keen, we shall find farmers all over the country forced to feed ducks on baled hay. Ducks will not die of this, however. They will actually be kept alive by low-class politicians sneaking into the barn at night and giving them the proper food. (Thus a great organization of bootleggers gave us our liquor only a few years ago.) If this situation is finally accepted as inevitable, scholars will be called in to prove that the particular food which is being fed to the ducks is actually baled hay, even though to a superficial observer it looks like something else. This definition will mix men up along some other lines and the literature will continue to pile up so long as the conflict exists. When the conflict disappears, the need of definition will go with it.

The illustration sounds absurd, but the writer has tried many cases involving exactly that type of situation. A plaster company was scraping gypsum from the surface of the ground. If it was a mine, it paid one tax, if a manufacturing company, it paid another. Expert witnesses were called who almost came to blows, such was their disgust at the stupidity of those who could not see that the process was essentially mining, or manufacturing. A great record was built up to be reviewed by the State Supreme Court on this important question of "fact." [7]

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[7] Thurman Arnold, *The Folklore of Capitalism* (Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 180-182. Reprinted by permission of Yale University Press.

Here is a paragraph analysis of the selection:

¶1. States the thesis of the article — the contention that definition often produces more confusion than clarity — in the first two sentences. The remaining sentences elaborate that contention in general terms by summarizing the reasons for the confusion.

¶2. Poses what seems to be a simple and ludicrous example in order to begin developing the thesis.

¶3. Restates thesis by asserting that definition of such contrasted words as "horse" and "duck" will result in confusion. This assertion is developed slightly, but still only in general terms.

¶4. Transitional paragraph which rejects objection that no one would ever try to define these terms by suggesting that changing conditions might require a definition, thus leading in to the main treatment of the hypothetical illustration.

¶5. Develops suggestion of fourth paragraph by showing how need for a definition might arise and how attempts at definition would proceed.

¶6. Shows the conflict that would arise as a result of defining "horses" and "ducks" to meet the new need, thus illustrating the confusion promised in the third paragraph.

¶7. Switches to an actual example to show that the hypothetical illustration resembles it and is therefore not as ludicrous as it first seemed.

The pattern of statement, explanation, illustration, and restatement is not so evident in this selection as it was in the other two, but if you study the paragraph analysis carefully you will see that all the elements of the pattern are there, though they are sometimes woven together within a single paragraph. If we ignore the illustration of the last paragraph — which was added merely to show that the hypothetical illustration was not so far-fetched as it might seem — the development of the selection may be represented as follows:

Statement of thesis	(¶1)
Explanation	(¶1)
Illustration	(¶'s 2 to 6)
Restatement	(¶'s 3 and 6).

Combined Division and Elaboration

So far it has been convenient for us to consider the two major patterns of development — division and elaboration — as completely distinct. In actual practice, however, most papers which develop a thesis by division also make use of elaboration. The division merely determines the main units of the paper. As each of these units is taken up in turn it is likely to be developed by elaboration. For example, if you turn back to "The Distinction Between War and Peace" on pages 42-

44, you will see that after the thesis is broken into its three factors – the legal, political, and military distinctions – each of these factors is developed by elaboration. That is a very common pattern, as we shall see when we study the analytical outline in Chapter 5. One way of describing it is to say that each factor of the thesis becomes a subthesis which is then developed by statement, explanation, illustration, and restatement. This combination of division and elaboration is illustrated by the following essay, in which the italicized thesis in the opening sentence is broken into five factors – politics, law, property, sex, and education – each of which is then developed by elaboration.

Thesis stated.

Key word, "primitive," defined, and thesis restated in light of the definition.

Transitional sentence leading to division of thesis
1st factor Subthesis 1 explained.

Subthesis restated.

In contrasting our material culture with the mental life of Americans today, *it is useful at the outset to emphasize the fact that the intellectual outlook of the masses remains much the same as it was in primitive times.* Anthropologists have described the primitive mind as characterized chiefly by an all-pervading super-naturalism, lack of precise and logical thinking, credulity, and an ignorance of scientific methods and results. Judged by these standards, it is obvious that the great majority of moderns are still overwhelmingly primitive in their ways of thinking. . . .[8]

We may now consider more specifically the archaic nature of the prevailing opinions and institutions in contemporary society. *Our political opinions and institutions represent a mosaic compounded of:* (1) The veneration of the state derived from the oriental emperor worship, (2) Roman legalism and the conception of secular omnipotence, (3) the classical obsession with the merits of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, (4) archaic views of representative government that developed between the sixteenth century and the eighteenth; (5) seventeenth and eighteenth century doctrines of natural rights, and (6) the eighteenth-century view of the perfectability of man, linked up with the nineteenth-century enthusiasm for democracy. While there is much vital political doctrine expounded by modern thinkers, this has found but slight adoption in practice, and there has been singularly little effort to adapt our political institutions to the needs of an urban, industrial age. . . .

[8] Condensed from *The History of Western Civilization*, Volume 2, by Harry Elmer Barnes, copyright, 1935, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

2d factor. Subthesis 2 stated and explained,

Law, likewise, is founded upon ancient theories and practices. It is still based primarily upon oriental usages and conceptions, the formulations of the Roman jurists, the precedents of the English common law, and the eighteenth-century natural law. Very little progress indeed has been made in the way of introducing the historical and sociological point of view in the reconstruction of juristic theory and practice in America. We attempt to regulate a twentieth-century civilization by applying to it legal concepts and methods that have changed but little since the year 1700. The rules of legal evidence are hopelessly out of date and confused. . . . . Even in the field of insanity, where the conventional legal conception of the free moral agent is in part suspended, the test for insanity is strictly legal and not medical. In a notorious case in Ohio – that of Mr. Remus – we witnessed the amusing spectacle of a group of learned and logical physicians branding the defendant as legally sane but medically and socially quite irresponsible.

and illustrated.

3d factor. Subthesis 3 stated and explained,

Our attitudes and usages with respect to property are equally full of primitive vestiges. The notion of the unique sanctity of property is in part an outgrowth of primitive mysticism and superstition. Our contemporary view of property rights is a compound of ancient legalism and the prevailing sixteenth and seventeenth century Protestant views of God's approval of thrift and profit. To these have been added the seventeenth and eighteenth century notion that the chief purpose of the state and legal institutions is to protect private property. . . . There is little or nothing in present-day American conceptions of property rights that cannot be discovered explicitly or implicitly in the writings of John Locke.

and restated.

4th factor. Subthesis 4 stated and explained,

We have been especially reluctant to bring the control of sex and the family into harmony with contemporary scientific and esthetic considerations. Our sex mores and family institutions embody: (1) a primitive reaction to the mystery of sex and of women in particular; (2) Hebraic uxoriousness and conceptions of patriarchal male domination; (3) patristic and medieval views regarding the baseness of sex and sex temptation, especially as offered by women; (4) the medieval esteem for virginity in women; (5) the sacra-

mental view of marriage, which leads us to regard marriage as a theological rather than a social issue, (6) the property views of the early bourgeois; and (7) the Kantian rationalization of personal inadequacy and inexperience. There is hardly a single item in the sex mores of a conventionally respectable American today that squares with either science or esthetics.

and restated.

5th factor. Subthesis 5 stated and explained,

Our educational system has changed but little as compared with the vast alteration in our way of living. Certain basic strains in our educational doctrine are derived from the oriental and medieval notion that the chief purpose of education is to make clear to man the will of the gods or of God. From the Greeks and Romans came the high esteem for training in rhetoric and argumentation as the prime essential of a successful career in politics. Humanism contributed the view that the classical languages embody the flower of secular learning and represent the most exquisite form of literary expression. . . . Education in the natural and social sciences and in technology has not been regarded as relatively important or respectable, and occupies nothing like so great a part in our educational system as the older currents in our curriculum. As Professor Kallen has observed, education today is more of a distraction from life than a preparation for it. Few of the real problems involved in living intelligently and successfully in an urban and industrial society are touched upon vitally in our educational system, from the kindergarten to the graduate school. . . .

and restated.

The discussion above enables us to comment intelligently upon the frequent assertion that we are living in a scientific age. The fact is, of course, that we are not doing anything of the sort.

Restatement of thesis with reference to all 5 factors.

We are living in an era in which our opinions and institutions are overwhelmingly the product of contributions from the prescientific era. . . . Not infrequently persons who are most exacting in their demands for the most recent provisions in plumbing, the best medical attention, the most efficient and up-to-date automobiles, and the rest, are found at the same time defending classical or medieval civilization as the ideal period of human development. . . . In short, the real problem

Illustration

Final restatement of whole thesis.

facing modern civilization is to make this actually a scientific age, that is, one in which we would not only insist upon contemporaneous bathtubs but also upon contemporaneous intellectual attitudes and assumptions.

We can briefly summarize the development of the essay as follows:

1. Thesis stated and explained.
2. First factor, political thinking, stated in detail and then restated in general terms.
3. Second factor, legal thinking, stated, explained, and illustrated.
4. Third factor, attitude toward property, stated, explained, and restated.
5. Fourth factor, sex mores, stated, explained, and restated.
6. Fifth factor, education, stated, explained, and restated.
7. Total thesis restated, illustrated, and restated again.

METHODS OF ELABORATION

It should by now be clear that the key to successful analytical development is elaboration. It should also be clear from the essay you have just read that one common way of elaborating a thesis is to explain what it means. Of the various other methods, there are three which, because of their popularity, deserve special attention. These are the method of examples, the method of comparison, and the method of contrast.

Elaboration by Examples

Perhaps the commonest way of making a thesis clear is to give examples that support it. Thus if we wish to support the contention that women are poor drivers or that sharks are dangerous to swimmers, we may give examples of poor driving on the part of women or show instances in which swimmers were killed or maimed by sharks. And we must be sure that our examples are sufficiently typical to prove our point.[9] Adequate development will usually require several such examples, the number varying with the difficulty of the thesis and the amount of space available. The following selection develops the thesis of the opening sentence by a half dozen suggested instances and one which is described in more detail throughout the last third of the paragraph.

[9] For a discussion of the use of examples as evidence to support a contention, see pages 503-518.

The historian is wise if . . . he concedes the eternal presence of the irrational and the inexplicable.

It is a recognition which encourages intellectual humility. I venture to think, too, that our sense of the mystery and variousness of life is enlarged, when we realize that the very great may spring from the very small. How does Edmund Burke put it? – "A common soldier, a child, a girl at the door of an inn, have changed the face of fortune, and almost of Nature." History is full of these momentous trifles – the accident which kills or preserves life in some figure of destiny; the weather on some critical battlefield, like the fog at Lutzen or the snow at Towton; the change of wind which brings two fleets to a decisive action; the severe winter of 1788 which produces the famine of 1789, and thereby perhaps the French Revolution; the birth or death of a child; a sudden idea which results in some potent invention. Let me give you an instance from the most recent history. The success of Turkish Nationalism under Kemal was due to the complete rout of the Greek armies in 1922 in Asia Minor. That ill-omened Greek campaign was largely due to the restoration in 1920 of King Constantine, which led to the Western Allies dissociating themselves from Greek policy and leaving Greece to her own devices. King Constantine was recalled as a consequence of a general election when M. Venizelos was defeated, and that election was held because young King Alexander, the protege of the Allies, died early in the autumn of 1920. The cause of his death was blood-poisoning due to the bite of a pet monkey in the palace gardens. I cannot better Mr. Churchill's comment: "A quarter of a million persons died of that monkey's bite." [10]

Notice the development of this selection. First, the author states his rather abstract thesis; then he discusses it in general terms through the first third of the main paragraph; then, in the second third of the paragraph, he suggests a number of examples without developing them in detail; finally, he presents his most dramatic example in sufficient detail to show the step-by-step connection between a monkey bite and the rout of an army.

Again, note how the following selection develops the thesis that words which are slang today were not necessarily slang in the usage of the past.

It may be worth noticing that occasionally we have something like a reversal of the process by which slang becomes reputable speech. A word or phrase may fall so completely in dignity that it takes on the associations of the colloquial, and sometimes those of out-and-out slang.

[10] John Buchan, *The Causal and the Casual in History*. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press, publishers.

Often it is impossible to say whether what appears to us a bit of racy slang (sometimes because it duplicates a current locution) had anything like the same association a century or several centuries ago. We are surely right, in general, in feeling that in Chaucer, for example, the conversation of Pandarus is as utterly natural as it is partly by reason of the colloquialisms and the slang it contains. But has Chaucer's use of *the bones* (for "dice") in the *Pardoner's Tale,* directly anticipating a bit of contemporary slang, exactly the same flavor as the word now has? "Slang phrases from Shakespeare" are sometimes compiled: for example, these: "beat it," "done me wrong," "she falls for it," "not in it," "not so hot," "if he falls in, good night," and "let me tell the world." What seems to us slang, however, is by no means necessarily slang to Shakespeare, who sometimes means literally what we take metaphorically, and sometimes, through sheer coincidence, hits upon what has become, in another context, twentieth-century slang. Chaucer and Shakespeare certainly use slang enough, as must any poet who realistically echoes the conversational speech of his day; but their slang is almost never ours.[11]

For a thesis such as this one there is probably no method so suitable as that of development by examples. Any attempt to explain the thesis without giving examples would probably fail, unless addressed to readers who could be counted on to supply their own examples. It is the last half of the paragraph, then – the part which contains the examples – which really drives home to the reader the point which the writer wishes to make.

Elaboration by Comparison (Analogy)

A writer often finds it helpful to explain his topic by comparing it with another subject with which the reader is presumably familiar. For example, the author of the following paragraph helps us to understand the structure of music by comparing it with that of language.

Music has often been compared with language itself, and the comparison is quite legitimate. While it combines easily with actual language, it also speaks a language of its own, which it has become a platitude to call universal. To understand the significance of the organizing factors of rhythm, melody, harmony, tone color and form, the analogy of a familiar language is helpful. Music has its own alphabet, of only seven letters, as compared with the twenty-six of the English alphabet. Each of these letters represents a note, and just as certain letters are complete

[11] Reprinted by permission of Prentice-Hall, Inc., from *The Development of Modern English,* by Stuart Robertson. Copyright, 1934, 1938, by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

words in themselves, so certain notes may stand alone, with the force of a whole word. Generally, however, a note of music implies a certain harmony, and in most modern music the notes take the form of actual chords. So it may be said that a chord in music is analogous to a word in language. Several words form a phrase, and several phrases a complete sentence, and the same thing is true in music. Measured music corresponds to poetry, while the old unmeasured plain-song might be compared with prose. The relationship of modern music to free verse at once becomes apparent, and impressionism, expressionism, cubism and futurism can all be found in music as well as the other arts.[12]

The most common use of comparison in writing is the *analogy.* An analogy is a literary device which allows a writer to discuss complex ideas by comparing them with common experiences. As the parables of Jesus illustrate, this kind of comparison is extremely helpful in explaining abstract ideas. Consequently, development by analogy is a favorite pattern with philosophers and scientists when they are trying to explain philosophical concepts to ordinary readers. Notice how Sir James Jeans uses an explanatory analogy to develop the idea presented in his first paragraph – that any prediction we can make about the conduct of atoms is a statistical prediction which may have no bearing on the conduct of single atoms.

These and other considerations to which we shall return below . . . have led many physicists to suppose that there is no determination in events in which atoms and electrons are involved singly, and that the apparent determinism in large-scale events is only of a statistical nature. When we are dealing with atoms and electrons in crowds, the mathematical law of averages imposes the determinism which physical laws have failed to provide.

We can illustrate the concept by analogous situation in the large-scale world. If we spin a half-penny, nothing within our knowledge may be able to decide whether it will come down heads or tails, yet if we throw up a million tons of half-pence, we know there will be 500,000 tons of heads and 500,000 tons of tails. The experiment may be repeated indefinitely, and will always give the same result. We may be tempted to instance it as evidence of the uniformity of nature, and to infer the action of an underlying law of causation: in actual fact it is an instance only of the operation of the purely mathematical laws of chance.

Yet the number of half-pence in a million tons is nothing in comparison with the number of atoms in even the smallest piece of matter with which

[12] From Sigmund Spaeth's *The Art of Enjoying Music*, copyright, 1933, by Sigmund Spaeth. Reprinted by permission of Whittlesey House, a division of the McGraw-Hill Book Company.

the earlier physicists could experiment. It is easy to see how the illusion of determinacy — if it is an illusion — crept into science.[13]

What is the usefulness of this analogy? We know that the law of averages predicts a theoretical probability that a tossed coin will turn up heads as often as tails. We also know that this theoretical probability is quite untrustworthy in determining the toss of a particular coin. By discussing atoms and electrons in terms of coins, the author is able to use our experience to help him convey his meaning. He is thus able to develop a thesis which is probably too abstract to be understood readily by general readers without the use of analogy.

In addition to its use in making abstract ideas clear, analogy may be effective in argumentative and descriptive writing. In Part Four of this book we shall study the use of analogy in argument. The selection that follows will illustrate its effectiveness in description. Tolstoy is trying to communicate to his readers the emptiness of Moscow when Napoleon finally reached the city. He could have described the deserted city in many ways. He chose to liken it to a queenless beehive and to develop the description by analogy.

Meanwhile Moscow was empty. There were still people in it, perhaps a fiftieth part of its former inhabitants had remained, but it was empty. It was empty in the sense that a dying queenless hive is empty.

In a queenless hive no life is left though to a superficial glance it seems as much alive as other hives.

The bees circle round a queenless hive in the hot beams of the midday sun as gaily as around the living hives; from a distance it smells of honey like the others, and bees fly in and out in the same way. But one has only to observe that hive to realize that there is no longer any life in it. The bees do not fly in the same way, the smell and the sound that meet the beekeeper are not the same. To the beekeeper's tap on the wall of the sick hive, instead of the former instant unanimous humming of tens of thousands of bees with their abdomens threateningly compressed, and producing by the rapid vibration of their wings an aerial living sound, the only reply is a disconnected buzzing from different parts of the deserted hive. From the alighting board, instead of the former spirituous fragrant smell of honey and venom, and the warm whiffs of crowded life, comes an odor of emptiness and decay mingling with the smell of honey. There are no longer sentinels sounding the alarm with their abdomens raised, and ready to die in defense of the hive. There is no longer the measured quiet sound of throbbing activity, like the sound of

[13] From Sir James Jeans' *The Mysterious Universe*. Reprinted by permission of the Cambridge University Press.

boiling water, but diverse discordant sounds of disorder. In and out of the hive long black robber bees smeared with honey fly timidly and shiftily. They do not sting, but crawl away from danger. Formerly only bees laden with honey flew into the hive, and they flew out empty; now they fly out laden. The beekeeper opens the lower part of the hive and peers in. Instead of black, glossy bees – tamed by toil, clinging to one another's legs and drawing out the wax, with a ceaseless hum of labor – that used to hang in long clusters down to the floor of the hive, drowsy shriveled bees crawl about separately in various directions on the floor and walls of the hive. Instead of a neatly glued floor, swept by the bees with the fanning of their wings, there is a floor littered with bits of wax, excrement, dying bees scarcely moving their legs, and dead ones that have not been cleared away. . . .

So in the same way Moscow was empty when Napoleon, weary, uneasy, and morose, paced up and down in front of the Kammer-Kollezski rampart, awaiting what to his mind was a necessary, if but formal, observance of the proprieties – a deputation.[14]

Tolstoy's purpose is to show the emptiness of Moscow. He states that purpose in the short opening paragraph and restates it in the short concluding paragraph. The rest of his description is sustained analogy. He chooses a queenless hive because it is not completely deserted; neither was Moscow. But in both the city and the hive the signs of life and habitation are superficial and abnormal. In both, the normal functions have been neglected; both are dirty and uncared-for; both lack leadership; in both, the inhabitants are spiritless, undisciplined, and irresponsible, tearing down what they should be building up, and stealing and permitting others to steal the fruits of the whole community's industry. And in both the city and the hive there are similar signs of decay and death.

Elaboration by Contrast

In any writing which is trying to describe, explain, or analyze, the use of contrast often helps the development of the purpose. For example, if you were writing a paper to show how to study, you might bring out the significance of your advice by beginning with a paragraph or two on how not to study. This was the device we used in discussing restriction in Chapter 2, when we began by contrasting an uncritical and a critical student each writing an autobiographical essay.

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[14] Reprinted from *War and Peace*, by Leo Tolstoy. Copyright, 1942, by Simon and Schuster, Inc.

The simplest kind of contrast is that which develops one of the contrasted elements completely before proceeding to the other. The pattern of such a contrast is illustrated in the following brief example:

> No two branches of mathematics present a greater contrast than arithmetic and the *Theory of Numbers*. . . .
>
> Arithmetic is the foundation of all mathematics, pure or applied. It is the most useful of all sciences, and there is, probably, no other branch of human knowledge which is more widely spread among the masses.
>
> On the other hand, the theory of numbers is the branch of mathematics which has found the least number of applications. Not only has it so far remained without influence on technical progress, but even in the domain of pure mathematics it has always occupied an isolated position, only loosely connected with the general body of the science.[15]

The following is a fuller development by simple contrast. The writer's purpose is to show the importance of planning in a course by contrasting an instructor who had planned exactly what he wanted to do with one whose planning was inadequate.

> I once took a course in "World History" which ran through an entire year. The instructor in the first semester was supposed to begin with the dawn of time, proceed from one mountain peak to another, and finish with the fall of Rome in 476 A.D. He set off at top speed the first day and did not remove his seven-league boots during the semester, with the result that we arrived – somewhat breathless – on the last day of class just in time to view the smoking ruins. From the first it was clear (1) that he had decided exactly how many days could safely be spent on each period, and (2) that he had mastered the materials himself. Whenever the students showed a tendency to get off the main track he herded them back onto it. He drove the class, quietly but relentlessly, if an unexpected event deprived us of an hour's time, he merely gave the screw another twist. I know he had a schedule – not only from his occasional comments about where the class should be at a given point in the semester but because he one day dropped it on the floor! Although he did push us a good deal, there was no confusion and no cramming of facts into an inadequate amount of time. He had such good mastery of the data that he could concentrate upon what was vital for our understanding. By having a schedule and sticking to it he gave his students precisely the overview of "World History" that was advertised in the catalog.

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[15] From Tobias Danzig, *Number: The Language of Science*. Copyright, 1930, 1933, and 1939, by The Macmillan Company. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

The second semester was a distinct contrast. We dawdled along, got completely lost in one cul-de-sac after another, loitered to admire Charlemagne, spent a whole week with the popes at Avignon, worked out an interesting but time-consuming project on social organization under feudal conditions, and suddenly found ourselves – a week before the final examinations – centuries away from the announced objective. The teacher tried to crowd all the remaining events of history up to the present into a week, but she was so unprepared herself that she did not know what to omit and what to include. The result was a hodgepodge, delivered under conditions of considerable mental and emotional stress. This second teacher had obviously no large plan whatever, although – with the exception of the last few days – her daily preparation was excellent. The classwork was not only good but stimulating; the difficulty was that she had no scheme for the semester as a unit.[16]

The pattern of such a contrast is very simple, since all that is required is to finish discussing one side of the contrast before beginning the other side. The alternative is to deal with both sides at once – to contrast A and B by showing first one of their differences, then another and another until the total contrast is completed. Observe how this is done in the following selection:

Death is at all times solemn, but never so much so as at sea. A man dies on shore, his body remains with his friends, and "the mourners go about the streets," but when a man falls overboard at sea and is lost, there is a suddenness in the event, and a difficulty in realizing it, which give to it an air of awful mystery. A man dies on shore – you follow his body to the grave, and a stone marks the spot. You are often prepared for the event. There is always something which helps you to realize it when it happens, and to recall it when it has passed. A man is shot down by your side in battle, and the mangled body remains an *object,* and a *real evidence,* but at sea, the man is near you – at your side – you hear his voice, and in an instant he is gone, and nothing but a *vacancy* shows his loss. Then, too, at sea – to use a homely but expressive phrase – you *miss* a man so much. A dozen men are shut up together in a little bark, upon the wide, wide sea, and for months and months see no forms and hear no voices but their own and one is suddenly taken from among them, and they miss him at every turn. It is like losing a limb. There are no new faces or new scenes to fill up the gap. There is always an empty berth in the forecastle, and one man wanting when the small night watch is mustered. There is one less to take the wheel and one less to lay out with you upon the yard. You miss his form, and the sound of his voice,

[16] Louella Cole, *The Background For College Teaching* (Farrar & Rinehart, 1940), pp. 354-355. Reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc.

for habit had made them almost necessary to you, and each of your senses feels the loss.[17]

Notice how this pattern binds the passage together. The details are presented in interlocking contrast: a detail of death on land followed immediately by a similar detail of death at sea, then a second detail of death on land followed by a contrasting one. This pattern has two advantages over the simpler one: first, it establishes each point of contrast as it is presented and does not require the reader to hold the description of A in mind until he finishes B; second, it tends to produce more integrated writing, since all the details are woven together and there is little opportunity of introducing details which are not actually used for contrast and are therefore irrelevant. Especially for extended or highly detailed contrasts, where the burden on the reader is considerable, this second method adds force and clarity.

SUMMARY

The following brief summary will allow a simple review of the basic content of this chapter:

1. The three basic patterns of development are chronological, spatial, and analytical.

2. Chronological development is an arrangement of the material in a time order. Usually events are related in the order in which they occurred; sometimes, however, this order is distorted by beginning at the end or in the middle of the time sequence, as is done in movie flashbacks. Chronological development is the favorite order for narrative, but it is popular also for autobiographical and biographical essays, for reports of events, and for papers describing processes.

3. Spatial development is an arrangement of material according to areas. The areas usually follow each other in some logical sequence and each area is finished before the next is begun. But this requirement may be waived whenever a deliberate variation permits a more effective development. Spatial development is the favorite order for descriptions of places; however, it may be used effectively in any paper which is discussing conditions in different areas.

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[17] Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before The Mast.* Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

4. Analytical development is a logical arrangement of material to bring out the implications of a thesis or purpose statement. It is the most complex of the three basic patterns, is often the most difficult, and is probably the most useful for college writing. It usually follows one of two sub-patterns or combines them:

a. Division: The thesis is stated, broken into its factors, and then developed one factor at a time. The thesis may then be restated as a concluding sentence or paragraph.

b. Elaboration: The thesis is stated, explained, illustrated, and restated in conclusion. Elaboration usually proceeds by one or more of the following methods: examples, comparison (analogy), or contrast.

EXERCISES

As a preparation for the exercises that follow, let us analyze four representative assignments and consider how each might be developed. After the analysis you will be asked to complete the assignment.

A. Write a one-paragraph definition of a word.

Analysis. Unless you propose to write an account of the different uses of the word at different stages of its history, chronological development will be useless. Unless you intend to show how the word is used in different parts of the country, spatial development will not be suitable. The order, then, has to be analytical. If you want to define the word by showing what it is not or by distinguishing it from a word with a quite different meaning, you will elaborate the definition by contrast. If you want to show three or four different current uses of the word you will develop the definition by division. The normal method, however, would be to state the meaning in general terms and then give several specific examples of its use.

Using the method of examples, define *one* of the following words: ***capitalism, democracy, immature, reactionary, socialism, tolerance, utopian.***

B. Write a 500-word description of your home town.

Analysis. This assignment needs restriction. It may be broken into three different purposes: (1) to describe your town in terms of its historical development; (2) to describe its appearance – the different sections of the town, the inhabitants of these sections, their homes, places of business, etc.; (3) to describe the character or spirit of your town. Each of these purposes will influence your decision about development. The first purpose would be developed chronologically, but the subject would be so large that in 500 words you could treat it only superficially.

The second purpose would be the more conventional one and would be developed by division into areas, the order of the areas to be determined in some logical manner – for example, the business district, the factory district, the residential district – or by contrasting selected areas – for example, the gold coast and the slums. The third purpose would be the most difficult but would probably result in the most interesting paper. This would require you to express your opinion of the character of the town as a thesis and then develop that thesis, probably by examples, although other methods – analogy and contrast – would be possible.

Select purpose 3 and write the description.

C. Write a 500-word essay on the subject: *The Best Team in Baseball.*

Analysis. This topic calls for analytical development, because once you have decided which is the best team in baseball you will have a thesis for the essay. The simplest way to develop the thesis will be by division – that is, you select the characteristics which make your choice the best team and elaborate each of these in turn. However, this may make for a rather mechanical development; so you should consider some variation of the pattern of division. One good method would be to start with a dramatic illustration which reveals these characteristics in action, and then go on to develop the thesis by division, using examples to elaborate each unit of the division.

With or without an introductory illustration, develop the paper by division.

D. Your brother, a sophomore in high school, is having difficulty with his studies. Your dad asks you to write and give him advice on how to study.

Analysis. The most obvious pattern will be development by division – taking up and elaborating specific pieces of advice. But this method may produce a dull letter and one which is didactic in tone. In order to avoid this objection, you might prefer to illustrate the advice first and then state it afterwards. One way to do this would be to open with two contrasted illustrations; the first would show the difficulties you had before you learned to study efficiently; the second would show the results of efficient study habits – a before-and-after contrast. Once the contrast had been established you could show what you had done to bring about that improvement – that is, you would elaborate the methods which had helped you. The total pattern of the letter would thus allow you to advise your brother without seeming to lecture to him.

Write the letter.

E. Choose any three of the suggested topics on page 31; for each prepare a detailed analysis of the best way to develop the thesis; then hand in all three analyses to your instructor so that he may select one for development into an impromptu essay.

4

PURPOSEFUL DETAILS

ONCE you have determined your purpose and the pattern of its development, you have completed the "rough work" of composition. From then on your problem is similar to that of a portrait painter who has blocked out the head he is about to paint and has all the features in their right places and proportions. His next job is to bring out the details of these features so as to make the portrait lifelike. So your task, after you have worked out the purpose and pattern of your paper, is to fill in the details which will transform your plan into a finished composition. To do that successfully you must be aware of two things: first, the need for detailed development; second, the distinction between details which actually help to achieve your purpose and those which merely pad your writing without improving it.

DETAILED VERSUS GENERAL STATEMENTS

Let us begin by contrasting an undeveloped and a well developed account of the same experience:

A TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE

One fine day a friend and I went fishing. After we had fished for several hours I felt tired. Since my friend was not willing to quit I decided to take a nap until he was ready to go home, so I stretched out on the ground and soon fell asleep.

I was awakened by my friend's voice close at hand. He warned me not to move, that a rattlesnake was crawling towards me, and that if I lay still it would probably pass by and not hurt me.

At first I thought he was joking, but I soon realized the wisdom of his advice, so I closed my eyes and lay still. Soon I felt the snake's clammy body on my arm. I was terribly scared, but I had enough sense to remain motionless. I could feel the snake crawl slowly across my body and once

when I opened my eyes I could see him looking at me. Then, after what seemed ages, he moved on.

I must have fainted, because the next thing I remember my friend was shaking me. He said I looked like a ghost, and the way I felt he was probably right.

Before you proceed to the next version, stop a minute. The author's purpose in this paper was to reproduce for his readers an experience which must indeed have been terrifying. If he has succeeded in his purpose, you, as the reader, should have shared as much of that experience as it is possible to transmit in writing. Have you done so? Has the writer done all that he could to make you feel what he felt while the snake was crawling over him? Try to answer this question before you read the second version.

It was a perfect afternoon, grand fishing weather, and Mack and I had had splendid luck in the morning, each having caught four fine bass. Now the sun was just touching the top of the east wall of Apple River Canyon, which is really not a canyon although the natives call it that. It was late afternoon, and I do not believe I ever saw the fast-running water sparkle more, or the rocks of the canyon reflect their reds and blues more brilliantly. Just above the rapids Mack was slowly "whipping" his fly on the surface of a quiet, deep pond that was nestled close against the steep rock wall. I was tired of fishing; so, in order to enjoy the west rays of the sun, I clambered up the wall toward a small shelf that hung over the water. After carefully laying down my rod, I stretched out to rest before starting the long walk back to camp.

I had dozed a few minutes, when that silent sixth sense which all people who sleep in the wilderness have, made me wake up suddenly, but without moving. I lay thus for a very short time, when I heard the voice of Mack, who apparently was below and to the left of me.

"Listen, Joe," he cautioned quietly, "don't be alarmed at what I am going to say, and under no circumstances must you move a muscle of your body, or ask me why you must not."

He spoke quietly, reassuringly, but what he said was as sharp and cold as ice-water. It was something like being told that an executioner's squad you were facing had only blank bullets in its guns. Obeying this tone in his voice, I remained perfectly motionless, and he spoke again.

"Now listen carefully, and again, don't move," he warned. "There is a rattlesnake about a foot from you, and slowly approaching you. You will be perfectly safe if you don't move. Perhaps he will crawl around you, but he will not strike if you do not move. I shall not speak again, because it might frighten him."

My muscles tensed; the blood rushed to my face; I wanted to jump and run, anything to get out of there. The thought flashed through my mind that perhaps my companion was joking, but almost the minute it entered, I knew that no one, speaking the way he did, could be joking. Lord! What could I do? If I could only see the snake, perhaps I could kill it, but I dared not move. Thus I waited, unable to analyze my feelings, almost sure of certain death if I moved. I closed my eyes and waited. Suddenly I felt something on the biceps of my right arm — a queer light touch, clinging for an instant — and then the smooth glide of an oily body. I could feel the muscles of the snake's body slowly contract, then relax as it slid smoothly, oh, how smoothly across my naked arm. Again and again that body contracted, and again and again it relaxed. At last I saw a flat, V-shaped head, with two glistening, black protruding buttons. A thin, pointed, sickening yellow tongue slipped out, then in, accompanied by a sound like that of escaping steam. Slowly, slowly it advanced, the rounded spots on its back and sides drawing together and then stretching to their length as it moved slowly forward. When it was about in the middle of my chest, it paused, slowly turned its head toward me, and fixed its cold, boring eyes in my direction. Now I could not have moved had I wished, I was fascinated. So he remained, darting his tongue out and in. Finally he slowly, very slowly, turned his head, and again moved forward. Once more I had to see and feel the slow contraction, relaxation, contraction, relaxation. The body began to narrow, the spots grew smaller, the cracks on his revolting greenish-white stomach grew closer together and more minute. At last the slender, whipping tail appeared on my chest, and then so slowly slid along until . . .

My head felt so queer, up and down, up and down it went. Why, my face was all wet! I weakly shoved at the bronzed arm that shook me, and asked, "What's the matter?"

"God! and only a couple of minutes!" I heard a voice filter into my brain. "Wonderful! I don't think I could have let a rattler crawl across me. Lord! but you're clammy, and look at your muscles and veins. Your face looks like a dead man's."[1]

The first version has the advantage of presenting its account first so that the second is denied the element of surprise. Yet there can be no doubt which is the more effective. The first account tells you about the experience; the second makes the experience come alive. The snake is real. You can see its markings, feel the contraction of its muscles, see that thin tongue flashing. You can see the cracks on the greenish-

[1] Joe Daly, "Too Close." Reprinted with permission from *The Green Caldron*, a magazine of freshman writing (University of Illinois), October, 1934, pp. 25-26.

white belly. And when the thin tail finally slides off Joe's chest you are almost as relieved as he was.

It will be well worth the effort to make a careful comparison of these two versions in order to see just how the second one achieves its effect. It is clear that this effect comes from skillful use of details, but what constitutes this "skillful use"? Suppose you conduct a little experiment. Take a sheet of paper and rule it down the middle. On one side put selections from the first version; on the other side put the same detail as it expressed in the second version. Here are some samples:

First Version	*Second Version*
One fine day	It was a perfect afternoon. . . . I do not believe that I ever saw the fast-running water sparkle more, or the rocks of the canyon reflect their reds and blues more brilliantly.
A friend	Mack
I stretched out on the ground.	I clambered up the wall toward a small shelf that hung over the water. After carefully laying down my rod I stretched out to rest.
He warned me not to move.	He spoke quietly, reassuringly, but what he said was as sharp and cold as ice-water. It was something like being told that an executioner's squad you were facing had only blank bullets in its guns.
I was terribly scared.	My muscles tensed; the blood rushed to my head, I wanted to jump and run . . . Lord! What could I do? If I could only see the snake, perhaps I could kill it, but I dared not move. Thus I waited, unable to analyze my feelings, almost sure of certain death if I moved.
Soon I felt the snake's clammy body on my arm.	Suddenly I felt something on the biceps of my right arm – a queer, light touch, clinging for an instant – and then the smooth glide of an oily body.

If you make this comparison conscientiously, you will learn more about how to use details than you are likely to learn from pages of advice. You will learn that there is a vast difference between re-creating an experience and summarizing it. You will see that the second account gives a clear picture of the event and that the author is concerned with bringing out all its significant details, whereas in the first version the writer has not called up the scene before him and expects the reader to do what is essentially the writer's responsibility – that is, to create the scene and the event in his imagination.

You will also learn from this comparison that one by-product of detailed writing is greater length. For freshmen who have difficulty developing any paper beyond a few hundred words this should be a useful discovery. You will not be tempted to say, "That's all there is to tell. I can't make it any longer unless I pad it." You will understand that supplying details to bring out the implications of general statements is not padding but the essence of successful communication.

Finally, you will notice that a hackneyed word or phrase does not achieve the effect obtained by fresher and sharper diction. Contrast, for example, "I felt the snake's clammy body on my arm" with "I felt something on the biceps of my right arm – a queer, light touch, clinging for an instant – and then the smooth glide of an oily body." The difference between these two statements is not that the second writer knows more words than the first. The real difference is that one writer is working at the job of communicating his meaning and the other is not. The first writer did not lack words; he lacked the willingness to live the experience over again so that his reader might live it with him.

CHOOSING EFFECTIVE DETAILS

All details have a common function: to make the writing more meaningful by making it less abstract. Details are the illustrative materials with which a writer elaborates his general statements so as to convey their full significance to a reader. The materials may be actions, ideas, sense-impressions, emotional attitudes, factual information, statistical data – they may be almost anything. All that matters is that the details be chosen to create deliberate effects and that they do create these effects.

We can best illustrate effective choice of details by taking a series of writing assignments, considering what details are needed to fulfil these assignments, and then showing the result when the appropriate details have been provided.

Assignment A

A writer wishes to praise the mayor for his conduct of the city government. The selection of details in this assignment is easy, since the function of the details is to itemize the specific accomplishments of the mayor's administration.

Morrison's accomplishments have reached far beyond delousing the city

of underworld parasites. He drove through a $50,000,000 public-works program and bond issue which will provide a new union station, a new civic center, new express highways and streets – and incidentally eliminate 144 dangerous grade crossings. His administration lopped off deadheads, reducing city payrolls by 600; established the first real pension fund for city employees; saved the municipality $500,000 annually by centralizing purchasing, and – miracle of miracles in boss-ridden New Orleans – inaugurated open meetings of the city council where municipal business is transacted at announced times each week in front of any citizen who wants to watch. An overdraft of $1,000,000, inherited from his predecessor, Robert S. Maestri, has been wiped out and a $1,500,000 surplus rolled up.[2]

Assignment B

A writer wishes to describe a room in such a way as to characterize the man who owns the room. That man is an unpleasant and pathetic personality who is both morbidly self-centered and shy. The details, then, must be selected to bring out these qualities. The writer must select from all the details of the room only those that are evidence of the man's exaggerated concern with himself and of his shyness. Here is the description:

It was an overcrowded museum of everything connected with himself, the fantastic monument to a singularly uninteresting past. Little space remained on the walls between enlarged snapshots of Mr. Wallace at all ages – baby pictures and photographs of choir-outings and army groups in which he figured – and an assortment of framed certificates proving that he had joined the Derry branch of the Primrose League in 1909, maintained an unbroken attendance at choir practice in the same town during 1911, and completed a course in first-aid, prior to taking out a druggist's license to sell patent medicines as well as groceries in 1912. In that year he had also moved over the border to Kildooey; several photographs testified to this, all were dated and bore explanations: "Day of Arrival. R. J. W. approaching shop," "R. J. W. by Kildooey bridge. The first Sunday." . . . The few inches of the wall-space which remained, round about eye-level, had been filled by tacked-up showcards; on these were gummed a series of apparently pointless souvenirs. "A pretty seashell. Picked up by R. J. W. at Drumross Head, Whitsun, 1913," or a piece of bog-oak, "Found by R. J. W. on a walk near Kilcar, August bank Holiday, 1913." In group-photographs, where other people had crowded nearer the camera, partly eclipsing him, he had identified himself with an arrow or a cross as well as his initials; lest he should fail to be recog-

[2] From Ralph Wallace: "Chap Morrison – Mayor," *Forum*, May, 1948 p. 271.

nized by the unknown spectator for whom this display was arranged. There were many pictures in which he was only half visible; a burning diffidence seemed to keep him always hanging about the outskirts of any little assembly, so that he was easily pushed aside. No other names and initials were given in his records of days gone by. And into this house, Bridie had said, no one but himself came, from month's end to month's end. While none at all ever came willingly, without a business intention.[3]

Assignment C

A writer wishes to explain the time-lag between the onset of a rainstorm and the flooding of the rivers. Essentially the answer is that the dry earth is capable of absorbing a great deal of water and that the rivers will not begin to flood until the earth is saturated. What kind of details does he need? Those that will show the actual mechanics of absorption – the means by which the rain is soaked up. His real purpose is to spell out the meaning of the abstract statement, "dry ground absorbs water." He can do that only by showing the rain actually being absorbed.

By deep affinity, every grain of dust drew water to itself. The punky dryness of rotting logs grew slowly sodden. In the thickets of blackberry, and toyon, and poison oak, the dead leaves lay deep; beneath these rested the half rotted leaves and twigs of older years, and still deeper the mould of generations. This porous mass sucked moisture like a stiff sponge, and paradoxically the life-giving water even woke to new vigor the very processes of decay.

Still more, the living vegetation sucked in and held the rain. How many bucketfuls to change from black to green all the moss upon the rocks? How many tank-cars to wet all the pine-needles and all the oak leaves? How many trains of tank-cars to uncurl all the blades of grass upon all the hills? Leaves shrunken to conserve moisture expanded and grew heavy; drooping shoots stood up stiff and vigorous. The very cells expanded, and the protoplasm for its subtle chemistry absorbed to itself countless tons of water.

Even animal life drew in the water. Cattle and horses grew dark beneath the downpour. The fleeces of the sheep were heavy. Deer in the forest glades changed from dun to brown. Through the tunnels of ants and beetles the moisture seeped downward. The channels of earthworms were as millions of conduits. The myriad far-ranging burrows of gophers and ground-squirrels took the trickles deeper still. Then at last following the fissures of the earth itself the seeping moisture from the surface

[3] From Robertson: *The Signpost*. Copyright, 1944, by Eileen A. Robertson Turner. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company.

tion courses is the writer's personal observation. For some assignments we may obtain our materials from special reading, but for the most part we reproduce them from personal experience. We may report our experience directly, as when we describe a scene or a person we are looking at. Or we may review – "see again" – the details in our memories. However we do it, our task as writers is to give the reader the details which he needs to understand what we wish to tell him.

INSERTING DETAILS DURING REVISION

In Chapter 2 the essay, "So This Is College," was used to illustrate the fact that when a writer has his purpose clearly in mind his thinking is so concentrated that the details he needs sometimes come crowding in upon him as he writes. For the most part experienced writers seldom have to dig hard in their memories for the details they will use; their chief problem is rather to select from the wealth of details at their disposal those which will create the most effective results.

Inexperienced writers, however, may profit from the habit of studying their first drafts with a view to adding details wherever the discussion seems too general. This habit is especially to be recommended for students who have difficulty finding enough to say to meet the minimum length of the assignment. It is also valuable for students who fail to be convincing or interesting because they write at too general a level.

We can illustrate the adding of details during revision by taking a few samples of writing which is not sufficiently elaborated and adding the necessary details:

> West of the town of Philadelphia lay a green and rolling meadow called the Commons, and there Tom Paine made his way to watch the militia drill. He had thought of a mob before coming to the meadow on this placid, sunny spring afternoon, but this he saw was no mob. Neither was it an army, even in promise; neither was it anything in the world he had ever seen before. . . .

If the author wishes to describe the militia for us, he must not stop here. We do not have enough information about the militia to know what the author means when he says that it was neither a mob nor an army. Why wasn't it a mob? Why wasn't it an army? Unless the author gives us the evidence which led him to these conclusions, his statements will carry no conviction. We need two kinds of descriptive

details: some to show that the militia was not a mob, and others to show that it was not an army. Here are the added details:

> . . . this group of men and boys, apprentices, journeymen, masters, clerks and students, smiths and millers, carpenters, weavers, barbers, printers, potters, men in aprons with the stain of their trade on their hands. These were the citizens of Philadelphia, yet not all the citizenry. The distinction eluded him, though it was there. Not that they were workingmen all, for there were masters and rich men as well as those who worked for hire; there was one banker, two mercers, a journalist, Tom Jaffers, who was rich enough to do nothing at all, three pastors, a grain speculator, and a fur buyer, to add to those who worked with their hands. There were Quakers, who were pacifists, Methodists, Puritans, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Jews, Congregationalists, Dissenters. Deists, Agnostics, and Atheists. There were free blacks along with the whites, Negro slaves along with their masters.
>
> What moved them? Paine wondered. What distinguished them? What had brought them together?
>
> Slowly, he walked around the field, his heart racing with excitement, apprehension, fear too, withal a hopefulness he had never known before. He watched them drill with their own weapons, this awkward, stumbling, self-conscious first citizen army the world had ever known: firelocks they bore, great old muskets, bell-mouthed matchlocks that had come into the country more than a century ago, a few long, graceful rifles from the back counties, halberds, axes, pikes, cutlasses, rapiers, two-handed museum-piece swords, and those who had no weapon, not even a horse pistol, just sticks which they carried with dead seriousness. Some of them, those who had a shilling to spend strutting, already had uniforms, fantastically colored outfits with mighty cartridge boxes upon which was painted either "Liberty," or "Freedom," or "Death to Tyrants," or some other slogan calculated to impress the world with their state of mind. Officers they had too, fat old Fritz van Goort for a colonel, little Jimmy Gainsway a captain, Captain Jacob Rust, the miller, and that only the beginning, for the officers' list was near a mile long, with all of them shouting orders at once with no attempt at synchronization, left face, about face, forward march, halt, forward march, men poking into each other, being bowled over, stumbling, tripping, whole lines of men going over like tenpins, shouting, a musket firing by accident — of course, they all had them loaded, with shot, too.[7]

You see now why it was not a mob. The details of occupation, of social status, and of religion show you that it was a cross-section of the

[7] Howard Fast, *Citizen Tom Paine*. Copyright, 1943, by Howard Fast. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc.

citizenry of Philadelphia, assembled peaceably but purposefully for one of the serious functions of citizenship. You see also why it was not an army. The details about the conglomeration of weapons and equipment, about the confused orders and the confused way those orders were carried out – these details bring out the meaning of the abstract statement that the militia was not an army. They are therefore the essence of the description.

Here is the second sample:

> Playgoing (in the Elizabethan period) was not the orderly activity that it is today. We go to the theatre quietly, to listen attentively to a half-literary exercise. The Elizabethans went to the public theatres boisterously, with little reverence or consideration for dramatist or actor, the dandies anxious to show themselves superior to the entertainment by which they were passing idle hours, aiming at *conspicuous* attendance, and the groundlings in the pit offering vociferous approval or disapproval at every opportunity.

If this is all the author has to say about the Elizabethan audience he has left his task only half done. From this description we get no real picture of the audience. We need more details: what kind of people made up the audience; what did they do during the play; in what ways were they inconsiderate and irreverent; and how did they make themselves conspicuous? When these details are added the picture of the audience comes into sharp focus:

> The flag flying over the building to signify "a play is on" brought, indeed, a strange audience: a pit crowd of apprentices playing "hookey," town idlers, a few shameless women, travellers intent on seeing the sights, fighters off duty, seafarers ashore, etc.; and above in the balconies students and poets and a few shrewd burghers or minor court hangers-on (perhaps with ladies, who dared come only under masculine protection); and on the stage itself the fops and beaux and noblemen, as anxious to be seen as to see, interrupting the action if they willed, smoking and talking and displaying their figures and their finery. To this queer mixture of cultured and uneducated, of lowly and exalted, of those who came for love of drama and those who came to show their superiority, the Elizabethan drama was shaped. No doubt about this vigorous audience enjoying spirited verse or swift action. No doubt about its vociferous reaction if the lines or the action became too slow or too tame. Coarseness went down agreeably, but literary fineness might kill comedy or tragedy. If anything on the stage bored, the audience took to the dice or cards, and always there was much drinking of ale and widespread eating of fruits and sweets.[8]

[8] From Sheldon Cheney's *The Theatre*, Longmans, Green and Co., 1929. Reprinted by permission of Longmans, Green and Co.

We know now what the author meant by his first paragraph. But it took the details of the second paragraph to make us understand. Had these details not been added, the author would have stopped short of achieving his purpose. Perhaps these samples will help you to see that if you can detect a too-general statement in your first draft you can still add the necessary details to convert that statement into an effective piece of writing.

The illustrations used so far may suggest that details should be added as a separate paragraph. Sometimes they should. But it will often be advisable to cut open a paragraph at several points and insert the needed details. The following paragraphs illustrate this procedure. The parenthetical numbers at the left show where the correspondingly numbered details at the right should be inserted.

Many of the girls on this campus seem eager to make themselves as unattractive as possible. Their dress is slovenly. (1) They are indifferent about personal grooming. (2) They act as though being a coed requires them to dress and look as though they were working in a glue factory.

1. sloppy jeans for skirts; bare legs and old saddle shoes instead of hose and pumps; form-fitting sweaters replaced by shapeless sweat shirts.
2. Stringy, unbarbered hair; shiny noses; untended nails.

An income of $5,000 in 1947 meant no more than a $3,200 income in 1941 or a $2,900 income in 1939. Food costs had increased considerably. (1) Clothing was much more expensive. (2) The cost of medical care had risen sharply. (3) Considering similar increases in all commodities, statisticians have estimated that from 1939 to 1947 the cost of living rose 157%.

1. Meat up 20 cents a pound; butter up 39 cents, milk rose 6 cents, eggs 25.
2. Wardrobe that cost $572 in 1941 cost $992 in 1947.
3. Visit to doctor's office rose from $2 to as much as $6.

During my undergraduate years I worked at a variety of occupations. (1) In taking these jobs I was concerned only about making enough money to meet my college expenses, but I now realize that the experience I got from working was a useful supplement to my academic education. (2)

1. door-to-door salesman, inspector in a shovel factory; bell-boy, elevator operator, night-switchboard operator, hospital orderly.
2. Taught me the value of money, gave me a sense of independence and confidence, gave me an insight into the hopes, fears, and attitudes of various kinds of people, and helped me to understand how to get along with them.

As a final illustration of the adding of details during revision, let us take the worst example we have seen of abstract writing and consider how it could be made a more effective composition. The exhibit is the three sentences with which the girl in Chapter 1 dismissed her muskie-fishing adventure.

> From that day on, most of our time was spent in the boat on the lake. Even though our luck was pretty good I just couldn't learn to like that rod and reel sport. Consequently I was bribed into steering the boat.

If you have ever been on a fishing trip, stop a moment and reflect on the host of details that are covered over by this general statement. *Details of boredom:* long hours with nothing happening; the momentary false excitement of hooking into weeds or a log or a stone, followed by disappointment and the teasing of one's companions; the desperate superstitions that a change of bait or position or wind would make the fish bite. *Details of discomfort:* hands blistered by oars; knuckles skinned on the reel; fingers pricked by hooks or cut on a fish's gills or fins; the discomfort of sitting long hours on a hard seat; the annoyance of a line caught in the motor or snarled by a backlash. *Details of excitement:* the thrill of a strike; the first sight of the fish; his last desperate dive beneath the boat; attempts to gaff or net him; his wild flopping in the boat; the big one that got away just when he was being lifted into the boat.

Out of that mass of details the girl could have selected many that might have made us sympathize with her judgment that muskie fishing was an overrated sport. Had she realized that her three sentences were too abstract to have any effect on a reader she might have expanded them somewhat as follows:

> From that day on, most of our time was spent in the boat trying to catch muskies. We would get up before daylight, slosh some cold water on our faces, and prepare breakfast on a capricious kerosene stove. By the time it was light enough to bait a hook we would be pushing off from the wharf. Usually we would fish until noon, take an hour out for lunch, and try again until evening. Once we took sandwiches and a thermos of coffee with us and ate lunch in the boat, after rinsing our fishy hands in the lake. Once was enough. After that we girls insisted on being put ashore to prepare lunch.
>
> The prerequisite for comfortable fishing, I found, is the right kind of anatomy. I didn't have it. Even three cushions, piled on top of another, only partially modified the hardness of the boat seat. I am sure that if God had intended the human frame to be subjected to five or six continuous hours on a narrow, wooden plank, he would have designed it differently. The slimy business of baiting the hook and of unhooking a

fish when I was unfortunate enough to catch one, I could usually delegate to the men. But I never could discover any way of getting somebody to sit for me.

I admit that muskie-fishing has its exciting moments — the sudden thrill of a hard strike, those delicious seconds when you wait for the muskie to turn the bait in his mouth before you set the hook, his final desperate dive as you bring him near the boat, and the first gleam of his greenish-white body as you pull him close to the surface. But those moments are paid for by hours of boredom and discomfort, when you sit, cold and wet, with nothing to do but fend off the persistent horse fly that is enamored of your knuckles. Even the thrill of landing a big one soon descends to an anticlimax as you struggle with the vicious creature in the boat, trying to hold him still with hand and foot while he thrashes his slimy carcass about, upsetting tackle boxes, and lacerating your fingers with his sharp, spiny fins. Then, when he is safely on a stringer at last, there follows a discouraging fifteen minutes of fumbling with numbed fingers to untangle the line, now hopelessly snarled in the contents of the spilled tackle box.

And when all this dreary routine is over, and your line is paying out freely from the side of the boat, what is there to look forward to? At best, the same thing over again — and all this for a fish which is hardly fit to eat. Do you blame me for deciding that if I had to be involved in such foolishness I would confine my efforts to steering the boat? That way I could save my disposition and what was left of my fingernails.

The contrast of this rewritten version and the original short paragraph from which it was developed should show what can be done by adding details during revision. Of course, if a student cannot recognize that his general statements need detailed elaboration, it will never occur to him to make the additions. But if he can develop the habit of studying his first draft to see if more could be done to make his writing convincing, he should see many ways of adding effective details.

PURPOSEFUL SELECTION OF DETAILS

Details are not good in themselves; they are good because they help the writer to make himself clear to the reader. It stands to reason, therefore, that the details must be selected to fit the writer's purpose. Details which have no relation to that purpose will be worse than useless; for the concrete quality which makes them effective when well chosen will make them conspicuous when they are badly chosen, and will thus call attention to their inappropriateness.

All the selections presented in this chapter have been examples of purposeful use of details. But look at this paragraph:

Perhaps the best vantage-point from which I may view the sights of the town is the platform of the depot. The Chicago local stops daily and the mail clerks heave the mail into the baggage car and pull the wagon back to the express room. After the local has left, the switch engine begins shunting the box cars in the yards, and my eyes idly turn to look down the quiet street. A small theater can be seen across the street. The name of the feature is printed on the canopy. In front of the hotel which stands next door can be seen the usual crowd. People lean over the bridge over the creek. The creek would lead you beneath the hotel and various business houses to the gas plant. From this coal gas plant issues black smoke. The fireman regularly stokes the fires in the huge ovens. The smell of gas and coal tar prevails in the entire area around the gas plant.

This paragraph is full of details, but what are they supposed to do? Why have they been selected? As far as we can tell, the purpose of the paragraph is to describe the town as it is seen from the railroad platform, but instead of selecting descriptive details to fulfill that purpose, the writer has allowed his attention to wander so that he records any detail that comes to mind. The loading of the mail car and the shunting of the box cars are pictorial, but they do not advance the description of the town. Moreover, when the writer does turn his attention to the town, he fails in two ways. First, he selects too few details to give a clear picture, for he mentions only the theater, the crowd before the hotel, and the people leaning over the bridge. Second, he drifts into irrelevant details – the course of the creek and the stoking of the ovens, neither of which is evident from the station platform. The result is an incoherent paragraph which fails to do its job.

In the following paragraph most of the details are wisely chosen to bring out England's veneration of her past, but those in italics have no relation to that purpose and are awkward digressions:

England's veneration for the past is revealed in a myriad of trifling ceremonies and customs, some glorious, some, at least to a foreigner, amusingly old-fashioned. It is seen in the pomp and pageantry with which England loves to invest its public ceremonies – the opening of parliament, the patriarchal royal carriage, the Lord Mayor's barge, the Beef-eater's pike, the vintners' procession, *the lamp-lighter, the communal and unsanitary drinking fountains, the lack of refrigeration in meat and fish shops, and the fruit and vegetable stalls with their wares exposed to the flies and the dirt of the city.* It is seen, especially in the profusion of monuments that flourish in the cities. London is full of memorials to people and events that seem insignificant today. Westminster Abbey is crammed with statues, plaques, and busts of heroes long dead and comfortably

forgotten. *Probably its most impressive memorial is the simple tablet, set in the floor, to mark the burial place of the unknown soldier.* A few of the monuments may be pushed obscurely into a corner, but none is ever discarded. Year after year new relics are crowded in upon the old as the nation adds to it memories.

These inappropriate details have slipped into the writing because the writer failed to keep his purpose clearly in mind. His thesis committed him to present only those details which illustrated pomp and pageantry. But his mind wandered from antiquated practices that ilustrate pomp and pageantry to those which reveal inefficient and unsanitary conditions. The reference to the tomb of the unknown soldier – quite appropriate in some other description of the interior of the abbey – has no relation to the writer's purpose.

Our final illustration is less obvious than the other two and will require more careful attention. These two passages were answers to an examination question which required students to illustrate the differences between early and late Renaissance painting by contrasting Fra Lippi's *Madonna and Child* and Raphael's *Sistine Madonna.*

C – answer

Filippo's picture is simply designed, and the figures are naturalistic. The Madonna is sweet, gracious, and human, dressed in the mode of the times. The Bambino is a natural, playful child. He is being lifted up by two older boys – undoubtedly Fra Filippo's family posed for the picture. The background is a stylized landscape of rocks and streams, bounded by a frame. The Madonna is seated in a chair with an elaborately carved arm which stands out in the foreground.

Raphael designed the Sistine Madonna in a pyramid with the Madonna herself at the apex. She carries the curly-haired Child, and although she is standing still, her garments swirl as in a strong wind. One's eye is first caught by the figure of Pope Sixtus at the lower left, and through the folds of his

A – answer

Fra Filippo's picture is a good example of early Renaissance naturalism. The Madonna – his own wife – is wearing a stylish gown, which is painted in faithful detail. Her hair is dressed in the mode of the time. She is seated – as though in her own home – on an elaborately carved chair, with a framed painting of a landscape serving as the background. Her pose and expression are calm, perhaps devout, but neither exalted nor humble. She is an ordinary worldly mother with a chubby baby, who is being lifted to her rather ungracefully by a saucy angel. The entire scene is intimate, personal, and joyous, but hardly reverent. Filippo, pleased with the new-found technical mastery of his age, is content to paint what he sees.

Raphael was able to get above his technique and make it expressive of

garment and his uplifted eyes, drawn toward the central figure of the Virgin. Her garments, billowing to the right, draw the eye downward again to the figure of St. Barbara, kneeling on a cloud. Her eyes are cast down, and the glance follows hers to discover two jaunty cherubs leaning on the lower frame. They look upward, thus deflecting the eyes of the beholder up again, completing the movement of the design. This painting is one of the high points of the development of Renaissance art.

lofty emotion. The figures in the *Sistine Madonna* are monumental and stand out against a subdued background. The Madonna, her feet resting weightlessly on a cloud, wears an expression of sublime dignity. She holds with graceful ease the Child, whose sober eyes reveal the portent of His future. The figures wear classic robes, whose flowing lines give a wonderful, circling movement to the painting. A cloud of tiny cherub's heads, peeping through the effulgence surrounding the Virgin, completes the heavenly setting. Where Filippo's work is mere copying, Raphael's is imaginative and spiritual. This loftiness of conception combined with grace of design and beauty of execution is the flower of the High Renaissance.

What is the difference between these two answers? Why did one receive a less-than-average grade, and the other an excellent grade? Both papers are roughly the same length; both are well written; both show an intimate knowledge of the pictures which they are contrasting. The difference between them is essentially one of the selection of details. The answer at the left is unsatisfactory because it drifted away from the question. What the student actually wrote was a description of the *Madonna and Child* and another description of the *Sistine Madonna.* The details she presents describe the pictures effectively, but they do not contrast the differences between early and late Renaissance painting. Therefore her paper does not satisfy the assignment. The answer at the right selects those details which illustrate the differences of the two periods, and thus makes the contrast between the pictures a purposeful one. The author is not merely describing two pictures; she is describing the characteristics which make them represent their periods. That is what the assignment asked.

With the exception of summaries, any kind of writing you do, from an intimate personal letter to a formal research paper, will become a more effective composition if it contains plenty of details. It is through details that you reach the senses of your reader or prove a point – make him see, hear, feel, smell, or taste the things you are

talking about, or believe as you do about your subject. It is through details that you make a story real, bring a character alive, put conviction into an argument, make explanations clear, and report events so that a reader feels he is actually witnessing them. The details of course must be well chosen to fit the purpose of the writing. But it is lack of details, not use of the wrong ones, that often weakens freshman writing. Once you see why and when details are necessary it is not too difficult to develop the knack of selecting the right ones.

EXERCISES

A. Without attempting to incorporate them in a piece of writing, list the details you would use if you were describing each of the following. Actually study the subject before preparing your list.

1. Your room
2. Your roommate
3. A contrast of two instructors
4. The campus
5. The college paper
6. Your favorite eating place
7. A recent social event
8. Your work in composition

B. Choose two of these subjects and develop each into a fair-sized paragraph.

C. Suppose you are writing to a friend who intends to come to college next year. Supply the necessary details so that he will fully understand what you mean by the following abstract statements:

1. Freshman week is exciting.
2. Registration is the world's worst headache.
3. There is likely to be a good deal of confusion during the first week of classes.
4. College professors are not a special breed of people.
5. Methods of teaching vary with the instructors.
6. Assignments are going to take longer than they did in high school.
7. I have already had some useful advice from upper classmen.
8. College life isn't all work.

D. In the following passage all the details have been numbered. In a short report, first list the numbers of those details which you consider appropriate to the writer's purpose; then list those which you consider inappropriate; finally explain why you consider each item in the second list inappropriate.

If a sociologist of the year 2500 were to write a history of the Victorian society solely on linguistic evidence, he would have to conclude that its members enjoyed a special dispensation from the usual laws of nature. (1) Men did not die; they passed away, or went to their rest, or answered the last summons, or slept with their fathers, or met their Maker, or did something equally romantic. (2) Transportation, without the aid of the airplane, the automobile, electricity, or the diesel engine,

was still primitive. (3) Except for the daily newspapers, the means of communication were scarcely different from what they had been in Shakespeare's day, since there was neither radio nor telephone to flash messages around the world in a few seconds. (4) Men did not spit or sweat; they expectorated and perspired. (5) Women had no legs, only limbs. (6) They were not allowed to vote or to hold public office. (7) Only lower-class babies were born; the others were issued into the world or came to bless the home. (8) Pregnancy was unknown; instead the mothers passed through an interesting (or delicate) condition before their little strangers were deposited by the stork. (9) Labor unions were struggling into existence, but the Anti-Combinations Act, which made it a penal offense for any two workmen to talk together about ways of increasing their wages or improving their working conditions, forced the unions underground. (10) Thanks to such men as Darwin, Huxley, Galton, and Lyell, science was beginning to dominate thought, but the poets, especially Tennyson, were afraid of it and of its repercussions on the stability of religious beliefs. (11) Polite members of society did not put on their clothes, eat, or go to bed; rather they dressed, dined, and retired. (12) Flowers, food, and breath did not smell; they emitted an odor. (13) Bellies were nonexistent among animals, with the embarrassing exception of the whale, which had indelicately been given a belly in the Biblical account of Jonah's misfortunes — probably as a result of faulty translation. The only abdominal organ was the stomach. (14) Anyone who did not belong to the Church of England was considered a nonconformist and was often subject to economic and political discrimination.

E. Expand the following summary into a 500-word paper by adding appropriate details at the places indicated. If you have difficulty in seeing what sort of details are needed, consult Chapter 23.

Although the writing of a research paper is a difficult assignment, many students make it more difficult than it need be because of inefficient working habits. Too often they postpone work on the paper until it is too late to do a respectable job of it. ( ) Often they invite avoidable difficulty by failure to find out at the beginning of their study whether or not sufficient material is available in the library. ( ) Instead of developing a general notion of the topic before tackling it in detail, they begin with the first book which is convenient and plunge into the fine points of the topic before they see the topic as a whole. ( ) They take more notes than are necessary because they begin to take notes before they have decided what kind of information they need, ( ) and because they do not pick out the factual information of a paragraph but quote the paragraph in its entirety. ( )

F. The following selection is a brilliant example of effective use of details. Read it carefully and then write a 500-word paper in which you discuss (*a*) the ratio of detail to abstract-description, (*b*) the kinds of details used (actions, sights, sounds, etc.), (*c*) the appropriateness of spe-

cific details to the author's purpose at the moment, and (*d*) the most memorable details in the whole article.

R.M.S. TITANIC[9]

The sea was surging into the Titanic's hold. At 12:20 the water burst into the seamen's quarters through a collapsed fore and aft wooden bulkhead. Pumps strained in the engine-rooms — men and machinery making a futile fight against the sea. Steadily the water rose.

The boats were swung out — slowly; for the deckhands were late in reaching their stations, there had been no boat drill, and many of the crew did not know to what boats they were assigned. Orders were shouted; the safety valves had lifted, and steam was blowing off in a great rushing roar. In the chart house Fourth Officer Boxhall bent above a chart, working rapidly with pencil and dividers.

12:25 A.M. Boxhall's position is sent out to a fleet of vessels: "Come at once; we have struck a berg."

To the Cunarder Carpathia (Arthur Henry Rostron, Master, New York to Liverpool, fifty-eight miles away): "It's a CQD, old man. Position 41-46 N.; 50-14 W."

The blue spark dancing: "Sinking; cannot hear for noise of steam."

12:30 A.M. The word is passed: "Woman and children in the boats." Stewards finish waking their passengers below; life-preservers are tied on; some men smile at the precaution. "The Titanic is unsinkable." The Mt. Temple starts for the Titanic; the Carpathia, with a doublewatch in her stokeholds, radios, "Coming hard." The CQD changes the course of many ships — but not of one; the operator of the Californian, nearby, has just put down his ear-phones and turned in.

The CQD flashes over land and sea from Cape Race to New York; newspaper city rooms leap to life and presses whir.

On the Titanic, water creeps over the bulkhead between No. 5 and 6 firerooms. She is going down by the head; the engineers — fighting a losing battle — are forced back foot by foot by the rising water. Down the promenade deck, Happy Jock Hume, the bandsman, runs with his instrument.

12:45 A.M. Murdoch, in charge on the starboard side, eyes tragic, but calm and cool, orders boat No. 7 lowered. The women hang back; they want no boat-ride on an ice-strewn sea; the Titanic is unsinkable. The men encourage them, explain that this is just a precautionary measure: "We'll see you again at breakfast." There is little confusion; passengers stream slowly to the boat deck. In the steerage the immigrants chatter excitedly.

A sudden sharp hiss — a streaked flare against the night; Boxhall sends a rocket toward the sky. It explodes, and a parachute of white stars lights up the icy sea. "God! Rockets!" The band plays ragtime.

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[9] From Hanson Baldwin's *R.M.S. Titanic* (Harper's Magazine, January, 1934). Copyright, Hanson W. Baldwin, 1934. Reprinted by permission of Willis Kingsley Wing.

No. 8 is lowered, and No. 5. Ismay, still in dressing gown, calls for women and children, handles lines, stumbles in the way of an officer, is told to "get the hell out of here." Third Officer Pitman takes charge of No. 5; as he swings into the boat Murdoch grasps his hand. "Good-by and good luck old man."

No. 6 goes over the side. There are only twenty-eight people in a lifeboat with a capacity of sixty-five.

A light stabs from the bridge; Boxhall is calling in Morse flashes, again and again, to a strange ship stopped in the ice jam five to ten miles away. Another rocket drops its shower of sparks above the ice-strewn sea and the dying ship.

1:00 A.M. Slowly the water creeps higher; the fore ports of the Titanic are dipping into the sea. Rope squeaks through blocks; lifeboats drop jerkily seaward. Through the shouting on the decks comes the sound of the band playing ragtime.

The "Millionaires' Special" leaves the ship — boat No. 1 with a capacity of forty people, carries only Sir Cosmo and Lady Duff Gordon and ten others. Aft, the frightened immigrants mill and jostle and rush for a boat. An officer's fist flies out; three shots are fired in the air, and the panic is quelled. . . . Four Chinese sneak unseen into a boat and hide in its bottom.

1:20 A.M. Water is coming into No. 4 boiler room. Stokers slice and shovel as water laps about their ankles — steam for the dynamos, steam for the dancing spark! As the water rises, great ash hoes rake the flaming coals from the furnaces. Safety valves open; the stokers retreat aft, and the water-tight doors clang shut behind them.

The rockets fling their splendor toward the stars. The boats are more heavily loaded now, for the passengers know the Titanic is sinking. Women cling and sob. The great screws aft are rising clear of the sea. Half-filled boats are ordered to come alongside the cargo ports and take on more passengers, but the ports are never opened — and the boats are never filled. Others pull for the steamer's light miles away but never reach it; the lights disappear, the unknown ship steams off.

The water rises and the band plays ragtime.

1:30 A.M. Lightoller is getting the port boats off; Murdoch the starboard. As one boat is lowered into the sea a boat officer fires his gun along the ship's side to stop a rush from the lower decks. A woman tries to take her Great Dane into a boat with her; she is refused and steps out of the boat to die with her dog. Millet's "little smile which played on his lips all through the voyage" plays no more; his lips are grim, but he waves good-by and brings wraps for the women.

Benjamin Guggenheim, in evening clothes, smiles and says, "We've dressed up in our best and are prepared to go down like gentlemen."

1:40 A.M. Boat 14 is clear, then 13, 16, 15 and C. The lights still shine, but the Baltic hears the blue spark say, "Engine-room getting flooded."

The Olympic signals, "Am lighting up all possible boilers as fast as can."

Major Butt helps women into the last boat and waves good-by to them. Mrs. Straus puts her foot on the gunwale of a lifeboat, then she draws back and goes to her husband: "We have been together many years; where you go I will go." Colonel John Jacob Astor puts his young wife in a lifeboat, steps back, taps cigarette on fingernail: "Good-by, dearie; I'll join you later."

1:45 A.M. The foredeck is under water, the fo'c'sle head almost awash; the great stern is lifted high toward the bright stars; and still the band plays. Mr. and Mrs. Harris approach a lifeboat arm in arm.

Officer: "Ladies first, please."

Harris bows, smiles, steps back: "Of course, certainly; ladies first."

Boxhall fires the last rocket, then leaves in charge of boat No. 2.

2:00 A.M. She is dying now; her bow goes deeper, her stern higher. But there must be steam. Below in the stokeholds the sweaty firemen keep steam up for the flaring lights and the dancing spark. The glowing coals slide and tumble over the slanted grate bars; the sea pounds behind that yielding bulkhead. But the spark dances on.

The Asian hears Phillips try the new signal – SOS.

Boat No. 4 has left now; boat D leaves ten minutes later. Jacques Futrelle clasps his wife: "For God's sake, go! It's your last chance; go!" Madame Futrelle is half-forced into the boat. It clears the side.

There are about 660 people in the boats, and 1,500 still on the sinking Titanic.

On top of the officers' quarters men work frantically to get the two collapsibles stowed there over the side. Water is over the forward part of A deck now; it surges up the companionways toward the boat deck. In the radio shack, Bride has slipped a coat and lifejacket about Phillips as the first operator sits hunched over his key, sending – still sending – "41-46 N.; 50-14 W. CQD – CQD – SOS – SOS –"

The captain's tired white face appears at the radio-room door: "Men, you have done your full duty. You can do no more. Now, it's every man for himself." The captain disappears – back to his sinking bridge, where Painter, his personal steward, stands quietly waiting for orders. The spark dances on. Bride turns his back and goes into the inner cabin. As he does so, a stoker, grimed with coal, mad with fear, steals into the shack and reaches for the lifejacket on Phillips' back. Bride wheels about and brains him with a wrench.

2:10 A.M. Below decks the steam is still holding, though the pressure is falling – rapidly. In the gymnasium on the boat deck the athletic instructor watches quietly as two gentlemen ride the bicycles and another swings casually at the punching bag. Mail clerks stagger up the boat-deck stairways, dragging soaked mail sacks. The spark still dances. The band still plays – but not ragtime:

Nearer my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee . . .

A few men take up the refrain; others kneel on the slanting decks to pray. Many run and scramble aft, where hundreds are clinging above the silent screws on the great uptilted stern. The spark still dances and the lights still flare; the engineers are on the job. The hymn comes to its close. Bandmaster Hartley, Yorkshireman violinist, taps his bow against a bulkhead, calls for "Autumn" as the water curls about his feet, and the eight musicians brace themselves against the ship's slant. People are leaping from the decks into the nearby water – the icy water. A woman cries, "Oh, save me!" A man answers, "Good lady, save yourself. Only God can save you now." The band plays "Autumn":

God of Mercy and Compassion!
Look with pity on my pain . . .

The water creeps over the bridge where the Titanic's master stands, heavily he steps out to meet it.

2:17 A.M. Men run about blackened decks, leap into the night, are swept into the sea by the curling wave which licks up the Titanic's length. Lightoller does not leave the ship, the ship leaves him, there are hundreds like him, but only a few who live to tell of it. The funnels still swim above the water, but the ship is climbing into the perpendicular; the bridge is under and most of the foremast, the great stern rises like a squat leviathan. Men swim away from the sinking ship, others drop from the stern.

The band plays in the darkness, the water lapping upwards:

Hold me up in mighty waters
Keep my eyes on things above,
Righteousness, divine atonement,
Peace and everlas. . . .

The forward funnel snaps and crashes into the sea; its steel tons hammer out of existence swimmers struggling in the freezing water. Streams of sparks, of smoke and steam, burst from the after funnels. The ship upends to 50 to 60 degrees.

Down in the black abyss of the stokeholds, of the engine-rooms, where the dynamos have whirred at long last to a stop, the stokers and the engineers are reeling against hot metal, the rising water clutching at their knees. The boilers, the engine cylinders, rip from their bed plates, crash through bulkheads; rumble – steel against steel.

The Titanic stands on end, poised briefly for the plunge. Slowly she slides to her grave – slowly at first, and then more quickly – quickly – quickly.

2:20 A.M. The greatest ship in the world has sunk. From the calm, dark waters, where the floating lifeboats move, there goes up, in the white wake of her passing, "one long continuous moan."

5

OUTLINING

FOR MOST college writing the kind of purposeful planning discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 will be sufficient. But for long papers – especially for research and term papers – it will be necessary for you to draw up the plan of the paper in the form of an outline. Outlining is not basically different from what you were doing in Chapter 3 when you were organizing your ideas through one of the patterns of development. Outlining is merely a more formal way of doing the same thing. Whether or not it is a better way will depend partly on the length of the paper and partly on its complexity. You may also find that outlining will help you study and retain what you have read.

THE USES OF AN OUTLINE

A formal outline, then, has three uses: It may serve as an aid to effective reading; it may offer a convenient test of the proposed organization of a paper; and it may provide a means by which a writer can clarify his purpose and develop it.

Outlining as a Reading Aid

A large part of your work in college consists of digesting the contents of books and essays and being able to explain what you have read. When material is complex – as it often is in essays on economics, history, literary criticism, philosophy, and political science – the discipline of reducing it to an outline provides two advantages: it forces you to watch carefully what the author is doing and how he is doing it, and it gives you, in a form convenient for review, a digest of the basic content. In both these respects the outline is to the essay what a map is to a city you do not know very well. It is an efficient and streamlined device for understanding the total structure and the relations between its parts.

For example, the following outline reduces a long article to a form which permits a quick review of the original. Even without reading the article you can tell from the outline what the author was saying. It is quite probable that on the evidence of the outline alone you could answer an examination question on the advantages of gas as a war weapon.

Chemical Warfare

Thesis: Gas is the ideal weapon of war.

I. The ideal weapon is one which does not necessarily destroy but nevertheless is effective in subduing the opponent.
   A. The direct object of war is to force the enemy into submission, not to kill him.
   B. The ideal weapon has the following characteristics:
      1. It should be simple to manufacture in peace or war and its production should not affect prosperity.
      2. Its nature should be unknown to the enemy.
      3. It should be capable of incapacitating, but the incapacitation should not be permanent.
      4. It should permit an established defense against it, one known in advance and prepared for by the side using the weapon.
      5. It should inflict no permanent damage upon property.

II. Gas meets the requirements of the ideal weapon.
   A. The chemical industry does not require any expensive conversion to manufacture war gas.
      1. The facilities for production exist and are in use in peacetime industry.
      2. The cost of production is less than that of other weapons of war, and the product can be quickly and cheaply converted to peacetime uses.
   B. The enemy cannot provide efficient protection against a gas attack.
      1. Preparations for a gas attack cannot be so effectively reconnoitered as preparations for air, artillery, or tank attacks.
      2. Even when a gas attack is anticipated, uncertainty about the type of gas to be used makes defense difficult.
         a. Different types of gas require different defenses.
         b. The attack may shift from one form of gas to another.
         c. The use of masks as a defense must be confined to short periods, because:
            (1) Continuous use of masks tends to lower troop morale,
            (2) A man with a mask is only fifty per cent efficient.

C. Gas attacks can be controlled so as to achieve a specified degree of incapacitation.
   1. Death, incapacity to work or fight, or morale-sapping irritation may be obtained by controlling the concentration of the gas.
   2. The results desired can be achieved at once or after a period of latency, depending on which effect best suits the plans of the attackers.

D. Gas permits a defense by the army using it.
   1. The attacking force can be equipped with masks and protective clothing to allow them to advance in gassed areas.
   2. The defense against a specific plan can be worked out in advance and incorporated in the plan of attack.

E. Gas inflicts no permanent damage on property.
   1. Contaminated areas may be decontaminated by the use of chemicals.
   2. Even if no decontamination is used, the effects of the gas wear off in time.

The outline allows you to summarize both the content and the structure of the original article. It is therefore a useful device whenever the material to be studied is difficult or important enough to warrant the time outlining takes. The following are the steps involved in preparing a reading outline:

1. Read over the essay to form a general impression of its purpose and structure. Pay particular attention to the opening paragraphs which usually state the intention or thesis, and to any headings which may give you a clue to the different parts of the work.

2. Determine the writer's purpose by picking out his thesis. If none is explicitly stated, formulate the purpose which is implied.

3. Determine the main divisions of the essay and mark them I, II, III, etc. Sometimes the author will have marked these divisions for you. If the essay is well constructed each of these parts should constitute a major unit of the outline.

4. Express the purpose of each of these major units as a topic heading or a subthesis. Test these headings to see whether they logically develop the main purpose statement.

5. After you have done all this, consider whether the headings established in 4 above should be subdivided. If they should, break each of them, in turn, into its parts and mark these parts A, B, C, etc. If still further subdivision is required, mark the new subdivisions 1, 2, 3, etc.

6. Check the completed outline against the original essay to see that it adequately reveals the structure and content of the essay.

This process may be illustrated at a simple level by preparing an outline of the essay on the distinction between war and peace (page 42). The first reading of that essay shows that the thesis is stated in the first paragraph and is then broken into three factors. The discussion of each factor – the legal, political, and military distinctions between peace and war – forms a major division of the essay. The outline, then, would consist of the thesis and three subtheses – I, II, and III. Similarly, an outline of the selection on pages 51-54 would consist of the thesis ("The intellectual outlook of modern life is essentially primitive") and six major divisions, the first five of which would apply the thesis to the fields of politics, law, property rights, sex and family life, and education, and the last of which would sum up the author's argument.

Outlining to Test Organization

A badly organized paper will not be thoroughly successful, no matter how well it is written. Therefore if there are any serious flaws in the organization you plan to use it would be wise to detect them before beginning the actual composition. Since the outline serves as a sort of X-ray picture of the skeleton of a piece of writing, it offers a convenient and reliable test of organization and allows a change of plans before it is too late.

Examine the following outline, made by an instructor from a student research paper. The purpose statement was taken from the opening paragraph which, as far as the instructor could judge, was designed to set up the thesis of the paper. The remaining eight paragraphs dealt successively with the topics labeled by the capital letters in the outline. The headings opposite the Roman numerals were provided by the instructor to show the main topics covered in the paper.

New Cures for Cancer

Purpose statement: To show the advances made in the control and cure of cancer during recent times.

I. The history of cancer
   A. Among the early Egyptians
   B. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans
   C. Down to the nineteenth century

II. The causes of cancer
   A. External irritation

B. Internal irritation
C. Inherited tendencies

III. Recent remedies
A. Cysteine disulphide
B. Surgery
C. X-rays and radium
D. Preventive care

We do not have to look very closely at this outline to see serious defects in the structure of the paper. If it is to deal with recent advances in the control and cure of cancer, then the history and causes of cancer are irrelevant, and two thirds of the paper has no relation to this purpose. Conversely, if this student does not intend to deal with recent developments in the treatment of cancer, she was most unwise to suggest that false purpose in her opening paragraph. Finally, if we reject the purpose suggested by the opening paragraph, no other purpose is evident in the outline, except the vague intention to write *about* cancer. In other words we see that the paper is going to be a purposeless development of an unrestricted subject.

The moral of this example is not merely that the organization of this paper leaves much to be desired. The real point is that the weaknesses of the paper are at once revealed by the outline. Had the writer been able to study this outline before she began to write, she might have foreseen these weaknesses and thus have avoided them. When you consider the amount of time it took her to gather material and write the finished paper, you will realize that, for her, the time spent on an outline would have been a wise insurance against failure.

Outlining as a Means of Determining Purpose

In actual practice most of us often begin to outline before we fully understand what we want to do. We go through a period of preliminary outlining during which we are not really drawing up a plan for the paper we will finally write but are feeling our way toward our purpose. We are using the outline as a tool to help us clarify our thoughts, somewhat like the housewife who finds out how she wants her furniture arranged by moving it about the room. Like the housewife, we could save ourselves a good deal of trouble if we could see, without all this experimenting, how our material should be organized, but these experimental outlines are often a necessary means of thinking out our purpose so that we can proceed to the final outline.

Let us illustrate. Suppose you are asked to write a term paper on

the characteristics of superior college students. Assume that you have done the necessary reading and have acquired a collection of notes, including statistical evidence, case histories, academic and professional records of superior students, and comparisons of superior and inferior students. As you study these notes (grouping similar kinds of information together) you decide that superior college students show certain characteristics, which you list as follows:

1. They make a rapid survey before reading a chapter.
2. They associate what they learn in one course with work in another.
3. They study alone.
4. They tend to be non-social.
5. They are more introverted than other students.
6. They notice the headings in the text books.
7. They are more self-conscious than other students.
8. They are younger than most students.
9. They are relatively indifferent to the opposite sex.
10. They are less assertive, but more independent.
11. They take a slightly lighter schedule.
12. They are persistent.
13. They recite to themselves.
14. They clear up any point they do not understand before going on to another.
15. They spend a little more time than the average in study.
16. They are happy in college.
17. They participate in more extracurricular activities, but mostly in clubs in which the interest is intellectual rather than social.
18. They usually have abilities necessary for success in their chosen profession.[1]

As you study these characteristics you begin to see that some of them are related; so you begin to group them under what seem to be topic headings, which at first may look something like this:

Study habits
Age
Personality traits
Social characteristics

But on reconsidering these headings you see that what you have to say about age could be dismissed in a sentence and that the two dominant topics seem to be study habits and personality traits. You

[1] For these characteristics I am indebted to Luella Cole's *The Background for College Teaching* (Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1940), p. 396. Reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Company.

therefore set these up as headings and group specific characteristics under them as follows:

Personality Traits	*Study Habits*
non-social	spend more time on studies
introvertive	study alone
self-conscious	notice headings of textbooks
indifferent to opposite sex	rapid survey before reading
persistent	recite to themselves
less assertive, more independent	clear up one point before moving on to another
(?) participate in more extracurricular activities, but of intellectual type	associate what they learn in one course with what they learn in another
	(?) take slightly lighter schedules

You put a question mark before some of the items because you feel that they do not fit too well under their headings, and you see that a pattern is beginning to emerge. Indeed, at this point you are tempted to draft as your thesis: "Superior college students have characteristic personality traits and study habits." But you recognize that if that is all you are going to show you might as well hand in your list of characteristics, since they show all that your thesis asserts.

As you study your material again, you begin to see a variety of possibilities. You could write a paper to show that the superiority of college students is determined by academic rather than by social success. But since that seems self-evident, you reject it. You try "Although superior students are happy in college, they are not socially successful." That seems better, but you realize that it puts too much emphasis on the personality traits and not enough on study habits; so you try again. Finally, you decide that if you wrote an essay to show that superior students are better adjusted in their academic than in their social activities, you could get a unified paper which would allow you to use most of your material. So you begin to draft an outline which emerges like this:

Thesis: Superior college students are better adjusted to their academic than to their social environment.

I. They are well adjusted to their academic environment.
   A. They have efficient study habits.
   B. They supplement their class work with intellectual extracurricular activities.
   C. They are happy in college.

II. They are less well adjusted to their social environment.
  A. They are introverted and self-conscious.
  B. They are non-social.
  C. They are relatively indifferent to the opposite sex.

At this point, assuming that you have the details in your notes to develop these sentences, you have the basic organization of your paper completed. You may still subdivide some of your headings. For example, the study habits might be subdivided, and different non-social attitudes might be recognized. But these are refinements. The basic structure has been established.

The three uses of the outline just illustrated – as a reading aid, as a test of organization, and as a tool for clarifying and developing purpose – justify the attention given to outlining in college composition classes. The ability to organize material effectively is essential to successful work in many courses, and a student who develops that ability in his first semester in college will work more efficiently because of it.

TOPIC AND SENTENCE OUTLINES

A *topic outline* is one in which the headings are merely single words or phrases, not complete sentences. Thus the faulty outline on cancer cures on page 92 and the following example are topic outlines.

The Divisions of Federal Authority

Purpose: To show the main divisions of the federal government.

I. The Executive
  A. The President
  B. The Cabinet
  C. Appointed authorities
II. The Legislature
  A. The House of Representatives
  B. The Senate
III. The Judiciary
  A. The Federal Courts
  B. The Supreme Court

The form of the *sentence outline* has already been illustrated by the outlines on pages 90-91 and on page 95. If you re-examine these outlines you will see that each entry is expressed as a complete sentence. In some instances the sentence may run through more than one

entry. For example, one part of the outline on chemical warfare reads as follows:

c. The use of masks as a defense must be confined to short periods, because:
   (1) Continuous use of masks tends to lower troop morale,
   (2) A man with a mask is only fifty per cent efficient.

In this instance, the sentence consists of the main clause, represented by *c*, and the two subordinate clauses, represented by (1) and (2).

Of these two forms the topic outline is the more popular, for it is easier to construct and it is often a preliminary stage in the development of a sentence outline. It is therefore useful when all that is needed is to block out main and subordinate headings. The sentence outline, though more difficult to construct, exerts more restriction on the writer, since it not only names the points to be discussed but also indicates what is to be said about them. It is therefore the better form to use for an essay in which close-knit organization is important. Notice how the following sentence outline develops the thesis through three logical and related steps.

What Hybrid Seed Corn Has Done for Farmers

Thesis: The use of hybrid seed corn has raised the standard of living of the American farmer.

I. The use of hybrid seed corn has increased the production of corn.
   A. It has increased the yield per acre.
   B. It has decreased the loss due to disease and weather conditions.

II. The use of hybrid seed has brought about new markets for corn.
   A. The nature of the hybrid seed industry has encouraged successful exploration of new uses for corn.
   B. As a result of new industrial uses the market for corn has been greatly expanded.

III. The combination of increased production and an expanded market has raised the farmer's standard of living.
   A. It has increased his annual net income.
   B. It has provided more leisure time by allowing the farmer to purchase time-saving machinery.
   C. The combination of more money and more free time has made the farmer eager and able to provide comforts and conveniences in his home.

Here the development of the thesis is carried beyond the mere blocking out of the material to be presented. The thesis is factored into its

logical subtheses, each of which, in turn, is subdivided. As a result the whole outline is knit tightly together and there is little opportunity for the writer to stray from his purpose.

THE CONVENTIONS OF OUTLINING

A complete outline consists of three parts: the title, the purpose statement, and the body of the outline. The main divisions of the body are represented by Roman numerals; their divisions, in turn, are marked by capital letters. Successive subdivisions are indicated by Arabic numerals, small letters, Arabic numerals in parentheses, and small letters in parentheses. These symbols follow a progressive system of indention so that the relation and relative importance of topics may be seen at a glance.

Title

Purpose statement (or thesis) . . . . . .
I. . . . . .
A. . . . . .
1. . . . . .
a. . . . . .
(1) . . . . . .
(a) . . . . . .
(b) . . . . . .
(2) . . . . . .
b. . . . . .
c. . . . . .
2. . . . . .
3. . . . . .
B. . . . . .
1. . . . . .
2. . . . . .
II. . . . . .
A. . . . . .
B. . . . . .
C. . . . . .

In addition to numbering and indenting, the above abstract illustrates the convention of *no single divisions.* There is no I without a II, no A without a B, no 1 without a 2. If one heading is broken into smaller units, it must be broken into more than one unit. Failure to observe this convention is often a sign of illogical organization, and

the convention is usually strictly enforced in composition classes. Most instructors would object to the following organization of a paper to show under what conditions a professional golfer will deliberately slice a ball:

I. To play around a dog-leg
   A. Hogan at Tam O'Shanter
II. To avoid a natural obstruction

The objection would be that the reference to Hogan's deliberate slice in the Tam O'Shanter tournament was an illustration of I, not a division of it, and that the illustration had better be omitted from the outline.

There are two conventions that cannot be revealed by the abstract. First, different levels of division must not be confused. Main headings must not be represented as subheadings or subheadings as main ones, since such mistakes misrepresent the logical division of the material and are therefore likely to mislead the student when he comes to develop his outline into a paper. Contrast the two erroneous outlines that follow with the correct one on page 96.

I. The Executive
   A. The President
   B. The Supreme Court
II. The Legislature
   A. The House of Representatives
   B. The Senate

I. The Legislature
II. The Senate
III. The President
IV. The Judiciary

At the left, the inclusion of the Supreme Court as a division of the executive authority has distorted the organization of the government into two rather than three divisions. At the right, the failure to recognize that the Senate is a division of the Legislature has resulted in four divisions of the government. Any paper developed from either of these outlines would probably be unsatisfactory, since to avoid the confusion which the outlines invite, the writer would have to plan his material more effectively while writing than he had been able to do when he was devoting all his attention to organization.

The second convention not illustrated in our abstract is the use of parallel structure. So far as possible the form of all entries in an outline should be consistent. Obviously, topic headings and sentences should not both be used in the same outline. In addition, it is wise to use parallel grammatical constructions throughout a topic outline, for doing so makes it easier to see whether the outline is actually

logical. Notice that the outline at the left obscures the equality of the topics by shifting from prepositional to infinitive phrases, while the outline at the right remains parallel throughout.

Why I Came to College

I. For economic reasons
II. In order to improve myself socially
III. To make myself a cultured person
IV. For fun

Why I Came to College

I. To improve my economic status
II. To develop social poise
III. To make myself a cultured person
IV. To enjoy college activities

SHAPING THE OUTLINE

The actual shaping of your outline will be influenced by the clearness with which you have your purpose in mind. If you are still uncertain what you want to do, you will probably have to experiment, much as we did on pages 94-96. In that event, you will have to list your information, as we listed the characteristics of superior students, group similar pieces of information together, organize these groups into major units, and finally determine what these units show. Until you have done these things you are in no position to begin the final outline, since you do not yet know to what end you are trying to organize your material.

Once you have a clear statement of purpose, the best procedure is to lay out the main divisions of your outline before you worry about subdivisions. First establish all the Roman numerals, then break each Roman numeral into its capital letters, and so on. By working this way you will keep better control of your outline: you will not be likely to distort the organization by excessive development of some headings and inadequate development of others. Since any revision of the main headings will probably require changes in the subheadings, too early attention to subheadings may be time wasted.

To illustrate this procedure, let us assume that a writer wishes to show the development of military aviation by contrasting the part it played in World War I with that in World War II. His purpose immediately suggests the basic contrast in his paper, and hence the two Roman numerals of his outline.

Stage 1.

I. Aviation in World War I
II. Aviation in World War II

The next step is to break these Roman numerals into their main divisions.

Stage 2.

I. Aviation in World War I
   A. The nature of the early airplane
   B. The uses of aviation
   C. The reputation of aviation

II. Aviation in World War II
   A. The nature of the modern airplane
   B. The uses of aviation
   C. The reputation of aviation

The basic plan of the paper is now established, but it is still too general to be a useful blueprint. Therefore the development must be carried forward another stage.

Stage 3. (Completed topic outline)

I. Aviation in World War I
   A. The nature of the early airplane
      1. Its flimsy construction
      2. Its insignificant pay load
      3. Its mechanical unreliability
   B. The uses of aviation
      1. Short range reconnaissance
      2. Crude bombing
      3. Spectacular but insignificant aerial duels
   C. The reputation of aviation
      1. Generally ignored by military authorities
      2. Regarded as an expensive novelty by public

II. Aviation in World War II
   A. The nature of the modern airplane
      1. Variety of constructions to suit purposes
         a. Light, medium, and heavy bombers
         b. Pursuit ships
         c. Transports
         d. Training craft
      2. Structural capacities
         a. Range of flight
         b. Load capacity
         c. Armament and firepower
   B. The uses of aviation
      1. Offensive uses
         a. Long range mass and precision bombing
         b. Preliminary bombardment before attack

c. Long range reconnaissance
d. Supply
e. Transport

2. Defensive uses
a. Break-up of enemy concentrations
b. Harassing of enemy movements
c. Air cover for ships and troops
d. Submarine reconnaissance
e. Evacuation of personnel
f. Interceptor force

C. The reputation of aviation
1. Regarded as decisive factor by military authorities
2. Regarded by troops as aristocratic branch of the services
3. Highly favored by public opinion
4. Emerged from war as co-equal with army and navy

The outline is now a complete plan for a long paper. The writer has merely to provide the details necessary to elaborate the headings. But the chances are that the plan might not have been so completely or so consistently worked out had the writer not proceeded methodically through the first two stages before attempting the final form.

TESTING THE OUTLINE

Whenever a careful outline is required, try to avoid finishing it at a single sitting. The time spent on the outline of a long paper is so small compared with the total time of composition that you can usually afford to reconsider your plan before you begin to write. It is often wise to subject the outline to a deliberate test by asking yourself the following questions:

1. Is the purpose statement satisfactory?
2. Is there a logical and evident relationship between the parts of the outline?
3. Is the outline sufficiently developed to be thoroughly useful?

Let us consider these questions.

Is the Purpose Statement (Thesis) Satisfactory?

Since the whole outline is a development of the purpose statement, an unsatisfactory statement invites trouble all along the way. As we

have already seen, the statement of purpose should be restricted, unified, and precise. We have also seen in the outline of the paper about cancer (page 92) that a faulty purpose statement will probably lead to a badly organized or pointless paper. A rigorous checking of the purpose statement is therefore the first and most important step in testing the usefulness of a tentative outline.

As an additional illustration of what is likely to happen if a student proceeds to develop an unsatisfactory statement, consider the following example:

> The purpose of this paper is to provide a better understanding of the American Indian by revealing a few facts about his everyday life and customs.

If you examine the statement carefully you will discover that its author has really not clarified his purpose and that any paper he writes is likely to be superficial. Why, for instance, does he think that "a few facts" about the everyday life and customs of the Indian will help us to understand him better? What kind of facts is the student going to reveal? What will be his criterion for accepting some facts and rejecting others? When we look at the outline which he developed we see, as his purpose statement would lead us to expect, that he is simply going to write a purposeless paper "about" the American Indian.

I. The Indian religion differs from the white man's.
   A. The Indian religion is complicated.
   B. His conception of the supernatural has a strong influence on his everyday life.

II. The Indian medicine man is one of the most important people in the tribe.
   A. The training of the medicine man begins at an early age.

III. Dancing is of great importance in the life of the Indian.
   A. There are many classes of dancing.
   B. The instruments used to accompany the dancers are of a wide variation.

IV. The education of the Indian was not very extensive.
   A. There were several Indian colleges built.

V. The government of the Indian was simple.
   A. There were four divisions in the government.

Apart from the errors in the conventions of outlining, do you see that the vagueness of the purpose statement encouraged the student to tack on anything that had any connection with his general subject?

The only purpose this outline has is to string together enough information to bring the paper up to the required length. This example, of course, is an unusually bad one, but it illustrates what can happen when a student bases an outline on an unsatisfactory purpose statement.

Is There an Evident, Logical Relationship Between the Parts of the Outline?

In a good outline the relationship between the parts ought to be clear. Anyone studying the outline should be able to see how each Roman numeral brings out an important part of the purpose statement and how each subdivision helps to develop the main heading of which it is a part. If there is any doubt about the relation of any heading to the total purpose of the outline, that heading is either unclearly stated or is a potential trouble spot in the organization. Whatever the reason, the difficulty should be removed before beginning to write. Notice how clear is the relation between all parts of the following outline.

Thesis: The age at which a citizen may vote should be reduced to 18.

I. The present age limit is wholly arbitrary and has no logical justification.
   A. It has no relation to physical maturity.
   B. It has no relation to intellectual maturity.
   C. It has no relation to economic maturity.

II. Whatever justification the present age limit once had has been removed by changed conditions.
   A. In the last war we were forced to draft 18-year-olds because they made the best soldiers.
   B. The draft necessitates a change in the voting age if we are to respect the political maxim that the responsibilities of citizenship presuppose the privileges of citizenship.

III. The objections against reducing the age limit, like the objections against female suffrage, are based on unsupported assertions.
   A. It was asserted that women would use the vote foolishly, but the facts have disproved that assertion.
   B. It is asserted that 18-year-olds neither care about voting nor will take the trouble to make themselves politically informed, but the facts do not support that assertion.

IV. The argument that there has to be some minimum age begs the question, since reducing the age limit does not abolish it.

V. Reducing the age limit would broaden the base of our democracy, a consequence which has been traditionally desirable.

Each Roman numeral shows a clear relation to the thesis, each capital letter is a logical division of its Roman numeral. No entry in the outline fails to advance the purpose, and each introduces, at its proper place, a significant part of the argument. You can be confident from looking at this outline that the paper written from it will be a coherent and closely-reasoned argument.

Now study the following outline, which is intended to develop the thesis that the Munich Conference was in reality a political poker game. The outline looks good, but test it by asking whether there is any clear or necessary relationship between the parts. Study it by yourself first, and then consider the analysis that follows it.

Thesis: The Munich Conference was in reality a political poker game.

I. Hitler held three tens in the game.
   A. The ten of clubs was manpower.
      1. Hitler had much power and made the men join the Nazi party.
      2. The children that were born were brought up to love war and were therefore confirmed Nazis.
   B. The ten of hearts was morale of the people.
      1. Austria had been taken seemingly without bloodshed.
      2. The rich industrialists were backing Hitler because they were jealous of the money and the power that the Jews were accumulating.
   C. The ten of diamonds was air power.
      1. Hitler had more planes, he said, than England, France, and Czechoslovakia together.
      2. England was not all out for war at this time and had less planes than did Hitler.

II. England held a pair of aces but was bluffed out because she wanted peace so badly.
   A. The ace of spades was finance.
      1. Hitler was using all his money for war preparations.
      2. The English knew that they could get financial help from the United States if necessary.
   B. The ace of hearts was sea power.
      1. Germany and England made an agreement that Germany was to have 35% as much sea power as England.
      2. Hitler had built 250 submarines which was against the Treaty of Versailles, but England let him go because they were afraid of war.

III. France held a pair of fives.

A. The five of clubs was foreign relations.
1. England would have entered the war on the side of France although neither country was prepared for war.
2. Czechoslovakia would not have had to bow down to Hitler if France and England had not sold her out.

B. The five of spades was the poor government of France.
1. The government of France accepted the ultimatum of Germany in regard to Czechoslovakia although they had not been delegated to do so.
2. France undermined the Czech government by telling them to wait; they did, until it was too late.

At first glance this outline looks good, but let us examine it closely. At the level of the Roman numerals there seems to be a clear relationship with the thesis, though actually the Roman numerals are themselves metaphors and the relationship is fictitious, as we shall later see. Now look at the capital letters. Do A, B, and C under I point back to the Roman numeral? At first glance they seem to, but if we ask a few embarrassing questions we learn that this relationship too is fictitious. Why is manpower called the ten of clubs? Could it not just as well be called the ten of hearts, the queen of diamonds, the ace of spades, or anything else in the deck? Why is the ten of diamonds air power, or the ace of spades finance, or the ace of hearts sea power? Or why is any capital letter classified as it is, except that it carries out the metaphor of the poker game and makes the outline look good without affecting the organization of the paper? The sad truth is that the metaphor merely causes confusion.

We have to go to the Arabic numerals to find what the author is really going to do. When we do so, the whole outline is exposed. Look at the section on manpower. Are the statements that Hitler made the men join the Nazi Party and caused the children to become confirmed Nazis evidence that Hitler had more manpower available than the British or the French or both? Might not the statement about the children be used as evidence of morale rather than of manpower? Is the jealousy of the industrialists sound evidence of strong morale among the Germans? Do the statements about France point to any advantage which she might use in the conference? In short, when we get to the Arabic numerals, we find that there is no clear relationship between the parts of the outline. Its only logic is the false logic of the metaphor.

If you ignore everything but the Arabic numerals, this is the organization you get:

1. Hitler had much power and made the men join the Nazi Party.
2. The children that were born were brought up to love war and were confirmed Nazis.
3. Austria had been taken seemingly without bloodshed.
4. The rich industrialists were backing Hitler because they were jealous of the money and the power that the Jews were accumulating.
5. Hitler had more planes, he said, than England, France and Czechoslovakia together.
6. England was not all out for war at this time and had fewer planes than did Hitler.
7. Hitler was using all his money for war preparations.
8. The English knew that they could get financial help from the United States if necessary.
9. Germany and England made an agreement that Germany was to have 35 per cent as much sea power as England.
10. Hitler had built 250 submarines which was against the treaty of Versailles, but England let him go because they were afraid of war.
11. England would have entered the war on the side of France although neither country was prepared for war.
12. Czechoslovakia would not have had to bow down to Hitler if France and England had not sold her out.
13. The government of France accepted the ultimatum of Germany in regard to Czechoslovakia although they had not been delegated to do so.
14. France undermined the Czech government by telling them to wait; they did, until it was too late.

When we get away from the metaphor, this is the material that the student is going to present, in the order given. Does it prove that the conference was a political poker game? Actually, the paper the student wrote had merely an occasional reference to a poker game. He was so deceived by his own metaphor that he did not discover, until his graded paper was returned to him, that there was no necessary relation between the various units of his outline and the purpose on which he thought he was writing.

Is the Outline Sufficiently Developed to Be Thoroughly Useful?

If an outline is a blueprint for a paper, it must be detailed enough to be genuinely useful. For example, if we had stopped at either Stage 1 or Stage 2 in the development of the outline on military aviation (page 100), we would still have been left with a considerable amount

of organization to do while writing the paper. The more we can handle the organization in the outline, the freer we are later to concentrate on the problems of composition. A review of the preliminary outlines on the superior student (pages 94-95) will show how true this is.

SUMMARY

1. The ability to outline is useful: (*a*) as an aid in difficult or important reading; (*b*) as a means of testing the proposed organization of a paper; (*c*) as a tool for clarifying and developing the purpose of a paper.

2. In a topic outline parts are expressed as words or phrases; in a sentence outline, as complete sentences. The topic outline is easier to construct and is therefore more popular, but since the sentence outline requires more careful planning it is the better form for any essay in which a logical progression of ideas or arguments is required. In practice, most sentence outlines evolve out of preliminary topic outlines.

3. The conventions of outlining require that all headings be marked with an appropriate symbol and indented to show the degree of division. They also require that the outline should contain no single divisions, should not confuse major and minor divisions, and should keep the grammatical structure of all headings parallel.

4. In preparing an outline, always finish the major divisions before you touch minor divisions. Do the Roman numerals before you begin the capital letters, and the capital letters before you begin the Arabic numerals. This will require you to work out the outline in a series of stages.

5. When you think your outline is complete, test it by considering the following questions: (*a*) Is the purpose statement satisfactory? (*b*) Is there a logical and clear relationship between the parts? Do the Roman numerals point back to the thesis, and the capital letters to the Roman numerals? (*c*) Is the outline sufficiently developed to be thoroughly useful?

EXERCISES

A. Fit the following statements into their appropriate place in the framework that follows and supply statements for I and II.

1. Speed of air travel is its major advantage.
2. Fear has been the greatest deterrent to passenger travel by air.

3. Time and cost to airport is another deterrent.
4. Frequency of service has stimulated growth.
5. Advance reservation has been a drawback.
6. Baggage limitation is an inconvenience to commercial travellers.
7. There is a probable saving in the cost of air travel.
8. Air sickness and other discomforts are still prevalent to some degree.
9. Cancellations of flights are still too high to satisfy the traveling public.

Thesis: The growth of air passenger travel has been affected by both favorable and adverse factors.

I. .....
  A. .....
  B. .....
  C. .....

II. .....
  A. .....
  B. .....
  C. .....
  D. .....
  E. .....
  F. .....

B. The purpose statement and Roman numerals of a student outline are given below. Under them are statements that comprise the capital letters and Arabic numerals. From these two sets of data, reconstruct the complete outline.

The purpose of my paper is to reveal what the plastic surgeons are doing to restore function and improve the appearance of scarred and wounded veterans of World War II.

I. The primary aim of the plastic surgeon is to restore function.
II. The plastic surgeon is also interested in improving the appearance of scarred and wounded veterans.

1. The hands and arms are among the first portions of the body to be restored.
2. The plastic surgeon can rebuild an entire new face for the patient.
3. Noses are rebuilt to enable patients to breathe and to improve appearance.
4. New eyelids are made to protect eyes.
5. Leg and arm stumps may be made healthy and alive by plastic surgery before artificial limbs are applied.
6. Scars that make veterans hideous are removed.
7. Patients are restored to their former likeness as nearly as possible.
8. Ears are restored by plastic surgery.
9. New tendons are put into fingers so they can move.
10. Skin grafts are done on burns that are too noticeable.

11. Thumb and forefinger are most important to save so hand can function.

12. Lower jaws are rebuilt so that veteran can eat, drink and speak naturally.

13. Entire forearms are rebuilt by plastic surgery.

14. Scars that are opened and undermined, then sewed together, heal neatly without scarring.

15. Hands are most important for veteran to help himself.

16. Surgeons connect live tissue to paralyzed area to heal it almost without a defect.

C. Rearrange the following sentences into an outline to develop the thesis that "The motivation behind Marx's theories was purely personal and in no way was concerned with benefiting the masses."

1. In his letters to Dr. Kugelmann this personal motivation stands out.

2. Several of the conversations between Engel and Marx bring out Marx's personal motivation.

3. His correspondence brings out the personal motivation that kept driving him on to new economic theories.

4. In his conversations with and about his compatriots this personal motivation appeared.

5. Marx eliminated all who dared to be of equal stature in the promulgating of socialistic and communistic policies.

6. His closest friends in the "professors' club" were the first to be eliminated.

7. During many of the conversations that took place at the "professors' club", Marx clearly revealed his personal motivation.

8. He refused to recognize any opinions that were not his own.

9. He purged the International of all men who disagreed with him.

10. This personal motivation was very evident in Marx's dealings with the International Workingmen's Association.

11. His correspondence with Proudhon, Bakunin, and other colleagues bears out his personal motivation.

12. In unguarded moments, sometimes even in guarded moments, Marx's conversations revealed his personal motivation.

13. Ferdinand Lassalle was eliminated because, next to Marx, he was the most powerful figure in the "professors' club."

14. Hess, Weitling, and Bakunin were also eliminated.

15. When Marx had to choose whether to let the International go on without him or be disbanded, he disbanded it.

16. Through his personal motivations Marx destroyed the International Workingmen's Association.

17. This personal motivation was evident in his correspondence and conversation.

18. His correspondence with his own family dripped with personal ambition.

D. In both of the following pairs of outlines one version is the student's original, the other is his revision after a conference with his instructor. Study both outlines carefully, identify the revised version, and explain in a short report the reasons for the revisions.

(1)

To show the ways the Tennessee Valley will benefit by the various projects carried on by TVA.

I. Production of fertilizer to aid agriculture
   A. Prevention of erosion

II. Production of cheap electricity
   A. Electrical appliances will be encouraged in every household
   B. Electric power will attract great industries to the valley

III. The goal of TVA is to provide a more assured existence for everyone in the valley
   A. Housing plans for model communities
   B. Development of waterways to stimulate tourist trade
   C. Government instruction in practical subjects

IV. Federal government justified in creating TVA.

To show the means by which TVA hopes to improve economic and living conditions in the Tennessee Valley

I. Agricultural improvements
   A. Prevention of erosion
   B. Production of cheap fertilizer
   C. Government advice to farmers

II. Industrial improvements
   A. Attraction of large industries through supply of cheap electric power
   B. Promotion of local industries through government instruction
   C. Development of waterways to stimulate tourist trade

III. Improvements in living conditions
   A. Development of model communities
   B. Increased housing facilities
   C. Extensive use of electrical appliances in all homes

(2)

To show Elizabeth's contribution to the development of the English Navy

I. Condition of navy prior to Elizabeth's reign
   A. Its size compared with first rate navies
   B. Its lack of government support
   C. Its inefficient use

II. Elizabeth's support of the "Sea Dogs" — Drake, Frobisher, Howard, Raleigh, and Grenville
   A. Political and economic reasons for her support
   B. Nature and extent of her support

III. Results of Elizabeth's support of Sea Dogs
   A. Economic rivalry with Spain
   B. Defeat of Armada and new prestige of English navy
   C. Extensive shipbuilding program to forestall Spanish retaliation
   D. More efficient design for ships
   E. Improved theory of naval warfare
   F. Foundation of English naval tradition

IV. Summary of condition of navy at end of Elizabeth's reign in contrast to condition described in I above

To show Elizabeth's contribution to the development of the English Navy

I. Condition of navy prior to Elizabeth's reign
   A. Navy relatively small in comparison with other first rate powers
   B. Inadequate government attention to fleet

II. Development of naval warfare during the period
   A. Importance of battle with Spanish Armada
      1. Types of warfare used by both sides
      2. Defeat of Armada a turning point in English naval history
   B. Brief description of offensive and defensive forces of English navy
      1. Classification of ships as to size and armament
      2. Location of forces
   C. Work of Elizabethan Sea Dogs
      1. Influence upon Elizabeth
      2. Sea Dog fighting tactics
         a. Work of Drake
         b. Treatment of Spanish ships

III. Comparison of formation and battle tactics of Elizabethan and modern navies
   A. Factors of formation and battle tactics
   B. Closing paragraph

E. Using the headings and subheadings as guides, prepare a topic outline of this chapter.

F. Select any of the topics suggested on pages 30-33, prepare a statement of purpose for that topic, and develop the statement through a sentence outline. Make your outline detailed enough so that your instructor can forsee from it the complete development of your proposed paper.

6

PARAGRAPHS: COMPOSITIONS IN MINIATURE

THE FUNCTION OF THE PARAGRAPH

PARAGRAPHING, like punctuation, is a way to ease the reader's task. Considering the long history of writing, it is a relatively recent device. Originally authors wrote in long, unbroken blocks. Later it became the custom to place the mark ¶ in the margin as a signal of some turn or transition, or of a new phase of the subject. These paragraph marks acted as signposts. They pointed out the successive steps in the development of the author's thesis. And, in doing so, they offered some relief to eyes which had to travel, without rest, through pages of solid writing.

Today the function of these paragraph marks has been taken over by the practice of indenting paragraphs or of leaving extra space between them. There has been an increasing trend toward reducing the length of paragraphs in popular writing, but paragraphing is still a device to show the structural units of a piece of writing.

You have already seen that the function of the different headings of an outline is to show these same structural units. The relationship, then, between outlining and paragraphing is very close. Indeed, in formal exposition and argument a paragraph often develops a particular heading or subheading of the outline. The heading then becomes the *topic* or *topic sentence* which the paragraph develops. The topic sentence may be explicitly stated in the paragraph or it may be merely implied. In either event, the content of the paragraph may be summed up in a single statement which can be both the topic sentence of the paragraph and the heading of the outline.

In less formally organized papers – such as most of those we discussed in Chapter 4 – the paragraphing may not so neatly mark off each unit of organization. A thesis may be announced in one paragraph and illustrated in another, as it was in the selection about the

Elizabethan audience (page 76). Or it may be announced in one paragraph, explained in another, and illustrated in a third, as in "More Than a Sport" (page 46). But though a writer may vary his paragraphing for psychological or stylistic reasons, he still uses the paragraph as a device to set off succeeding units of his work. Thus the paragraph is not only a unit of development but in a sense also a miniature composition.

THE FOUR REQUIREMENTS OF GOOD PARAGRAPHS

The basic requirement of a good paragraph is that it make clear the meaning of its topic or central idea. A paragraph designed to develop a unit of an outline or to elaborate a factor of the thesis should devote itself to that task and should not stop until it has satisfactorily completed it. Its chance of succeeding will depend on how well it observes four characteristics: *completeness, unity, order,* and *coherence.*

Completeness

Detailed development is just as important in a paragraph as in a whole composition – indeed, no essay can be rounded out unless its paragraphs are. For example, look at this selection:

WHY I CAME TO COLLEGE

My chief reason for coming to college was to prepare myself for a position that would allow me to have a larger income than I would be likely to obtain as a high school graduate. There is no question that college graduates make more money.

Another reason for coming to college was to provide myself with a cultural background that would help me to make a more satisfying use of my leisure time.

A third reason for coming to college was to increase my social experience. Getting along with people is important, and college teaches a man to be a good mixer.

This selection is little more than an outline; each paragraph merely adds a second general statement to the topic sentence. If the function of a paragraph is to drive home the implications of the topic sentence, then the three units of this paper cannot properly be called paragraphs at all.

Such incomplete paragraphs result in very weak writing. If the author of this paper believes that a college education will improve his economic and social position, he should show his reasons for thinking so. The habit of confining a paragraph to a general judgment, without evidence, illustration, or support of any kind, is a major weakness of freshman writing; yet it is a habit which is easily overcome once students appreciate how much supporting details mean to a reader, and once they learn how to supply them.

To see the difference in effectiveness between incomplete and complete paragraphs, contrast the two following ones.

(1)

This notion of order is a familiar one to man. He discovers changeless properties in the objects around him, and in himself and his fellow men. Thus he finds himself accepting the saying of Ecclesiastes, "there is nothing new under the sun," as a philosophical conclusion about all existence.

(2)

This notion of order is a familiar one to man. *He sees the sun rise and set with regularity. He watches the seasons follow each other in unvarying succession.* He discovers changeless properties in the objects around him: *water is wet, the oak yields acorns, and only acorns produce oaks. In his own life he passes, in turn, through childhood, youth, and age. And as he sees each generation facing the problems of its predecessors, he is aware of the pattern in the behavior of men.* Not without reason he finds himself accepting the saying of Ecclesiastes, "there is nothing new under the sun," as a philosophical conclusion about all existence.[1]

In supplying these italicized details, we are merely applying to the paragraph the lesson we learned in Chapter 4 about the use of purposeful details. If a student has learned that lesson well, his paragraphing is not likely to be incomplete. If he finds, as he comes to revise the first draft of his paper, that any particular paragraph is too abstract, he can add the details at appropriate places, as they have been added in this example.

The Length of Paragraphs

What we have said about complete paragraphs naturally raises the question of how long paragraphs should be. Students sometimes feel

[1] From *The Theory and Practice of Philosophy* by Abraham Edel, copyright, 1946, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

that college instructors have a prejudice against short paragraphs — a prejudice evidently not shared by successful newspaper and magazine writers. Actually, the instructor usually objects not to short paragraphs, but to incomplete ones. An illustration, taken from *Newsweek*, will show this distinction.

> One of the greatest art hoaxes was proved last week in an Amsterdam prison.
>
> Dutch art experts laughed when Hans van Meegeren, Dutch Nazi artist, claimed it was he who had painted the seven Vermeers which museums and private collectors, among them Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, had bought since 1939 for $3,000,000.
>
> So, before a skeptical audience, van Meegeren sat down at his easel. With the jewel-like detail, crystal clarity of atmosphere, and exquisite harmony of the lemon yellows and blues Jan Vermeer so loved, van Meegeren turned out a "seventeenth century masterpiece" — a painting of Christ and his pupils in the temple. The paints he used, such as the real lapis-lazuli for his blues, had in some cases cost him $2,000 a tube.
>
> Other evidence: In van Meegeren's studio was the chair in which Christ is seated in "Christ at Emmaus," the most famous forgery; the hands of Christ in this painting seem to be drawn after van Meegeren's own hands.[2]

Structurally, these four paragraphs develop a single idea which is stated in general terms in the short first paragraph. The whole story, therefore, might have been told in a single paragraph had the author been concerned only with showing the structure of his thought. But *Newsweek*, like most newspapers and news magazines, is printed in small type with several columns to the page, and the physical appearance of its pages makes long paragraphs highly undesirable. Therefore, the author's division of his material into four paragraphs is entirely justifiable, even wise, in the light of his total obligation to his readers. His paragraphs are short but they are not incomplete, a fact that can easily be demonstrated by writing the passage in one solid paragraph, thus changing the length without affecting the completeness of development.

The number of words in a paragraph is no real standard of completeness. If you study the work of established writers you will find paragraphs ranging from less than five words to more than five hundred. In general the paragraphs in fiction tend to be shorter than those in exposition, and the more formal the writing is, the longer they are

[2] Reprinted by permission of *Newsweek* from the issue of September 10, 1945.

likely to be. The only adequate test of paragraph length is the functional one: is the paragraph sufficiently developed to do its job?

Unity

Since a paragraph develops a topic sentence, stated or implied, there should be nothing in it which does not clearly serve that end. This is the principle of unity. Unified paragraphs make clear reading. Paragraphs which digress or drift away from their topic sentences put extra demands on the reader and sometimes thwart him in his efforts to follow the writer's purpose.

To write unified paragraphs, an author must stick ruthlessly to his purpose. You have already seen a mild break in unity in the *Newsweek* report, in which the author interrupted his account of the forgeries to tell how much the artist paid for his paints. But since that digression was brief — and interesting — it did not seriously distract the reader's attention. The following digression is less excusable:

> It is a good thing that we learn to speak as children. If the learning were postponed until we were adults most of us would be too discouraged by the difficulties to persevere in the task. *Perhaps, in that event, our political campaigns would be conducted in sign language and our radio broadcasters would be required to learn the Morse code.* We take a child's learning to talk for granted, and not infrequently parents grow worried when their four-year-old stumbles over his consonants or becomes snarled in his syntax. Yet compared with the intellectual achievement of learning to talk, the discovery of the theory of relativity is a trifling accomplishment.

Clearly the author intended to develop the idea that learning to speak is man's greatest intellectual achievement. But as he wrote he became interested in the possible consequences of our not learning to speak, and in an uncritical moment he introduced the italicized sentence. Such a digression is a sign of uncontrolled thinking; and repeated digression is almost sure to annoy and bore even the most patient reader.

The paragraph below digresses even more flagrantly.

> In order to bring about harmony in our economy, Congress must force unions to become more responsible. This is no reactionary proposal. It is made in the interests of labor itself. Organized labor is an asset to the economy of a nation. One has only to read of the conditions that prevailed in mills and mines and factories during the last century to understand what the lot of the workingman would be like if he were deprived

> of his right to unite with his fellow workers to force concessions from entrepreneurs whose short-sighted irresponsibility has been nourished on *laissez-faire.*

The writer begins by accusing labor unions of being irresponsible and concludes by asserting the irresponsibility of management. The ability to see both sides of a question is valuable, but a writer who fails to make up his mind what side he is on before he begins his paragraph merely transmits his confusion to his reader.

Here is one more example:

> During the war years Churchill became the very symbol of British determination and endurance. For many of us in the United States he was John Bull in person. When he addressed Congress, shortly after our entry into the war, his speech was enthusiastically cheered. He pointed out that if his father, instead of his mother, had been an American, he might have been speaking that day as a member of Congress. One can well imagine such an event, for there is something typically American about Churchill and his ideals.

Notice how this paragraph reverses itself. The first sentence states the topic of the paragraph and the second sentence begins the development. Then the author refers to Churchill's speech before Congress. The only justification for mentioning that speech would be to illustrate the way Churchill symbolized the British people. But the writer becomes more interested in the speech than in the use he is supposed to be making of it; so when he recalls Churchill's reference to his American mother, he begins to see in Churchill a typically American figure. This is the kind of thing that all too often happens to a writer who makes up his mind as he goes along.

The only cure for such paragraphs is complete rewriting. The author must begin again, but first he must get clear in his own mind what one idea he wants to develop in the paragraph. It will be a useful discipline for him to set down the topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph and to keep his eye on it while he writes. That will help him to resist intruding ideas which seem interesting or important but which have nothing to do with his immediate purpose.

Orderly Movement

If the paragraph is to be an organic unit its movement should follow some clear order. There are several different ways in which the material of paragraphs may be arranged. But while there may be no

one inevitable order for a given paragraph, certainly some orders will be more effective than others.

Consider the following:

(1) We all know that if we "burn" chalk the result is quick-lime. (2) There are a great many other ways of showing that chalk is essentially nothing but carbonic acid and quick-lime. (3) Chemists enunciate the result of all the experiments which prove this, by stating that chalk is almost wholly composed of carbonate of lime. (4) By the procedure of burning we see the lime, but we do not see the carbonic acid. (5) If, on the other hand, you were to powder a little chalk and drop it into a good deal of strong vinegar, there would be a great bubbling and fizzing, and, finally, a clear liquid, in which no sign of chalk would appear. (6) Here you see the carbonic acid in the bubbles; the lime, dissolved in the vinegar, vanishes from sight. (7) Chalk, in fact, is a compound of carbonic acid gas, and lime, and when you make it very hot the carbonic acid flies away and the lime is left.

This paragraph is fully developed and is unified. A careful reader, however, would notice something about it that would bother him. He would feel, at first reading, a certain jerkiness in its development. As he reread it, he would observe that the sequence of ideas in the paragraph was as follows:

1. A statement about a specific experiment – burning.
2. A statement about other experiments.
3. A conclusion drawn from all experiments.
4. A second statement about burning.
5. A statement about a specific experiment – dissolving.
6. A second statement about that experiment.
7. Another statement essentially about burning.

He would then understand what had bothered him on the first reading: the author should have grouped the statements about burning in the first part of the paragraph, those about dissolving in the second part, and finally should have drawn the general conclusion about all such experiments. This is exactly what T. H. Huxley did in the paragraph from which our scrambled version was taken.

We all know that if we "burn" chalk the result is quick-lime. Chalk, in fact, is a compound of carbonic acid gas, and lime, and when you make it very hot the carbonic acid flies away and the lime is left. By this method of procedure we see the lime, but we do not see the carbonic acid. If, on the other hand, you were to powder a little chalk and drop

it into a good deal of strong vinegar, there would be a great bubbling and fizzing, and, finally, a clear liquid, in which no sign of chalk would appear. Here you see the carbonic acid in the bubbles; the lime, dissolved in the vinegar, vanishes from sight. There are a great many other ways of showing that chalk is essentially nothing but carbonic acid and quick-lime. Chemists enunciate the result of all the experiments that prove this, by stating that chalk is almost wholly composed of "carbonate of lime."[3]

Huxley developed his paragraph *inductively* – that is, he moved from facts to a generalization – from the specific experiments to show that chalk contained lime and carbonic acid to the more inclusive statement that all experiments prove that chalk is composed of carbonate of lime. It would have been quite possible to develop the paragraph in exactly the opposite direction, to move from the general to the particular – from the broad conclusion to the specific experiments. Such development is called *deductive*. Here is a deductive development of Huxley's topic:

Chalk is almost wholly composed of carbonate of lime, a compound of lime and carbonic acid gas. The existence of both elements may easily be demonstrated by simple experiments. If a small quantity of powdered chalk is dropped into a good deal of strong vinegar, a great bubbling and fizzing will ensue and finally there will remain a clear liquid containing no trace of lime. The bubbles can be identified as carbonic acid gas. The lime has dissolved completely in the vinegar. But if, in a second experiment, chalk is burned, only the lime remains, the gas having been driven off by the heat.

The great majority of expository paragraphs are developed deductively. The paragraph usually opens with a general statement – called the *topic sentence* – which the rest of the paragraph elaborates and hence makes more meaningful. This is merely another way of saying that the topic sentence states the thesis of the paragraph and the subsequent sentences elaborate that thesis.

Often the deductive pattern is modified so that a paragraph not only opens with a general statement but also closes with one. The author will state his general conclusion, develop it deductively, then restate the conclusion at the end of the paragraph. This is merely the pattern of statement, elaboration, and restatement which you saw illustrated in Chapter 3. The paragraph is still developed deductively,

[3] From T. H. Huxley, "A Piece of Chalk," *Collected Essays*. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

but the topic sentence is repeated – usually in different words – as a concluding sentence, as in the following example:

> *Most disputes about whether or not men are stronger than women are meaningless because the disputants fail to consider that the word "stronger" may mean many things.* Most men can surpass most women in lifting heavy weights, in striking an object (say a baseball or an opponent's jaw), in running, jumping, or doing heavy physical labor. But the statistics indicate that most women live longer than most men, that they have a better chance of resisting disease, that they can beat men at operations requiring finger-dexterity and the ability to work accurately under monotonous conditions. On this kind of evidence it would be legitimate to argue that women are stronger than men. The truth is that each sex can surpass the other in certain kinds of activities. *To say that one is stronger than the other is to indulge in an argument which would not arise if the word "stronger" were more sharply defined.*

The last sentence of this paragraph is a restatement of the opening sentence. The paragraph is developed deductively, but a general statement both introduces and concludes it.

Less popular than the deductive method, but fairly common in expository writing is the *diagnostic* movement of sentences within a paragraph. A paragraph developed diagnostically moves from question to answer or from effect to cause: The topic sentence of such a paragraph poses a question or states an effect and the other sentences answer the question or show the cause. The following paragraph moves from question to answer:

> *And when is water boiling?* It can be said, with few people to argue the point, that water boils at two hundred and twelve degrees Fahrenheit. Myself, I would say that when it bubbles with large energetic bubbles, and looks ready to hop from the kettle, and makes a rocky rather than a murmuring noise, and sends off a great deal of steam, it is boiling.[4]

The topic sentence of this paragraph is the italicized question. The rest of the sentences answer that question in two different ways.

The next paragraph first states a result, then gives the cause:

> *When Basil Rathbone was handed a scenario titled: "The Monster," he gave it back to Paramount without reading it.* A wise man in the studio retitled it "Destiny" and sent the same script back to Rathbone. He read it, liked it, and assured me on the set that it is not a horror pic-

[4] From M. F. K. Fisher's *How To Cook A Wolf*. Copyright, 1942, by M. F. K. Fisher. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc.

ture. "I'm through with horror and villainy," says Basil, "a man has only so many villains in him, and I've played all mine."[5]

The topic sentence of this paragraph is the italicized statement of the effect. The rest of the paragraph explains the cause which produced that effect.

A paragraph may also follow a *reversed* movement. If it does, it usually begins with a topic sentence which contains or implies a contrast or qualification. The first half of the paragraph develops one phase of the topic sentence, then the second half contrasts or qualifies what has been said. Usually the point of reversal is indicated by a transitional conjunction such as *but, on the other hand, nevertheless, still,* or *yet.* For example:

> *The statement that the German people were ultimately responsible for the war is a half truth which encourages a convenient oversimplification.* It is true that Hitler was the constitutionally appointed leader of the German nation and that, despite individual protests, his policies, as long as they were successful, had the approval or at least the acquiescence of the German voters. *But* in the world in which we live no man, no nation causes war. To fix any ultimate responsibility for World War II we must go beyond Hitler and the Nazi ideology; we must look before Munich and the invasion of Poland. And the farther we look the more clearly we will see that the roots of war were world wide, and that no nation was guiltless of nourishing them.

The italicized topic sentence suggests that (1) the German people were responsible for the war, (2) other people were also responsible. The next sentence supports the suggestion of German guilt. Then at the transitional *But* the paragraph begins to reverse itself and to move toward the conclusion that all nations were involved in the responsibility for the war.

A word of caution should be uttered about this kind of paragraph movement. In the hands of an inexperienced writer, a reversed paragraph may easily become disunified, and may end up, like those we saw on pages 117-118, saying the opposite of what the author intended. To be successful, the reversal must be deliberate. The author must be aware at the outset that he intends to qualify his opening statement within the paragraph, and the topic sentence should be phrased to reveal that intention. Unless these conditions are observed, it will often be safer to break the paragraph in two at the point of transition. For example:

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[5] From Sheilah Graham's column, *Chicago Daily News,* March 6, 1940. Reprinted by permission of the *Chicago Daily News* and The Bell Syndicate, Inc.

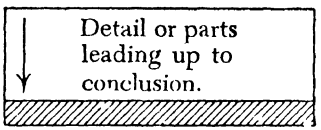
The statement that the German people were ultimately responsible for the war is a half truth which encourages a convenient oversimplification. It is true that Hitler was the constitutionally appointed leader of the German nation and that, despite individual protests, his policies, as long as they were successful, had the approval or at least the acquiescence of the German voters.

But in the world in which we live no man, no nation causes war. To fix any ultimate responsibility for World War II we must look beyond Hitler and the Nazi ideology; we must look before Munich and the invasion of Poland. And the farther we look the more clearly we will see that the roots of war were world-wide, and that no nation was guiltless of nourishing them.

The following table will summarize the types of paragraph movement which we have been discussing:

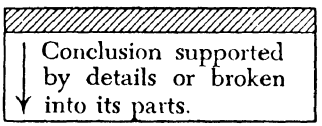
Inductive

(from specific details to the general statement or from the parts to the whole, the topic sentence, if stated, appearing at the end of the paragraph).



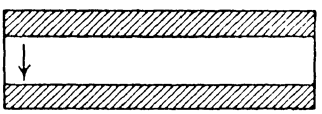
Deductive: Type 1

(from general statement to supporting details or from whole to parts, the topic sentence, if stated, at or near the beginning of the paragraph).



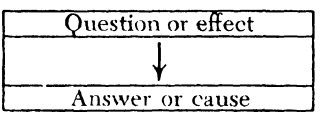
Deductive: Type 2

(differs from Type 1 only in that topic sentence is restated at end of paragraph, so that the paragraph opens and closes with the general statement).



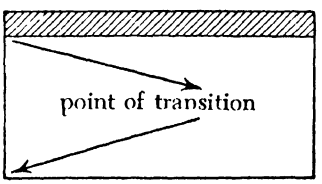
Diagnostic

(paragraph moves from question to answer or from effect to cause, topic sentence often stated as question at opening of paragraph).



Reversed

(topic sentence usually implies contrast or qualification, direction reversed in the middle of paragraph so that both parts tend to balance; point of reversal usually indicated by transitional conjunction, such as: *on the other hand, nevertheless, yet, still*).



Coherence

The word *cohere* means to stick together. A paragraph is said to have coherence when, in addition to having unity and orderly development, all of its sentences are woven together or flow into each other. If a paragraph has this characteristic, the reader moves easily from one sentence to the next without feeling that he is reading individual sentences. If the paragraph lacks coherence, the reader will be conscious that the sentence rather than the paragraph is the unit of writing, and he will feel that he is reading a collection of separate sentences rather than an integrated paragraph.

Coherence Within the Paragraph

The following paragraph lacks coherence:

> I was accepted and started to work. My experience until that time had been derived chiefly from books. I was not prepared for the difficult period of adjustment that every inexperienced secretary must face. I soon became discouraged with myself and so dissatisfied with my job that I was on the point of quitting. My employer must have sensed this. He called me into his office and talked to me about the duties of my position and the opportunities it offered for advancement. That talk helped me considerably. I realized that there was nothing wrong with me or the job that experience could not cure and I decided to stay.

This paragraph is adequately developed, it is unified, it follows an orderly development; yet it is a poor paragraph. The writer's ideas do not flow from one sentence to the next; they merely jolt through the paragraph in a series of jerky statements, like boxcars being shunted on a siding. The trouble is that its sentences are not knitted together. The reader is forced to tackle each one separately and in so doing he loses the flow and continuity which a more carefully constructed paragraph would provide.

Now look at the same paragraph slightly altered:

> I was accepted, and started to work. *Until that time* my experience had been derived chiefly from books, *and unfortunately* those books had not prepared me for the difficult period of adjustment that every inexperienced secretary must face. *Consequently* I soon became so discouraged with myself and so dissatisfied with the job that I was on the point of quitting. *I think* my employer must have sensed this, *for* he called me into his office and talked to me both about the duties of my position and the opportunities it offered for advancement. That talk

helped me considerably. *From then on,* I realized that there was nothing wrong with me or the job that experience could not cure, and I decided to stay.

Transitional Words and Phrases. The second version is distinctly better than the first, and if you read both aloud, the difference between them will be still more obvious. Why? The content is the same, the diction is scarcely changed, and the second version is not more fully developed than the first. The italics in the second version should already have shown you the difference. By a few minor revisions, the sentences of the second paragraph have been woven together so that the reader may move easily from one to the next. The whole difference is in the transitions between statements. Transition, then – the interconnection of sentences – is the secret of coherence, assuming, of course, that the paragraph is already unified and orderly.

Let us look closely at what was done.

1. The adverbial phrase, *until that time,* was moved forward to provide transition between sentences 1 and 2.
2. Sentences 2 and 3 were joined by the conjunction *and.*
3. The subject of sentence 3 was changed from "I" to "those books" to provide closer connection with sentence 2, and the transitional adverb *unfortunately* was added for smoother passage.
4. The transitional adverb, *consequently,* was used to tie sentences 3 and 4 together.
5. *I think* was added at the beginning of sentence 5 to avoid a sudden change of subject, thus reducing "my employer" to the subordinate clause.
6. Sentences 5 and 6 were joined and a transition was provided by "for."
7. Transition was provided between the last two sentences by *from then on.*

Transition Through Related Sentence Structure. A writer who looks upon a paragraph as a unit designed to develop a central idea, and who consequently composes a whole paragraph at a time, is not likely to write paragraphs which lack coherence. Most incoherent passages are a result of thinking in terms of single sentences rather than of whole paragraphs. When a writer works this way, he is likely to write one sentence, stop, think a minute, write a second sentence, stop, and continue in a series of jerks and pauses. Paragraphs developed in this way are almost sure to be incoherent, for the writer is starting afresh at every new sentence. He loses the feeling of continuity with the

last sentence before he begins the next one. Consequently he is not able to keep a consistent grammatical pattern running throughout the paragraph. Consider the following example:

> Although the writing of a research paper is a difficult assignment, many students make it more difficult than it need be because of inefficient work habits. The work on the paper is too often postponed until it is too late to do a decent job of it. Failure to find out at the beginning of the study whether or not sufficient material is available in the library often invites serious difficulty. Many students tackle the topic in detail before they have formed a general notion of the topic. It is unwise to begin reading the first book which is available and to plunge into fine points before the student has learned to understand the topic as a whole. The habit of taking notes too soon is inefficient. Students should postpone notetaking until they have decided what kind of information they need. It is also a mistake to quote a paragraph in its entirety. The notes should consist of the factual information taken from the paragraph.

Because this paragraph was developed one sentence at a time, the writer failed to maintain any consistent point of view toward his material. He changes from active to passive voice, from a personal to an impersonal subject, and he uses seven different subjects for the nine sentences of his paragraph. As a result there is no grammatical unity within the paragraph, which reads as jerkily as it was composed.

Notice the improvement in the following version:

> Although the writing of a research paper is a difficult assignment, many students make it more difficult than it need be because of inefficient working habits. Too often they postpone work on the paper until it is too late to do a respectable job of it. Often they invite avoidable difficulty by failure to find out at the beginning of their study whether or not sufficient material is available in the library. Instead of developing a general notion of the topic before tackling it in detail, they begin with the first book which is convenient and plunge into fine points before they see the topic as a whole. They take more notes than are necessary because they begin to take notes before they have decided what kind of information they need, and because they do not pick out the factual information of a paragraph but quote the paragraph in its entirety.

The biggest change here is that the noun *students* or its pronoun *they* has been made the subject of every sentence. This not only eliminates unnecessary and awkward shifting but allows the writer's purpose to develop easily and steadily through successive sentences.

It is not a requirement of effective paragraphing that a common

subject run through all sentences. In many paragraphs changes in subject are necessary or wise. But when, as in the example above, arbitrary changes in subject destroy coherence, revision to avoid these shifts will often greatly improve the paragraph.

Pronoun Reference. Since a pronoun refers to an antecedent, the use of a pronoun in one sentence to point back to an antecedent in the preceding sentence offers a simple and natural connecting device. Notice how the alternating use of pronoun and antecedent provides effective transitions between the following sentences:

> In the history of the American film no other single personality has so endeared himself to the world as Charlie Chaplin. His presence is as much alive as ever in the thousands of 16 mm. revivals of his work. Every generation takes him to its heart anew. As with all great characters one sees in Chaplin what one brings to him.[6]

The use of pronouns often allows a writer to keep his subject running through the paragraph without falling into monotonous repetition. Notice how this is done in the following paragraph, in which nominative, possessive, and objective forms of the same pronoun bind the sentences together by inconspicuous repetition.

> He was a monster of conceit. Never for one moment did he look at the world or at people, except in relation to himself. He was not only the most important person in the world, to himself; in his own eyes he was the only person who existed. He believed himself to be one of the greatest dramatists in the world, one of the greatest thinkers, and one of the greatest composers. To hear him talk, he was Shakespeare, and Beethoven, and Plato rolled into one. . . .[7]

Transitional Markers. These are words or phrases placed at or near the beginning of a sentence to signal to the reader the relationship between the new sentence and the one before it. The commonest of these markers are the simple connectives *and, or, nor, but,* which commonly serve as bridges over which the reader may easily pass from one sentence or clause to the next. Others – sometimes called transitional connectives – indicate the direction which the new sentence is about to take and so prepare the reader for what is to follow. The

[6] From *The Rise of The American Film* by Lewis Jacobs, copyright, 1939, by Lewis Jacobs. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

[7] The subject of this description is later identified as Richard Wagner, the famous German composer. Reprinted from *Of Men and Music* by permission of Simon and Schuster, publishers. Copyright, 1937, by Deems Taylor.

commonest of these transitional connectives may be classified as follows:

1. To introduce an illustration: *thus, for example, for instance, to illustrate.*

2. To add another phase of the same idea: *secondly, in the second place, next, moreover, in addition, similarly, again, also, finally.*

3. To point a contrast or qualification: *on the other hand, nevertheless, despite this fact, on the contrary, still, however.*

4. To indicate a conclusion or result: *therefore, in conclusion, to sum up, consequently, as a result, accordingly, in other words.*

You have already seen a few of these transitional markers used in the revised version of the paragraph about the research paper. Here is a further illustration.

> Such a controlling purpose, of course, limits the appeal of the book, and probably this work will have a greater attraction for the layman than for the professional historian. *Moreover,* it always runs the risk of producing a book which, because of its lack of any unifying theme, is merely another book about the subject with which it deals. There are, *indeed,* moments when one feels that the author has not sufficiently resisted the temptation to add another story merely because it is a good story, without concerning himself too much about the relationship of the story to the theme that he is developing. *Thus* the chapter dealing with Strang's kingdom on Beaver Island hardly escapes being an eight page digression, since it has no other claim to being an integral part of the story of the development of the Great Lakes than the fact that Beaver Island happened to be located in Lake Michigan. The story, of course, is interesting, *but* like a cuckoo in a sea-gull's nest, it would be more at home in other quarters.

To see the value of the connectives in this paragraph, one need only read it again and omit them.

The following paragraphs illustrate the use of various transitional devices:

> The good educator is very serious but also very sensible. (And) somewhere in (his) soul there is a saving lightness. (He) understands, to begin with, the meaning of a recent remark: "Not everything can be learned." (Some things) are never taught; they are simply known. (Other things) cannot in the nature of things be known, either by student or by teacher. (And then) there is that endless series of knowable things only a few of

which can be bestowed upon the student during the fragment of his life he spends in school.[8]

The transitional devices in this paragraph are the connectives *And* and *And then,* the pronouns *he* and *his* pointing back to the antecedent *educator,* and the connecting relationship between the words *everything, Some things,* and *Other things.* Still a subtler linking is achieved by the words *learned . . . taught . . . known . . . knowable.*

Deliberate repetition

Deliberate repetition

Interconnection of pronouns and antecedents

In a world in which the leaders of war democracies are the Daladiers and Chamberlains and Churchills, *we have reason to be proud* of (Lincoln) *We have reason to be proud* that *with every opportunity* of setting up a dictatorship, (he) did not *succumb; with every opportunity* of betraying democratic values under the guise of war necessity, (he) did not *succumb.* . . . I have no intention of saying that Lincoln was wholly consistent in the strength of (his) humanism. . . . Yet there never was a time when it was more important for us than now to know the capacity of a democracy to turn up *greatness* of Lincoln's sort from (its) humblest sons — a *greatness* that will survive the grime and savagery of war.[9]

All the transitional devices we have discussed are revealed in this paragraph. Lincoln, although his name is seldom the actual subject of a sentence, is referred to in almost every sentence and thus gives the paragraph a continuity of subject; the pronoun references help tie the paragraph together; the purposeful repetition of similar phrasing in the first half of the paragraph strengthens the coherence; and the transitional connective *Yet* links the last sentence with the one preceding it.

Coherence Between Paragraphs

We have been thinking of the single paragraph as a unit. It is, however, only one of several units in the larger scheme of the whole paper, and just as there should be coherence *within* the paragraph, so there should be at least a measure of coherence *between* paragraphs.

In an analytical paper which is well organized, the relationship between the paragraphs will be clear, for the reader will be following

[8] From Mark Van Doren: *Liberal Education.* Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

[9] From Max Lerner's review of Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years.* Reprinted by permission of the *New Republic.*

the thesis of the paper and, especially if the topic sentences appear at the beginning of each paragraph, he will have no trouble seeing the relationship of each new paragraph to what has gone before. The following selection offers a simple illustration of this. Notice that the first paragraph states the thesis of the selection and identifies the four factors, each of which is developed in a separate paragraph.

Thesis

There are four idols which beset men's minds. To these for distinction's sake I have assigned names. I call the first Idols of the Tribe; the second, Idols of the Cave; the third, Idols of the Market-Place; the fourth, Idols of the Theatre.[10]

Topic sentence points to first factor of thesis.

The Idols of the Tribe are founded in human nature itself, and in the very tribe or race of men. For it is a false assertion that the sense of man is the measure of things. On the contrary, all perceptions, as well of the sense as of the mind, accord to the measure of the individual, not to the measure of the universe. And the human understanding is like an irregular mirror, which distorts and discolors the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it.

Topic sentence points to second factor of thesis.

The Idols of the Cave are the idols of the individual man. For everyone, besides the errors common to human nature in general, has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolors the light of nature; owing either to his own proper and peculiar nature or to his education and conversation with others; or to the reading of books, and the authority of those whom he esteems and admires; or to the differences of impressions, in a mind preoccupied and predisposed or on a mind indifferent and settled; or the like. So that the spirit of man, however it is disposed to different individuals, is a thing variable and full of perturbation, and governed as it were by chance. Whence it was well observed by Heraclitus that men look for sciences in their own little worlds, and not in the great and common world.

Topic sentence points to third factor of thesis.

There are also idols formed by the intercourse and association of men with each other, which I call idols of the Market-Place, on account of the commerce and

[10] From Francis Bacon's *Magna Instauratio.*

consort of men there. For it is by discourse that men associate; and words are imposed according to the apprehension of the vulgar. And therefore the ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obsesses the understanding. Nor do the definitions or explanations, wherewith in some things learned men are wont to guard and defend themselves, by any means set the matter right. But words plainly force and overrule the understanding, and throw all into confusion, and lead men away into innumerable and inane controversies and fancies.

Topic sentence points to fourth factor of thesis.

Lastly, there are idols which have immigrated into men's minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from perverse laws of logic. These I call Idols of the Theatre; because in my judgment all the received systems are but so many stage-plays, representing worlds of their own creation after the unreal and scenic fashion. Nor is it only of the systems now in vogue, or only of the ancient sects and philosophies that I speak: for many more plays of the same kind may yet be composed and in like artificial manner set forth; seeing that errors the most widely different have nevertheless causes for the most part alike. Neither again do I mean this only of entire systems, but also of many principles and axioms in science, which by tradition, credulity, and negligence have come to be received.

The clear relationship of each topic sentence to the thesis of the essay creates the effect of "signposting" each paragraph, of informing the reader in advance what each is going to do, what part of the thesis it is going to develop. Such signposts serve the double purpose of setting off each paragraph as a structural unit of the essay and yet providing transitions between paragraphs. Notice the signposts of the next selection.

The politicians tell us, "you must educate the masses because they are going to be masters." The clergy join in the cry for education, for they affirm that the people are drifting away from the church and chapel into the broadest infidelity. The manufacturers and the capitalists swell the chorus lustily. They declare that ignorance makes bad workmen. . . . And a few voices are lifted up in favor of the doctrine that the masses should be educated because they are men and women with unlimited capacities for being, doing, and suffering, and that it is as true now, as ever it was, that the people perish for lack of knowledge.

(These members of the minority,) with whom I confess I have a good deal of sympathy, . . . question if it be wise to tell people that you will do for them, out of the fear of their power, what you have left undone, so long as your only motive was compassion for their weakness and their sorrows. And if ignorance of everything which it is needful a ruler should know is likely to do so much harm in the governing classes of the future, why is it, they ask reasonably enough, that such ignorance in the governing classes of the past had not been viewed with equal horror? . . .

(Again,) (this sceptical minority) asks the clergy to think whether it is really want of education which keeps the masses away from their ministrations —whether the most completely educated men are not as open to reproach on this score as the workmen; and whether, perchance, this may not indicate that it is not education which lies at the bottom of this matter?

(Once more,) (these people,) whom there is no pleasing, venture to doubt whether the glory, which rests upon being able to undersell all the rest of the world, is a very safe kind of glory – whether we may not purchase it too dear; especially if we allow education, which ought to be directed to the making of men, to be diverted into a process of manufacturing human tools, wonderfully adroit in the exercise of some technical industry, but good for nothing else.

(And, finally,) (these people) inquire whether it is the masses alone who need a reformed and improved education. . . . They seem to think that the noble foundations of our old universities are hardly fulfilling their functions. . . . And while as zealous for education as the rest, they affirm that if the education of the richer classes where such as to fit them to be the leaders and the governors of the poorer; and if the education of the poorer classes were such as to enable them to appreciate really wise guidance and good governance, the politicians need not fear mob-law, nor the clergy lament their want of flocks, nor the capitalists prognosticate the annihilation of the prosperity of the country.[11]

As the circled expressions show, Huxley uses two sets of transitional devices: the signposts *Again, Once more, Finally* to mark the transition from one paragraph to the next; and the references *These members of the minority, this sceptical minority, these people,* each of which points back to the people holding the opinion described at the end of the first paragraph.

Transitional Paragraphs

Occasionally a whole short paragraph may be used as a transition. Such a paragraph always occurs at a point at which the author has

[11] From T. H. Huxley: *Collected Essays.* The Macmillan Company, publishers.

finished one main unit of his composition and is about to start another. The transitional paragraph may be used in several ways. It may sum up what has already been said before introducing the next unit. It may introduce one or a series of illustrations of a point already made. Or it may state what the writer intends to do next. The following examples will illustrate these uses:

To sum up before beginning the next unit:

Before we begin to analyze the merits of this proposal, let us sum up what we have already established. We have shown that the proposed program has several times been offered to the American people and has always been rejected. We have shown that the proponents of the program have attempted to manufacture a need which does not exist. We have further shown that the program is being advocated by diverse groups which have nothing in common except a conviction that what is best for their special interests must also be best for the country.

To introduce a series of illustrations:

The point that I have been making is necessarily abstract. In order to make it more concrete, let me cite three illustrations, all of which are drawn from common experience.

To show what the writer intends to do next:

Now, you may admit all these things and yet inquire what can be done about them without sacrificing values that have become precious to us all. Since I realize that this question is a just one, I shall outline briefly the organization of the University of Utopia. It will be seen that not all the features of this university are new and original. At Wisconsin, Harvard, Swarthmore, and numerous other places, many phases of its plan have been tried and have succeeded. Much of the rest of the program has been under discussion at the University of Chicago and elsewhere for some years.[12]

These transitional paragraphs connect what has gone before with what is to follow. In addition, each is a sort of aside to the reader in which the writer shows the connection between parts of his work. The transitional paragraph, then, links larger units as a transitional word or phrase connects sentences or paragraphs.

[12] From R. M. Hutchins, "The University of Utopia," in *The Yale Review*. Copyright, Yale University Press.

EXERCISES

A: The following student essay is written solid. Study it carefully and decide where the paragraph divisions should occur. Then write out and return to your instructor the first sentence of each paragraph.

So you want to produce a play! Sounds simple, doesn't it? Perhaps it is – in the professional theatre. There the producer has a million and one stooges running around for him so that all he has to do is give the orders. However, when you produce a show – just an amateur production – there are no stooges awaiting your beck and call. You have no stage manager, costume manager, lighting technician, property manager, director, make-up manager, publicity chairman, house chairman, and so on, and so on, and so on. You have to be all those people rolled into one besides being all the subheads and crewmen. If you are lucky, you have a staff of sixty people, including your cast, and no one of those sixty has had enough experience to be the manager of any one department; consequently you are the goat. First of all you must design the set for your production (since you have no scene designer), noting carefully the choice of colors – blue, cold; red, passionate; yellow – absurd, isn't it, but quite necessary. Having successfully struggled through the "designing stage," you come up against the construction problem (since you have no construction manager). About the same time construction gets under way, direction comes along, so you have to divide yourself in two or run from the paint shop to the rehearsal stage all day long. Duck, because here come some more headaches! In order to make a production profitable (the sole purpose of producing any play in the first place), the public must know what is going on, when it is going on, and where it is going on. In other words – publicity! You must call all the local newspapers and plead with them to write up an article on the play. Then comes poster publicity, word-of-mouth publicity, and any other type of publicity that you can think of. But wait! You'd better divide yourself into quarters because along with publicity you have to take care of the business end. You must line up a printer for the tickets and programs, get the ushers and ticket takers signed up, number the seats in the auditorium, and arrange for places to sell the tickets. From now on you not only stay up all day working on the production – construction, direction, publicity, business – but you stay up all night poring over costume books, searching for the right costume for so and so, making sure that the colors will harmonize with the set, and rummaging through the costume chest for a few remnants that can be sewed together and made to look like an old Spanish shawl. Now what? Well, the set is almost finished, the play is shaping up, publicity is getting along fairly well, business is ready to get under way, costumes are being made, ripped up and made over again, and – oh, yes! What good are the set and actors if there is nothing on the stage for the Thespians to eat from or sit on? Properties. What do you need? Now let's see – a desk, a round table, a sofa, twin armchairs, and a floor lamp. Oh, let's not forget hand props like a cigarette case, a

table lamp, pictures for the walls, a vase, flowers. The set is finished and ready to be put up. "Get some braces, hold leg number two, take the eye up, screw the braces, set her up, foot it," plus a few magic words not fit for print, and the set is up. Now you move in the props that you have managed to wheedle out of your dear friends, and you have a semblance of a living room. What good is a scene if none of the audience can see it? Lights! "Get out the gelatins, bring me some baby spots, put on border number two, fade on number six spot, put on the hanging floods, up with the foots," – and then just hope. Comes dress rehearsal night. Set, props, lights, costumes, actors – well, what do you know, we forgot something. Ha! Ha! No make-up. You madly dash around putting base seven on Joe, number four on Beatrice, blue shadow on Betty, white lines on Jack, powder seven-and-one-half-R on Mabel. Everything is all worked out now, including you. Curtain! Dress rehearsal is on. You squirm through the whole play listening to people "fluff" their lines, watching light cues come on in the wrong place, noticing the whole set tremble when Joe slams the door, biting your fingernails to the quick when Betty rips her costume. What a pleasant evening! You spend all night fixing over a few costumes, changing the make-up chart, putting more braces on the set, making out a light cue sheet, adjusting the dimmers, rearranging the furniture, and changing a few lights. Before you know it, the performance time has arrived. Once more the mad last minute rush, and then the brave shout, "Curtain!"[13]

B. Correct the digressions of the faulty paragraphs given on pages 117 and 118 by taking the topic sentences of these paragraphs and developing them as they should have been developed in the first place.

C. For each of the following paragraphs write out and return to your instructor the answers to the following questions:

1. What is the topic sentence?
2. What is the order of development of the paragraph – inductive, deductive, diagnostic, or reversed?
3. What transitional devices are used to keep the paragraph coherent?

In the year 1830 a French customs official unearthed, in the valley of the Somme, strange implements of flint now recognized by the learned as the weapons with which the men of the Old Stone Age made war. These stones are called *coups de poing*, or "blows of the fist," for one end was rounded to be grasped in the hand, while the other end was pointed for persuasion. With these modest tools of death, it seems, Neanderthal men from what is now Germany, and Cro-Magnon men from what is now France, fought fifty thousand years ago for the mastery of the continent, and, after a day of lusty battle, left perhaps a score of dead on the field. Twenty years ago, modern Germans and modern Frenchmen fought

[13] Marge Halvorsen, "How to Spend a Quiet Four Weeks." Reprinted with permission from *The Green Caldron*, a magazine of freshman writing (University of Illinois), March, 1947, pp. 10-11.

again, in that same valley, for that same prize, with magnificent tools of death that killed ten thousand men in a day. One art alone has made indisputable progress in history and that is the art of war.[14]

The purist claims to base his case on cultivated usage, but even this claim is largely specious, for cultivated usage is by no means wholly on his side. Such usage may eschew the double negative; it may separate *sit* from *set;* but there is a large proportion of the purist's dictums which it fails to justify. Take the business of *It's me,* for example. Cultivated conversational practice is very definitely against *It is I* (see for example the analysis of this locution in Leonard's Current English Usage) and yet the purist declines to budge from his championing of the latter phrasing. As a matter of fact, *It is I* is only a third in a series of changes from Old English *Ic eom hit* (*I am it*) down through Chaucer's *It am I* to the present, fourth stage, *It's me.* To be historically consistent the purist should go back to Old English. To be grammatically consistent he should accept the fourth change to *It's me,* a change which has taken place in actual fact.[15]

Some of the current coinages show a considerable ingenuity, e.g., *klim,* the name of a powdered milk, which is simply *milk* backward, *flit,* a spray for obnoxious insects, suggesting very forcibly their precipitate departure; *rem,* a cough cure, obviously based on *remedy; jonteel,* a perfume, from the French *gentile; toncan,* a brand of sheet-iron, produced by reversing the syllables of *Canton,* the town in Ohio where it is made. . . . Many trade-names embody efforts to state claims for the product without colliding with the legal prohibition of descriptive terms, e.g., *holeproof, eversharp, interwoven, softee,* and *klingtite.*[16]

The available facts show this student was allowed to enroll in the course two weeks late on the understanding that he would make up the work which he had missed. At no time did he consult his instructor about the back work, nor did he hand in the assignments of the first two weeks. At the end of four weeks he had only one grade on the record and that was a failing grade. He was asked to come in and have a talk with his instructor, but though he made an appointment he did not keep it. At midsemester he was notified in writing by the dean's office and orally by his instructor that he was failing the course. He was advised either to drop the course with a failing grade or go to work, but he did neither. At the end of the semester he had completed less than a third of the required work, and had failed all examinations in the course, and had accumulated 15 absences. In view of these facts it would seem that he has

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[14] Will Durant, "Why Men Fight," *The Saturday Evening Post,* July 10, 1937. Reprinted by permission of the author and the Curtis Publishing Company.

[15] From Janet Rankin Aiken's *Commonsense Grammar.* Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

[16] From H. L. Mencken: *Supplement I: The American Language.* Alfred A. Knopf, publisher.

simply been wasting his own time and his parents' money and is not responsible enough to merit any more lenient consideration than the university regulations permit.

If I were a freshman (again) I should determine to do some one line of work well. As I remember, I was principally concerned in "getting through." I think I was not quite so modest in my scholastic ambitions as the young fellow who told me not long ago that a "pass" was as good as one hundred per cent to him, but at least I was not so much concerned about doing my best in some one line of work as I wish now I had been. Practically every college man, every freshman included, is rushed with his work. He takes more "hours" than he should, or he neglects to prepare the assignments at the proper time, so that when his work is done it is done hastily. Nine out of ten freshmen are behind with assigned work. I have known fellows even to go as far as to argue that it is an excellent practice to get behind, for then if one is to catch up he must force himself to do a large amount of work in a short time. I grant that this may be a good thing, but work done under such conditions usually shows all the earmarks of slovenliness and superficiality. There are many subjects in which I think it would be sufficient to merely do good work, but at least in one subject I wish I had made it a point to take time to give the matter careful thought, and to do it as well as it was possible for me to do.[17]

One day a girl brought me a composition that had been corrected and returned. On the two pages that it occupied there was a total of 127 corrections. I could not get any coherent picture from such a complete mess, so I tabulated the errors according to type. Out of the 127 mistakes, 92 came from wrong punctuation. There were no errors of capitalization or grammar. Two sentences were incomplete, 19 were far too long and involved, 8 contained wrong references, and 6 lacked parallelism. The girl had another composition to write at once. I told her to go to work on it, but to concentrate on the avoidance of a single error — the long, loose-jointed sentences. In fact, I was so sure from the analysis that her key mistake was mere length that I instructed her to use not over fifteen words per sentence. She promised to keep within this limit and went into an adjoining laboratory. I did not see the finished product, but I know she went directly to class where she handed in her work, and I know she got no help from anyone. The total length of this second composition was about twenty words more than the first, but when it came back there were only eight errors — one incomplete sentence, three errors in spelling, and four unnecessary commas. All of the mistakes the girl had made earlier had been pyramided upon the single error of trying to write sentences that were too long. Naturally, this girl still needed to learn how to write sentences that were of greater length than fifteen

[17] Thomas Arkle Clark, "If I Were a Freshman Again." From *The American College Magazine* for July, 1910.

words, but the situation was much clarified for all concerned by this isolation of the key difficulty.[18]

Yes, you may say, but if fraternities and sororities should be abolished, wouldn't students organize other cliques and clubs? I admit they would, but such groups would be formed in a normal natural way. Students would be judged on their merits and find their own level. A boy or girl would not be relegated to a fixed position in campus society during the first days of school, as is provided under smug Panhellenic rules, merely because of the prestige or bank account of his parents, or because of the way he flipped a cigarette or handled a cup of tea.[19]

America has been going suburban. The city moving out and the country moving in have met and mingled in this new melting pot – the urban belt. According to the latest United States census, the suburban population increased approximately thirty per cent between 1930 and 1940, against little more than seven per cent for the country as a whole. In the decade between 1920 and 1930, the suburbs grew five times faster than the rural districts and three times faster than the cities they encompassed. Already fifty-eight per cent of the people in this country live in metropolitan areas, with a disproportionate number in nineteen centers such as Greater New York, Chicagoland, and Greater Los Angeles. Small towns, the traditional citadels of American provincialism, have become enveloped in some metropolitan area or another, and have become citified. Highway 67 is now the extension of Main Street, and the corner grocery has given place to the A. & P.[20]

To think of Chaplin is to think of the movies. Yet this unique actor, director, and producer has added little to movie technique or movie form. He has been not a technician but a pantomimist, a commentator, a satirist, a social critic. His artistic problems have not been cinematic; they have been personal, always being solved by feeling. His importance lies not in what he has contributed to film art, but in what he has contributed to humanity. If he is negligible as a movie craftsman, if he has evolved no new formal aspects to enrich the medium, he has created many monuments to enrich society. Chaplin will always be known for his social outlook, his insight into human nature, his pantomimic skill, his ingenious development of the incident, and his evocation of a mood. It is these qualities rather than any plastic contributions which have made him significant as a screen artist.[21]

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[18] From Luella Cole's *The Backgrounds for College Teaching* (Farrar & Rinehart, 1940). Reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc.

[19] From Mrs. Glenn Frank's "Heartache on the Campus," *Woman's Home Companion*, April, 1945. Reprinted by permission of the *Woman's Home Companion*.

[20] From Carl von Rhode's "The Suburban Mind," *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1946. Reprinted by permission of *Harper's Magazine*.

[21] From *The Rise of the American Film* by Lewis Jacobs, copyright, 1939, by Lewis Jacobs. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

From the point of view of the ordinary citizen, democracy is both the easiest and most difficult form of government. It is the easiest because it permits each citizen a high degree of freedom. In a democracy, more than in any other form of government, he remains his own man – free to think, talk, and worship as he pleases, and, within wide limits, free to carve out for himself whatever kind of profession or career seems to him most lucrative or most satisfying. Yet these privileges are not purchased without a price. For a democracy makes heavy demands of each citizen. It places upon him the responsibility of being continually informed of the needs not only of his own country but of the whole world. It requires him to weigh and decide which of several conflicting policies will best meet these needs. It demands that he distinguish between the interests of special groups and the general welfare, and between immediate and long range interests. It insists that he learn to observe the will of the majority without ignoring the rights of minorities. And it constantly requires of him the difficult task of seeing the implications of economic, political, and social theories and of sensing the effect that these implications will have in the lives of his grandchildren.

If you enjoy working out the strategy of games, tit-tat-toe or poker or chess; if you are interested in the frog who jumped up three feet and fell back two in getting out of a well, or in the fly buzzing between the noses of two approaching cyclists, or in the farmer who left land to his three sons; if you have been captivated by codes and ciphers or are interested in cross-word puzzles, if you like to fool around with numbers; if music appeals to you by the sense of form which it expresses – then you will enjoy logic. You ought to be warned, perhaps. Those who take up logic get glassy-eyed and absent-minded. They join a fanatical cult. But they have a good time. Theirs is one of the most durable, absorbing and inexpensive of pleasures. Logic is fun.[22]

Beauty is the quality which makes to endure. In a house that I know, I have noticed a block of spermaceti lying about closets and mantelpieces, for twenty years together, simply because the tallow-man gave it the form of a rabbit, and, I suppose, it may continue to be lugged about unchanged for a century. Let an artist scrawl a few lines or figures on the back of a letter, and that scrap of paper is rescued from danger, is put in portfolio, is framed and glazed, and, in proportion to the beauty of the lines drawn, will be kept for centuries. Burns writes a copy of verses, and sends them to a newspaper, and the human race take charge of them that they shall not perish.[23]

D. Select any three of the following statements. Use each of them as a topic sentence of a paragraph. Develop the paragraph so that it is complete,

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[22] From Roger W. Holmes' *The Rhyme of Reason,* copyright, 1944, with permission of Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

[23] Emerson, "Beauty."

unified, and coherent. Then in a separate paragraph explain the order of development and the transitional devices you have used:

1. The transition from high school to college life is a difficult one.
2. Essentially, college is a place in which students learn from each other.
3. Student activities belong to the students.
4. The educational value of fraternity bull sessions is greatly overrated.
5. There is a significant distinction between self-confidence and conceit.
6. Much adolescent shyness is sheer egotism.
7. What is college spirit?
8. There never yet was a self-made man.
9. It is easier to confess our sins than our weaknesses.
10. We have nothing to fear but fear itself.
11. If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent one.
12. It is easier to get men to die for peace than to live for it.
13. The statement that education will save the world is one of our most popular opiates.
14. Colleges will not begin to achieve their function in a democratic state until they divorce themselves from the belief that higher education exists for the economic welfare of the students.

7

EFFECTIVE SENTENCES

TRULY EFFECTIVE SENTENCES – those which do their work with artistic neatness as well as with accuracy – are probably more often rewritten than written. Especially is it true of inexperienced writers that their thoughts do not always find best expression in a first draft, but have to be worked over, once they are down on paper. For this reason, much of this chapter applies more to revision than to the first draft. Yet practice at getting your sentences right finally is the best preparation for learning to get them right at the first try.

The four characteristics of effective sentences are *clarity, consistency, economy,* and *variety.* In practice these are not separate virtues. Clear sentences are likely to be consistent, economical, and varied; conversely, unclear ones are often inconsistent and wordy. For simplicity, however, we shall have to take up these characteristics one by one.

CLARITY

Most unclear sentences fail to convey their intended meaning because the writer has not kept his reader in mind. Obviously, a writer who is confused about his own meaning is not likely to convey it clearly to a reader. But merely knowing what one wants to say is no guarantee of clarity. The writer must always remember that unless he expresses himself in words which will be as clear to the reader as they are to him, his meaning may be misunderstood or not understood at all. For example, the following sentences probably seemed quite clear to the students who wrote them, but even the most intelligent reader will have difficulty with them.

> In the past every great change in favor of the masses that has taken place in the laws and political viewpoints of a country has been brought about only by war, revolt, and insurrection because the privileges of the few have been disturbed.

The cheaper steels, as those in structural shapes, because steel rails make use of this steel, but for high grade tools or steel castings it is impossible.

Young men who go to war must leave their homes and friends. But if they love them, they will help to make the parting easy.

This was the only English course I mastered because of my leaving college for active service.

I feel quite certain that the amount of science carried in high school and college does not balance the need for my place in the air force.

Some of these sentences are so fuzzy that you cannot tell precisely what point the writer is trying to make. Others are capable of two interpretations. In some you may be able to guess which meaning the writer intended. But, as soon as the reader has to guess, the process of communication breaks down. In the kind of writing we are considering in this book, the chief aim and responsibility of the writer is to control the reader's response to a statement, to make sure that the impression received by the reader will be precisely the one which the author intended him to receive.

This point is emphasized because a common student answer – indeed, a common human answer – to the criticism of ambiguity is to brush it aside with the remark, "Oh, you *know* what I mean!" Often the critic does know. But the criticism is nevertheless sound; for nothing can spoil effective communication more quickly than a writer's assumption that he can pass on some of his responsibility to the reader.

Specific causes of unclear sentences are confused sentence structure, faulty pronoun reference, misleading word order, and careless omission.

Confused Sentence Structure

The following excerpt was taken from a letter written by a physician to an insurance company in answer to the question whether there was any active tuberculosis in the family of an applicant:

In none of this period has there been any active, open tuberculosis in any member of the family, with the exception of his younger sister, none of the family have had any chronic illness of any kind.

If you were an officer of the insurance company and were required to charge the applicant a higher premium if there was active tuberculosis in his family, which rate would you charge, and how would you justify your decision on the evidence of this letter?

The confusion in this letter comes chiefly from the fact that two

sentences have been written as one. When the reader, recognizing the error, tries to break the sentences apart, he cannot tell to which sentence the all-important phrase – *with the exception of his younger sister* – belongs. Remember, there was no doubt in the doctor's mind. He knew the facts, and he had no intention of misleading or confusing the insurance company. But his failure to see his answer as his reader would see it caused him to assume that what was clear to him would be equally clear to others.

Not all ambiguous sentences are quite so baffling, but often they create unnecessary trouble. For example, a reader discovers what the following sentences mean, but not in time to avoid the difficulty they cause:

1. I felt hot and uncomfortable when my brother suggested a swim I readily agreed.
2. They have been unable to find a house or an apartment since he returned from service they have been living with her parents.
3. I asked him, before you arrived, I wanted to know the truth.

In each of these sentences the reader is presented with a group of words which could modify either the preceding or the following main clause.[1] The natural first response is to assume that the modifier refers to the clause preceding it, and the reader temporarily misinterprets the sentence. Here are two examples of a slightly different kind:

4. She did not care for movies meant little to her.
5. When we started to eat the dog after a few timid advances came over beside us.

In these sentences the reader may first assume that the words following *for* and *to eat* complete the opening clause. As he reads on, he sees that his interpretation is wrong, that *for* is being used to introduce a new clause, and that *the dog* is not the object of *to eat* but the subject of the main clause. Again:

6. I had to take a ground check of the radio equipment, the mechanics and their helpers had to check the instruments and fill the gas tanks.

A reader is likely to interpret this sentence as a series of three things to be checked – until he comes to the second verb and realizes that he is reading two separate sentences which have been run together as one.

In all these sentences the confusion could have been removed by

[1] A student who is not familiar with the grammatical terms employed throughout this chapter should look them up in the Glossary.

simple changes in punctuation.[2] Punctuation which fails to make clear the structure of a sentence is a major cause of trouble in student writing.

Faulty Pronoun Reference

You have previously seen that the use of pronouns to point back to nouns in preceding sentences is one way to make a paragraph coherent. But a pronoun which has no clear antecedent, or which may point back to either of two nouns, may be bothersome to a reader, and a pronoun placed too far from its antecedent may create an awkward or ambiguous sentence.[3] Observe how the following sentences are improved when they are revised to make the pronoun reference clearer.

Confusing Reference	*Clear Reference*
My coat was too shabby to wear to the dance. He lent me his because it looked so bad.	He lent me his coat to wear to the dance because mine was shabby.
I lived on a farm and drank unpasteurized milk. Now that I am older, I wouldn't do that.	When I lived on a farm I drank unpasteurized milk. I wouldn't drink it now.
Parents are hopelessly prejudiced in favor of their children when they are small. They are really not much better than savages, but they think of them as angels.	Although small children are not much better than savages, their parents regard them as angels.
Mr. Dionne became wealthy after his wife presented him with five daughters, which was more than he could have expected.	Mr. Dionne acquired unexpected wealth after his wife bore him five daughters.
We could not afford the price for the books which they were quoting.	We could not afford the price which they were quoting for the books.
In this story the two brothers quarrel and their wives take sides with them. Then their children become involved in the quarrel. When they see what is happening they decide that they had better have a reconciliation.	In this story the two brothers quarrel. First their wives and then their children are drawn into the dispute. When the brothers see that their whole families are becoming involved they agree to a reconciliation.
A gust of wind whipped around the corner which he had not expected.	An unexpected gust of wind whipped around the corner.

[2] If you do not see clearly what punctuation should have been used or if you make such errors in your own writing, you should consult pages 316-317.

[3] For a fuller discussion of pronoun reference, see pp. 335-336 and 347-349.

Any writer may easily be trapped into a faulty pronoun reference as he is developing his ideas in the first draft, but really awkward references are so easy to detect that a writer has little excuse for not discovering and correcting them during revision.

Misleading Word Order

Word order in English is relatively fixed.[4] The fundamental convention is that related elements should be kept as close together as possible. Some variation of the basic pattern is permissible, but in general it is wise to avoid unnecessary separation of two closely related elements, such as subject and verb, verb and complement, modifiers and the elements which they modify.

The following contrasts will illustrate how faulty word order may be improved. The sentences at the right have been revised to limit the reader to a single interpretation. The last example on the left is not ambiguous, but it is awkward.

Faulty Word Order	*Explanation*	*Improved Word Order*
I was born on a small farm where I lived until I was ten. I grew up observing how the different vegetables and fruits grew *without any special effort on my part.*	*The italicized phrase is intended to modify* observing, *but its position suggests that it modifies* grew. *It should be put as close to* observing *as possible.*	I was born on a small farm where I lived until I was ten. I grew up observing, *without any special effort on my part,* how the different vegetables and fruits grew.
The prosecution revealed that she had planned to kill him *repeatedly.*	Repeatedly *is intended to modify* had planned. *This order suggests that it modifies* to kill.	The prosecution revealed that she had *repeatedly* planned to kill him.
Today a woman is not required to promise to love, honor and obey her husband *in many marriage ceremonies.*	*The position of the italicized phrase is awkward because it allows an important idea to dangle at the end of the sentence and also permits an unintended meaning. The revision at the right cannot be misinterpreted.*	*Many of the marriage ceremonies* no longer require the woman to promise to love, honor, and obey her husband.

[4] For a discussion of the pattern of English word order, see pp. 353-354.

Faulty Word Order	*Explanation*	*Improved Word Order*
At one time his neighbors said he had been in jail.	*The italicized phrase modifies* had been *but may be interpreted as modifying* said.	According to his neighbors, he had *once* been in jail.
No one would make such a statement about our President *unless he was trying to undermine our democracy.*	*The italicized phrase is intended to modify* one, *not* President. *It should either be put before the main clause or revised, as at the right.*	Only a man *who was trying to undermine our democracy* would make such a statement about the President.
This method has won more grand championships for the Pennsylvania State College during the last ten years than any other sheep flock in the country, *at the International Livestock Exhibition in Chicago.*	*The italicized phrase is intended to modify* has won *and should not be allowed to dangle at the end of the sentence. As the revised sentence shows, the original is awkward and needs to be completely rewritten.*	By this method Pennsylvania State College has, during the last ten years, won more grand championships *at the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago* than any other exhibitor.

Nine times out of ten, confusing or faulty word order will be revealed by careful rereading during revision – and often the mere shifting of a word or phrase will clear up a bad confusion.

Confusing Omissions

The omission of words necessary to a clear understanding of the thought makes the task of the reader either difficult or impossible. Glaring omissions, like those in the following sentences, should never get beyond the first draft:

Omission	*Revision*
I understand that she will soon all right.	I understand that she will soon *be* all right.
We went by car and a pleasant trip.	We went by car and *had* a pleasant trip.
That excuse seemed quite at the time.	That excuse seemed quite *satisfactory* at the time.

Such omissions are sheer carelessness; those below are the result of confusion rather than of carelessness:

Omission	*Explanation*	
I don't like the crowd which he associates.	*With a choice of two forms of the subordinate clause* — with which he associates *or* he associates with — *the writer has failed to supply* with *either at the beginning or end of the subordinate clause.*	I don't like the crowd *with* which he associates. or I don't like the crowd he associates with.
We searched through all our pockets, but no money.	*In this sentence, the* but *requires the same construction after as before it — that is, a main clause. The omission of the verb after* but *leaves the second clause incomplete.*	We searched through all our pockets, but *found* no money.
She may be as nice as you say, but fickle.	*Again, a main clause with an expressed verb is required after* but.	She may be as nice as you say, but *she is* fickle.
The state he wants to live in his old age is California.	*Two phrases require* in *in this sentence* — to live in *and* in his old age. *The one* in *cannot serve both.*	The state he wants to live *in* in his old age is California. or California is the state *in* which he wants to live in his old age.

These examples should not be interpreted as meaning that *all* omissions are to be avoided. One of the characteristics of informal writing is that it leaves out certain words which would be included in a more formal style. Thus a writer may prefer "He says he wants a larger allowance to meet the increased cost of dating" to "He says *that* he wants a larger allowance *in order* to meet the increased cost of dating" because the omission of *that* and *in order* gives the first sentence a slight informality in keeping with the general tone of his writing. Such omissions are generally acceptable and are not, therefore, a concern of this chapter.

Moreover, some of the examples called faulty above would be less objectionable in informal speech than in writing, since in speech the context more readily compensates for omissions. In college writing, however, it is wise not to leave the context to do what can easily be done without it. Readers learn to expect that certain conventions of grammar will be followed and are momentarily puzzled or annoyed when these conventions are ignored. And even a moment's annoyance breaks the flow of thought.

CONSISTENCY

More than most students realize, the process of writing is controlled by conventions, and these conventions are none the less binding because many of them are seldom explicitly stated. When you start to write a sentence, you generally have a wide choice of ways in which to write it. But as soon as you begin to write, you restrict that choice. Neither you nor your reader may always be fully aware that the opening you choose determines how you will finish the sentence; yet the reader has learned to expect certain ends from certain beginnings — certain sentence patterns and grammatical agreements. If you fail to follow the expectations which your opening suggests, he will accuse you of writing awkwardly, or even illiterately.

Consistency of Pattern

The relationship between a writer and a reader may be illustrated by an analogy with dancing. Anybody who has danced knows that both partners move in accordance with patterns which both understand and take for granted. The man, by his leading, indicates which pattern he wishes to set; the girl follows. If the man leads his partner to expect one kind of movement and then switches to another, the girl will have difficulty following.

The relationship between writer and reader is similar. Each assumes that the other is familiar with the basic patterns of sentence structure. The reader, like the girl in the dance, must follow the writer's lead, and as long as the writer follows an accepted pattern the reader has no trouble. But if the writer sets one pattern in the first half of a sentence and then shifts to another, the reader is likely to be confused.

Two types of sentence patterns are most likely to cause errors of this kind. These are the *parallel* (or *balanced*) sentence and the *periodic* sentence.

The Parallel Sentence

The pattern of the parallel sentence can be seen in a few examples.

1. Speak quietly and carry a big stick.

This sentence consists of two main clauses connected by the conjunction *and*. The clauses might be thought of as opposite sides of a balance, with the conjunction serving as the fulcrum. In its present form the sentence is balanced. If, however, it had been written,

Speak softly and you should carry a big stick.

the balance would be destroyed. The two parts of the sentence are no longer parallel, since the verbs are in different moods and one has an expressed subject and the other has not.

2. I do not want to see him or to talk to him.

The parallelism of this sentence becomes apparent when we set it up thus,

I do not want
- to see him
- or
- to talk to him.

We see that the two infinitive phrases which complete the verb are parallel in structure. If we write the sentence,

I do not want to *see* him or *talking* to him.

we destroy the parallelism. But notice that the omission of the second *to* would not affect the grammatical construction of the sentence, for that *to* would be understood as following the first one even if not expressed.

3. He was encouraged to persevere by the wishes of his parents, the advice of his teachers and the hopes of his friends.

In this sentence a series of phrases, all similar in form, complete the preposition *by*, thus:

He was encouraged to persevere by
- the wishes of his parents,
- the advice of his teachers,
- and
- the hopes of his friends.

The parallelism of these phrases would be destroyed if the sentence had been written:

He was encouraged to persevere by
- *the wishes* of his parents,
- *the advice* of his teachers,
- and
- *to justify* his friends' hopes.

4. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame him, and useless to praise him.

Had Gray written often thus, it had been
- vain to blame him
- and
- useless to praise him.

The parallelism of the two complements of the verb would be ruined if the sentence had been written:

Had Gray written often thus, it had been
- *vain to blame* him
- and
- *no use praising* him.

On the evidence of these examples we can say that *in a parallel sentence, elements similar in idea and grammatical function should be similar in form.* The elements may be main clauses, subordinate clauses, phrases, or single words; they may function as subjects, verbs, complements, or modifiers; they may be balanced in pairs (as they are in examples 1, 2, and 4), or they may constitute a series (as in example 3). But, whatever their nature, they show a regularity of structure and rhythm which constitutes a recognizable pattern.

How effective and memorable parallelism can be, these additional illustrations will show:

For God, for country, and for Yale.

I came, I saw, I conquered.

A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.

We have met the enemy and they are ours.

Whenever a writer begins what is evidently a parallel construction, his readers expect him to continue it. If halfway through the sentence he introduces elements which are not parallel with those that went before, he strikes a discord in the reader's ear. Thus, if he begins a series with a noun, he must continue with nouns. If he begins a series with infinitives, he must stick to infinitives. If he uses any of the simple conjunctions (*and, or, nor, but*), the reader will assume that the part of the sentence following the conjunction will be parallel to the part that immediately preceded it.

These requirements sometimes put quite a strain on an inexperienced writer who has started a parallel sentence, perhaps without realizing it, and who is more concerned about getting his thought down on paper than about observing the conventions. No such strain exists, however, when that writer is revising his work.

The Periodic Sentence

A second construction which is likely to cause inconsistency in student writing is the periodic sentence. A periodic sentence is one in which the main thought is not completed until the end. Such a sentence frequently opens with a subordinate clause, a long introductory phrase, or a series of such elements. The following sentence from *Time's* review of *Henry V* is a good example:

1. To find the "kind of poetic country" he wanted, and to avoid such chance anachronisms as air raids (the picture was made in Britain during the war), Olivier shot the battle sequence in Ireland.

In normal order, this sentence would begin with the main clause – *Olivier shot the battle sequence in Ireland.* By inverting the normal order, the writer produces a more effective sentence, but one which requires the reader to hold the modifying phrases in his mind until he reaches the statement which they modify.

In the examples below, the main clauses have been italicized.

2. While he would not make any definite commitment, and wants to consult his father before talking with you, *I think he is going to buy.*
3. Showing a great deal more power than we had expected, *the team ran up three victories in succession.*
4. Thwarted in his attempts to enlist the support of his colleagues against the measure, *the senator threatened to filibuster.*

Periodic sentences which open with phrases as do the first, third, and fourth of our examples) often lead students into an inconsistent construction. In such sentences the reader usually expects the introductory phrase to modify the subject of the main clause. If the phrase does not do so, it is said to be left dangling or to be a *dangling modifier.* Thus, in the sentence, *Slamming the door behind her, their marriage was at an end,* there is nothing in the main clause for the opening phrase to modify, so it seems to modify *marriage.* Had the sentence been written,

Slamming the door behind her, Mary walked out of his life.

the phrase would have modified *Mary* and would not have been left dangling.

There is often more than one way of revising a dangling modifier. The two most common ways are (1) to restate the main clause so as to give it a subject which the opening phrase may modify, as was done above, and (2) to convert the opening phrase into a subordinate clause – for example: *When she slammed the door behind her, their marriage was at an end.* Both methods of revision are illustrated in the examples that follow:

Dangling Modifiers	*Revised*
1. To do your job safely, steady nerves are required.	1. To do your job safely, you must have steady nerves.
	1. It requires steady nerves to do the job safely.
2. Having lost all his money, nothing remained but bankruptcy.	2. Having lost all his money, he was faced with bankruptcy.
	2. When he lost all his money he was forced into bankruptcy.

Dangling Modifiers	*Revised*
3. To win consistently in the winter tournaments, constant practice is required.	3. It requires constant practice to win consistently in the winter tournaments. 3. To win consistently in the winter tournaments, you must practice constantly.
4. Jilted by the only girl he ever loved, life seemed futile.	4. Jilted by the only girl he ever loved, he felt that life was futile. 4. When he was jilted by the only girl he ever loved, his life seemed futile.
5. To make sure that your paper is well organized, an outline will help.	5. To make sure that your paper is well organized, you should use an outline. 5. An outline will help to guarantee that your paper is well organized.

As these examples illustrate, most dangling modifiers are caused by beginning the sentence with a participial or infinitive phrase and then forgetting that the phrase should have a noun or pronoun to modify, usually the subject of the main clause. If a student finds himself repeatedly making this error, he might be wise to avoid introductory participial or infinitive phrases until he has learned to use them conventionally.

Grammatical Consistency

A writer is also expected to be consistent in his use of grammatical forms. He is expected, for example, to keep his tenses consistent; to make subjects and verbs agree in number and person; to make pronouns agree with their antecedents in gender, number, and person; to spell words and punctuate sentences in accordance with established practices – in short, to make his sentences consistent with the generally recognized conventions of educated usage. Since a complete review of these conventions would lead us too far afield from the purpose of this chapter, we shall confine ourselves here to inconsistent pronoun references and leave other grammatical inconsistencies to Part Three of this book.

One kind of inconsistency that occurs frequently in freshman papers is the unnecessary and awkward shuttling about between a personal

and impersonal subject or between first, second, and third person forms of pronouns. Look at the following excerpt from a student theme.

> If *one* has developed good English usage through listening to eloquent speakers and has read worthy material, *they* will be able to speak correct English. One of the best ways to keep *your* speaking and writing up to a high standard is to keep away from inferior styles and stay on a level with which *you* are familiar.

This student would have done well to take her own advice. If, instead of shifting the subject from *one* to *they* to *you*, she had maintained the informal *you* throughout, her work would have been less awkward and more natural.

It is not difficult, once you see how such shifting bothers a reader, to catch any examples of it that have slipped into your first draft. Which pronoun you choose will depend on the degree of formality you want. The impersonal *one* is, of course, most formal, usually more formal than most freshman composition requires, and it sounds stilted when used consistently throughout a paragraph. For this reason the shift from *one* or *one's* to *he, his,* or *him* (whichever case is appropriate) has become acceptable even to fastidious readers. With this exception you should stick consistently to the pronoun you have decided to use.

Inconsistency in the person of the pronoun usually goes hand in hand with unnecessary shifts in subject, with shifts from active to passive voice, and from a formal to an informal style. All these inconsistencies are reflected in the following sentences:

Inconsistent	*Revised*
1. When one signs up for a course like that you don't know what you are getting into.	1. When you sign up for a course like that you don't know what you are getting into. 1. When one signs up for a course like that he does not know what he is getting into.
2. A person thinks he has proofread his paper until it is gramatically perfect, but you are surprised when you get it back.	2. You think you have proofread your paper until it is grammatically perfect, but you are surprised when you get it back. 2. A person thinks he has proofread his paper until it is grammatically perfect, but he is surprised when he gets it back.

Inconsistent	*Revised*
3. Students in the upper third of their class have a better chance of succeeding, and if you have participated in college activities, your chances are still better.	3. Students in the upper third of their class have a better chance of succeeding, if they have participated in college activities, their chances are still better.
4. No matter what a man does for a woman like that, you just can't please her.	4. No matter what a man does for such a woman, he just can't please her.
5. The paragraph begins with a topic sentence that tells what is to be explained, and after that he sticks right to the topic.	5. The author sticks to the development of the topic sentence with which he began the paragraph.

Seldom do sentences like these actually obscure meaning. But they can be very annoying to a reader, and they are a sure sign that the writer has failed to master one of the commonest conventions of grammatical consistency.

ECONOMY

Contrast the two following sentences:

1. If there were an imaginary race of people, all the members of which had this characteristic in common, that, because of some defect in their physiological structure, they were not able to perceive any of the colors which we see, except blue, there is every reason for believing that this race of people would probably not be able to extract from their experience a law to the effect that blue was the only color which they were able to see.
2. If a race of people had the physiological defect of being able to see only the color blue, they would hardly be able to formulate the rule that they saw only blue.

These two sentences say exactly the same thing. The only difference between them is that the first says it in eighty words and the second says it more clearly in thirty-two. The excess wordage of the first sentence does not create any literary "merit" lacking in the second sentence, nor does it allow fuller development or qualification of meaning. The first sentence, then, contains forty-eight words which in no way help communication. Rather, they require additional effort from the reader without contributing additional meaning.

Wordiness is one of the worst weaknesses in writing. From the reader's point of view, it can sometimes be worse than grammatical errors, misspellings, and other departures from the conventions of educated usage. Ungrammatical constructions may irritate him, but

they will only occasionally obscure the author's meaning. But sustained wordiness places an intolerable burden on the reader and may baffle him completely.

In freshman writing the chief causes of wordiness are (1) misguided attempts at a literary style, and (2) failure to eliminate useless words in revision.

Pseudo-Literary Style

Many students who habitually write clear, concise sentences in letters to their friends fall into wordiness in their composition assignments because they have a false notion of what makes good writing. They assume that good writing is "fancy" writing, and therefore are reluctant to present any thought in simple language. Instead, they resort to flowery diction and involved sentence structure in an attempt to be "literary."

Good writing is first of all clear writing. "Literary' attempts that make the reader's task more difficult are not merely useless; they are harmful. Consider this excerpt from a student paper:

> I found myself stepping from the rather casual high school life into a world of serious, studious adults. The three months' interlude between classes was hardly enough to adapt oneself to the new mental environment. The transitory extent of those ninety-six days was astonishing, and soon those of us who chose a higher degree of education found ourselves among unfamiliar gray walls.

What this student meant, of course, was that her summer vacation was all too short to bridge the gap between the adolescent level of high school and the adult level of college. Why did she not say something like that? Probably because she felt that so prosaic a statement was unworthy of the high literary standards of a college composition class. The chances are she felt pretty happy with *interlude;* and *transitory* — surely that was a word one met only in books! Unfortunately, the naive delight in big words and "fine" phrases for their own sakes is not only bad in itself; it has troublesome by-products. It not only encourages wordiness and vagueness, but often leads a student into confused and shifting constructions which he might otherwise have avoided.

A student who suffers from the illusion that "lofty" diction helps to create a literary style should carefully examine the works of successful modern writers. Many of our best plays, poems, short stories, articles, and essays are simply and informally written. Such a style is really a

better test of literary ability than most students realize, for it is fairly easy to use elaborate and pretentious diction, but quite hard to present a complex idea or a moving experience in simple, natural language. The old saying that "Hard writing makes easy reading" has a great deal of truth in it. It makes readability the test of writing, and it recognizes that good, readable prose is often the fruit of careful revision. That is why we said at the beginning of this chapter that truly effective sentences are probably more often rewritten than written.

The following contrasted sentences further illustrate how a "literary" style obscures meaning. In so far as they can be translated, the student sentences at the left have been revised into the more natural statements at the right:

Artificial and Obscure	*Clearer*
As I grew older I became more interested in the different fields of occupation and what they had to offer me as far as choosing a life's occupation was concerned.	As I grew older I began to examine more carefully the relative advantages of different professions.
Our educational system is not lacking in any way as to its purpose of helping one to prepare oneself for the requirements of a future career.	Education succeeds in preparing us for our future careers.
Trusting that I have imparted the fact that I, too, have dreamed the same dreams that girls always do, I deem it best to conclude this version of my innermost fancies.	I end this description of my reveries with the hope that they reveal me as a normal girl.
Usually his expectations are fulfilled, for the gentleman he is introduced to does understand very well the various phrases, selection of words, and grammatical structures, that otherwise might not be understood by a person whose geographical location of his home was not what his was.	He is usually right, for however troublesome our dialect may be to strangers, it is always understood by our neighbors.

Study these sentences carefully. Note in the first how many words in the original version simply need not be there, once the two key words, *examine* and *profession*, have been thought of. Once you begin to seek the direct, simple, and straightforward, the chances are that you will feel as if you had been freed of verbal manacles.

Useless Words

If you have ever composed a telegram you have already had a valuable lesson in cutting out words not absolutely necessary to your

message. The ruthless revision involved in pruning a twenty-word sentence to a ten-word telegram is neither possible nor advisable in most college writing. But it is well to know that often a single word will do the work of two or three, and that a short phrase may replace a long clause without hurting either style or meaning.

The three most common means of reducing wordiness in a sentence are excision, substitution, and direct statement. *Excision* is the pruning out of useless words. Here are two examples:

1. Cutting out a purposeless introductory phrase. The italicized words form the revised sentence.

(With reference to the relationship between the laws of today and the laws of ancient times,) *I think that the author is wrong in stating that the laws of today are based on ancient laws.*

2. Cutting out deadwood[5] within the body of the sentence.

I (only) *hope I get as much* (benefit) *out of* (my years of) *college* (work and study) *as I got from* (the four years I spent in) *high school.*

Substitution is the replacing of a wordy expression by an economical one.

1. Substituting one word for a phrase:

I took an academic line of subjects.
I took an academic *course.*

2. Substituting a phrase for a clause:

She is the girl who is wearing a blue dress.
She is the girl *in blue.*

3. Substituting a simple sentence for a compound or complex sentence:

He married the former Jane Smith; she is his third wife.
The former Jane Smith is his third wife.

They live in Eau Claire, which is in Wisconsin.
They live in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Direct statement is explicit statement. It says, rather than implies, what the author means, and it avoids *circumlocutions* – words or phrases which shy away from a clear statement because of timidity, false modesty, or literary affectation. Contrast these pairs of sentences:

[5] Professor Perrin, from whom I have borrowed this term, defines *deadwood* as "a lazy word or phrase that adds nothing to the meaning of the sentence." *Writer's Guide and Index to English,* p. 161.

I was so sick that I released the contents of my stomach.
I was so sick that I vomited.

He was – shall we say? – in an inebriated condition.
He was drunk.

His statement is not in accordance with the truth.
His statement is untrue.

I find myself not in complete agreement with Dr. Jones.
I don't completely agree with Dr. Jones.

In the following contrasted sentences the wordiness at the left has been revised at the right. Try to see that the main difference between the wordy sentences and the economical ones is not mere length, but precision and clarity. At the left, important ideas, such as logical subjects, are often put into modifying phrases, so that the structure of the sentence does not reflect the structure of the thought. At the right this does not happen.

Wordy	*Economical*
Dealing with the idea about the use of property in ancient times and the use of property today, I think it is about the same.	The uses of property have not changed during the centuries.
All persons should strive to develop a usage of good English.	Everyone should try to use good English.
I believe to some extent, about the same as the author in his attitude toward crime and criminal tendencies.	I agree with the author's attitude toward crime and criminal tendencies.
In the way of college mathematics, I have had College Algebra, Trigonometry, and Analytical Geometry.	I have had College Algebra, Trigonometry, and Analytical Geometry.
I was born in the city of Bangor. It is located in the state of Maine.	I was born in Bangor, Me.
In regard to specific influences on my speech and writing, I might say that there has been nothing outstanding to influence either. It has been gradual all the way along. In other words, I've had nothing to overcome, such as, impediments in speech, accent, or influence of foreign tongue being used in the family. The latter being rather impossible since the fact exists that my ancestors came over in the Mayflower.	There have been no significant influences on my use of English. I have had no speech impediments, and, as a descendant of an old American family, I have not been exposed to a foreign language at home.

One reason for such sentences – particularly the first and the last – is that the writer does not think his meaning through before he starts to write. He puts down something – frequently his main idea,

and often as not in a subordinate construction – and then has to work the rest in somehow. The result is often a pretty sorry product.

VARIETY

Sentences may be clear, consistent, and economical, yet still may fall short of effectiveness if they are monotonously alike in length and structure. Examine the following, for instance:

> Shakespeare's *Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth* is a drama of kinghood and war. It is essentially a play about a young king's coming of age. Henry V had been an irresponsible young prince before his accession to the crown. He had to prove his worthiness as king by leading his army in war. He invaded France and captured Harfleur, and then tried to withdraw his troops to Calais. He and his men were confronted by a numerically superior French army at Agincourt. In a famous passage in Shakespeare's play, Henry urges his soldiers on to an incredible victory. The superior mobility and firepower of the English proved too much for the heavily armored French.

As you have probably noticed, all the sentences in this paragraph are similar in length and pattern. With one exception, the word order is subject, verb, complement; and the number of words is respectively 14, 12, 14, 15, 15, 14, 16, 16.

Such similarity in length and structure may not be too monotonous in a single paragraph, but a 500-word essay in this style would strain a reader's patience. It is important, therefore, to recognize that a writer, like a baseball pitcher, stands to profit from a change of pace, and that varied sentences are generally more effective than those that plod along in constant lengths and patterns. The rest of this chapter will consider means of introducing variety into monotonous sentences.

Inversion

The normal order of the elements in a sentence is subject-verb-complement, with modifying phrases and clauses following the elements they modify.[6] Inversion is a deliberate departure from normal order. Thus, instead of saying *They who only stand and wait also serve,* Milton gained a line far better suited to his purpose by placing the subordinate clause at the end of the sentence – *They also serve who only stand and wait.*

[6] For a more detailed discussion of word order, see pp. 352-356.

The following sentences contrast normal and inverted word order:

Normal	*Explanation*	*Inverted*
The Elizabethan drama was shaped to this queer mixture of cultured and uneducated, of lowly and exalted, of those who came for love of drama and those who came to show their superiority.	*In normal order, phrases modifying the main clause follow it. In the inverted sentence the modifying phrases come at the beginning. Since a place of major emphasis in an English sentence is the beginning, this inversion gives added emphasis to the description of the audience.*	To this queer mixture of cultured and uneducated, of lowly and exalted, of those who came for love of drama and those who came to show their superiority, the Elizabethan drama was shaped.
The audience took to dice or cards if anything on the stage bored; and there was always much drinking of ale and eating of fruits and sweets.	*On each side of the semicolon is an independent sentence. The first is inverted at the right by placing the subordinate clause before the main clause; the second shows normal order in both versions.*	If anything on the stage bored, the audience took to dice or cards; and always there was much drinking of ale and eating of fruits and sweets.
The dead leaves lay deep in the thickets of blackberry, and toyon, and poison oak.	*The normal order at the left is inverted at the right by placing the modifying phrase before the main clause.*	In the thickets of blackberry, and toyon, and poison oak, the dead leaves lay deep.

From the discussion on pages 150-152 you will recognize the first and third versions at the right as periodic sentences. When a sentence is continued after the main thought has been expressed — as at the left — it is called a loose sentence. The term is unfortunate, since it suggests clumsiness. Actually, the loose sentence is normal, and the name is not used in any derogatory sense.

Many sentences cannot be classified as either loose or periodic because they have characteristics of both types. The example that follows begins as a periodic but ends as a loose sentence.

> After all the promises he had given us, he stayed away from the party, without even offering the courtesy of an excuse.

Such a sentence we may call a mixed sentence. Again the name is used without derogatory connotations.

Most of your sentences will be loose or mixed. Indeed, an overfondness for periodic sentences may result in affected, self-conscious writing. But the change of pace that comes from a combination of loose, mixed, and periodic sentences may often increase the effectiveness of your writing. Notice the variation in the following:

> (*Loose*) Three times too has earthquake spread ruin in California since the Charleston disaster of fifty years ago. (*Periodic*) Stalking down

the coast like a hungry cat, it sprang upon San Francisco in 1906, Santa Barbara in 1925, and Long Beach in 1933. (*Loose*) The deadliest quake in the history of Europe laid low the city of Messina in 1908 and claimed the lives of more than a hundred thousand. (*Mixed*) Within the same brief span of years the demon fell upon India, South America, the West Indies, and China, with terrible destruction of life and property.

(*Periodic*) Although such disasters have been all too frequent, they record but a few of the shocks that have racked the globe in fifty years. (*Mixed*) Many earthquakes are happily lost beneath the sea; many others, like the Montana quake of 1925, though severe enough to wreck great cities, are centered in areas of sparse population. And many another is so slight that only the delicate seismograph can detect it. (*Periodic*) Yet so marked is the earth's infirmity, so false the concept of *terra firma,* that a perceptible trembling of the ground is felt at some place on the globe during every hour of the day and night.[7]

Subordination

An understanding of *subordination* requires an understanding of its opposite term, *coordination.* Statements are co-ordinate when they are logically and grammatically equal or parallel. Thus the clauses in Caesar's famous report, *I came, I saw, I conquered,* are co-ordinate-main clauses. Had Caesar written, *Having come and seen, I conquered,* he would have reduced the first two clauses to a participial phrase, thus making them grammatically subordinate to the final clause, though co-ordinate with each other. Subordination, therefore, is a reduction in grammatical rank so as to make the subordinated expression dependent on something else.

Monotonous sentences are likely to suffer from over-coordination. They tend to express as main clauses or independent sentences many ideas which could better be presented in phrases or subordinate clauses. The result is not only monotony of sentence pattern, but wordiness and lack of emphasis. A wise use of subordination lets a writer emphasize what is important, play down what is minor, and express his thoughts more succinctly. Whenever you find yourself writing too many *and's, but's,* or *for's,* pause and take thought. It is a sure sign you are not subordinating minor ideas to main ones.

In the following examples the versions at the right have been revised by subordination:

[7] From *Autobiography of Earth,* by John Hogdon Bradley; copyright, 1935, by Coward-McCann, Inc.

Over-coordination	*Explanation*	*Subordination*
They approached even closer to our hiding place, and we felt increasingly sure we would be discovered.	*Italicized main clause of loose sentence is subordinated at right, creating a periodic sentence.*	*As they approached even closer to our hiding place* we felt increasingly sure we would be discovered.
Rider attended Oxford and there he met young Sebastian Flyte and the two boys became friends. *Sebastian was the youngest son of the Marquis of Marchmain.*	*Italicized sentence subordinated to modifying phrase at right, achieving greater economy.*	At Oxford Rider became friendly with Sebastian Flyte, *the youngest son of the Marquis of Marchmain.*
John Stuart Mill *was born in 1806 and died in 1873.* He was famous as a child prodigy *but his fame continued throughout his life. He was a logician, a political economist, and a man of letters.* He was one of the most influential thinkers of the nineteenth century.	*Except for subject, first sentence is subordinated as dates in parentheses. Second italicized main clause is reduced to subordinate clause. Third italicized main clause is reduced to a modifying phrase.*	John Stuart Mill (*1806-1873*) was a child prodigy *whose fame did not cease at maturity. As a logician, political economist, and man of letters,* he was one of the most influential thinkers of the nineteenth century.
I was unaccustomed to handling a canoe in rough waters with a single paddle. The canoe tacked from side to side. I could not hold its nose into the waves, and I expected every moment that I would capsize.	*Three loose sentences converted into one mixed sentence by reducing the first two sentences to an introductory phrase, and the last main clause to a concluding phrase.*	Unaccustomed to holding a canoe in rough water with a single paddle, I could not hold its nose into the waves, but tacked from side to side, always in imminent danger of capsizing.

In contrast with the sentences at the left, those at the right are mature, compact, and interestingly varied. This is not to say that no two successive sentences should follow the same pattern or that one should be constantly trying to subordinate something to something else. Careless subordination can lead to odd dangling modifiers, and too many inverted sentences can easily make one's writing seem artificial. Nevertheless in any group of details some are subordinate and should be shown so. If this is difficult to do in a first draft, work for it in revision.

SUMMARY

Efforts to make sentences as effective as possible are more often the work of revision than of the first draft. Here are some of the questions you should consider when you come to revise your work:

1. Will the sentences be clear to a reader?

a. Is the sentence structure clear? Have two sentences been written as one, or one sentence as two? Can the reader see at the first reading the relationship between the different elements of a sentence? Does the punctuation bring out this relationship?

b. Are the pronoun references clear? Do the pronouns refer to specific antecedents so that there can be no doubt in the reader's mind to what they refer?

c. Is the word order clear? Would the sentence be less awkward or ambiguous if modifying words or phrases were transferred to another position?

d. Are there any careless omissions which will make the task of the reader more difficult?

2. Are the sentences structurally and grammatically consistent?

a. Are the elements in a parallel sentence as uniform as they can be made? If in doubt, read the sentence aloud and test the regularity of rhythm which is one of the characteristics of a parallel structure.

b. Do introductory phrases correctly modify an element of the following main clause, or are they left dangling? Watch particularly phrases beginning with participles and infinitives.

c. Is the sentence grammatically consistent? Do subjects agree with verbs, and pronouns with antecedents, so far as they can? Are the tenses as consistent as it is possible to make them? Is there any unnecessary shifting between personal and impersonal pronouns or between active and passive voice?

3. Would the writing be improved by greater economy?

a. Do attempts at a "literary" style result in wordiness?

b. Is there any deadwood that might be pruned out of the sentences?

c. Could sentences be stated more directly to avoid circumlocutions or lack of emphasis?

d. Would the subordination of main clauses to subordinate clauses or phrases tighten up the sentences? Could a single word or a short phrase be substituted for a long phrase or a clause?

4. Are the sentence patterns sufficiently varied?

a. Are all the sentences of the same length? Do they tend to follow an unchanging order of subject -- verb – complement, or are they sufficiently varied?

b. Would greater variety of pattern be obtained by changing some of the loose sentences into periodic or mixed sentences?

c. Would the sentences become more emphatic if modifiers were transferred out of their normal order?

d. Do the sentences show too much coordination? Would the pattern become more varied if several simple sentences were combined, through subordination, into a complex sentence?

EXERCISES

A. Rewrite the following sentences to remove any examples of confused sentence structure, faulty pronoun references, misleading word order, or unconventional omissions:

1. None of the brothers was willing to show much sympathy for his action was not only mean but reflected on the character of the whole chapter.
2. I am a reader of books, which most people consider dry and uninteresting.
3. When the blizzard became worse we decided we had better find a place to spend the night. We were still miles away from any town, but a farmer let us sleep in his barn because it was so stormy.
4. Statistics show that college men like their studies better than women.
5. She broke her wrist and her right ankle was discolored and swollen.
6. Throughout the game, especially in the last quarter, was hopelessly one-sided.
7. Eat mother and you may feel better.
8. He swung off to the right and left the main highway.
9. Mother was very pleased when your letter came she cried with happiness.
10. A health examination is necessary before you can be married in several states.
11. She answered that although she liked him she could not marry him when he proposed.
12. The kitten jumped in her lap as she sat on the stool and purred contentedly.
13. I am not afraid what he will say; his bark is always worse than his bite.
14. Today he believes one thing, tomorrow the opposite. He shows consistency of opinion.
15. Instead of my chest, my heart seemed to be in my throat.

B. Rewrite the following sentences to remove any constructions which are conventionally inconsistent:

1. We knew that he was lying but being unable to prove it because of lack of evidence

2. The hand-drawn maps show very little detail but is used mainly in finding the target, as they are very clearly marked on these maps.

3. My greatest thrills were attained in a two-hour fight with a hundred-pound tarpon. They are memories you can never forget.

4. After reading the selection from Mr. Barnes' *History of Western Civilization,* it is agreed that the intellectual outlook of the masses remains much the same as it was in primitive times.

5. The typical occupation of the adults I have been with are the professional people, and also a great many people of the laboring class.

6. Naturally, having been to college and graduating from high school, it has given me a better grasp than others who have not been so fortunate.

7. After a person is found to have a positive reaction to the patch test an x-ray of the chest is advised. This is also to ascertain if the person has any activity in their lungs. Not everyone with a positive reaction has activity in their lungs, but all positive reactions without activity are advised to have an x-ray at least once a year.

8. Of course, it is pure superstition. There is no way of foretelling what one's future husband will be like, or even if you will be married at all.

9. About my writing after I leave the service is still undecided.

10. Seeing the policeman out of the corner of my eye, my car came to a dead stop at the intersection.

11. By keeping up with these daily quizzes will allow you to master each part of the work as it comes along.

12. In writing this long paper, a typewriter is desired but not compulsory.

13. Having finished our pie and coffee the tires were checked and the tank filled up.

14. Every engineer who has expectations of some day obtaining an executive position and not be just a machinist should learn to speak and write well.

15. I personally think that if a man owns a fine big car, let him have it and don't be so greedy.

C. Rewrite the following sentences to obtain greater economy of statement:

1. I will be available for an interview whenever time will see fit for you.

2. This was done under the direction of Mr. Russell Osborne, to whom you may refer to for reference.

3. Of course, as time goes by there is being made much improvement in sanitary and medical matters.

4. The need for a practical education cannot be denied, just to go on living requires it. But to do more than just exist there is something more required, and that something more is a liberal education.

5. Skin grafts usually require two weeks to take. That is, it takes that time for skin to grow to the area to be repaired. The preliminary treatment of some burns may take as long as four weeks. That is just getting

them in condition for a graft. The actual graft itself may take months to complete. It depends, of course, on the degree of the burn and the area to be treated.

6. Take, for example, the price of meat. If there are two stores, one selling meat for one price, and the other selling for a lower price, which one would sell the most meat? The answer is not difficult to guess. Of course it would be the one which sold the meat at a lower price.

7. With all these practices being carried down from earlier ages there has been little effort to adapt them to the needs of an urban, industrial age. After the twentieth century being made up from the developments of previous time, it would not be possible to make a sudden change in the lives of today.

8. Concerning my own sojourn within the portals of higher education I have only spent a little more than a semester in college.

9. Writing is one of the best ways of expressing yourself, and if you use good English it will reflect favorably on your character and will present a good impression of you to anyone who reads your writing.

10. In plotting a course, the navigator or fighter pilot uses math in so many ways that it would be an impossible task for him to perform without the use of math.

11. By the statement, knowing the will of God, I take it to mean that a person has acquired a sense of what is right and what is wrong.

12. The ideas put forth are misleading, however exact, and could only be used if the entire selection were modified to include only those suggestions for improvement of only several of the large scope of ideas enumerated.

13. What high school did to me to overcome this feeling of inferiority is something about which I can only state my opinions, not knowing whether or not they are true.

14. My father and mother when speaking to each other often speak in German, but when the subject is of an intimate nature they may speak some other language, on account of because I have a faint comprehension of the German tongue.

15. Although I cannot truthfully say that I was acclaimed during my high school career as a prodigy, being what is generally known as an average student, I was able to survive the rigors of four years of academic pursuits and to achieve graduation without ever having received a single failing grade in any subject.

D. 1. By means of inversion, change the pattern of the following sentences:

a. The rain fell in sheets for more than an hour.

b. We continued our journey despite his advice.

c. He will follow the original plan, regardless of the consequences.

d. He was born on July 15, if I remember correctly.

e. The lines combine the power of prose and the glory of poetry, especially as they are spoken by Olivier.

f. Perch fishing, indeed! You don't know what fishing is until you have had a five pound bass on the end of a fly line.

g. Count me out if that's what you intend to do.

2. By means of subordination, revise the following passages into single sentences:

a. The statement that the German people were ultimately responsible for the war is a half truth. It encourages a convenient over-simplification.

b. Thus I waited. I was unable to analyze my feelings. I was almost sure of certain death if I moved.

c. An emotional shock to the mother will affect her child. It changes the activity of her glands. This affects the chemistry of her blood.

d. He had every opportunity of setting up a dictatorship. He did not succumb. We have reason to be proud of that.

e. The idols of the cave are the idols of the individual man. Everyone shares the errors which are common to human nature in general. In addition, everyone has a cave or den of his own. This refracts or discolors the light of nature.

f. Van Meegeren turned out a "seventeenth century masterpiece." It was a painting of Christ and his pupils in the temple. It was painted with jewel-like clarity of detail, crystal clarity of atmosphere, and an exquisite harmony of lemon yellows and blues. Jan Vermeer had loved these colors.

g. The Elizabethans went to the public theaters boisterously. They had little reverence for dramatist or actor. The dandies were anxious to show themselves superior to the entertainment by which they were passing a few idle hours. They aimed at conspicuous attendance. The groundlings in the pit offered vociferous approval or disapproval at every opportunity.

E. Study the following contrasted versions and write a report explaining in detail the means by which the original version was revised.

Original

The Levenford of Dr. Cronin's book is really the town of Dumbarton. It is one of the oldest towns in Scotland. It was the most important town north of the Tweed at the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion, and was called Alcluyd. The Pict chieftains gathered there when they were preparing to swoop down into England in search of plunder; and they always returned there to divide the spoils of victory. The town stands at the gateway to the

Revised

Dumbarton, the Levenford of Dr. Cronin's book, is one of the oldest towns in Scotland. At the time of the Saxon invasion, Alcluyd, as it was then called, was the only town of any importance north of the Tweed. It was there that the Pict chieftains gathered before swooping down into England in search of plunder, and there that they returned to divide the spoils of victory. Standing as it does at the gateway of the highlands, the town has been the field of many battles, and the great island rock of Dumbarton has served successively as the fortress of Picts, Romans, Northmen, Jacobites, and Royalists. When attacked by superior forces, the townspeople, like the Athenians deserting

Original	*Revised*
highlands and has been the field of many battles. Its great island rock has served successively as a fortress for Picts, Romans, Northmen, Jacobites, and Royalists. It has often served as a refuge for the townspeople whenever they were attacked by superior forces. They would retreat to the rock, as the Athenians retreated to their ships, until an opportunity presented itself for overthrowing the invaders.	their city for the ships, would seek refuge in this great rock and bide their time until an opportunity for overthrowing the invaders should arise.

F. Using whatever means seem best, revise these sentences from a student paper to give them greater variety:

There were new motives encouraging Benedict Arnold to commit treason. First, there were the repeated slights of Congress. In Philadelphia Arnold presented his accounts to Congress. They in turn appointed a committee to audit and investigate them. The committee took its time in reporting its findings and Congress failed to act. Arnold petitioned Congress a second time. They turned his petition down.

When Joseph Reed presented charges against Benedict Arnold, Congress took its time in settling them. The investigation dragged out over a period of several months. This began to cause Arnold to develop a persecution complex. It seemed whenever Congress was called upon to settle charges presented against Arnold it took them a long time to come to a decision.

Second, there was his need for ready cash with which to pay his debts. Arnold lived in a style of splendor and extravagance which was far beyond his means. He contracted more debts than he was able to pay. Rather than lower his standard of living he continued to go farther in debt. The people to whom he owed money finally asked him to pay up This was of course impossible because he had no money. He petitioned Congress to settle his accounts, but they turned him down. He was confused and highly irritated. He finally resorted to all forms of acquiring money with which to pay his creditors. Some of the methods he resorted to were not in keeping with the rank he held.

Review

Using whatever means seem advisable, revise the following statements into more effective sentences:

1. I disagree in the author saying that primitive people's mental attitudes were as highly educated as the men of Harvard University.

2. As in the example I used of the automobile, the common man can just as easily drive the big car as the wealthy one, but not so long as the wealthy one, for the upkeep would be out of his income.

3. No one knows just how large the cave really is, but they are hoping it will be larger than they originally thought.

4. Although the mere frankness of his statements makes it difficult to conceive that we are actually living in such a world.

5. At the completion of the piles being driven we then set the floor forms.

6. Newspapers interested me only as far as airplane performances and other reports about aviation or ground men. The report on the progress of the Flying Tigers, the Eagle Squadrons and other American groups.

7. In his viewpoint of our government and the political set-up of the world of today I just partly believe in.

8. The most important influence on a person today when people are talking to one another is their manner of speaking.

9. With the gate in the right place, the engine can now start the pumps working to get the water out of the dock, which is called dewatering.

10. This, however, the fact that man refuses to change, is the author's chief point, and of this I say again that he tells us not how or in what way we are to change in order to better ourselves.

11. I should say that my club interest was a large factor in my use of language. The organization I have in mind is the one I was a member of for the past six or seven years. This club was one of the first organized sculling clubs in New York, having activated in the year 1867.

12. In the minds of some people the word "Government" brings a similar feeling as the word "Fascism" does to others.

13. The primitive man may have been very superstitious, and had a lack of precise and logical thinking, credulity, and an ignorance of scientific methods.

14. If I understand you correctly, you're saying that what poetry does is to give an individual a sense of harmony, a sense of fulfillment, make him more complete or feel more significant.

15. A good show lamb must be used to being led and easy to handle in the ring.

16. We subscribed to some of the leading periodicals, such as *Reader's Digest, Time,* and a few women's magazines.

17. I like the first description better than the other two. I think it is written much more clearly, so that you can actually imagine what it looks like. You can mentally see what Rockefeller Center looks like, the offices, the elevators, and the people.

18. If a person does his work conscientiously there's no reason why they shouldn't be able to graduate.

19. Unless a person went on to college, or unless his work included writing, I don't believe many of us developed our English by writing.

20. Being in good humor will keep one out of quarrels. This does not mean agreeing to everything someone else says in order to keep peace.

However, you are not likely to lose your head and bicker needlessly if you grin and shrug your shoulders at the problem. A grin is contagious. Let's use it more often.

21. We are not really using the modern mind when electrocuting or hanging a criminal. Of course, we could not let them go free to harm others.

22. Although I have had only the fundamentals of foreign languages, it has helped me to a better understanding of the English language.

23. All plates that need to be drilled are sent to the drill room. This step has been practically eliminated because they weld the plates together instead of riveting.

24. The first thing that is done to them is heat treating. They apply heat to the plates to make them more stable. That is to prevent them from warping during the other stages of the process.

25. I was born in the seaport town of Portsmouth, Virginia, November 16, 1921. A town of some fifty thousand people, mostly middle class shipworkers who are employed by the government in the Norfolk Navy Yard.

26. From that time on the changes in Miami Beach became very rapid and today it is impossible to recognize it from its former days.

27. After reading and studying the article by Mr. Barnes, I am inclined to believe is a radical on some of his ideas and very good on others, an example being that the masses of today still believe in supernaturalism.

28. Most of my life has been spent in contact with the middle class of people. The majority of these people being employed in factories.

29. Speaking of the movie as a whole, I like it very much. There are, however, a couple of exceptions. I don't think very much of the way it opened. It pictured Mr. Ziegfeld, played by William Powell, in heaven. He was reminiscing of the Ziegfeld Follies of past years. He was wishing he could put just one more Follies on. If he could, he would make it the greatest he had ever produced. He goes on dreaming of the stars he would use in the picture and of the beautiful costumes and elaborate scenes he would have. Then continues a series of scenes with these stars, in which each one contributes their share.

30. The author is trying to show us that our educational system is not entirely adequate. Our educational program is designed to give us basic knowledge of many subjects of our choice, but they sometimes fail to explain how it is applied to real life. Then, because we do not know how to apply it, it is of no use to us. The conditions under which we work and live are constantly changing and new cases arise that have never been dealt with before, so we are lost.

PART TWO

DICTION

8

VOCABULARY

THE AGE we live in has been called the machine age, the age of science, and even the atomic age. It could as reasonably be called the verbal age. For today words are the mightiest and yet the commonest tools in the world. Contrasted with the power of words, electric and atomic power are relatively unimportant in our daily lives. This, of course, has been true of other ages. There has never been a time when civilized men could do much without words. But the more complex a civilization becomes, the more its existence depends on the power of words. And today their power is immense.

We often fail to understand this because we take words for granted. Familiarity breeds, if not contempt, at least indifference. Yet, stop a moment and consider how much we live in a verbal world. This college education, which you feel means so much to your future, is almost entirely a verbal experience. You read books, you listen to lectures, you reach conclusions, you formulate a philosophy—with words. Without them no scientist could learn of the discoveries of his fellow scientist, no doctor could remove an appendix, no religious or moral beliefs would be possible. Without words there would not only be no social life; there would be no society, except one inferior to what the most primitive savage can boast of. Each generation, lacking the recorded wisdom and knowledge of its predecessors, would have to begin afresh the task of becoming civilized—a hopeless task since, without language, there would be no means of achieving the goal.

The study of diction is not, as some people mistakenly think, a matter of learning to say in big words what can be said as well in small ones. The study of diction is the key to effective communication. It is essentially a study of what words mean, how they mean it, how they are used and abused, and how they can be exploited to serve the purposes of the user. These are the problems with which Part Two of this book is concerned.

INCREASING YOUR VOCABULARY

In comparison with other languages, English has a vocabulary which is both extensive in scope and international in character. Unabridged English dictionaries record about half a million words, but even such dictionaries omit a vast number of highly specialized or technical words. When these omissions are taken into account, the total English vocabulary may contain more than a million words.

It is estimated that less than half the words in an unabridged dictionary are of English origin. The rest have been borrowed from other languages. Most of the borrowed words have come from Latin, either directly or after passing through one of the Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese). The remaining borrowings, as the following words illustrate, come from a wide variety of tongues:

banana (African), *cotton* (Arabic), *kangaroo* (Australian), *whisky* (Celtic), *tea* (Chinese), *drum* (Dutch), *lion* (Egyptian), *chauffeur* (French), *rucksack* (German), *music* (Greek), *cherub* (Hebrew), *afghan* (Indian), *piano* (Italian), *goulash* (Magyar), *bamboo* (Malay), *skirt* (Norse), *canoe* (American Indian), *lilac* (Persian), *molasses* (Portuguese), *bonanza* (Spanish), *tungsten* (Swedish), *potato* (West Indian).

In considering our own store of words we must distinguish between recognition and active vocabularies. All of us can understand a great many words that we do not use in speaking or writing. These words are part of our recognition vocabularies. Our active vocabularies consist of those words which we actually use as well as recognize. It is generally believed that the recognition vocabulary of an educated adult is about three times the size of his active vocabulary.

The most successful efforts to increase our vocabularies are likely to be indirect, and to follow rather than precede a need for more words. As children we do not set out to learn new words; we learn them because we meet them and need them to describe the complex experiences to which we are daily introduced. Within the limits of their natural capacities, the children with the widest experiences, both verbal and physical, will be those with the most extensive vocabularies. The same holds true for us who are no longer children. The more we increase the scope and depth of our knowledge, the larger our vocabularies will become. Your own experience in college should convince you that, as you become daily better acquainted with the facts of history, economics, philosophy, physics, chemistry, biology,

psychology, and sociology, you make useful additions to your store of words. Therefore, the most practical means of increasing our vocabularies would seem to be a serious and sustained effort to educate ourselves.

Of specific vocabulary-building exercises one of the most profitable is to convert words you recognize into words you use. Your recognition vocabulary is a great reservoir of words upon which you might draw in speaking and writing. Impromptu speech situations, it is true, seldom give you the chance to use these words, but prepared speeches and written assignments do. And the revision of a paper gives innumerable opportunities of putting into active service words that are lying dormant in your recognition vocabulary.

Suppose the following expressions are part of our recognition vocabulary: *by the same token, degrade, divinity, doctrine, environment, exploitation, ideals, inferior, mankind, major premise, mocking, subject to.* Now let us see how we could use these words in a revision:

Original

Lincoln once said that a nation cannot exist half free and half slave, and neither can a man exist if he is forced to live in a way that he is ashamed of. Anything which encourages us to act as though some men were naturally lower than others, and therefore excuses the rule of the strong over the weak, attacks, however unintentionally, the chief belief of any civilized religion: that all men share in the nature of God.

Revised

Lincoln once said that a nation cannot exist half free and half slave, and *by the same token* a man cannot exist if his *environment* is constantly *mocking* the *ideals* of his religion. Whatever *degrades* any particular man degrades all *mankind.* Any *doctrine* which encourages us to act as though some men were naturally *inferior* to others, and therefore *subject to* the *exploitation* of the superior beings, attacks, however unintentionally, the *major premise* of any civilized religion: that all men share in the *divinity* of God.

The difference between these two passages is not merely the difference of a dozen words or so. The revised version is altogether a more effective statement. The opening sentence as first written is but a pale shadow of the revision. Words like *mocking* and *degrade* add force to the sentence. And *divinity* certainly says more here than *nature.* By learning to use such words we acquire a better means of communicating. This is the real worth of an extensive vocabulary.

Another means of increasing your vocabulary is to cultivate an intel-

ligent curiosity about words, to be conscious of words and of the ways in which they are being used, and to be interested in finding out anything that may be useful about their origin and history. This requires that you be familiar with the most reliable sources of information about words and be able to use these sources efficiently. Usually the best available source is a good dictionary.

USING THE DICTIONARY

To make the most efficient use of your dictionary, you should understand both its scope and its limitations. A good dictionary is much more than a guide to spelling, pronunciation, and meanings. It is also less than the absolute and infallible authority that its users sometimes try to make it. To understand the real value of a dictionary you must know what it is intended to do and how it does that.

What Dictionaries Are, and Are Not

Kinds of Dictionaries. Dictionaries are of two main kinds, general and specialized. A general dictionary, which is the type usually thought of as "the dictionary," records information about words in general use among educated speakers and writers. It does not limit its vocabulary to any special field, but neither does it include highly technical, scientific, or professional terms. Specialized dictionaries are confined to restricted fields or purposes – law, medicine, philosophy, pronunciation, dialects, slang, and so on. A list of some of the commonest specialized dictionaries is given in Chapter 21 on "Using the Library."

General dictionaries are of two kinds, abridged and unabridged. An abridged dictionary is one that has been prepared by condensing the material of an unabridged dictionary, thus sacrificing completeness of treatment to the more limited needs and lower cost of the shorter version. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* is an abridgment of *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language.*

Of unabridged dictionaries, the best known (arranged in alphabetical order) are:

A Dictionary of American English, 4 vols., University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

New Standard Dictionary of the English Language, Funk and Wagnalls, New York and London.

The Oxford English Dictionary (originally entitled, *A New English Dictionary*), 10 vols. and Supplement, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language Second Edition, G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass.

The best-known abridged dictionaries are:

The American College Dictionary,[1] Random House and Harper & Brothers, New York.

College Standard Dictionary, Funk and Wagnalls, New York and London.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass.

Winston's Simplified Dictionary, Advanced Edition, John C. Winston Company, Chicago.

An abridged dictionary is the most practical for general purposes, and you may have been required to buy one. You would be wise also to acquaint yourself in a general way with some of the unabridged dictionaries in your college library, especially with their introductory comments.

The Date of a Dictionary. The date of a dictionary has more significance than its users always realize. Since English is a living language, continuously adding new words, dropping others, and suffering changes in meanings and pronunciations, an old dictionary may be as outmoded a description of current usage as a ten-year-old photograph is of your appearance today.

For example, the *Oxford* was begun in 1857; the first volume was published in 1888, the tenth in 1928. By the time the tenth volume appeared, the first was forty years old — a long time, considering the rate at which new words are brought into the language to satisfy the needs of scientific, industrial, and social progress — so long a time, indeed, that within five years of the date of the tenth volume, the editors found it necessary to publish a supplement to bring the dictionary up to date!

This reference to the date of the *Oxford* is no reflection on a work which has deservedly been called the greatest of dictionaries, but it

[1] *The American College Dictionary* has been classified here as an abridged dictionary because it is a desk dictionary, comparable to the *College Standard* and the *Collegiate*. Technically, it is not an abridgment of a larger dictionary, being an original work, but it is less extensive than the unabridged dictionaries cited above.

does mean that one who consults that dictionary should refer to the Supplement as well as to the main entry in the appropriate volume. Any reader who concludes that, because a meaning is not recorded in the first volume, it is not a recognized meaning should add: "At least it was not recognized by the editors of the *Oxford* when Grover Cleveland was President of the United States."

Moreover, there may be little relationship between the date on the title page and the date at which the work on the dictionary was done. Not all new "editions" are new throughout. They may be merely reprintings, with minor revisions, particularly if the dictionary follows a policy of "continuous revision." These annual revisions are sometimes only slightly more significant than the annual changes in the models of automobiles.

The Authority of the Dictionary. A dictionary is a record of established, educated usage. It shows, among other things, the spellings, pronunciations, and meanings which educated people have given to words. It is an indispensable guide for words with which we have had little personal experience. It is a most reliable guide to the usage of the past. When it is used to settle controveries about today's usage, it has two limitations: it is necessarily incomplete; and it is necessarily somewhat behind the pace of an ever-changing language.

The incompleteness of a dictionary is intentional. Even the most extensive unabridged dictionary is deliberately restricted. Not only does it make no attempt to cover all special fields, but its definitions cannot indicate all the finely shaded meanings which a word may be given in different contexts. A dictionary must restrict itself to those meanings which most frequently recur. We shall see why later when we study context.

General dictionaries are even more restricted in their treatment of pronunciation. The pronunciation they record is that used in formal platform delivery.[2] Even this is further restricted to the dominant pronunciation; two pronunciations are given only when there is no conclusive evidence that one is predominant.[3] These restrictions largely disqualify a general dictionary as a final arbiter in controversies

[2] Any student who consults *Webster's* on pronunciation should be sure to read the editorial statement on pronunciation, on page xii of the *New International.*

[3] The term "preferred" pronunciation is less significant than dictionary readers usually think. If the preference were clearly established, only one pronunciation would be recorded. Indeed, leading dictionaries sometimes disagree on which of two pronunciations is preferred.

over "correct" or "best" current pronunciations in conversational speech. The dictionary simply does not attempt and should not be used to settle such disputes.[4]

What Dictionaries Contain

Unlike most of your textbooks, your dictionary will be used constantly throughout your four years in college. You would be wise, therefore, to become as familiar with it as possible now. Look first at its table of contents. Notice that the book contains a great deal of useful information not usually associated with a dictionary: dates of historical personages, populations of foreign cities, addresses of American colleges, translations of common Latin phrases, and other useful information.

But most of the information is linguistic and, as shown on the following page, reproduced from *The American College Dictionary*, is more extensive than most students realize.

This information may be summarized as follows:

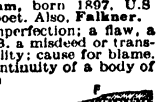
1. *Spelling.* In addition to spelling, the entry shows whether or not the word is capitalized, at what points it may be divided into syllables, which compounds (*faultfinder*) are written solid, which (*fat-witted*) are hyphenated, and which (*father confessor*) are written as two words. When alternate spellings are given, either is acceptable in educated usage.

2. *Pronunciation.* The sound of the word is indicated by symbols explained in the introductory pages and illustrated at the bottom of each right-hand page. The main stress is shown by a heavy accent mark immediately following the syllable to be accented (*fatten*). A secondary stress has a noticeably lighter mark (*father-in-law*).

3. *Grammar.* The dictionary identifies the part of speech by an abbreviation (*n.*, *adj.*, *adv.*, *v.*, etc.), distinguishes between transitive (*v. t.*) and intransitive (*v. i.*), gives the principal parts of verbs (*fatigue*), and shows *irregular* plurals (*fatuities*). It also cites other parts of speech derived from the main entry (*fathomable, fathomer*).

[4] If such disputes must be settled by an appeal to a dictionary, the disputants should consult a pronouncing dictionary which records colloquial (conversational) speech. Of these, the most authoritative is Kenyon and Knott's *A Pronouncing Dictionary of American English.*

Father Christmas, *Brit.* Santa Claus.
father confessor, *Eccles.* a confessor.
fa·ther·hood (fä′ᵺərho͝od′), *n.* state of being a father.
fa·ther-in-law (fä′ᵺərĭn lô′), *n., pl* **fathers-in-law.** 1. the father of one's husband or wife. 2. *Brit. Colloq.* a stepfather.
fa·ther·land (fä′ᵺərland′), *n.* 1. one's native country. 2. the land of one's ancestors.
fa·ther·less (fä′ᵺərlĭs), *adj.* 1. without a living father. 2. without a known or legally responsible father.
fa·ther·ly (fä′ᵺərlĭ), *adj.* 1. of, like, or befitting a father. —*adv.* 2. in the manner of a father. —**fa′ther·li·ness,** *n.*
—**Syn. 1. FATHERLY, PATERNAL** refer to the relationship of a male parent to his children. FATHERLY has emotional connotations, it always suggests a kind, protective, tender, or forbearing attitude *fatherly advice.* PATERNAL may suggest a kindly, more proprietary attitude, *paternal interest;* but it may also be used objectively, as a legal and official term: *his paternal grandmother, paternal estate.*
fath·om (fă*th*′əm), *n., pl.* **fathoms,** (*esp. collectively*) **fathom,** *v.* —*n.* 1. a unit of length equal to 6 feet: used chiefly in nautical and mining measurements. —*v.t.* 2. to reach in depth by measurement in fathoms; sound; try the depth of; penetrate to or find the bottom or extent of. 3. to measure the depth of by sounding. 4. to penetrate to the bottom of; understand thoroughly. [ME *fathme,* OE *fæthm,* c. G *faden;* akin to Gk. *pétalos* spreading] —**fath′om·a·ble,** *adj.* —**fath′om·er,** *n.*
fath·om·less (fă*th*′əmlĭs), *adj.* impossible to fathom. —**fath′om·less·ly,** *adv.*
fa·tid·ic (fātĭd′ĭk, fə-), *adj.* prophetic. Also, **fa·tid′i·cal.** [t. L: s. *fātidicus* prophesying]
fat·i·ga·ble (făt′ə gə bəl), *adj.* easily fatigued or tired.
fa·tigue (fətēg′), *n., v.,* **-tigued, -tiguing,** *adj.* —*n.* 1. weariness from bodily or mental exertion. 2. a cause of weariness; labor; exertion. 3. *Physiol.* temporary diminution of the excitability or functioning of organs, tissues, or cells after excessive exertion or stimulation. 4. *Mech.* the weakening of material subjected to stress, esp. a continued series of stresses. 5. Also, **fatigue duty.** *Mil.* a. labor of a generally nonmilitary kind done by soldiers, such as cleaning up an area, or digging drainage ditches, or raking up leaves. b. state of being engaged in fatigue: *on fatigue.* c. (*pl.*) fatigue clothes. —*v.t.* 6. to weary with bodily or mental exertion; exhaust the strength of. —*adj* 7. of or pertaining to fatigue: *fatigue detail.* [t. F, der. *fatiguer,* t. L: m. *fatigāre* tire] —**fatigue′less,** *adj*
fatigue clothes, a soldier's uniform for fatigue duty
fa·tigued (fətēgd′), *adj.* wearied. —**Syn.** See **tired**[1].
fatigue party, a group or detail of soldiers engaged on fatigue.
Fat·i·ma (făt′ĭmə, fä′tē mä′), *n.* 1. A.D. c606–632, daughter of Mohammed. 2. the seventh and last wife of Bluebeard, popularly a synonym of feminine curiosity.
Fat·i·mid (făt′ə mĭd), *n.* 1. caliph of the North African dynasty, 909–1171, claiming descent from Fatima (def. 1) and Ali. 2. any descendant of Fatima and Ali. Also, **Fat·i·mite** (făt′ə mīt′).
fat·ling (făt′lĭng), *n.* a young animal, as a calf or a lamb, fattened for slaughter. [f. FAT + -LING[1]]
fat·ly (făt′lĭ), *adv.* 1. in a fat manner; plumply. 2. clumsily.
fat·ness (făt′nĭs), *n.* 1. condition of being fat. 2. corpulence. 3. oiliness. 4. richness; fertility.
Fat·shan (făt′shän′), *n.* a city in SE China, in Kwantung province, near Canton. ab. 500,000.
fat-sol·u·ble (făt′sŏl′yə bəl), *adj. Chem.* soluble in oils or fats.
fat·ten (făt′ən), *v.t.* 1. to make fat. 2. to feed for slaughter. 3. to enrich; make fertile. 4. *Poker.* to increase the number of chips in (a pot). —*v.i.* 5. to grow fat. —**fat′ten·er,** *n.*
fat·ti ma·schi·i, pa·ro·le fe·mi·ne (făt′tē mäs′skē ē′, pä rō′lē fē′mē nē), *Italian.* deeds (are) manly, words womanish (one of the mottoes of Maryland).
fat·tish (făt′ĭsh), *adj.* somewhat fat.
fat·ty (făt′ĭ), *adj.,* **-tier, -tiest.** 1. consisting of, containing, or resembling fat: *fatty tissue.* 2. *Pathol.* characterized by over production or accumulation of fat. —**fat′ti·ness,** *n.*
fatty acid, *Chem.* any of a class of aliphatic acids, esp., one such as palmitic, stearic, oleic, etc., present in animal and vegetable fats and oils as glycerides.
fatty degeneration, *Med.* deterioration of the cells of the body accompanied by the formation of fat globules within the diseased cells.
fatty tumor, lipoma.
fa·tu·i·tous (fətōō′ə təs, -tyōō′-), *adj.* characterized by fatuity.
fa·tu·i·ty (fətōō′ə tĭ, -tyōō′-), *n., pl.* **-ties.** 1. foolishness; complacent stupidity. 2. something foolish. [t. L: m.s. *fatuĭtas*]
fat·u·ous (făch′ōō əs), *adj.* 1. foolish, esp. in an unconscious, complacent manner; silly. 2. unreal; illusory [t. L: m. *fatuus*] —**fat′u·ous·ly,** *adv.* —**fat′u·ous·ness,** *n.* —**Syn. 1.** See **foolish.**
fat-wit·ted (făt′wĭt′ĭd), *adj.* dull; stupid.
fau·bourg (fō′bo͝org, -bo͝org; *Fr.* fō bo͝or′), *n.* a part of a city outside of, or orig. outside of the walls; suburb.
fau·cal (fô′kəl), *adj.* 1. pertaining to the fauces or opening of the throat. 2. *Phonet.* a. (of the explosion of a stop) produced by lowering the velum the *t* of *button* has faucal explosion if no vowel is pronounced before the *n.* b. laryngal [f. s. L *fauces* throat + -AL[1]]
fau·ces (fô′sēz), *n pl Anat* the cavity at the back of the mouth, leading into the pharynx [t. L] —**fau·cial** (fô′shəl), *adj.*
fau·cet (fô′sĭt), *n.* any device for controlling the flow of liquid from a pipe or the like by opening or closing an orifice; a tap; a cock. [ME, t. OF m *fausset,* der. *fausser* force in, damage, g. L *falsāre* falsify]
faugh (fô), *interj.* an exclamation of disgust.
Faulk·ner (fôk′nər), *n.* **William,** born 1897, U.S novelist, short-story writer, and poet. Also, **Falkner.**
fault (fôlt), *n.* 1. a defect or imperfection; a flaw, a failing. 2. an error or mistake. 3. a misdeed or transgression. 4. delinquency; culpability; cause for blame. 5. *Geol., Mining* a break in the continuity of a body of rock or of a vein, with dislocation along the plane of fracture. 6. *Elect* a partial or total local failure, in the insulation or continuity of a conductor, or in the functioning of an electric system. 7. *Tennis, Rackets, etc.* a. a failure to serve the ball legitimately within the prescribed limits. b. a ball which when served does not land in the proper section of the opponent's court. 8. *Hunting.* a break in the line of scent; a losing of the scent 9. *Obs.* lack; want. 10. **at fault,** a. open to censure; blamable. b. puzzled, astray 11. **in fault,** open to censure; blamable. 12. **find fault,** find something wrong; complain. 13. **to a fault,** excessively —*v.i.* 14. *Geol.* to undergo a fault or faults 15. *Archaic* to commit a fault. —*v.t.* 16. *Geol.* to cause a fault in 17. *Now Rare or Dial* to find fault with, blame, or censure. [ME *faute,* t. OF, g. LL *fallita,* der L *fallere* deceive]



Section of strata displaced by a fault. F, fault line. A and A, formerly a continuous mass of rock

—**Syn. 1. FAULT, FAILING, FOIBLE, WEAKNESS, VICE** imply moral shortcomings or imperfections in a person. FAULT is the common word used to refer to any of the average shortcomings of a person, when it is used, condemnation is not necessarily implied. *of his many faults the greatest is vanity.* FOIBLE, FAILING, WEAKNESS all tend to excuse the person referred to. Of these, FOIBLE is the mildest, suggesting a weak point that is slight and often amusing, manifesting itself in eccentricity rather than in wrongdoing *the foibles of artists.* WEAKNESS suggests that the person in question is unable to control a particular impulse, and gives way to self-indulgence: *a weakness for pretty women.* FAILING is closely akin to FAULT, except that it is particularly applied to humanity at large, suggesting common, often venial, shortcomings *procrastination and making excuses are common failings* VICE (which may also apply to a sin in itself, apart from a person. *the vice of gambling*) is the strongest term, and designates a habit that is truly evil and corrupt: *he is very unruly, but he has no vices.* —**Ant. 1.** virtue, merit
fault-find·er (fôlt′fīn′dər), *n.* one who finds fault; one who complains or objects.
fault-find·ing (fôlt′fīn′dĭng), *n* 1. act of pointing out faults; carping; picking flaws —*adj.* 2. given to finding fault; disposed to complain or object
fault·less (fôlt′lĭs), *adj.* without fault or defect; perfect. —**fault′less·ly,** *adv.* —**fault′less ness,** *n*
fault plane, *Geol.* the plane of fracture in a fault
fault·y (fôl′tĭ), *adj.,* **faultier, faultiest.** 1. having faults or defects: *faulty workmanship* 2. *Rare.* of the nature of a fault; morally blamable. *whatever is faulty with the Church.* 3. *Obs.* culpable, at fault —**fault′i·ly,** *adv.* —**fault′i·ness,** *n* —**Syn. 1.** defective, imperfect, wrong, incomplete. 2. blameworthy, reprehensible, censurable.
faun (fôn), *n. Rom. Myth.* one of a class of rural deities represented as men with the ears, horns, and tail, and later also the hind legs, of a goat [ME See FAUNUS] —**faun′like′,** *adj.*
fau·na (fô′nə), *n.* 1. the animals of a given region or period, taken collectively (as distinguished from the plants or *flora*). 2. a treatise on the animals of a given region or period. [NL, special use of *Fauna,* name of sister of FAUNUS] —**fau′nal,** *adj*
Fau·nus (fô′nəs), *n. Rom. Relig.* a woodland deity, identified with Pan. [t. L]
Faust (foust), *n.* 1. the chief character in a famous German story; he is represented as selling his soul to the devil for power or knowledge. 2. a tragedy by Goethe (Part 1, 1808, Part 2, 1833) 3. an opera (1859) by Gounod.
fau·teuil (fō′tĭl, *Fr.* fō tœ′y), *n French.* an easy chair.
faux pas (fō pä′), *pl.* **faux pas** (fō päz′, *Fr.* pä′). *French.* a false step; a slip in manners or conduct; a breach of etiquette or propriety.
fa·ve·o·late (fə vē′ə lĭt′), *adj.* honeycombed; alveolate; pitted. [f. s. NL *faveolus* (dim. of L *favus* honeycomb) + -ATE[1]]
fa·vo·ni·an (fə vō′nĭ ən), *adj.* 1. of or pertaining to the west wind. 2. mild; favorable; propitious. [t. L: s. *favōnĭānus,* der. *Favōnius,* the west wind]
fa·vor (fā′vər), *n.* 1. a kind act; something done or granted out of good will, rather than from justice or for

4. *Foreign words.* Until foreign words have been "naturalized," they are italicized in print and underlined in writing. The *ACD* identifies foreign words (*fauteuil, faux pas*) by stating their nationality immediately after the part of speech abbreviation.

5. *Definitions.* When more than one meaning is given, the *ACD* presents the most common meaning first. When meanings are restricted to certain geographical areas (British, Scottish, United States) or to particular fields or professions (Ecclesiastical, Chemistry, Medicine, Nautical) or to special types of usage (Colloquial, Slang), an appropriate label (*Brit., Scot., U.S.; Eccles., Chem., Med., Naut.; Colloq., Slang*) precedes the definition.

6. *Etymology.* Etymology is the study of the origins of words. Dictionary etymologies show the original form and language from which the entry is derived. This information is placed in square brackets, with an abbreviation to identify the original language. The etymology of *fault,* for example, tells us that the word descended from Latin through Late Latin (*LL*), Old French (*OF*), and Middle English (*ME*) to Modern English.

7. *Synonyms.* Occasionally a definition is followed by words roughly similar in meaning (*fatherly*), and less frequently by *antonyms,* words almost opposite in meaning (*fault*).

If you are using some other dictionary, contrast a similar page with this sample from the *ACD* and insert a memo of the chief differences beside the sample page. This will help you to become familiar with your own dictionary and thus allow you to use it more efficiently.

DICTIONARIES OF SYNONYMS

A dictionary of synonyms groups together words essentially similar in meaning and distinguishes the particular differences in their uses. Thus *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms* lists after the first of three meanings of *nice* the synonyms: *dainty, fastidious, finical, particular, fussy, squeamish, pernickety,* and then goes on to distinguish between the connotations of these words. Then comes a series of analogous words ("near synonyms"), then a series of contrasted words ("near

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antonyms"), and finally a series of antonyms, words with meanings the very opposite of *nice.*

A special type of dictionary of synonyms is a *thesaurus.* This is a classification of words and phrases according to a logical scheme, as contrasted with alphabetical order. The most popular of these is Roget's *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases,* which classifies words according to a complex scheme, the main units of which are: abstract relations, space, matter, intellect, volition, and affections. A student who knows the idea he wants to describe can thus consult this classification and follow the references until he finds the word he wants. Usually, however, we know at least one word, however unsatisfactory, for the idea we have in mind, and it is generally a simpler procedure to look up that word in a dictionary of synonyms. But if a student owns a copy of Roget's *Thesaurus* he can use it as a dictionary of synonyms by consulting the alphabetical arrangement of the index and following the references there given.

WORD COMPOSITION

One good way of developing an interest in words and so increasing your vocabulary is to study the composition of words, to analyze the original elements from which they have been built up. The etymologies given in a standard abridged dictionary provide all the necessary information for this analysis. Since most English words of foreign origin are from Latin, some knowledge of Latin or Greek will be very helpful in recognizing foreign elements in English words. But even without such knowledge any student can easily learn to recognize those Greek and Latin elements which recur most frequently, as the following word lists will show.

In these lists the Greek and Latin elements are classified as roots and prefixes. The root of a word is its main element or elements, as in LOVE ly, BEAUTI ful, in DUCT ion, DEMO CRACY, BLACK BOARD. Prefixes are particles which precede the root: IN duction, TRANS mit, EX pel. To these two elements might be added a third, suffixes (cour AGE, depend ENCE), but the forms and meanings of classical suffixes cannot be clearly distinguished in such a brief treatment as this.[5]

[5] For a useful summary of Greek and Latin suffixes in English, see Hixson and Colodny, *Word Ways* (American Book Company, 1939). Kennedy's *Current English* also contains a valuable treatment of the subject.

Greek Roots

anthrōpos (man)
archaios (old)
biblion (book)
chronos (time)
dēmos (people)
gē (earth)
genos (race, kind)
hydōr (water)
kratos (power)
logos (speech, knowledge)
philos (lover)
phōnē (sound)
sophia (wisdom)
theos (god)

Latin Roots

acer (sharp)
aqua (water)
aequare (to level)
amare (to love)
audire (to hear)
bellum (war)
bene (well)
brevis (short)
caput (head)
corpus (body)
credere (to believe)
currere (to run)
dicere (to say)
ducere (to lead)
facere (to make, do)
fundere (to pour)
jacere (to throw)
laborare (to work)
lux (light)
malus (bad)
mittere (to send)
navis (ship)
pax (peace)
portare (to carry)
sal (salt)
scribere (to write)
solvere (to loosen)
tenere (to hold)
urbs (city)
venire (to come)

Greek Prefixes

In actual usage the Greek and Latin prefixes given below show variations of meaning. The meanings given in parentheses should be understood as general meanings which are subject to modification in particular contexts.

a- (not)
anti- (against)
arch- (chief)
auto- (self)
epi- (on top)
hemi- (half)
hetero- (different)
homo- (same)
hyper- (above)
micro- (small)
neo- (new)
ortho- (straight)
pan- (all)
poly- (many)
proto- (first)
pseudo- (false)
tele- (far, distant)

Latin Prefixes

ab- (from, off)
ad- (to, towards)
ante- (before)
bi- (two)
circum- (around)
contra- (against)
dis- (not, apart)
ex- (out)
extra- (outside)
in- (into, within)
in- (not)
inter- (between)
intro- (into)
multi- (many)
non- (not)
omni- (all)
per- (through)
post- (after)
pre- (before)
pro- (for, forth)
re- (again)
retro- (back)
semi- (half)
sub- (under)
super- (above)
trans- (across, through)
tri- (three)
ultra- (outside)
uni- (one)

An interest in the origins and evolutions of words is often described as "the dictionary habit." If this phrase means learning how to use a good dictionary without abusing it and using that knowledge to satisfy a wholesome curiosity about words, it is one of the most pleasant and profitable habits a student can develop. Both as a hobby and as a source of power it pays rich dividends. There is, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, much more to the study of words than finding out what the dictionary has to say about them. But certainly the willingness to consult a good dictionary and the ability to consult it intelligently are the prerequisites for any profitable study of diction.

EXERCISES

A. Write out and return to your instructor the answers to the following questions:

1. What unabridged general dictionaries are available in your college library?
2. From what unabridged dictionary is your own abridged edition derived?
3. What are the dates of publication of these two dictionaries?
4. What does the Introductory Matter of your dictionary contain?
5. Write out the full forms of the following abbreviations: Ant., Arch., C., Comp., Dial., e.g., fr., LG, MF, Obs., O.D., O. Dan., pp., Skr., syn., v.i., Vulg.
6. Does your dictionary record the population of foreign cities? To what nearest unit? What is the population of Toronto?
7. Look up the entry *New Brunswick* and write out in a paragraph, using no abbreviations, all the information your dictionary records.
8. Contrast the pronunciation of the name, Joseph Stalin, in your dictionary and in *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*. How do you explain the difference?
9. What rhymes does your dictionary provide for *cheer, eyes, dirt*?
10. Where are the following colleges located: *Baker University, Bethany College, Lincoln Memorial University, Otterbein College*?

B. 1. How does your dictionary label the following uses of the italicized words?

1. That's an *awfully* nice hat.
2. I *calculate* it will take about three weeks.
3. She was a small, dark-*complected* girl.
4. You must be *dumb* to *flunk* such an easy *exam*.
5. Let's go for a long *hike*.
6. I saw *lots* of actors on the M.G.M. *lot*.
7. Tell them to *kill* that story.
8. Gary Cooper read the *script* and did not like it.
9. May I *phone* you tonight?
10. I guess it would be *O.K.*

2. From what languages are the following words derived?

1. algebra
2. alcohol
3. automobile
4. bantam
5. boor
6. candy
7. caravan
8. chorus
9. devil
10. dollar
11. flannel
12. husband
13. inertia
14. lemon
15. loot
16. mosquito
17. nice
18. opera
19. pajamas
20. quixotic
21. shampoo
22. skipper
23. slogan
24. tobacco

3. Which of the following expressions should be italicized as foreign words?

1. anno Domini
2. belle
3. belles lettres
4. debutante
5. décolletté
6. en rapport
7. enfant terrible
8. ensemble
9. fiancé
10. fiasco
11 faux pas
12. in absentia
13. matériel
14. nom de guerre
15. nom de plume

C. 1. What pronunciations does your dictionary give for the following words?

1. abdomen
2. acclimate
3. alias
4. banal
5. clandestine
6. data
7. ennui
8. fugue
9. hazard
10. heinous
11. impious
12. impotent
13. inquiry
14. joust
15. massage
16. niche
17. nascent
18. nuance
19. obesity
20. penalize
21. precedence
22. query
23. quixotic
24. rancid
25. robot
26. sagacious
27. schism
28. secretive
29. status
30. technics
31. vagary
32. vestigial
33. victuals
34. Wagnerian
35. zealot
36. zenith

2. Determine the plural forms of the following:

analysis, buffalo, cargo, court-martial, criterion, crocus, radius, spoonful, stratum, thesis, vertebra.

3. Distinguish between the synonyms given in your dictionary for the following words:

1. ambition
2. apt
3 bad
4. contention
5. deface
6. discover
7. emergency
8. examination
9. excuse
10. fiendish
11. haste
12. ideal
13. juncture
14. luster
15. melancholy
16. needful
17. oral
18. restive
19. voracious
20. wild

D. 1. Identify the Greek or Latin roots from which the following words are derived. The second group will offer some difficulty, since some of these words are descended from variant forms of the roots given on page 183. For example, *lucid* comes from the genitive case (lucis) of *lux,* and *amateur* comes from the past participle (amatus) of *amare.*

acid, archaic, atheism, beneficial, Bible, chronic, corporal, current, democracy, duke, eugenics, geography, hydrant, malignant, pacific, philanthropy, remit, scribble, solve, theology.

abridge, amateur, audience, bellicose, cattle, chronometer, corset, factory, fusion, illustrate, misanthrope, mission, patriarch, philosophy, reject, saucy, sophomore, subscribe.

2. Identify the Greek or Latin prefixes in the following words:

amoral, abscond, adversary, antecedent, automobile, bisect, circumscribe, contradict, extradite, heterogeneous, homogenous, infallible, interrupt, introduce, multilateral, omnipotent, panacea, polygamous, postpone, preliminary, refer, supervise, subordinate, transport, triangle, ultra-violet.

9

WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

THE ETYMOLOGICAL FALLACY

THE STUDY of etymology has its virtues, but it also has its dangers. Alexander Pope once said that a little learning is a dangerous thing, and students of etymology sometimes tend to illustrate the truth of his remark. Discovering that some words are not now used as they once were, they leap to the conclusion that these words are being "misused." This belief, that present-day meanings should correspond with those originally suggested by a word's composition, may be called the *etymological fallacy.*

A good example of this fallacy is provided in the following passage by Alexander Woollcott, who is objecting to the "misuse" of the word *flair*:

> This noun came over from the French – a derivative of the verb *flairer,* "to smell." It suffered no sea-change on the way and got into trouble at all only after it had been staying among us quietly and almost unnoticed for several years. On the lips of anyone who cares enough about his vocabulary to keep it in good working condition, "flair" still means – and can only mean – a capacity to detect. You have a flair for news when you have a nose for news. Yet within the past five years there has spread like the flu the foul habit of using it interchangeably with "knack" or "aptitude" or "gift," as if a man with a flair for painting were one who could lightly toss off a landscape instead of merely one who knew a good watercolor when he saw it. In no time at this rate it will have lost its edge and all those who speak or write fastidiously will have to cast it aside as no longer fit for use.[1]

What does the word *flair* mean? If we accept Woollcott's testimony, it means in English what it meant in French — "a capacity to detect."

[1] From Alexander Woollcott's "Lessons in English," *The Reader's Digest,* March, 1947. Reprinted by permission of *The Reader's Digest* and the Viking Press, Inc.

It cannot, says Woollcott, mean *knack* or *aptitude*, because it did not have these meanings in French; these are corruptions of the "real" meaning of the word, however commonly they are used.

There are several implications in this answer that you should understand. One of them is that the number of users has no influence on the meaning of the word. Another is that the word has a meaning of its own, apart from its users. A third is that this "real" meaning is determined by the "original" meaning. Woollcott is saying, then, that the meaning of the word is determined by its etymology.

This reasoning is more plausible than sound, as we can see by considering what would happen if it were applied to other words. *Manufacture*, for example, came from the Latin *manu* (by hand) and *facere* (to make). According to Woollcott's logic, it must still mean *made by hand.* The word *pen* came from the Latin *penna* (feather), and if Woollcott is correct, is being universally misused today. In Old English *wench* meant *girl* – any girl; therefore, an instructor who addressed the girls in his class as wenches should cause no offense. Since *stench* and *stink* in Old English had no unpleasant connotations, a poet today should be able to write about the "sweet stink of honeysuckle" without being ludicrous. A policeman *preventing* a parade, would ride at the head of it, since the word came from the Latin *prae-venere* (to come before). And if your father held no public office you would not be rude to call him an *idiot*, since that word once meant a private person as contrasted with a public official.

Clearly society could not tolerate the general application of such a theory, and anyone naive enough to act upon it would be considered too eccentric to remain at large. Subscribers to the etymological fallacy escape the consequences of their theory only because they do not practice it. When it comes to buying pens and preventing parades, they are as sensible as the rest of us, and as unconcerned about original meaning.

THE EVOLUTION OF MEANINGS

Although the original meaning of a word is an untrustworthy guide to its present meaning, a study of the origin of words and of the changes in their meanings is one of the best ways to understand the evolutionary nature of a living language.[2] To know how words have

[2] And as we saw in Chapter 8, knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes often helps us to understand words we have not understood before.

changed in the past is not only to free oneself from misguided fears about current changes; it is often to have a revelation of the unsuspected romance of words. For words, like people, are born and die, are changed and weathered by the seasons, and, passing, do not altogether disappear, but leave their imprint in our language. This is why a good dictionary is one of the most satisfying books that ever fell from a printing press. For it is not only a record of words as they are, but of what they have been. Tucked away in its small print is the fascinating story of linguistic evolution.

To trace this evolution in detail requires more space than an abridged dictionary can afford. *Webster's Collegiate*, by recording its definitions in the order of their historical appearance, does suggest this evolution. The *New International* and the *New Standard*, because of their greater scope, are still more useful in this way. But for a historical study of the meanings of English words the best dictionary by far is the *Oxford*. The remainder of this discussion of meaning is based on the *Oxford* and assumes that that dictionary is available in your college or city library. If for any reason it is not, the *Shorter Oxford*, the *New International*, or the *New Standard* may suffice.

Although the meanings of words may change in all sorts of ways, four are generally recognized: **amelioration, pejoration, extension,** and **restriction.** Amelioration is a change from unfavorable to favorable meanings. Pejoration is a change in the opposite direction, from good meanings to bad. Extension signifies that the meaning of a word has developed wider or more general uses. Restriction is the opposite of extension, from less general to more specific.

Amelioration

The words *lord* and *lady* are examples of amelioration. These words developed out of the Old English *hlāfweard* and *hlæfdige*. The first syllable of both words is the ancestor of our modern *loaf*. *Weard* is the parent of our *ward, warden, guard, guardian*. A hlāfweard was the protector or provider of the loaf—he was the "breadwinner." *Dige* came from the same root as our word *dough* and meant, in Old English, "to knead." The hlæfdige, therefore, was the member of the family who kneaded the loaf or prepared the food which her husband provided. Thus, for all their aristocratic connotations, the words *lord* and *lady* had their origin in the division of labor in the domestic economy of our Old English ancestors.

Pejoration

In contrast, *cad* is one of many words which shifted from a favorable to an unfavorable meaning. The word apparently derives from the same root as *cadet.* By the eighteenth-century *cad* had become a slang term used by coachmen to designate people who tipped the coachman to pick them up on the road and so cheated the owner out of a regular fare. During the next century the word was extended to other professions. A bricklayer's helper was known as a cad, and so were men who performed menial services for college students. Gradually the word became Oxford slang for any uneducated and vulgar person, from which meaning it sank to the still more objectionable modern one.

Extension

The best examples of extension are words which came into the language as the names of individuals or places and were broadened to represent the characteristics for which the names were famous. Thus *boycott* was the name of an Irish captain who became the first victim of a boycott, and *meander* was originally the winding river celebrated by Homer.

Restriction

The word *corn* is an interesting example of restriction. Originally it meant a hard particle of anything: one could speak of a corn of sand or a corn of salt. Then it was restricted to the seeds of plants, then to the seeds of cereal plants. Finally it came to mean the seed of the favorite cereal of the speaker's district. That is why *corn* means maize in America and oats in Scotland.

THE PRINCIPLE OF USAGE

The best approach to the study of meaning is to recall your own experience with the language. When you were a child, you discovered what words meant by keeping your eyes and ears open and seeing what happened when your parents used words. For example, when you tried to tear up the newspaper or empty an ash tray on the floor, your mother usually tried to stop you, both physically and by saying "No!" After a while, if you were a reasonable child, her "No" was enough by itself. You had learned the meaning of *no.* In the same way you learned the meanings of many other words, and not of single words only, but of whole sentences.

All this is merely another way of saying that the meaning of a word is equal to the work it does or the use to which it is put. This is called *the principle of usage*, a principle which states that the meaning of a word is determined by the way speakers and writers generally use it. The adverb *generally* is significant, for the principle of usage concerns only the consistent and collective use of words, not the occasional eccentric use of individual speakers.

One of the corollaries of accepting usage as the standard of meaning is that words have no meaning in themselves. They have only such meanings as users agree to give them. Thus *manufactured* means *made by hand* as long as it is used to mean that, but when people generally make it mean *made by machine*, then that is its new meaning. This explains why words may evolve through various meanings throughout their history. It also explains why a word cannot be said to have any *real* meaning apart from its uses, and why the etymology of a word cannot be accepted as the standard of its current meaning. And, of course, once usage has been accepted as the standard of meaning, it is nonsense to talk about a word's being "universally misused."

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

Your childhood experience with words can show you something else about meaning. When you began to understand what your parents were saying, you were not aware of words as words. When your mother said, "You must not play with matches," you did not hear and recognize six separate words. Rather you heard the whole statement as a single, sustained noise. You had learned from experience what usually happened when your mother made that particular noise. You knew the meaning of her statement, but you did not know that the statement was composed of separate words.

The recognition of a word as a unit of speech came much later. Indeed, if you listen carefully to what people actually say, you will notice that, in informal speech, words do not have a separate existence, but run into each other to form a speech sequence. It is only in writing that words are represented as separate units. Thus we write "Do you want an apple?" but we say something like "Djouwannanapple," with a rising inflection that does the work of the question mark.

This observation is important because it leads us to the study of *context*, or the environment in which a word occurs. Whatever meanings words may be given depends on the context in which they are

used. Thus *spring* in one context may represent a season of the year; in another it may mean a source of drinking water; in a third it may refer to the metal coils that support the upholstery of a couch; while in a fourth it means "to jump."

It is profitable to recognize three kinds of context: *verbal, physical,* and *psychological.* The verbal context is an environment composed of words, the other words in the sentence or paragraph or speech in which the particular word occurs. See, for example, how the following different verbal contexts affect the meaning of the word *man*:

Man was made to mourn. (man = mankind = men + women + children)

He was her man, but he done her wrong. (man = lover)

Man the boats! (you could man the boats with women)

He is his own man. (he is not the tool of anybody)

Man, but I'm tired! (man = gee, gosh, oh)

Wow, what a man! (man = specimen of masculinity)

What a man, he makes me sick! (man = fool, nuisance, or other disagreeable person)

A man has a deeper voice. (man = male of the human species)

Come on, be a man! (show some courage, or stand up for your rights)

By physical context we usually mean the condition of the speaker's body while he is uttering the word. The words "You idiot!" when spoken by a girl to her escort may be a term of endearment. But if she speaks these words with a red face, flashing eyes, and a clenched fist, they may be an expression of rage, disgust, or contempt. The old saying, "When you say that, smile" is an acknowledgment that the physical environment in which words are used influences our response to them.

Psychological contexts are more difficult to define, but are no less important to the meanings of words. They are those environments which are neither verbal nor physical, but are made up of the situations and moods in which words are used. Suppose you take your girl to dinner at the home of a friend, and get into an argument with another guest. You have strong opinions on the subject and present them at length. Later, on the way home, you begin to wonder whether you talked too much, whether you were too positive, whether your host was impressed or annoyed. So you turn to your girl and ask her, "Tell me, did I make myself obnoxious arguing with Brown?" What you really want her to say is, "Why, I thought you were brilliant!" Instead

she replies, in a neutral sort of voice, "Oh, I wouldn't say that." She might as well have said, "Yes, you did," for in the psychological context in which her answer was given, that is how you interpret it.

The influence of context on meaning is so important that even when a speaker says what he did not intend to say, his audience may understand his intended meaning without difficulty. Thus, a professor lecturing on the economy of Japan remarked that the Japanese lived on a "riot of dice." The class laughed, but it understood him perfectly. Again, a four-year-old boy had a slight skin eruption, which his mother treated with vaseline. Later the trouble returned, and the boy, holding out his arm, said, "Mama, put some gasoline on my itch." No sensible mother could have any doubt what "gasoline" meant in this context.

When words are reported out of context, the original meaning may be badly distorted. What one whispers to one's sweetheart in privacy can be made to sound ludicrous when reported next morning at the family breakfast by an eavesdropping younger sister. Statements made in the intimacy of classroom discussion can sound shocking or idiotic when paraphrased in the college paper. And few public officials escape the embarrassment of having their words torn out of context and so presented that they seem to say much more or something quite different from what was originally intended. Indeed, the trick of quoting out of context might be said to be standard procedure for discrediting an opponent during a political campaign.

The peculiar effectiveness of this kind of misrepresentation lies in the fact that a convincing rebuttal is difficult. The misrepresented speaker cannot deny that these are his "exact words"; he can only say that they are not all of his words, and that they were not intended to mean what they are now being used to mean. But before an unsophisticated audience, that often sounds like a feeble excuse. Until audiences become suspicious of quoting out of context, until they develop the habit of asking, "What else did he say, and under what conditions?" misrepresentation through half-truths will remain a convenient device for those who have no scruples about using it.

EXERCISES

A. By consulting an unabridged dictionary (preferably the *Oxford*) trace the development that the meanings of the following words have undergone. Then select a good example of each of the four patterns discussed on pages 189-190 and write a paper containing one paragraph for each example.

1. acorn
2. bonfire
3. boor
4. buxom
5. calico
6. cattle
7. chapel
8. clerk
9. constable
10. cunning
11. curfew
12. deer
13. diaper
14. fame
15. Ferry
16. frock
17. front
18. hussy
19. knave
20. lust
21. lynch
22. nice
23. panic
24. pedagogue
25. sherry
26. shibboleth
27. tantalize
28. Yankee

B. 1. Using the example of *man* on page 192 as your model, show how different contexts provide different meanings for the following words: *bear, fish, light, rat, shine, stars.*

2. Look up the meaning of *ex officio* in your dictionary. What does the phrase mean in this sentence from *The New Yorker?*

Since (Raymond) Swing, more than any other commentator, expounds United States government policy for a global audience, he is something like a private, ex officio State Department.

3. Which of the words *good, better, best* indicates the highest degree of merit?

4. Is your answer to question 3 borne out in the following sentences:

a. My game was better today, but it still wasn't good.
b. None of the papers is good, but this one is the best.

5. What do the italicized words mean in the following contexts:

Let me go.
House to *let.*
Without *let* or hindrance.
To *let* blood was a favorite remedy of medieval medicine.
We put a new *boot* in the tire.
I'll give you a dollar to *boot.*
Smith *booted* the extra point.
The jockey *booted* home three winners.

C. Under the heading, *The Context Makes a Difference,* write a short paragraph for each of the following examples to show the relation between context and meaning:

1. A young woman who had volunteered to give a blood transfusion was asked by the intern: "What type are you?" "Oh," she answered, "I'm the sophisticated type."

2. Second-hand car, second-hand suit, second-hand toothbrush. Free enterprise, free tickets, free love. A planned attack, a planned surprise, a planned economy.

3. When silk stockings were first introduced to Europe, they were extremely rare and costly. Feeling that they would be a gift fit for their queen, certain well-intentioned Spaniards offered, through a court official, to send some to Isabella. The offer was coldly refused with the explanation that "the Queen of Spain has no legs."

4. We point to something and ask, "What is it?" We expect an answer

such as "It's a table," or "It's a tree." The answer, "It's wood," might not satisfy us. We would feel like replying, "I don't want to know what it's made of; I want to know what it *is*." When we ask what a thing is, we are really asking how that thing is classified, and the kind of classification we have in mind is indicated by the context of the question. Thus, where a chemist, asked, "What is it?" might answer, "Carbon," a jeweler would say, "A diamond." Each classifies it according to his prevailing interest in it. If we do not share that interest, we must be careful to rule it out in our question. If we ask the jeweler, "What is it in terms of its chemical composition?" he will understand what kind of answer we want, and he, too, will reply, "It's carbon."[3]

D. How much meaning would a reader have got from the following selection had it been published in 1940? Write a 200-word paragraph to show how the writer depends on context to bring out the humor of his article.

Splitting the Infinitive [4]

One of the most closely guarded secrets of the era can now be told, how an anonymous group of grammarians, working in secrecy in a remote section of the country, have finally succeeded in splitting the infinitive.

The so-called "Bronx Project" got under way in 1943, with the installation of a huge infinitron specially constructed for the job by Cal Tech philologists. Though the exact details are still withheld for reasons of security, it is possible to describe the general process.

From a stockpile of fissionable gerunds, encased in leaden clichés to prevent radioactivity, a suitable subject is withdrawn and placed in the infinitron together with a small amount of syntax. All this material must be handled with great care, as the slightest slip may lead to a painful solecism. Once inside the apparatus, the gerund is whirled about at a great speed, meanwhile being bombarded by small particles. A man with a Gender Counter stands always ready to warn the others if the Alpha-Betical rays are released in such high quantities as to render the scientists neuter.

The effect of the bombardment is to dissociate the whirling parts of speech from one another until at length an infinitive splits off from its gerund and is ejected from the machine. It is picked up gingerly with a pair of hanging clauses and plunged in a bath of pleonasm. When it cools, it is ready for use.

The question is often asked: Can other countries split the infinitive? I think we can safely answer "No." Though it is true that Russia, for one, is known to have large supplies of thesaurus hidden away behind the Plural Mountains, it is doubtful if the Russians have the scientific technique. They have the infinitive but not the know-how.

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[3] From *The Theory and Practice of Philosophy*, by Abraham Edel, copyright, 1946, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

[4] Norman Jaffrey, "Splitting the Infinitive," *Saturday Evening Post*, February 22, 1947. Copyright (1947) by the Curtis Publishing Company.

And that is something on which to congratulate our own brave pioneers in the field of grammatical research. Once it was thought that the infinitive could not be split — at least, not without terrible repercussions. We have shown that it is quite possible, given the necessary skill and courage, to unquestionably and without a shadow of a doubt accomplish this modern miracle.

E. Write out and return to your instructor that statement of each group of three (*a, b,* or *c*) which most precisely reports what was said in this chapter:

1. *a.* The etymological fallacy is the mistake of believing that words are things.
   b. The etymological fallacy is the mistake of believing that words must mean in English what they meant in the language from which they were borrowed.
   c. The etymological fallacy is the mistake of believing that context does not matter.

2. *a.* The best source for a study of the historical development of meaning is the *Oxford.*
   b. The best source for such a study is the *Collegiate.*
   c. The best source for such a study is the *New International*

3. *a.* The words *lord* and *lady* are good examples of the ameliorative tendency.
   b. The words *buxom* and *wench* are good examples of the ameliorative tendency.
   c. The words *flair* and *hussy* are good examples of the ameliorative tendency.

4. *a.* The opposite of amelioration is restriction.
   b. The opposite of amelioration is extension.
   c. The opposite of amelioration is pejoration.

5. *a.* The word *corn* is an example of restriction.
   b. The word *corn* is an example of extension.
   c. The word *corn* is an example of pejoration.

6. *a.* The principle of usage states that the more a word is used the less useful it becomes.
   b. The principle states that usage has no bearing on the meaning of a word.
   c. The principle of usage states that the meaning of a word is determined by the use generally made of it by speakers and writers.

7. *a.* The context of a word is the environment in which it is used.
   b. The context of a word is what the speaker intends it to mean.
   c. The context of a word is its derivation.

8. *a.* There is no relationship between context and meaning.
   b. Context determines meaning.
   c. Words may change their meanings but their contexts remain fixed.

10

WORDS AS SYMBOLS

WORDS AND THINGS

WHEN carried to extremes, the belief that words have a "real" meaning results in what is called *word magic*. A person who believes in word magic acts as though words *were* things. Thus, among certain primitive tribes the belief is common that if one can obtain the name of his enemy, he can destroy that name and so destroy the enemy. If he can find out the secret name of a god or a devil, he can usurp the supernatural powers which that god or devil possesses.

Today it is easy to smile at such superstitions and to assume that they are the products of an uncivilized age, but the close association of word and thing which is the basis of word magic is a subtle association which persists even in the thinking of highly civilized societies. Some of the opposition to daylight-saving time illustrates this confusion of word and thing. People uneasily suspect that if they turn the hands of the clock ahead, they have dropped an hour out of their lives. Often the best argument for such people is not to deny that they have "lost" the hour, but to promise that they will get it back in the fall. The common practice of skipping thirteen in numbering the floors and rooms of a hotel is another illustration of the lingering belief in word magic.

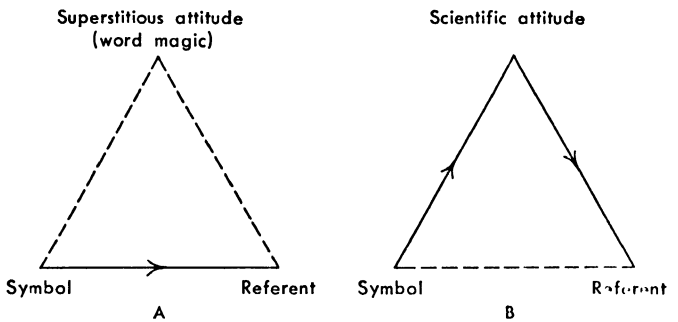
The basic assumption of a scientific study of meaning is that the only connection between words and things is a connection in our minds. Words are not things, but they make us think of things. The letters *b-o-o-k* make you think of this thing you are reading or of a similar thing. But any other combination of letters could perform the same function, provided that people had agreed on that combination. Because of this general agreement, the same object is known by different names in different languages. Thus, what we call a book in English is also referred to as *Buch* (German), *boek* (Dutch), *bok*

(Swedish), *Bog* (Danish), *livre* (French), *libro* (Spanish) and so on. No one of these names is the "real" name for book. No one is better than the others. In so far as they point to the thing which we choose to call a book, they are all satisfactory names.

As you are aware, there are many other devices that act like words in conveying meanings. Highway markers, mathematical formulae, musical notations, military insignia, and many other things communicate information and advice in much the same way as words do. These devices are not called words, even though they act like words. Let us then use the term *symbol* to cover words and all similar means of communication.

When they are used as symbols, words *point* or *refer* to things. Sometimes they refer to things which may be experienced by our senses, things which have existence in the physical world around us, such as books, trees, stones, desks, and doughnuts. At other times they refer to things which cannot be found in the physical world but which exist in our minds, such as the ideas of truth, love, honor and justice. Since the word *thing* tends to make us think chiefly of physical objects, let us use the term *referent* instead. The *referent,* then, is the thing, belief, or event to which the symbol refers.

The difference between a superstitious and a scientific attitude to the relation between words and things may now be illustrated by the following contrasted diagrams.[1]



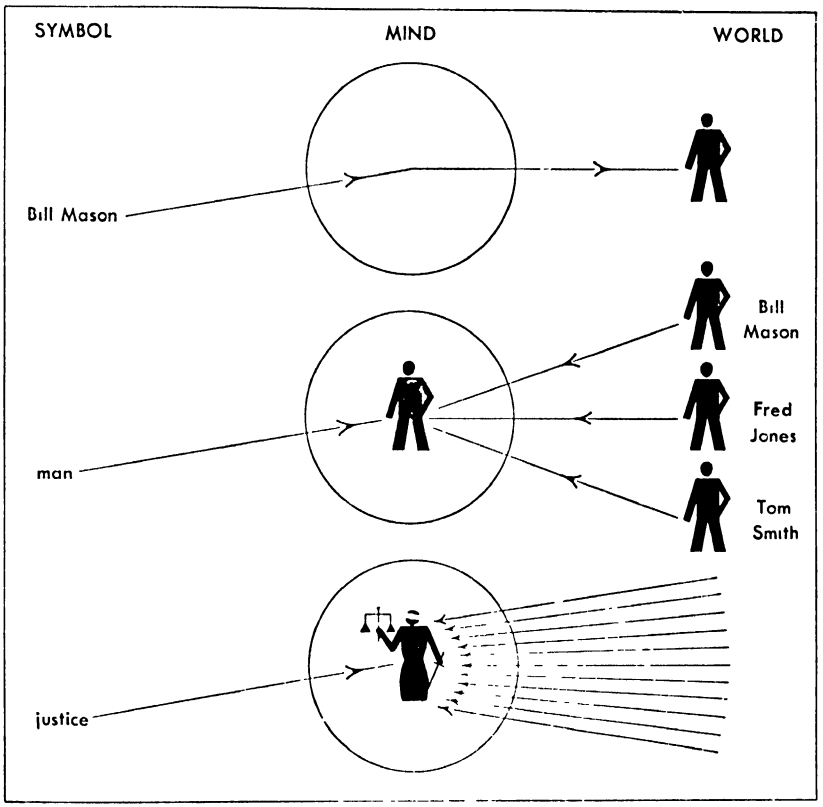
In diagram A the solid line indicates a *direct and necessary connection* between the symbol and the referent, and the dotted lines indicate that that connection is not created *in* the mind but is merely

[1] For these diagrams and the discussion of the relationship between symbol and referent, I am indebted to *The Meaning of Meaning,* by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards.

perceived *by* the mind. In diagram B the dotted line indicates that there is no necessary connection between symbol and referent, while the solid lines illustrate that the only connection between symbol and referent is a mental one.

CLASS NAMES

Let us consider now the differences between the referents of such words as *Bill Mason, man* and *justice.* When you were in grade



Explanation

The symbol *Bill Mason* points to a particular individual in the physical world. The referent is physical. The symbol *man* refers to characteristics which Bill Mason, Fred Jones, and Tom Smith have in common. It does not point to any of these individuals. Rather it points to a mental picture which we have formed of the characteristics which are common to the whole class of which Bill, Fred, and Tom are members. The referent is psychological. The symbol *justice* points to an idea in our minds. This idea may have been formed from a great variety of events in the world, but it is an attitude toward these events rather than the events themselves. The referent is psychological.

school you probably learned that there were three kinds of nouns: proper nouns (names of particular persons, places, or events), common nouns (names of common objects), and abstract nouns (names of qualities or characteristics). And, according to this division, you recognize *Bill Mason* as a proper noun, *man* as a common noun, and *justice* as an abstract noun.

While this threefold division is quite justifiable, it will be useful now to recognize that common and abstract nouns are more alike than the old classification suggests. Study the diagrams on page 199.

From these diagrams you will see that, whereas proper nouns point to specific physical referents, both common and abstract nouns point to a referent inside our heads. We can have no sensory experience with these referents. We cannot see, hear, touch, taste, or smell justice, honor, or truth, though we can witness actions which we describe as just, honorable, or true. Similarly, though we can see and touch Bill Mason, Fred Jones, and Tom Smith, we cannot see or touch the referent for *man*. The referent for *man* is a sort of a composite picture in our minds, made up of the characteristics which all particular men have in common. In other words, it is a *class name*.

Since this distinction may be confusing, it will be well to recall our first experience with words. If you have been around small children just learning to talk, you will have noticed that they learn proper nouns before they learn class names. At first they know people and animals only as individuals – "Papa," "Mamma," "Spot," "Kitty." They have at first no concept of classes. At first all dogs and cats, regardless of size or color, are "Spot" and "Kitty." A picture of any man is likely to be identified as "Papa" and of any woman as "Mamma." Only later and gradually do children develop the concept that individuals who resemble each other can be given a common class name.

The child's experience with words should teach us two things about class names. First, as our knowledge of individuals grows it is necessary to group them into classes. The child can do without class names only so long as his experience is confined to a few individuals. As his world grows, he must begin to see resemblances between individuals and to invent or learn class names for these resemblances. Second, the child's experience should remind us of something we too easily forget, that individuals existed as individuals before they were grouped into a class, and that the class names do not point to all the characteristics of an individual but only to those he has in common with other individuals. Thus the word *man* is useful to name what

Bill Mason, Fred Jones, and Tom Smith have in common. It is not useful as a name for any of these particular men, because it does not indicate the individual characteristics which distinguish them from each other.

This last point is important because we all tend to use class names when we are dealing with individuals. For example, we refuse to let our sister drive our car because we don't trust "women drivers." Now, whether or not women drivers as a class are better or worse than men drivers as a class is a question that might be debated for hours. But in this illustration we need not worry about women drivers. We are not dealing with a class; we are dealing with *our sister,* and the real question is whether she, as an individual, is a trustworthy driver. When, instead of asking, "Can I trust my sister with the car?" we ask, "Can I trust a woman with the car?" we merely confuse our thinking and make it more difficult to act intelligently.

This illustration shows the greatest abuse of class names. We tend to respond to them uncritically, almost automatically. We say, "I wouldn't date a high-school student," or "I wouldn't vote for a Republican," or "I wouldn't marry a foreigner," without considering particular high-school students or Republicans or foreigners. We refuse to listen to a man who is called a "radical or a "reactionary," not because we dislike the man (we may know nothing about him), or because we dislike his ideas (we may know nothing about them, either), but because we dislike the class of which he is alleged to be a member. Because of this automatic response, we let ourselves be manipulated by any writer or speaker who finds it easier to call his opponents names than to disprove their arguments. The result often is that we reject desirable policies, defeat at the polls men who would make useful public servants, cut ourselves off from pleasant companions, and refuse to associate with men or girls who might make excellent husbands or wives. Or, as the following quotation suggests, we force our political representatives to become more concerned with words than with things.

> During the 1936 campaign Stuart Chase wrote a book called *Rich Land, Poor Land,* in which he dramatized with brilliant persuasiveness the appalling waste of irreplaceable fertile soil. No one seemed to doubt that the statements were true or that the situation was serious. Did the political candidates make a major issue of what they were going to do to remedy this evil? They did not. The proposal of a practical plan might have been ruinous to either party. . . .

The reason for all this was that men did not want to be branded as Communists, or Fascists, or bureaucrats, or advocates of ruinous spending, or as opponents of the Constitution on the one hand and the capitalistic system on the other. Capitalism, Communism, and Fascism were the greatest political realities among people, none of whom could give an intelligible account of any of these "systems."[2]

INDEXES

To help us to avoid such uncritical responses some students of meaning advise us to check our reactions by adding indexes to class names – woman driver$_1$, woman driver$_2$; foreigner$_1$, foreigner$_2$, and so on. This device helps us to avoid governing our conduct in a particular situation by an attitude that we have developed about a whole class of situations. Thus, when we are told that Bill Mason is a freshman, a Scotsman, and a football player, we may avoid jumping to the conclusion that he is young, stingy, and poor in English. We may realize that freshman$_1$ is not freshman$_2$, that Scotsman$_1$ is not Scotsman$_2$, that football player$_1$ is not football player$_2$. And we may then adopt the more intelligent practice of suspending judgment about Bill's age, generosity, or writing ability until we have had a chance to observe the facts.

This use of indexes may profitably be applied even to proper nouns. For example, the Bill Mason we know today is not the Bill Mason his mother knew ten years ago. He is physically, mentally, and emotionally different. He has different tastes, more ambition, and a greater sense of responsibility, and he is constantly trying to impress these differences on his parents by insisting that Bill Mason$_{1950}$ is not Bill Mason$_{1940}$ and should not be treated as though he were.

All this does not mean that you need actually write an index number after each class name. But it does mean that you should judge individuals on their own merits and not react blindly to such terms as *women drivers, politicians, freshmen* and *foreigners.* Consider, for example, the following generalization about the class, college students:

> . . . college students, at least American college students, are different from all other people on this planet; they are the only people who try to get as little as possible for their money.
>
> They will spend the most valuable years of their lives, thousands of dollars of their parents' money and some of their own if they can get any,

[2] From Thurman Arnold, *The Folklore of Capitalism.* Reprinted by permission of the Yale University Press.

in trying to derive as little as possible out of their college courses, provided only that they will receive their coveted diploma at the end of four years of such efforts.

The label, *college students,* is a class name for more than two million people. Some of them are men; some are women. Some are on their own for the first time in their eighteen years; others are veterans of the greatest war the world has ever seen. Some have all their expenses paid by their parents; others earn their own way; still others are married and are supporting a family while they study. Some came to college simply because their parents sent them; some came hoping to find themselves – or husbands; some want to prepare for a profession; and some came out of a conviction that a college education offered the best introduction to the wisdom and culture of the ages. These people are of all sizes, shapes, colors. They differ in their moral, economic, and political philosophies, in their tastes, customs, and habits as much as a similar number of non-college students would differ. Indeed, all that college students have in common is that, at the moment, they are enrolled in some college.

In the light of this expansion of the term *college students* any attempt to indict *all* college students is obviously unfair. What the speaker has in mind is *some* college students. A slight revision of his original statement will allow him to make his point without distorting the facts:

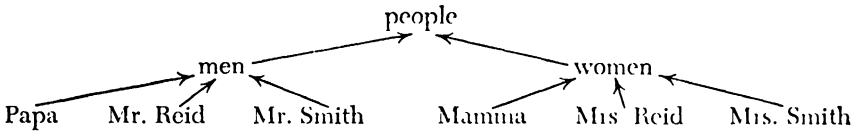
> While most college students are genuinely concerned about getting a good education, there are some who want only one thing from college – a degree. These students will spend the most valuable years of their lives, thousands of dollars of their parents' money and some of their own if they can get any, in trying to derive as little as possible out of their college courses, provided only that they will receive their coveted diploma at the end of four years.

A similar correction must be made of loose generalizations about all classes. To say that all men, women, freshmen, seniors, college professors, ministers, politicians, Republicans, Americans, redheads, or Negroes are thus and so is nonsense – unless the thus and so refers to the particular characteristics to which the class names point. When we have said that all freshmen are first-year college students and that all redheads have a different kind of pigmentation from blondes, we have said about all we can safely say about these people as a class. We may say that freshman_1 is a spendthrift and that redhead_5 is a prude.

But when we do, we are talking about individuals, not about classes. Indeed, a shocking number of generalizations have little connection with reality, however imposing they may sound.

ABSTRACTIONS

We have already seen that abstract and common nouns (class names) have this in common, that both point not to individuals but to characteristics which a number of individuals have in common. We might, therefore, say that all nouns other than proper nouns are abstractions. But before we do, let us see more clearly what is involved in the process of abstraction.



This diagram shows how a child goes from a knowledge of particular individuals to a knowledge of characteristics which groups of individuals share. Remember that the child knew his six people intimately. He knew that Papa was different from Mr. Reid and that Mr. Smith was different from both. Yet he learned that they resembled each other when contrasted with their wives. So, by ignoring differences and concentrating on similarities, he developed the concept of classes called *men* and *women.* Then he saw that, however much men and women differed from each other, they were, when compared with animals, birds, and trees, very much alike. So he developed the concept of a class called *people.*

The process of creating classes by selecting particular characteristics of individuals and ignoring all other characteristics is called *abstraction.* All class names, therefore, are abstractions, though some (*people*) are more abstract than others (*men, women*). The farther we carry on the abstraction process, the less clearly our names point to the individuals we started from. Notice that the farther we get from *Bill Mason* in the following list, the less surely we know what referents our words are pointing to:

1. Bill Mason
2. Member of Dr. White's English class
3. Freshman
4. College student
5. Educated person

It is for this reason that communication becomes increasingly difficult as it becomes more abstract. The complexity of our civilization requires us to use abstractions; yet the more we use them, the more likely we are to misunderstand each other. When a phrase like *educated persons* can point to literally millions of possible referents, it is hard for a reader or listener to be sure which particular referent is meant. And often this difficulty is increased because each party to the communication process blindly assumes that because the word means one thing to him it will mean the same to his partner. The resulting difficulties, and the way out of them, are illustrated in the following paragraphs by Stuart Chase. Mr. Chase is dealing with the abstractions *Government* and *Business*. After quoting a series of emotional utterances by prominent people on the topic of *Government versus Business,* he goes on to say:

> People talk as though they saw an iron-booted entity "government" jumping on a frail, defenseless "business," or, per contra, a gross, recalcitrant "business" hurling a shower of monkey wrenches at a hard-working, conscientious "government." In the world that we actually see with our eyes or touch with our hands, there is no entity "government" and no "business." A man with a camera could not take a picture of either. He can take a picture of Dr. Bennett of the Soil Conservation Service, or a picture of Mr. Alfred P. Sloan. He can take a picture of Grand Coulee Dam – indeed I have a copy – where thousands of men working for a "business" contractor are building the biggest "government" structure in history, bossed by "government" engineers. He can take a picture of a fleet of "business" trucks running on U.S. 1, a "government" road, or a picture of a little "business" man made happy by an RFC "government" loan. . . .
>
> Before Citizen A and Citizen B can intelligently communicate to each other about "government," it is necessary that they both go down the verbal ladder to events in the real world which both can see and agree upon. At this lower level, Citizen A can point to his income-tax blank and say to Citizen B: "By 'government' I mean this. Take it, look at it, add it up. Isn't it the damnedest thing?" But Citizen B may say: "I pay no income tax. I'm on the Federal Arts Project. It saved my life. Look at these sketches for my new high-school mural. By 'government,' I mean *this!*" Income-tax blanks and high-school murals and millions of other tangible objects, acts, events, constitute the reality behind the term "government." Ditto for "business." How are you going to get A and B to agree in this situation? You cannot get them to agree. So they shout. But observe: if they stop shouting about "government," it may be possible for B to agree with A that his income tax is a complicated accounting

monstrosity and for A to agree with B that his high-school mural sketch is admirable. . . .[3]

As Mr. Chase points out, the thing to do when we are mired in an abstract discussion is *to get back to the referents,* to return to the individual instances which were the starting points of the abstraction process. This is a solution which both writers and readers should bear in mind. The writer must remember that abstract statements may be interpreted in many ways and that it is his responsibility to convey as clearly as he can to his readers just how he means the statement to be taken. His best means of doing this is to elaborate his abstract statements by the methods illustrated in Chapters 3 and 4. Such elaboration allows him to come down the abstraction ladder and point to the particular facts which he has in mind. This is what Mr. Chase does when he reduces the emotional reactions of citizens A and B to the word "government" to a discussion of income-tax blanks and high-school murals. At that level, A and B are talking about things, not about words. They may still disagree in their attitudes toward these things, but their disagreements are likely to be specific, and each will understand what the other means.

The reader, on his part, must make a conscientious effort to find the referents to which the writer is trying to point. He also must recognize that abstract statement may be interpreted in different ways and he must try to see from the whole context of the writing what the writer has in mind. We usually place the major responsibility on the writer, but we should remember that communication is a two-way process and, especially when the subject matter is necessarily abstract – as in philosophy – the reader has to do his share of the work. There will be times when the ideas to be communicated require the most careful co-operation between writer and reader.

EXERCISES

A. Write out and return to your instructor that statement in each of the following groups of three (*a, b,* or *c*) which most precisely reports what was said in this chapter.

1. *a.* Word magic is the ability to enslave people by words.
   b. Word magic is a superior knowledge of etymology.
   c. Word magic is the belief that words are things.
2. *a.* The basic assumption of a scientific study of meaning is that there is a *real* meaning for each word.

[3] From Stuart Chase, "Government vs. Business," *Common Sense,* June, 1938. Reprinted by permission of the author.

b. The basic assumption is that there is no *necessary* connection between words and things.

c. The basic assumption is that there is no connection *at all* between words and things.

3. *a.* A symbol is an abbreviation for a word.

b. A symbol is a sort of sign language.

c. A symbol is a name for words and similar means of communication.

4. *a.* The referent is to the symbol as the thing is to the word.

b. The referent is to the symbol as the word is to the thing.

c. The referent is to the symbol as proper nouns are to class names.

5. *a.* Class names, like abstract nouns, point to psychological referents.

b. Class names, unlike abstract nouns, point to psychological referents.

c. Class names have no referent.

6. *a.* The greatest abuse of class names is their unnecessary use to point to individuals.

b. The greatest abuse of class names is their overuse.

c. The greatest abuse of class names is their use as abstractions.

7. *a.* The practice of indexing allows us to avoid abstractions.

b. The practice of indexing helps us to avoid uncritical responses to class names.

c. The practice of indexing allows us to distinguish between class names and abstractions.

8. *a.* Abstracting is the process of becoming more and more vague.

b. Abstracting is the process of confusing the general and the particular.

c. Abstracting is the process of creating classes by selecting those characteristics of individuals which are common and ignoring those which are not common.

B. Read the following selection carefully, then write a two-paragraph paper. In the first paragraph explain what the Connecticut Yankee is trying to do and why he fails. In the second paragraph develop the topic sentence: *Our modern Brother Dowleys are no less confused.*

"Why, look here, brother Dowley, don't you see? Your wages are merely higher than ours in *name,* not in *fact.*"

"Hear him! They are *double* – ye have confessed it yourself."

"Yes – yes, I don't deny that at all. But that's got nothing to do with it; the *amount* of the wages in mere coins, with meaningless names attached to know them by, has got nothing to do with it. The thing is, how much can you *buy* with your wages? – that's the idea. While it is true that with you a good mechanic is allowed about three dollars and a half a year, and with us only about a dollar and seventy-five –"

"There – ye're confessing it again!"

"Confound it, I've never denied it, I tell you! What I say is this. With

us *half* a dollar buys more than a *dollar* buys with you – and *therefore it* stands to reason and the commonest kind of common-sense, that our wages are *higher* than yours."

He looked dazed, and said, despairingly:

"Verily, I cannot make it out. Ye've just said ours are the higher, and with the same breath ye take it back."

"Oh, great Scott, isn't it possible to get such a simple thing through your head? Now look here – let me illustrate. We pay four cents for a woman's stuff gown, you pay 8 cents, four mills, which is four mills more than *double*. What do you allow a laboring woman who works on a farm?"

"Two mills a day."

"Very good; we allow but half as much; we pay her only a tenth of a cent a day; and – "

"Again ye're conf––"

"Wait! Now, you see, the thing is very simple; this time you'll understand it. For instance, it takes your woman 42 days to earn her gown, at 2 mills a day – 7 weeks' work; but ours earns hers in forty days – two days short of 7 weeks. Your woman has a gown, and her whole seven weeks' wages are gone; ours has a gown, and two days' wages left, to buy something else with. There – *now* you understand it!"

He looked – well, he merely looked dubious, it's the most I can say; so did the others. I waited – to let the thing work. Dowley spoke at last – and betrayed the fact that he actually hadn't gotten away from his rooted and grounded superstitions yet. He said, with a trifle of hesitancy:

"But – but – ye cannot fail to grant that two mills a day is better than one."

. . . No, I had to give it up. What those people valued was *high wages;* it didn't seem to be a matter of any consequence to them whether the high wages would buy anything or not. . . . I proved to them that in a quarter of a century their wages had advanced but 30 per cent., while the cost of living had gone up 100; and that with us, in shorter time, wages had advanced 40 per cent., while the cost of living had gone steadily down. But it didn't do any good. Nothing could unseat their strange beliefs.[4]

C. In a short paper discuss the attitude toward words revealed in the following selections and provide additional illustrations of the same attitude from your own experience or reading:

1. Six is a number perfect in itself, and not because God created all things in six days; rather the converse is true; God created all things in six days because this number is perfect, and it would have been perfect even if the work of the six days did not exist.–*St. Augustine.*

2. The names of male animals must not be mentioned when women are present; such words as *bull, boar, buck, ram, jack* and *stallion* are absolutely taboo. . . . It was only a few years ago that two women in

[4] From Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.* Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

Scott county, Arkansas, raised a great clamor for the arrest of a man who had mentioned a *bull-calf* in their presence. Even such words as *bull-frog, bull-fiddle* and *bull-snake* must be used with considerable caution, and a preacher at Pineville, Mo., recently told his flock that Pharaoh's daughter found the infant Moses in the flags: he didn't like to say *bull-rushes*. . . . The hillman sometimes refers to animals merely as the *he* or the *she*, and I have heard grown men use such childish terms as *girl-birds* and *boy-birds*.[5]

3. Speak of the Devil and he's sure to appear; talk of angels and you'll hear their wings rustling.

4. When, in 1752, the English calendar was reformed to bring it into accord with the Gregorian calendar, it was necessary to drop out eleven days and to call the day following September 2, September 14. This change caused great public indignation, and throughout the country people angrily protested to the government, "Give us back our eleven days!"

5. The word *lingerie* today is being universally misused. The word comes from the French *linge*, meaning linen, and therefore can be used only to refer to linen goods. A linen tablecloth may properly be called lingerie, but to apply that name to silk underwear is sheer linguistic ignorance.

D. The two passages that follow illustrate the fact that failure to distinguish the referents of what look like quite simple words can interfere with the process of communication. Notice that the disagreements brought about by these misunderstandings are removed as soon as both parties understand to what things in the physical world the words *John* and *go round* point. Study both passages and write an account of a similar controversy over the question, "Can animals think?" Then show that the disagreement is caused by different interpretations of the word *think* and that when both disputants agree on the interpretation, the disagreement ceases.

Two men are disputing about the color of John's hair. One of them has in mind a boy named John with black hair, the other a boy, also named John, with red hair. As the boys are called by a common name, the disputants suppose the same boy is being referred to. One contends that John's hair is black; the other that it is not black, but red. Thus they appear to be contradicting each other, and as long as the ambiguity of the name *John* is not recognized, no way of settling the dispute is available. The question of how John's hair can be black and yet not black at the same time remains a mystery. When it is recognized that there are two Johns, however, John Jones and John Smith, the mystery is at once resolved; the apparent contradiction is seen to be no more than an ambiguity posing as a contradiction, and the dispute is settled. Clarity takes the place of confusion. Both disputants are in the right. John Jones'

[5] From Mencken, *Supplement One: The American Language*. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

hair is black and John Smith's hair is not black.[6]

Some years ago, being with a camping party in the mountains, I returned from a solitary ramble to find everyone engaged in a ferocious metaphysical dispute. The *corpus* of the dispute was a squirrel – a live squirrel supposed to be clinging to one side of a tree-trunk; while over against the tree's opposite side a human being was imagined to stand. This human witness tries to get sight of the squirrel by moving rapidly round the tree, but no matter how fast he goes, the squirrel moves as fast in the opposite direction, and always keeps the tree between himself and the man, so that never a glimpse of him is caught. The resultant metaphysical problem is this: *Does the man go round the squirrel or not?* He goes round the tree, sure enough, and the squirrel is on the tree; but does he go round the squirrel? In the unlimited leisure of the wilderness, discussion had been worn threadbare. Everyone had taken sides, and was obstinate; and the numbers on both sides were even. Each side, when I approached, therefore appealed to me to make it a majority. Mindful of the scholastic adage that whenever you meet a contradiction you must make a distinction, I immediately sought and found one, as follows: "Which part is right," I said, "depends on what you *practically* mean by 'going round' the squirrel. If you mean passing from the north of him to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then to the north of him again, obviously the man does go round him, for he occupies these successive positions. But if, on the contrary, you mean being first in front of him, then on the right of him, then behind him, then on the left, and finally in front again, it is quite as obvious that the man fails to go round him, for by the compensating movements the squirrel makes, he keeps his belly turned towards the man all the time, and his back turned away. Make the distinction and there is no occasion for any further dispute. You are both right and both wrong according as you conceive the verb 'to go round' in one practical fashion or the other."[7]

E. The following article attempts to classify the adult population of the United States into three (perhaps four) classes. The accompanying chart attempts to show some of the referents for these class names. Study the article and the chart and then write a 500-word review in which you consider (*a*) the advantages and disadvantages of such classification, (*b*) the question whether the classes were abstracted from the referents or whether the referents were selected to illustrate classes which were invented by Mr. Lynes, and (*c*) to what extent the referents could be interchanged so that activities which are alleged to be characteristic of one class might as reasonably be used as typical of another.

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[6] From James MacKaye's *The Logic of Language*. Reprinted by permission of Dartmouth College, publishers.

[7] From *Pragmatism* by William James. Copyright, 1907, by William James. Reprinted by permission of Longmans, Green and Company, publishers.

High-Brow, Low-Brow, Middle-Brow[8]

Three bemused gentlemen are looking at things they like. One, a tall man in a baggy tweed suit, likes paintings by Picasso. The next, a man in shirtsleeves, enjoys calendar art. The third likes Grant Wood reproductions suitable for framing. The first is a high-brow, the second is a low-brow, the third a middle-brow. According to Editor Russell Lynes in an article in *Harper's Magazine,* the whole U.S. social structure can now be divided into these three types. Gone are the days, he says, when class distinction was determined by wealth, birth or political eminence. Instead he points out that true prestige now belongs only to scientists, writers, critics, commentators and thinkers of global thoughts. We have a society of the intellectual élite, run by the high-brows.

With tongue in cheek Lynes goes on to describe this new order. Your true high-brow, he says, is a shaggy sophisticate found on liberal arts faculties in college towns and often in big cities. If he pays any attention to his physical surroundings, he furnishes his rooms with "signed" pieces of modern furniture and decorates them with original sketches or little-known works by great masters. He would not own a color reproduction. He eats omelets and drinks "an adequate little red wine" which he buys for 90¢ a gallon. He edits or writes for a recherché "little magazine" and is basically a critic rather than an artist. A cultural snob of the worst sort, he cherishes obscure trends in thought and art and fights to keep them pure, noncommercial and within his own limited circle – especially out of the hands of the hated middle-brows, whom he considers culture-mongers. However, he feels an affinity with low-brows and even envies their uncritical enjoyment of the things they like.

The low-brow doesn't mind the high-brow either as long as the high-brow leaves him alone. His attitude toward the arts is strictly live and let live. He doesn't mind a monstrosity of an overstuffed chair if the chair is comfortable. He likes a movie if he enjoys it, and if he doesn't he says so, whether it is *Blondie* or *Henry V.* He has no fashionable tastes. If other people like the ballet it's all right with him as long as he doesn't have to go. Culture, as such, leaves him cold. He resents middle-brows because they try to sell it to him.

The high-brow would like to get rid of the middle-brow, but the middle-brow outnumbers him. Lynes divides middle-brows into two groups, upper and lower. The upper middle-brow, he says, is the cultural do-gooder who reads Toynbee, goes to foreign films and never calls curtains "drapes." By his pretended culture he seems determined to coarsen high-brow treasures. But these are safe from the lower middle-brow who, hell-bent on improving his mind, aspires only as high as book clubs and magazines edited by upper middle-brows. He lives in a world of washers and sedans, likes reproductions of hunting prints and gives barbecue parties. He secretly thinks he has good taste but does not dare talk about it.

[8] From "High-Brow, Low-Brow, Middle-Brow," adapted by Russell Lynes and *Life* editors from the original article in *Harper's Magazine.* Reprinted by permission of Mr. Lynes and *Life.*

Everyday Tastes of High-Brows, Low-Brows, and Middle-Brows [1]

Class	*Entertainment*	*Salads*	*Drinks*	*Reading*	*Records*	*Games*	*Causes*
High-Brow	Ballet	Greens, olive oil, wine vinegar, ground salt, pepper, garlic, unwashed salad bowl.	A glass of "adequate little red wine"	"Little magazines," criticism of criticism, avant garde literature	Bach and before, Ives and after	Go	Art
Upper Middle-Brow	Theater	Same as high-brow but with tomatoes, avocado, Roquefort cheese added	A very dry Martini with lemon peel	Solid non-fiction, the better novels, quality magazines	Symphonies, concertos, operas	The Game	Planned parenthood
Lower Middle-Brow	Musical extravaganza films	Quartered iceberg lettuce and store dressing	Bourbon and ginger ale	Book club selections, mass circulation magazines	Light opera popular favorites	Bridge	P.T.A.
Low-Brow	Western movies	Coleslaw	Beer	Pulps, comic books	Jukebox	Craps	The Lodge

[1] Adapted from a pictorial chart in *Life*, April 11, 1949, pp. 100-101.

11

TWO USES OF WORDS

WE HAVE SEEN that words mean whatever users agree to make them mean, that many of them have had different meanings at different stages of their histories, and that their present meanings vary with the context in which they are used. It is nevertheless possible to generalize these meanings into two main types. Consider these two sentences:

Our *cat* has three kittens.
He is all right, but his wife is a *cat.*

The word *cat* is being used in two different ways. In the first sentence, the referent of *cat* is a particular animal; in the second, it is not anything in the physical world, but an attitude in the mind of the speaker, an attitude toward a particular woman. We could distinguish between these two uses by saying that the first use of *cat* is *literal* and the second *figurative.* We could also say that in the first sentence we are dealing with the *denotations* of *cat* and in the second sentence with the *connotations.*

DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

The New International distinguishes between these terms by saying that "The denotation of a word is its actual meaning, the connotation, that which it suggests or implies in addition to its actual meaning." The word *actual* in this distinction is likely to be misleading. We have seen that the principle of usage defines meaning as the work a word does in a context. If a word (say, *wolf*), when used in a particular context, suggests certain unpleasant characteristics, then the suggestion of these characteristics is part of the word's work, part of its meaning. No word, unless we believe in word magic, has any meaning apart from what it suggests or implies in a context. Therefore, in the sense that any meaning is actual, all meanings are

actual; and the connotations of a word are no less actual than the denotations.

In this chapter the word *denotation* will be used to mean the physical referent which a word symbolizes. The denotation of *snake* is the reptile itself, as it exists in the physical world. In terms of denotation, the best definition of *snake* is the thing itself. The second best is a picture of the thing. We will say that words are being used at a denotative level when they are being used to point to the physical existences which they name.

Connotation will be used to mean the attitudes which a word provokes. The *connotations* of *snake* are the characteristics we associate with snakes and our responses to these characteristics. We will say that *snake* is being used at a connotative level when it is being used to point to our psychological reactions to the physical snake. Similarly, when *wolf* is used to designate a four-legged animal which hunts deer, it is being used at a denotative level. When it is used in other ways, we say it is being used at a connotative level.

The following contrasted sentences provide further illustrations:

Denotative	*Connotative*
1. The surgeon quickly found the *nerve* and severed it.	1. What a *nerve* that woman has!
2. I wish I could get hold of a good *hound.*	2. Have nothing to do with him. He's a *hound* if there ever was one.
3. It was a dangerous operation. I almost *died.*	3. That doctrine has been *dead* for fifty years.
4. The banker was *watering* his lawn.	4. The banker was *watering* the stock.

For words like *cat, nerve, hound,* and *dead,* it is usually easy to distinguish a literal use at a denotative level from a figurative use at a connotative level, because the context tells us which interpretation to make. Nor do we have much trouble with words like *ambitious, brave, chaos, foolhardy, glory, hate, viciousness,* because such words do not have any denotation. They do not point to facts in the physical world; they point to our judgments about the facts. Thus we may classify Blondin's stunt of walking a tightrope over Niagara Falls as *brave* or *foolhardy* according to how we feel about it.

Words which do cause trouble, however, are the class names, because it is often difficult to tell from the context whether the class name is pointing to individuals or to psychological reactions. For example, in *He is a Negro,* it is not clear whether the noun is pointing

to physical characteristics which we call negroid, or to the attitudes which these characteristics arouse in some people. Often the context will help us decide, but class names are treacherous because they tend to encourage confusion between the denotations and connotations of a word. And the more abstract the class name is, the easier such confusion becomes.

Recall that after reading Stuart Chase's discussion of "Government" and "Business" we saw that when people talk about "government ruining business" or about "business trying to dominate government" they are not referring to the millions of individuals and institutions which go to make up the abstractions "government" and "business." Rather they are talking about the special connotations these words have for them. We may share or reject these connotations, but, as Stuart Chase has pointed out, we merely deceive ourselves to no useful purpose when we make the mistake of assuming that these words are being used denotatively. Similarly, when we hear such expressions as "Isn't that just like a man?" and "Well, what can you expect from a woman?" we should recognize that the words *man* and *woman* point to attitudes arising out of the speakers' experience and are therefore being used connotatively, not denotatively.

The denotative and connotative uses illustrated above are sometimes referred to as the *scientific* and *poetic* uses of words. These descriptions remind us that a writer's purpose determines his choice of diction. A writer who is essentially interested in providing information will tend to use words at a denotative level. Since clarity of communication – clear pointing to specific facts – is his main concern, he cannot afford to let his readers make all sorts of private interpretations; therefore he tries to restrict interpretation by choosing words and contexts which are relatively free from connotations.

Consider the following paragraph, which is a good example of scientific writing at a popular level. Notice that the words point to things, not to attitudes, and that the diction makes no attempt to create either favorable or unfavorable responses in the mind of the reader.

> When a beam of sunlight enters a darkened room with dust in it, one can see the beam of light clearly defined as the light is scattered from the dust particles. The more dust particles in the room, the more the light is scattered; and if there is a real cloud of dust, the light is scattered so much that one can hardly see beyond it. The same thing happens to the beams from the headlights of a car in a fog. The small particles of water making up the fog in the air scatter the light that shines on them.

The denser the fog, the more the light is scattered, the less of it gets through the fog, and the less one can see through a fog with even the most powerful beam of light. By measuring the fraction of the incident light that goes straight through the fog and the fraction that is scattered by the fog particles, one can estimate the number of water droplets in the fog – or the number of dust particles in the air. This method is accurate for determining the number of fine particles in a cloudy suspension in air or in water and is used frequently in analytical chemistry.[1]

The poet, as contrasted with the scientist, is more concerned about creating emotional responses than he is about conveying factual information. His poetry may contain facts, may even be highly informative. But since the poet's chief desire is to stimulate the imaginations of his readers, he makes greater use of figurative language and of connotations which may invite emotional responses. As the following passage illustrates, a poet who failed to do this would be most disappointing:

The use of emotionally toned words is not, of course, always to be condemned. They are always harmful when we are trying to think clearly on a disputable point of fact. In poetry, on the other hand, they have a perfectly proper place, because in poetry (as in some kinds of prose) the arousing of suitable emotions is an important part of the purpose for which the words are used.

In "The Eve of St. Agnes," Keats has written:

> Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
> And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast.

These are beautiful lines. Let us notice how much of their beauty follows from the proper choice of emotionally colored words and how completely it is lost if these words are replaced by neutral ones. The words with strikingly emotional meanings are *casement, gules, Madeline, fair,* and *breast. Casement* means simply a kind of window with emotional and romantic associations. *Gules* is the heraldic name for red, with the suggestion of romance which accompanies all heraldry. *Madeline* is simply a girl's name, but one calling out favorable emotions absent from a relatively plain and straightforward name. *Fair* simply means, in objective fact, that her skin was white or uncolored – a necessary condition for the colors of the window to show – but also *fair* implies warm emotional preference for an uncolored skin rather than one which is yellow, purple, black, or any of the other colors which skin might be. *Breast* has also similar emotional meanings, and the aim of scientific description might

[1] From *Explaining the Atom,* by Selig Hecht, copyright, 1947, by The Viking Press, Inc.

have been equally well obtained if it had been replaced by such a neutral word as *chest.*

Let us now try the experiment of keeping these two lines in a metrical form, but replacing all the emotionally colored words by neutral ones, while making as few other changes as possible. We may write:

> Full on this window shone the wintry moon,
> Making red marks on Jane's uncolored chest.

No one will doubt that all of its poetic value has been knocked out of the passage by these changes. Yet the lines still mean the same in external fact; they still have the same objective meaning. It is only the emotional meaning which has been destroyed.[2]

The theoretical difference between the denotative and connotative uses of language is that the former points to things and the latter to attitudes. The practical difference is that the denotative use of words can be verified by the facts which the words symbolize, whereas the connotative use cannot. When a writer tells us that, under stated conditions, distilled water boils at 212° F. and freezes at 32° F., we can test his statement by experiment. If it checks, we say his statement is *true;* if not, we say it is *false.* But if a writer tells us that Shakespeare is the greatest of all poets, that all men are born free and equal, or that men are more honest than women, we cannot verify his statement by experiment. These are connotative, not denotative, descriptions. We may "agree" or "disagree"; we may even say "how true" or "what nonsense," but such responses are not verification; they are merely additional examples of connotative utterance. It is for this reason that controversies about what a poem "means" are less subject to arbitrary decision than are disputes about the meaning of denotative statements.

CONNOTATIVE DEVICES

Skill in using the emotional appeal of connotations is essential in any writing designed to persuade, convince, anger, inspire, or soothe a reader. Anything which helps a writer achieve these purposes is called a *connotative device.* The most common of these devices are *name-calling, slanting, rhyme, rhythm,* and *figures of speech.*

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[2] Reprinted from *How to Think Straight,* by Robert H. Thouless. Copyright, 1939, by Simon and Schuster, Inc. Canadian copyright, Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., publishers.

Name-Calling

Name-calling has been defined by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis as "a device to make us form a judgment without examining the evidence on which it should be based . . . by giving 'bad names' to those individuals, groups, nations, races, policies, practices, beliefs, and ideals which the speaker would have us condemn and reject." But names may be "good" as well as "bad." For example, one newspaper may refer to a professor of economics as a *scholar, scientist, expert,* or *authority* – if it approves of his teachings and wishes others to approve them. An opposing newspaper may call the same professor an *idealist, visionary, theorist,* or *brain-truster* – if it wishes to discredit his work. Both papers are choosing names which provoke the response they want. Carried beyond the limits of good taste or fairness, name-calling becomes objectionable, but it is a device which is almost sure to be used in any attempt to influence the opinions of others. The important thing is that, as readers and writers, we learn when it is being used legitimately, and when abused.

Slanting

Slanting is a deliberately one-sided account of an event. The writer presents some of the facts and ignores others in order to provoke a desired judgment in the reader's mind. Slanting is therefore a connotative device. You have already seen this device used in Miss Robertson's description of Mr. Wallace's room.[3] In the following example, the first version is an unslanted report. No significant facts have been suppressed. The writer is not trying to influence the reader to sympathize with either party in the dispute; therefore he presents all the facts necessary for an impartial report.

> In the city of Athens, McMinn County, Tennessee, supporters of the G. I. Nonpartisan League and some of 300 special deputies appointed by Sheriff Mansfield fought a six-hour gun battle for possession of the ballot boxes. The first evidence of the trouble occurred at 4 p. m. when the polling booths closed. At one polling place two G. I. watchers crashed through a glass door and told bystanders that they had been held prisoner by the deputies and had not been allowed to watch the voting. Between then and 9 o'clock fist fights broke out, a deputy shot a Negro in the hip, seven deputies were disarmed and beaten by G. I.'s, twenty veterans were arrested and jailed, and armed deputies seized the

[3] See pages 70-71.

ballot boxes and took them to the jail to be counted. At 9 o'clock, a group of G. I. supporters, many of them armed, gathered outside the jail and demanded the release of the veterans. Someone in the crowd fired a shot. The deputies fired back, and the battle was on. The G. I.'s fired at the jail windows and threw some home-made bombs. The deputies returned the fire as long as their ammunition lasted, and at one time threatened to shoot their hostages unless the attack was called off. At 3 a. m. the deputies surrendered. The G. I.'s took possession of the jail and the ballot boxes.

The following version was written to create sympathy with the veterans by omitting those details which might discredit them and stressing those which represent the deputies in an unfavorable light. The result is a one-sided account designed to make the reader interpret the conflict as the writer wishes.

Tennessee veterans, who fought all over the world to preserve the right of free elections, have now taught their home town political bosses that democracy begins at home. When 300 armed deputies, especially appointed by Sheriff Mansfield to "supervise" the election in McMinn County, forcibly prevented watchers for the G. I. Nonpartisan League from exercising their legitimate function, jailed twenty of them, shot a Negro, and seized the ballot boxes, the veterans and their sympathizers decided to fight for their rights. They marched on the city jail and demanded the release of their imprisoned buddies. When the deputies fired on the crowd, the veterans fired back. In six hours of bloody combat the veterans were victorious. The defeated deputies surrendered, and the G. I.'s freed their comrades and retrieved the stolen ballot boxes.

Finally, the next version is slanted in favor of the deputies. The writer ignores the shooting of the Negro and the threat to shoot the hostages. Instead he plays up those details which could be interpreted as evidence of mob violence on the part of the veterans.

Bullets rather than ballots decided the outcome of the election in McMinn County, Tennessee, as a mob of veterans took the law into their own hands. During the afternoon veterans had disarmed and beaten special deputies who had been appointed to preserve the integrity of the election. When some of the veterans were arrested, the rest organized a full-scale attack on the Athens city jail. For six hours they hurled bombs and bullets through the jail windows, wounding not only the outnumbered deputies, but some of the men they were supposed to be "rescuing." At 3 a. m. the besieged deputies, their ammunition gone and many of them badly wounded, were forced to surrender. The veterans took over the jail — and, of course, the ballot boxes.

A careful contrast of news stories in newspapers with opposing policies will yield many examples of the device of slanting. If, for example, you contrast the accounts of a football game in the newspapers of the winning and losing schools, you will see that each paper tends to slight those details which detract from its team's performance and to stress the evidence of its team's superiority. A "moral victory" is generally an actual defeat.

Rhyme and Rhythm

Prosaic statements, when presented in the rhyme and rhythms of verse, acquire added force. Thus, "Thirty days hath September" and "Sticks and stones may break my bones" get remembered by millions of people. The rhyme and rhythm have the effect of setting the words to music, and the musical pattern itself becomes part of the meaning.

This use of rhyme and rhythm has been generously exploited by the writers of advertising and political slogans. In the 1940 presidential election Roosevelt's reiteration of the names of three Republicans whom he had chosen as scapegoats – Martin, Barton, and Fish – provoked a response that would not have been possible had the names been Martin, Fish, and Shipstead, or even had the order of Martin, Barton, and Fish been reversed. Such slogans as *Tippecanoe and Tyler too; So round, so firm, so fully packed, so free and easy on the draw;* and the well-known Burma Shave jingles make similar use of the connotative effects of rhyme and rhythm.

Figures of Speech

The most common figures of speech are *metaphors* (Jones was a Rock of Gibralter in the line), *similes* (His preparations were as methodical as a surgical technique), and *personification* (a tired moon smiled wanly down on them). These devices are discussed in some detail in Chapter 13.[4]

REPORTS AND JUDGMENTS

We have seen that whether a writer uses words denotatively or connotatively will depend on the purpose of his writing. A writer who wishes to convey information will select words which are relatively free of connotations, while one who wishes to influence the conduct or opinions of his readers will choose words with appropriate

[4] See pages 264-271.

connotations. In short, the choice of diction will be determined by the purpose. Words are not "good" or "bad" in themselves, but only as they help or hinder a writer in carrying out his purpose.

When an article is concerned with communicating information we call it a *report;* when it is attempting to mold opinion we call it a *judgment.* Reports are denotative writings. They point to specific referents; they avoid the use of connotative devices; and, above all, the statements they make can be proved true or false by testing them against the facts. Judgments, on the other hand, are connotative statements. They point not to facts but to opinions; they use words which create emotional responses, and though the judgment may be accepted as "true" or "false," it cannot be verified in the way a report can be.

This distinction will be important to you, both as a reader and as a writer. As an educated reader, unless you wish to be at the mercy of every propagandist whose work you read, you must be able to see when an author is presenting the facts impartially and when he is using the facts, or some of them, to support or encourage opinions. For some types of writing that distinction will not be difficult to make. But the more the judgment resembles a report, the more you will be likely to accept it as an impartial presentation of the facts.

For example, it is part of the traditional ethics of journalism to avoid the use of judgments in newspaper reports. Most responsible newspapers try to follow this practice conscientously. But you have seen that a report can be changed to a judgment through the use of slanting, and a reporter, either innocently or deliberately, can easily create judgments in the minds of his readers by slanting the details of his report. Since such slanting is difficult to detect unless the reader knows all the facts which were available to the reporter, a slanted report is often the most effective kind of judgment. Witness the two slanted reports of the election in McMinn County, Tennessee.

The use of name-calling and of figures of speech chosen for their connotations will be much easier to detect if the reader is at all critical and alert about the use of words. The following selection, for example, is not a report but an outright judgment. It is not an account of William Jennings Bryan, but an account of how Mr. Mencken feels about him — or felt when he wrote the passage. We may or may not agree with Mencken's judgment of Bryan, but we should not mistake the passage for a report. No writer whose purpose was simply to convey information would here have used the diction which, for your convenienece, has been italicized.

This talk of sincerity, I confess, fatigues me. If the *fellow* was sincere, then so was P. T. Barnum. The word is *disgraced* and *degraded* by such uses. He was, in fact, a *charlatan, a mountebank, a zany without shame or dignity.* His career brought him into contact with the first men of his time; he preferred the company of *rustic ignoramuses.* It was hard to believe, watching him at Dayton, that he had traveled, that he had been received in civilized societies, that he had been a high officer of state. He seemed only *a poor clod* like those around him, *deluded* by *childish* theology, full of an almost *pathological hatred of all learning, all human dignity, all beauty, all fine and noble things.* He was a *peasant* come home to the *barnyard.* Imagine a *gentleman,* and you have imagined everything that he was not. What animated him from end to end of his *grotesque* career was simply ambition — the ambition of a common man, to *get his hand upon the collar of his superiors,* or, failing that, *to get his thumb into their eyes.* He was born with a *roaring* voice, and it had the *trick of inflaming half-wits.* His whole career was devoted to raising those half-wits against their *betters,* that he himself might shine. His last battle will be grossly misunderstood if it is thought of as a mere exercise in *fanaticism* — that is, if *Bryan the Fundamentalist Pope* is mistaken for one of the *bucolic fundamentalists.* There was much more in it than that, as everyone knows who saw him on the field. What moved him, at bottom, was simply *hatred* of the city men who had laughed at him so long, and brought him at last to so *tatterdemalion an estate.* He *lusted for revenge* upon them. He yearned to lead the *anthropoid rabble* against them, to punish them for their execution upon him, by attacking the *very vitals of their civilization.* He went far beyond the bounds of any merely *religious frenzy,* however inordinate. When he began denouncing the notion that man is a mammal even some of the *hinds* at Dayton *were agape.* And when, *brought upon Darrow's cruel hook,* he *writhed* and *tossed* in a very *fury* of *malignancy, bawling against the boldest elements of sense and decency* like a man *frantic* — when he came to that tragic climax of his striving there were *snickers* among the *hinds* as well as *hosannas.*[5]

It is obvious that the diction throughout this paragraph is highly connotative. Such terms as *fellow, charlatan, mountebank, rustic ignoramuses, poor clod, peasant, barnyard, tatterdemalion estate, lusted for revenge, anthropoid rabble,* and *religious frenzy* — to select the most obvious — are chosen for their emotional appeal. Since such an appeal was part of Mencken's purpose, the diction is effectively, even brilliantly, chosen. But it would be a useful lesson in the

[5] From *Prejudices: Fifth Series,* by H. L. Mencken. Copyright, 1926, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

meaning of words to stop and ask what are the referents behind these expressions. The more you consider the diction, the more you will discover that it does not point to facts and events in the physical world but to attitudes and opinions in the mind of Mr. Mencken. The point is not that these attitudes are unsound; that is another question. The point is merely that they are attitudes, not facts, and should be so recognized.

Most of your college writing assignments – at least in your English courses – will combine reports and judgments. Within the same paper you will be communicating information and expressing your attitude toward it. But some assignments will require you to confine yourself to reporting – summaries, content-reviews of reading, and technical reports, for example. Other assignments, especially critical and argumentative essays, will require you to develop opinions. Whatever the nature of the paper, the tools with which you work will be the denotations and connotations of words. To achieve your purpose you must distinguish between these tools and know when each is the right one for your particular job.

EXERCISES

A. Write out and return to your instructor the statement in each of the following groups (*a*, *b*, or *c*) which most precisely reports what was said in this chapter.

1. The denotation of a word is:
   a. the actual meaning,
   b. the etymological meaning,
   c. the referent which the word symbolizes.
2. The connotations of a word are:
   a. common misuses of the word,
   b. the attitudes which the word provokes,
   c. the interpretations to which the word is subject.
3. The connotative use of words is sometimes referred to as:
   a. the scientific use of words,
   b. the poetic use of words,
   c. the everyday use of words.
4. A connotative use of words is desirable when:
   a. the writer wishes to appeal to the reader's emotions,
   b. the writer wishes to provide factual information,
   c. the writer wishes his statements to be verified.

5. Name calling is a connotative device which:
   a. reduces discussion to the level of personalities,
   b. allows the writer to provoke favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the referent,
   c. Makes possible the writing of poetry.

6. Slanting is a connotative device which:
   a. makes possible the writing of description,
   b. allows the writer to present unqualified judgments,
   c. provokes a judgment by presenting selected facts.

7. The basic distinction between reports and judgments is that:
   a. reports are true; judgments are false,
   b reports are made by the writer; judgments are made by the reader,
   c. reports are denotative statements; judgments are connotative.

8. The difference between reporting and slanting is essentially that of:
   a. abstract versus concrete diction,
   b. the writer's purpose,
   c. the reader's attitude.

B. Under the general title, "Names Do Make a Difference," write a four-paragraph paper — one paragraph for each of the exhibits below, and a concluding paragraph. Illustrate your comments with additional examples drawn from your own experience of the difference between the connotations of desirable and undesirable names.

1. Call a woman a kitten, but never a cat;
   You can call her a mouse, cannot call her a rat;
   Call a woman a chicken, but never a hen;
   Or you surely will not be her caller again.

   You can call her a duck, cannot call her a goose;
   You can call her a deer, but never a moose;
   You can call her a lamb, but never a sheep;
   Economic she likes, but you can't call her cheap.

   You can say she's a vision, can't say she's a sight;
   And no woman is skinny, she's slender and slight;
   If she should burn you up, say she sets you afire,
   And you'll always be welcome, you tricky old liar.[6]

2. A friend of mine, the owner of a department store, sought to test the intentionality [belief in words rather than in things] of customers by a practical experiment. One morning he set out at different ends of a counter piles of men's handkerchiefs. On the one he placed a sign reading 'Soft-Textured, Genuine Irish Linen Handkerchiefs, Special 3 for 50¢.' On the other the sign read 'Nose-Rags, three for a quarter.' During

[6] John E. Donovan, "Semantics," *The Saturday Evening Post*, July 13, 1946. Reprinted by permission of Mrs. Gertrude D. Crane and *The Saturday Evening Post*.

an eight-hour period, twenty-six different persons examined and eleven bought from the 'Irish Linen' stock, while but six examined and only two bought the 'Nose Rags.' The point of this experiment should by now have been guessed: both piles contained the same kind of handkerchiefs.[7]

3. Regard the two abstractions "investor" and "speculator." The former is a good demon and the latter a sorry one. Investors must be encouraged, speculators scouted. Hence laws, regulations, rules, moral codes, principles. If you go into the New York Stock Market to separate an "investor" from a "speculator," you had better take a surgeon with you. The distinction is in our heads. On the market, any market, you find Junius buying and selling stocks, bonds, lands, commodities. Most of the time he does not know himself whether he is speculating or investing. Far out on one wing there may be a few pure plungers, far out on the other there may be some executors of trust estates who never think of an appreciation in their capital but only of income. In between lie the overwhelming majority of market transactions – to quote a man who has spent his life on the Street – where one is both speculating and investing more or less. Perhaps a gap-filling word is in order – call it 'investulating" or "specuvesting."[8]

C. Identify the connotative devices used in the following examples. Then match each example with an additional illustration of the same device which you have found in your reading or listening.

During the discussion of the loan to Britain in 1946, opponents of the loan called it a *handout*, a *gift*, an *underwriting of Socialism*, and a *misguided waste of public funds*. Supporters of the loan called it a *practical recognition of America's indebtedness*, a *helping hand to a valiant ally*, and an *investment in Democracy*

He travels fastest who travels alone.

Waste not, want not.

A penny saved is a penny earned.

Government of the people, by the people, for the people.

As President of Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson was once considering candidates for a vacant professorship. One of his advisers suggested the name of a famous scholar. Wilson shook his head. "But," protested the adviser, "he is considered the lamp of knowledge in his field."

"Yes," said Wilson, "but the lamp gives off more heat than light."

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[7] From *Language Habits in Human Affairs*, by Irving J. Lee. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers

[8] From *The Tyranny of Words*, by Stuart Chase, copyright, 1938, by Stuart Chase. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

Everett Watson is short, stocky, almost bald. His skin is coarse, his teeth irregular and tobacco-stained. His suits are cheap, ill-fitting, and usually unpressed. At a party he is self-conscious and ill at ease. He has no knack for social conversation and on such occasions when he has to dance with a woman his efforts are embarrassing both to himself and his partner. Although his association with business and civic leaders frequently requires him to eat in public, he has never learned to do it with any grace.

Everett Watson has taken an active part in almost every worthwhile community enterprise sponsored during the last ten years. His usefulness to the city is best revealed in the success of the Community Chest drive which he organized last fall, and in the recent report of the Citizens' Committee, of which he is chairman. Although his health is a matter of concern to all his friends, he has never hesitated to spend his strength and energy on any project which promised to be of service to the community.

During the 1940 campaign the presidential candidates were Franklin D. Roosevelt and Wendell L. Willkie. Throughout the campaign Willkie referred to his opponent as "the third-term candidate."

D. The four passages that follow are the opening paragraphs of the Republican, Democratic, Socialist, and Communist platforms prepared for the 1936 elections. First, for each platform copy out the words or phrases which were most obviously chosen for their connotations; second, for each party write a one-paragraph report of the *things* that party wants to bring about as you know them from experience; make this report as impartial and accurate as possible. Third, using the information you have just recorded, rewrite any two of the passages as they might have been written had their authors been more concerned with providing information than with appealing to the emotions of the voters.

Republican

America is in peril. The welfare of American men and women and the future of our youth are at stake. We dedicate ourselves to the preservation of their political liberty, their individual opportunity and their character as free citizens, which today for the first time are threatened by government itself.

For three long years the New Deal administration has dishonored American traditions and flagrantly betrayed the pledges upon which the Democratic party sought and received public support. . . .

Democratic

We hold this truth to be self-evident – that the test of a representative government is its ability to promote the safety and happiness of the people.

We hold this truth to be self-evident – that twelve years of Republican leadership left our nation sorely stricken in body, mind, and spirit; and

that three years of Democratic leadership have put it back on the road to restored health and prosperity.

We hold this truth to be self-evident — that this three-year recovery in all the basic values of life and the re-establishment of the American way of living has been brought about by humanizing the policies of the Federal Government as they affect the personal, financial, industrial, and agricultural well-being of the American people. . . .

Socialist

For a Socialist America — The Socialist party of the United States pledges itself anew to the task of building a Socialist society, under which the industries of the country shall be socially owned and democratically managed for the common good; a society under which security, plenty, peace, and freedom shall be the heritage of all.

Eight years ago the people of this country voted to continue the capitalist Old Deal. The purpose of this deal was to preserve the rights of the few who own most of the nation's wealth. Under the Old Deal, the economic machine was plunged into the worst depression of our history.

Four years ago the voters of the United States threw their support to the New Deal. They elected to office Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic party. The New Deal, like the Old Deal, has utterly failed. Under it, big business was given almost unheard-of powers. Untold wealth was destroyed. Prices rose. Profits advanced. Wages lagged. Twelve million men and women are still jobless, and hunger and destitution exist throughout the land. . . .

Communist

The American people today face the greatest crisis since the Civil War. Extreme reaction threatens the country, driving towards fascism and a new World War.

To meet this danger to our liberties and welfare, we must unite our ranks. In common action we must go forward to overcome this crisis in an American way, in the spirit of 1776, in the interests of our people and our country.

The collapse of the Hoover-Republican prosperity destroyed our boasted American standard of living. The New Deal failed to protect and restore our living standard. American capitalism is unable to provide the American people with the simple necessities of life. . . .

E. Select as your starting point any suitable news story and from the information contained in that story, write two accounts which are slanted in opposite directions. Underline all expressions which you chose deliberately for their connotations.

F. Study the advertisements in any popular periodical (such as the *Saturday Evening Post* or *Good Housekeeping*) and write a 500-word paper discussing the use of connotative devices in these advertisements.

12

LEVELS OF USAGE

EVERYONE knows that the way people speak reflects the social and economic background from which they have come. In general, those who have had a college education, or have spent most of their lives with educated people, speak differently from those who have not. You recognize such expressions as "Where was you last night?" "Me and him ain't speakin'," and "It don't make no difference," as the talk of uneducated speakers.

Moreover, one's style of speaking varies with the situation. Your own pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are not the same on the golf course as at the family dinner table, and not the same in a fraternity "bull session" as in an interview with the dean. You have not one way of speaking, but a range of ways. So has everyone else. We can describe this range by saying that a person's speech habits reflect different *social* and *stylistic* levels.

SOCIAL LEVELS: STANDARD AND NONSTANDARD ENGLISH

Words not only point to things and to attitudes toward things; they also reflect the social level of the person using them. Thus, "I have no money" and "I ain't got no money" refer to the same financial condition.[1] One is just as clear as the other; but the connotations of

[1] The common assertion that two negatives make an affirmative and that, therefore, "I ain't got no money" really means that the speaker does have money is an interesting example of the belief that words "ought" to mean what they are clearly not used to mean. However useful such a statement may be in mathematics, this "rule" about the double negative has no relation to the facts of English usage. In certain contexts (*I am not unwilling to go*) the double negative is educated usage for an affirmative statement, in certain other contexts (as in our example) the double negative is uneducated usage for a negative statement. The fact that the latter usage is a violation of the conventions of educated usage requires its censure in college and high-school writing, but such censure need not be used as an excuse for inventing linguistic mythology.

the second statement invite the judgment that the speaker is an uneducated person who comes from a socially inferior class.

It is common practice to apply the labels "good English," "correct English," or "pure English" to the first statement, and to classify the second as "bad English," "incorrect English," or "vulgar English." These labels are connotative. The tendency of scientific grammarians is to avoid such labels and, instead, to describe the statements at a denotative level. At this level "I have no money" is classified as *standard English;* "I ain't got no money" is classified as *nonstandard English.*

Standard English is a class dialect. It may be defined as the speech habits of those who enjoy a favored economic and social status in our society, and since this class may be roughly described as the educated class, we may say that standard English is the way that educated people speak and write. It is, therefore, the kind of English written and spoken by business executives, lawyers, doctors, ministers, teachers, writers, editors, artists, engineers, and other professional people, and, of course, by their wives. All these comprise a small minority of the total users of the language, perhaps ten to twenty per cent of adult speakers.

Nonstandard English is the name we give to the speech habits of the great majority of the users of the language. It is the language of the farm, the factory, the mine, the lumber camp, the railroad, and, in general, of those occupations which do not require what we call "higher education." It is essentially a spoken rather than a written language, but it may be written or imitated in writing by novelists, dramatists, and short-story writers, when they are representing characters who would be expected to use nonstandard English. It is occasionally used by educated people for humorous effects.

The superiority of standard to nonstandard English is social rather than linguistic. For the purposes for which it is used, nonstandard is a satisfactory dialect. If we use the term "correct" to mean "in accordance with the traditional patterns of the language," nonstandard is not less "correct" than standard English. The chief linguistic, as apart from social, superiority of the standard dialect is its greater wealth of vocabulary, its greater capacity for fine discriminations in expression. In this respect standard English is linguistically "better" than nonstandard.[2]

[2] For an analysis of this superiority of standard English, see Fries, *American English Grammar,* p. 228.

The admission that nonstandard English is satisfactory for the purposes for which it is used does not mean that standard English has no priority in the concerns of a college English class, or that nonstandard usage is defensible in college writing. Save in special assignments (chiefly fiction) in which the writer is required to represent uneducated speech, *nonstandard English has no place in college writing.* For colleges are preparing students to take their places on the economic and social level at which standard English is spoken and written. Therefore college and college students are committed to the study and use of standard English, and to the avoidance of all expressions which are typical of nonstandard.

STYLISTIC LEVELS

Standard English may be written at *formal, informal,* and *colloquial* levels. The differences between these levels have nothing to do with "correct" usage. Each is appropriate to particular purposes, and when it is appropriate it is correct. The differences are essentially those of style. Just as different social occasions require different styles of clothing, so different writing purposes require different styles of writing. The writer's obligation is to select the style appropriate to his particular purpose.

Before we can profitably discuss these styles, it will be necessary to consider five classes of words into which the vocabularies of educated people can be divided. These are *popular words, learned words, idiomatic diction, colloquialisms,* and *slang.*

Learned and Popular Words

In English, as in other languages, a great part of the total vocabulary consists of words which are common to the speech of educated and uneducated speakers alike. These words are the basic elements of our language. They are indispensable for everyday communication, and it is by means of them that people from widely different social levels are able to speak a common language. These are called popular words; they belong to the whole populace.

Contrasted with these are words which we read more often than we hear, and write more often than we speak – words more widely used by educated than by uneducated people, and more likely to be used on formal than on informal occasions. These we call learned words. The distinction can be illustrated by contrasting pairs of

popular and learned words which have roughly the same general meaning.

Popular	*Learned*	*Popular*	*Learned*
agree	acquiesce	kiss	osculate
air	atmosphere	learned	erudite
anger	animosity	let go	relinquish
beggar	mendicant	lying	mendacious
behead	decapitate	make easy	facilitate
blow out	extinguish	near	imminent
break	fracture, rupture	piece	fragment
breakable	frangible	prove	verify, substantiate
building	edifice	prevent	circumvent
clear	lucid	queer	eccentric
come out	emerge	round	circular
daily	diurnal	secret	cryptic, esoteric
end	terminate	sharp	acute
enemy	adversary	surrender	capitulate
face	visage	truth	veracity
fat	corpulent	try	endeavor
fire	conflagration	understand	comprehend
flabby	flaccid	vile	abhorrent
get	obtain	wasteful	profligate
hair-do	coiffure	wipe out	eradicate

If you were to consult your dictionary on the origin of the learned words given above, you would find that they were originally all foreign words. They came into English either directly from Latin or through some intermediary language, usually French. The great bulk of popular words (though there are many exceptions) have come down to us from Old English.

Since learned words are generally introduced and used by educated people with some knowledge of foreign languages, these words tend to retain in English some of their foreign characteristics. Thus their pronunciations, meanings, and grammatical features tend to remain in English what they were in the languages from which they were borrowed.[3] When, however, they become so useful that they are adopted into the active vocabulary of all classes, the uneducated as well as the educated, they cease to retain their learned characteristics and begin to be treated like native words. They lose their foreign pronunciations (*cottage, garage, lieutenant*); they give up their foreign grammatical features (*gymnasia* and *indices* become *gymnasiums* and

[3] See, for example, the discussion of foreign plurals on pages 290-291.

indexes); and they acquire meanings which they did not originally have (*curfew, deprecate, rodeo*). This process is called naturalization.

Words in the process of naturalization often go through an awkward stage in which they are part foreign, part English. At this stage, foreign and native pronunciations may exist side by side (*chauffeur, cigarette, detour, penalize*); the words may have both foreign and native grammatical structures (data *are*, data *is;* gladio*li*, gladio*luses*); they may have original and supplementary meanings (*flair, lingerie*). This transitional stage, if understood for what it is, need cause no alarm. Unfortunately, many sincere and well-intentioned people assume that the new characteristics are "mistakes," and feel called upon to denounce and urge others to denounce such "corruptions."

Idiomatic Diction

Every language contains a host of expressions which are not subject to logical analysis but are so characteristic that until one has learned to use them naturally he has not mastered the language. These expressions are called idioms. Unless one has learned the language as a native, they are often difficult to use. For example, a foreigner who has learned what *hard* and *up* mean in English will still be puzzled by the phrase *hard up*. A Frenchman to whom the greeting "How do you carry yourself?" seems the most natural kind of expression will be puzzled by "How do you do?" Yet the only real difference between these two salutations is that one is the French way of talking and the other is the English way. Each is natural to the people who use it. Each is an idiomatic construction.

Because idioms are traditional rather than logical, they cannot be learned by rules; they can only be learned by experience. There is, for example, no rule that will tell us in advance what verbs will govern what prepositions. We say aim *at*, abide *by*, account *for*, arise *from*, and adhere *to*. The meaning of a verb may be no clue to its meaning in an idiomatic verb-adverb combination. For example, a dictionary definition of *get* will be of little use in such phrases as *get ahead, get by, get over*. It is this arbitrary nature of idioms that causes trouble.

The following list gives some of the commoner English idioms.

all in all	by hook or by crook	come in handy
at any rate	call off	do away with
be taken in	call up	do up
by and large	catch fire	down and out

drink up
eat away
eat up
ever so often
every now and then
fall sick
far and wide
fight shy of
get a move on
get away with
get behind
get off
get on
get up
hard and fast
in accordance with
in any event
in spite of
in time
keep up
kill off
look down on
look over
look up to
make no bones about
make out
make up
meddle with
mull over
nice and cold
off and on
on the other hand
on time
pull through
put up with
quite the thing
right away
set about
set up
strike a bargain
take heed
tear down
tear out
tear up
through thick and thin
watch out
week in, week out
wind up

You will notice that these idioms are mostly made up of popular words. They are used by all classes of people and are therefore elements common to both standard and nonstandard speech. Often a particular idiom may be replaced by a more learned word. Thus "deceived" may be used for "taken in," "reflect" for "mull over," and "survive" for "pull through." As we shall see later, whether such substitution is advisable will depend on the formality or informality of the style.

Colloquialisms

The word *colloquial* is defined by the *American College Dictionary* as "characteristic of or appropriate to ordinary or familiar conversation rather than formal speech or writing." It does not mean here, as it is sometimes used to mean, "incorrect," "slovenly," or "undesirable." Its closest synonym is "conversational." A colloquialism, therefore, is any word or expression which might appropriately be used by educated people when conversing with other educated people.

This definition of *colloquial* makes it a broader term than *popular words* or *idiom*. Colloquialisms include many popular words and idiomatic constructions; they also include learned words with popular meanings (the use of *alibi* to mean *excuse*, for example), and constructions which are not strictly idioms, especially abbreviated or clipped forms of more formal diction, such as *ad* for *advertisement*. The following list will illustrate common colloquialisms. If there is any question about any of the words, consult the "Glossary" (pages 575–620) for a fuller discussion.

aggravate (annoy)
anyway (at any rate)
auto
awfully (very)
back of (behind)
bank on (rely on)
bunch (group)
bust (failure)
cute
don't
dove (dived)
enthuse
expect (suppose)
exam
fellow
fix (predicament)
folks
good and . . .
heap (a great deal)
home (at home)
it's me
kind (sort) of
like (as though)
locate (settle)
lot(s) of
mad (angry)
math
mean (nasty)
most (almost)
mighty (very)
outside of (aside from)
out loud (aloud)
over with (completed)
party (person)
peeve (annoy)
phone
plenty (adv.)
Prof
reason is because
show (movie)
show (chance)
sure (certainly)
terribly
terrific
who (whom)

Slang

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines slang as "a language of a highly colloquial type." Notice that the adjective is *colloquial,* not *vulgar, incorrect,* or *nonstandard.* There may be specific slang words which are confined to standard or to nonstandard speakers, but slang is used at all social levels. Its use is less frequent and more discriminating among educated speakers, but, though a college president would avoid slang in a public address, he might well use it in many informal speech situations.

In general, slang terms may be divided into three groups: (1) Those which have long existed in the language, but which are felt, like profanity, to be so vulgar that they are under a strong social taboo. (2) Expressions which belong to the specialized vocabulary of particular groups – gangsters, musicians, soldiers. (3) Words and phrases – such as, *blew his top, corny, dope, lemon, pull a fast one* – which have achieved a measure of popularity in informal speech but have not yet won dictionary recognition as established usage. Most of these expressions never become officially accepted into the standard vocabulary, though some finally do. For example, the words *bus, cab, cad, canter, hoax,* and *mob* were once slang terms but are now acceptable even in formal English; the clipped forms *auto, phone, taxi,* and the words *enthuse, mad* (angry), and *show* (movie) were once slang but are now classified as colloquial; and such current slang as *kids, liable* (likely), *sick* (disgusted), *swell* (good), and *windbag* are so common that their recognition as colloquialisms seems certain. The fact that slang words do occasionally become established usage makes any comprehensive taboo against slang

unwise. In general, college writing should avoid slang, but the nature of any particular slang word and the style of the paper in which it is used determine its acceptability.

Let us now return to the differences between formal, informal, and colloquial styles.

Formal Style

Formal (or Literary) English is primarily a written style, though it is occasionally used in public lectures of a serious or ceremonial nature. Its chief characteristics are (1) relatively long and involved sentence structure which frequently employs such rhetorical devices as the parallel and periodic sentence (see pages 148-152); (2) an extensive vocabulary which makes a liberal use of "learned" words and avoids abbreviations, contractions, colloquialisms, and slang; (3) conservative grammatical usage which tends to observe distinctions often ignored at a less formal level; (4) an impersonal tone; and (5) a serious and dignified attitude toward the subject and the reader.

The following paragraph is a moderate example of a formal style:

> There are, indeed, other objects of desire that if attained leave nothing but restlessness and dissatisfaction behind them. These are the objects pursued by fools. That such objects ever attract us is a proof of the disorganization of our nature, which drives us in contrary directions and is at war with itself. If we had attained anything like steadiness of thought or fixity of character, if we knew ourselves, we should know also our inalienable satisfactions. To say that all goods become worthless in possession is either a piece of superficial satire that intentionally denies the normal in order to make the abnormal seem more shocking, or else it is a confession of frivolity, a confession that, as an idiot never learns to distinguish reality amid the phantasms of his brain, so we have never learned to distinguish true goods amid our extravagances of whim and passion. That true goods exist is nevertheless a fact of moral experience. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever"; a great affection, a clear thought, a profound and well-tried faith are eternal possessions. And this is not merely a fact, to be asserted upon the authority of those who know it by experience. It is a psychological necessity. While we retain the same senses, we must get the same impressions from the same objects; while we keep our instincts and passions, we must pursue the same goods; while we have the same powers of imagination, we must experience the same delight in their exercise. Age brings about, of course, variation in all these particulars, and the susceptibility of two individuals is never exactly

similar. But the eventual decay of our personal energies does not destroy the natural value of objects, so long as the same will embodies itself in other minds, and human nature subsists in the world. The sun is not now unreal because each one of us, in succession, and all of us in the end, must close our eyes upon it; and yet the sun exists for us only because we perceive it. The ideal has the same conditions of being, but has this advantage over the sun, that we cannot know if its light is ever destined to fail us.[4]

Notice the style of this writing. The tone is serious and dignified. The diction (*objects of desire, disorganization of our nature, inalienable satisfaction, etc.*) tends to be learned. The sentence structure is frequently inverted, and there are many long sentences. The whole expression, as the following contrasted excerpts show, is far removed from the style in which the same ideas would be expressed in conversation or in informal writing.

Formal

There are, indeed, other objects of desire that if attained leave nothing but restlessness and dissatisfaction behind them. These are the objects pursued by fools. That such objects ever attract us is a proof of the disorganization of our nature, which drives us in contrary directions and is at war with itself. If we had attained anything like steadiness of thought or fixity of character, if we knew ourselves, we should also know our inalienable satisfactions.

Informal

We all have foolish desires. We want things which do not satisfy us when we get them. The fact that we want these things is evidence of our inconsistent nature. We are subject to conflicting desires and want to go in opposite directions at the same time. If we had a clearer understanding of our own needs and purposes, we would know what course was best for us.

You will observe that when we translate a formal style into an informal one we sacrifice dignity and eloquence in order to achieve clearer communication to a wider audience. Whether we gain or lose by such translation will depend partly on how great is the need for clearer communication and partly on how effectively the formal writer handles his style. In the hands of a skillful writer a formal style may be immensely eloquent. If we destroy that eloquence, we remove much — perhaps most — of what the writer has to tell us. For example, the style of the following passage is so essential to the

[4] From *The Sense of Beauty*, by George Santayana, copyright, 1896, 1936, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

author's purpose that we cannot paraphrase it informally without spoiling its effectiveness:

> Then, as the night wore on, another feeling crept across his heart, the living voices of the books spoke to him with another tone. From those great tongues of life and power and soaring immortality, there had now departed all the sonorous conviction of their overwhelming, all-triumphant chant. The grand and ringing tongue and joy now spoke the language of a quiet and illimitable despair, confided the legend of an inevitable defeat, an inexorable fatality.
>
> From those high storied shelves of dense rich bindings the great voices of eternity, the tongues of mighty poets dead and gone, now seemed to speak to him out of the living and animate silence of the room. But in that living silence, in the vast and quiet spirit of sleep which filled the great house, amid the grand and overwhelming stillness of that proud power of wealth and the impregnable security of its position, even the voices of those mighty poets dead and gone now seemed somehow lonely, small, lost and pitiful. Each in his little niche of shelf securely stored — all of the genius, richness, and whole compacted treasure of a poet's life within a foot of space, within the limits of six small dense richly-garnished volumes — all of the great poets of the earth were there, unread, unopened, and forgotten, and were somehow, terribly, the mute small symbols of a rich man's power, of the power of wealth to own everything, to take everything, to triumph over everything — even over the power and genius of the mightiest poet — to keep him there upon his little foot of shelf, unopened and forgotten, but possessed.[5]

Not all purposes, however, require such eloquence, and it would be a serious mistake to use so exalted a style on a subject which did not merit it. Much of the writing you will do in college will require only clear and concise statement. And, as we shall presently see, some very effective writing can be done in a style less formal than that of the two paragraphs quoted above.

Colloquial Style

If *colloquial* means *conversational*, a colloquial style is fundamentally the style used by educated people when speaking informally to their social equals. It is, therefore, rather a spoken than a written style, but it is often used by writers dealing popularly with subjects which are not too serious or dignified.

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[5] From *Of Time and the River*, by Thomas Wolfe. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

The characteristics of a colloquial style are (1) relatively short simple sentences, often grammatically incomplete, with few rhetorical devices; (2) a generous use of contractions (*I'll, we've, didn't, can't*), clipped words (*cab, exams, phone*), and the omission of relative pronouns (*who, which, that*) which would be retained in a formal style; (3) a vocabulary marked by general avoidance of "learned" words and by inclusion of the less objectionable slang terms; (4) a simplified grammatical structure which leans heavily on idiomatic constructions and ignores the fine distinctions of formal grammar; and (5) a personal or familiar tone, by which the writer tries to create the impression of speaking intimately to the reader.

The following selection is moderately colloquial:

You see, from the time a boy is six years old until he graduates from college he has to take three or four examinations a year. If he flunks once, he is out. But an inventor is almost always failing. He tries and fails maybe a thousand times. If he succeeds once, he is in. These two things are diametrically opposite.

We often say that the biggest job we have is to teach a newly hired boy how to fail intelligently. We have to train him to experiment over and over and to keep on trying and failing until he finally learns what will work.

We also have to teach him that everything is not in the books. The book used to say that we couldn't build a Diesel injector to operate at 20,000 pounds per square inch. What it really meant is that an injector couldn't operate at that pressure if it was built as the book specified. Today we have hundreds of thousands of injectors operating at pressures much higher than that. . . .

A few years ago I assigned a young man to work on the problem of friction and had him rub little pieces of metal to see how much they wore away, how much heat they generated, and so on. After he had been working on it for a little while, I stopped in to see him. "How are you coming along?" I asked.

"Not very well," he replied. "Don't you think this is an awfully childish problem for a fellow who has the kind of education I have?"

I didn't think so, or I wouldn't have assigned him to it, so I asked what the trouble was.

"It wouldn't be so bad," he exclaimed, "if it wasn't all in the books!"

"I'm glad you mentioned that," I said, "because if we have you working on this thing when it's all in the books, like you say, then we ought to stop right away. But before we do that, I want you to show me that book. If you can find that book or any book like it, I will give you a medal."

I saw him about a month later and asked how he was progressing on the medal business.

"Awful," he said, "I haven't been able to find anything. And I can't understand that, because it's something so fundamental I should think a lot would be known about it. I can't understand it at all. There's not a thing in the books about it."

I want to tell you something of the outcome of this episode because it shows how much we can accomplish if we don't place ourselves too high above our jobs. This same young fellow soon discovered some very interesting fundamental facts about friction and wearing surfaces which have enabled us to produce better piston rings for Diesel locomotives than we ever had before. When we first started to run our locomotives, we had to change rings every 50,000 miles. No one objected to that. They thought 50,000 miles was about as long as a piston ring ought to last. Now we have rings that will last 500,000 miles, and I think we ought to be able to get them to last 1,000,000 miles before we're done.[6]

Note the contrast between this passage and the two preceding. The whole tone of this one is conversational. The author is not concerned with "literary" effects, he is simply speaking in print to his readers, and he expresses his observations in the natural language of everyday speech. He uses contractions (*can't, couldn't, didn't, haven't*) and colloquial diction (*flunks, is in, is out, stopped in, awfully, fellow, like you say*). His sentence structure, on the whole, is uncomplicated; his paragraphs are short; his attitude towards his reader is distinctly personal.

The following student paper is a more extreme example of a colloquial style:

Have you ever tried to quit smoking? It's quite simple. I know. I've quit thousands of times already. In fact, I quit every day. I awaken every morning -- my nose and throat dry and parched. Then, I decide to quit smoking. But it's a terrible vice over which I no longer have control. I've just got to have a smoke. Just one. Then I'll not smoke any more the rest of the day. Just one to take care of my terrible longing. I can go without food, without drink. But I must have a cigarette. Just one.

So I smoke one before going to school. Only that one. I promise myself. I'm not going to smoke any more today. I'll leave my cigarettes home today. Yeh, that's what I'll do. And since I have no cigarettes, I'll not be able to smoke at all.

[6] Condensed from "How We Develop Inventors," by Charles F. Kettering, in *Mechanical Engineering* for April, 1944. Reprinted by permission of the publishers and courtesy of *Science Digest*.

When I'm at school, however, I sit in class and listen to the dull, monotonous tone of the instructor, "Good morning, students. We will begin today's lecture by discussing the Greek architecture as exemplified by that marvel of man-made constructions, the Parthenon."

And on and on, his droning voice inducing sleep. A cigarette. Where's a cigarette? That's the solution. Finally the bell rings. Thank God!

I dash down to the book store. A long line-up, blast it! Ex-servicemen are buying books. Thank heavens I don't have to stand in line for cigarettes. Ah, here we are.

"A package of Luckies, please."

"Sorry, but we're too busy just now to sell cigarettes. Come back later."

Notice the sentence structure in this selection. There was not a single sentence fragment in our two examples of a formal style, but there are half a dozen of them in this short essay. A comparison between the length of the sentences and of the sentence patterns in this passage and in the two paragraphs about books illustrates the characteristic sentence structures of formal and colloquial writing.

The potential strength of a formal style lies in its eloquence and stateliness. The potential strength of a colloquial style lies in its simplicity, its liveliness, and its wider appeal. In the hands of an incompetent writer both styles may fail to achieve the results of which they are capable. The dignity of a formal style may degenerate into pompousness, its eloquence into vague wordiness. Its tone may be stuffy rather than serious. The colloquial style, too, may be abused. Instead of being lively, it may merely be slovenly; instead of familiar, merely crude. Both styles have potential weaknesses.

Informal Style

The informal style tries to avoid the dangers of both these extremes and to exploit the broad middle-way between. Its sentence patterns are less involved than those of formal English without being as loose or fragmentary as those of colloquial English. It avoids the nice requirements of formal grammar without being dominated by conversational usages. Its diction may make occasional use of learned words, but it prefers idiomatic expressions and words which are easy rather than impressive. Its tone may have the seriousness of the formal style without its dignity, and the informality of the colloquial style without its easygoing familiarity. In short, it is to a formal and a colloquial style what a business suit is to evening clothes and a slacks-and-sweater combination.

The following selection will illustrate some of the characteristics of an informal style.

> Facing a big-league pitcher with a bat on your shoulder and trying to hit his delivery is another vital experience in gaining an understanding of the game about which you are trying to write vividly. It is one thing to sit in the stands and scream at a batsman, "Oh, you bum!" for striking out in a pitch, and another to stand twenty yards from that big pitcher and try to make up your mind in a hundredth of a second whether to hit at the offering or not, where to swing and when, not to mention worrying about protecting yourself from the consequences of being struck by the ball that seems to be heading straight for your skull at an appalling rate of speed. Because, if you are a big-league player, you cannot very well afford to be gun-shy and duck away in panic from a ball that swerves in the last moment and breaks perfectly over the plate, while the umpire calls: "Strike!" and the fans jeer. Nor can you afford to take a crack on the temple from the ball. Men have died from that. It calls for undreamed-of niceties of nerve and judgment, but you don't find that out until you have stepped to the plate cold a few times during batting practice or in training quarters, with nothing at stake but the acquisition of experience, and have seen what a fine case of the jumping jitters you get. Later on, when you are writing your story, your imagination, backed by the experience, will be able to supply a picture of what the batter is going through as he stands at the plate in the closing innings of an important game, with two or three men on base, two out, and his team behind in the scoring, and fifty thousand people screaming at him.[7]

You will notice several ways in which this paragraph compromises the differences between a formal and a colloquial style. Look at the sentence structure. The sentences are longer and more complex than those of the essay about smoking, but shorter and simpler than those of Santayana or Wolfe. There are no sentence fragments, but occasionally the writer breaks up a long sentence into two separate ones to avoid excessive length. For example the sentences beginning "Because, if you are a big-league player, . . ." and "Nor can you afford to take a crack on the temple . . ." could – and in a formal style probably would – have been incorporated in the sentences preceding them.

Notice that the reader is addressed directly as "you," characteristic of the colloquial style. Notice, also, the idiomatic constructions:

[7] From *Farewell to Sport*, by Paul Gallico, copyright, 1937, 1938, by Paul Gallico. Alfred A. Knopf, publishers.

"try to make up your mind," "gun-shy," "duck away," "take a crack," "you don't find that out," "a fine case of the jumping jitters".

The informal style is really a range of styles, from semi-formal to semi-colloquial. One selection may seem relatively formal; another may make a consistent use of contractions and contain occasional slang expressions. The following selections are arranged to show increasing informality.

(1)

When I stop at one of the graveyards in my own county, and see on the headstones the names of fine old men I used to know: *"Eric Ericson, born Bergen, Norway . . . died Nebraska," "Anton Pucelik, born Prague, Bohemia . . . died Nebraska,"* I have always the hope that something went into the ground with those pioneers that will one day come out again. Something that will come out not only in sturdy traits of character, but in elasticity of mind, in an honest attitude toward the realities of life, in certain qualities of feeling and imagination. Some years ago a professor at the University of Nebraska happened to tell me about a boy in one of his Greek classes who had a very unusual taste for the classics – intuitions and perceptions in literature. This puzzled him, he said, as the boy's parents had no interest in such things. I knew what the professor did not: that, though this boy had an American name, his grandfather was a Norwegian, a musician of high attainment, a fellow-student and life-long friend of Edvard Grieg. It is in that great cosmopolitan country known as the Middle West that we may hope to see the hard molds of American provincialism broken up; that we may hope to find young talent which will challenge the pale proprieties, the insincere, conventional optimism of our art and thought.[8]

(2)

A man in whom I have complete trust once looked me in the eye and told me he had seen a snake, when alarmed, open its mouth and allow its six young to crawl down its throat out of sight, and when danger was past, permit them to reappear. Now cannibal snakes which subsist wholly on their fellows (once or twice removed) are not rare. A nearsighted parent black snake might conceivably, tempted by the pangs of hunger, devour one of its own offspring, but I cannot believe in the willful use by an infant serpent of its mother's acid-filled tummy as a shelter.

A strange thing about nature fakes is that they are almost always gone one better by actual truths. The snake-swallowing sanctuary idea becomes a minor stunt when compared with certain common tropical fish,

[8] From Willa Cather's "Nebraska" in *These United States.* Edited by Ernest Gruening. Reprinted by permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation.

which look like little perch. If you want to see sheer magic, tap on the glass of an aquarium which holds a mother, father and one hundred (count them) tiny young. The moment after an alarm, there will be only two fish visible; every youngster being snugly hidden within the mouth of a parent. When danger is over, the whole mob is gently spewed forth, rolling head over tail to form a dense, orderly cloud around and behind their parents.[9]

(3)

There was recently a story in the newspapers about a man who, having trouble with his car, got angry at it and "poked it one in the eye" – that is, he smashed his fist through one of the headlights. (The newspapers learned about it when he turned up at a hospital to get his hand bandaged.) He got angry at the car just as he might have got angry at a person, horse, or mule that was stubborn and uncooperative. He thereupon proceeded to "teach" that car "a lesson." He may be said to have had a signal reaction to the behavior of the car – a complete, unreflective, automatic reaction.

Savages, of course, often behave in similar ways. When crops fail or rocks fall upon them, they "make a deal with" – offer sacrifices to – the "spirits" of vegetation or the "spirits" of the rocks, in order to obtain better treatment from them in the future. All of us, however, have certain reactions of similar kinds, sometimes, tripping over a chair, we kick it and call it names, some people, indeed, when they fail to get letters, get angry at the postman. In all such behavior, we *confuse* the abstraction which is *inside* our heads with that which is *outside* and act as if the abstraction *were* the event in the outside world. We create in our heads an imaginary chair that maliciously trips us and then "punish" the extensional chair that bears ill will to nobody; we create an imaginary postman who is "holding back our mail" and bawl out the extensional postman who would gladly bring us letters if he had any to bring.[10]

The elasticity of the informal style makes it the most useful all-purpose style. It is suited to narration, description, reports of events, most non-technical exposition, and critical and argumentative papers addressed to general readers. Most of the modern novels, essays, stories, magazine and newspaper articles you will read will be written at an informal level. Most of the lectures and speeches you listen to and many of the textbooks you study – including this one – will be

[9] From "Nature in False Face," by William Beebe in *Collier's*, January 29, 1944. Reprinted by permission of author and publishers.

[10] From *Language In Action*, by S. I. Hayakawa, copyright, 1941, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

LEVELS OF ENGLISH USAGE *

SOCIAL LEVELS	STYLISTIC LEVELS	LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS	REPRESENTATIVE USES
Standard (The speech habits of the most highly educated members of society — perhaps 10-20 percent of adult speakers.)	**Formal or Literary** (More often written than spoken.)	1. Relatively long sentences, complex in structure, employing considerable use of rhetorical devices. 2. Extensive vocabulary in which "learned" words are numerous. 3. General avoidance of abbreviations, contractions, omitted relatives, and other colloquial shortcuts. 4. Conservative grammatical usage which observes distinctions generally ignored in popular speech. 5. Impersonal tone and dignified attitude towards subject and reader.	1. Books and articles on scholarly or technical subjects, written for experts in the field. 2. "Belles-lettres": novels, essays, stories, poems, written for highly educated readers. 3. Prepared and serious or ceremonial addresses to restricted audiences.
	Informal (Both written and spoken, the general level of educated writing and of educated, deliberate speech.)	Overlapping the characteristics of formal and colloquial, but avoiding the extreme characteristics of both.	1. Books and articles on important subjects, but written for general readers. 2. Most novels, essays, poems, magazine and newspaper articles and editorials.

* This table is indebted to a similar table in Perrin's *Writer's Guide and Index to English* (p. 13). The differences between Professor Perrin's table and this one arise out of differences of classification.

			3. Most college writing. 4. Most speeches to general audiences; the deliberate conversation of educated speakers in formal speech situations.
	Colloquial or Conversational (More often spoken than written.)	1. Short sentences, simple in structure, little given to rhetorical devices, and usually following Subject-Verb-Complement order. 2. Generous use of contractions, abbreviations, clipped words; tendency to omit relative pronouns and other constructions not necessary to meaning. 3. Vocabulary marked by general avoidance of "learned" words, by idiomatic expressions, and by the use of less objectionable slang.	1. Light, chatty writing for general readers. 2. Dialogue in fiction, and any writing which attempts to catch the rhythms of conversational speech. 3. The letters of educated people to their intimate friends. 4. Almost all the conversation of educated people when they are at ease.
Nonstandard (The speech habits of the great mass of society, more often spoken than written.)		See note below.†	1. Dialogue in fiction which is dealing with uneducated characters; in dialect writing, and occasionally for humorous effects in informal or colloquial writing. 2. In almost all the conversation of nonstandard speakers, even when the speech situations are formal.

† The linguistic characteristics of nonstandard English have not been scientifically studied with sufficient fullness to warrant description here. Fries' *American English Grammar* describes some of the characteristics, but the fact that Fries' study is based on written records of a specialized nature keeps it from being more than an introduction to the study of nonstandard English. As Professor Fries points out (p. 35), most artistic imitations of nonstandard English are artificial dialects which distort the original by over-emphasis of particular constructions.

informal in style. With very few exceptions, the writing you will be asked to do in college will be informal. For all practical purposes, therefore, a knowledge of the characteristics of informal English, and experience in the use of these characteristics, will constitute the main concerns of English composition courses.

The accompanying table (pages 244-245) summarizes the social and stylistic levels which we have been discussing in this chapter.

EXERCISES

A. Write out and return to your instructor the statement in each of the following groups (*a*, *b*, or *c*) which most precisely reports what was said in this chapter.

1. *a.* Standard English is another name for correct English.
   b. Standard English is the usage of educated speakers and writers.
   c. Standard English is formal English.
2. *a.* Nonstandard usage is never acceptable.
   b. Nonstandard usage is incorrect.
   c. Nonstandard usage is generally not acceptable in college.
3. *a.* Standard usage is grammatically superior to nonstandard usage.
   b. Standard usage is socially superior to nonstandard usage.
   c. Standard usage is in no way superior to nonstandard usage.
4. *a.* Learned words are more beautiful than popular words.
   b. Learned words are more meaningful than popular words.
   c. Learned words are less common than popular words.
5. *a.* Popular words are used by all the people.
   b. Popular words are used chiefly in speech.
   c. Popular words are usually slang.
6. *a.* An idiom is a peculiarly native form of expression.
   b. An idiom is a figure of speech.
   c. An idiom is a word that has been naturalized.
7. *a.* A colloquialism is a disreputable usage.
   b. A colloquialism is a less desirable usage.
   c. A colloquialism is a conversational usage.
8. *a.* Slang is never permissible.
   b. Slang is permissible only in nonstandard usage.
   c. Slang is permissible in educated usage under restricted conditions.
9. *a.* An informal style occasionally contains errors in grammar.
   b. An informal style ignores the fine distinctions of formal grammar.
   c. An informal style is not grammatically different from a formal style.
10. *a.* Contractions are seldom permissible in an informal style.
    b. The use of abbreviations and clipped words is not permissible in an informal style.
    c. The reader is often addressed directly as *you* in an informal style.

B. Divide a sheet of paper lengthwise into three equal columns. Head the columns respectively *Slang, Colloquial,* and *Formal.* Then read the following selection and place each italicized expression in the colloquial or slang column, depending on how you classify it. Consult your dictionary if necessary. Finally, translate each expression into formal usage in the third column.

Minnie Schuyler had also changed a *lot* with the passing of time, although of course nobody paid much attention to it or thought anything about it. Some people wondered why she had stayed on at the hotel when everyone knew Martha Sinclair was *going in the hole* all the time. A few remembered what a great one Minnie had been when she was a young woman, how she'd had such spirit and had always *horsed around* and hadn't let anyone *get ahead of* her when it came to *joshing.* And now look at her, they said. Just look at her now, it *don't* seem possible. But that was about as far as it occurred to any of them to go.

She'd changed, all right. She'd put on some weight and her feet hurt all the time so that at the end of the day she had to hobble around like an old spavined brood mare. She'd always had a sharp tongue, but *some folks* remembered a time when she'd used it mostly on *smart alecks* who *had it coming* to them, and nothing had been more fun than to hear someone get one of Minnie's *bawling-outs.* Now she was just an old grouch who *had it in* for everybody and was so touchy it *didn't seem like* there was any way of pleasing her. But you couldn't blame her much, *when you came right down to it,* being around that rundown old hotel as long as she had. Funny how she'd stayed on there, having it in for Martha Sinclair and Josh Craig's *kid* the way she did.

Minnie didn't know herself which one *gave her the biggest pain,* Martha or the kid. *She guessed maybe Martha,* for letting him get to be the way he was. Sometimes she thought the woman was *batty,* because there was something *kind of crawly* about the way she *fussed* over him and the *gone* look she'd get in those big popeyes of hers whenever the little feist came near her and the way she'd stand and watch him through the window when the kid was *fooling around* out in the yard. It just wasn't natural. Only a batty old maid who didn't know *what it was all about* could make such a fool of herself—if she'd borne the *brat* herself she'd have had more sense. Like the way she *carried on* when the kid began *to take a shine* to the girls.[11]

C. Write a short account of your progress in college this semester to each of the following people: your best friend in high school, your mother or father, your high-school principal. Make the styles of these letters colloquial, informal, and formal respectively. Along with the reports submit a brief memorandum contrasting specific stylistic differences in the letters.

[11] From *Dwight Craig,* by Donald McCrae. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

D. Study the writings of several newspaper columnists. Cut out and hand in three columns which are respectively examples of formal, colloquial, and slang styles. Along with the clippings submit a memorandum explaining your classification of these columns.

E. Study the selections that follow. List them in order of decreasing formality (from most to least formal). Then write a report in which you present evidence to support your ratings.

(1)

At the end of the year 1492 most men in Western Europe felt exceedingly gloomy about the future. Christian civilization appeared to be shrinking in area and dividing into hostile units as its sphere contracted For over a century there had been no important advance in natural science, and registration in the universities dwindled as the instruction they offered became increasingly jejeune and lifeless. Institutions were decaying, well-meaning people were growing cynical or desperate, and many intelligent men, for want of something better to do, were endeavoring to escape the present through studying the pagan past. . . .

One may catch the prevailing mood by reading the final pages of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*. The colophon of this stately old folio, dated July 12, 1493, declares that it contains "the events most worthy of notice from the beginning of the world to the calamity of our time." Lest any reader feel an unjustified optimism, the Nuremberg chroniclers place 1493 in the Sixth or penultimate Age of the world, and leave six blank pages on which to record events from the day of printing to the Day of Judgment. Then begins a prophecy of the Seventh and final Age, "in comparison with which our age, in which iniquity and evil have increased to the highest pitch, may be regarded as happy and almost golden." Only the wicked will prosper, good men will fall into contempt and penury; there will be no faith, no law, no justice, no peace, no humanity, no shame, and no truth. Gog and Magog "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth . . . to gather them together to battle" (Revelation XX:8), war and civil tumults will spread over the whole world, neighboring cities fall to fighting one another, and conditions become so abominable that no man can lead the good life. Then will be fulfilled the whole screed of the Apocalypse: flood, earthquake, pestilence and famine; crops will not grow nor fruit ripen; the springs will dry up and waters flow with blood and bitterness, so that every fowl of the air, beast of the field and fish of the sea will perish. The seventh angel will pour out the seventh vial, and the awful Day of Judgment, painted in the lurid colors of the Vision of Saint John, will conclude the history of a wicked world.

Such was the burden of the imprecatory sermons that Savonarola was then preaching to a complacent Florence. Such, one may say, was the common expectation of serious thinkers in 1492. Yet, even as the chroniclers of Nuremberg were correcting their proofs from Koberger's press, a

Spanish caravel named *Nina* scudded before a winter gale into Lisbon, with news of a discovery that was to give old Europe another chance. In a few years we find the mental picture completely changed. Strong monarchs are stamping out privy conspiracy and rebellion; the Church, purged and chastened by the Protestant Reformation, puts her house in order; new ideas flare up throughout Italy, France, Germany and the northern nations; faith in God revives and the human spirit is renewed. The change is complete and astounding. "A new envisagement of the world has begun, and men are no longer sighing after the imaginary golden age that lay in the distant past, but speculating as to the golden age that might possibly lie in the oncoming future."[12]

(2)

Every morning at eight o'clock and again in the afternoon a certain ancient, small, and very feminine-looking steamer the S.S. *Goldenrod,* affectionately called the *Rod* for short, used to glide across the peaceful river to stop at the little landing and pick up a bag of mail and a passenger or two, and perhaps some article of freight. I used to like to watch the *Rod* lying against the wharf over there. She seemed to like it, and she would linger fifteen minutes or so before she glided back across the smooth bosom of the river to our old yellow steamboat landing, where she took on the rest of her passengers and mail and freight for the bold trip she made every day clear across the wide Bay of Belfast. The *Rod* was a dowdy ridiculous old lady, creaking terribly in every joint, yet she always had her gloves on and her bonnet at a jaunty angle as she went careening across the Bay, bouncing ridiculously and showing her petticoats, or else primly gliding with an air of intense propriety and self-satisfaction, according to the wind.

The *Goldenrod* was not by any means the largest and most impressive ship that ever came in or out of Castine. Our harbor is very deep, so deep and spacious that a whole fleet of battleships can anchor there. But for some reason battleships and great private yachts were not, in my time, particularly interested in coming to visit us. On the Fourth of July once, I remember, a battleship came and lay in the harbor and gave us a gala celebration. And usually once or twice during every summer I used to be waked up by hearing an early morning shout of excitement ring through the house, exclaiming "Look out the window! The *Corsair* has come in!" Then feeling a great thrill of snobbish joy I would run to the window to drink in the sight of that inhabitant of the great world of fashion and power, lying at anchor within the circle of the round Brooksville hills. But she never stayed. We had nothing to hold her, no resident multi-millionaires, no diplomatic society. At last even the Rockland steamer, the S.S. *Pemaquid,* affectionately called the *Quid* for short, gave up coming any more because her passengers grew fewer and fewer, and

[12] From *Admiral of the Ocean Sea,* by Samuel Eliot Morison. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company and the Atlantic Monthly Press.

after that the *Rod,* and the sardine boats, and the Dennetts' motorboats taking us across to the islands on picnics and painting excursions and faithfully rescuing us in thunderstorms, and the handful of small sailboats belonging to the summer colony, were all the craft we were used to seeing in our deep, beautiful, forgotten harbor.[13]

(3)

To begin with, our knowledge grows *in spots.* The spots may be large or small, but the knowledge never grows all over: some old knowledge always remains what it was. Your knowledge of pragmatism, let us suppose, is growing now. Later, its growth may involve considerable modification of opinions which you previously held to be true. But such modifications are apt to be gradual. To take the nearest possible example, consider these lectures of mine. What you first gain from them is probably a small amount of new information, a few new definitions, or distinctions, or points of view. But while these special ideas are being added, the rest of your knowledge stands still, and only gradually will you 'line up' your previous opinions with the novelties I am trying to instil, and modify to some slight degree their mass.

You listen to me now, I suppose, with certain prepossessions as to my competency, and these affect your reception of what I say, but were I suddenly to break off lecturing, and to begin to sing 'We won't go home till morning' in a rich baritone voice, not only would that new fact be added to your stock, but it would oblige you to define me differently, and that might alter your opinion of the pragmatic philosophy, and in general bring about a rearrangement of a number of your ideas. Your mind in such processes is strained, and sometimes painfully so, between its older beliefs and the novelties which experience brings along.

Our minds thus grow in spots; and like grease-spots, the spots spread. But we let them spread as little as possible: we keep unaltered as much of our old knowledge, as many of our old prejudices and beliefs, as we can. We patch and tinker more than we renew. The novelty soaks in; it stains the ancient mass; but it is also tinged by what absorbs it. Our past apperceives and co-operates; and in the new equilibrium in which each step forward in the process of learning terminates, it happens relatively seldom that the new fact is added *raw.* More usually it is embedded cooked, as one might say, or stewed down in the sauce of the old.[14]

(4)

There is then a certain body of knowledge with respect to the English language of which serious students of the language may reasonably be

[13] From *The Little Locksmith,* by Katharine Butler Hathaway; copyright, 1942, 1943, by Coward-McCann, Inc.

[14] From *Pragmatism,* by William James, copyright, 1907, by William James. Reprinted by permission of Longmans, Green & Co., Inc.

expected to be aware, and concerning which they may be expected to have intelligent opinions. Intelligent opinion is one that answers on first-hand information both the question what is right or important and the question why it is right or important. The blind follower of authority, no matter how lofty or numerous his authorities, can never be an intelligent person. He may be a learned person, but to be intelligent he must follow his own and not somebody else's judgment – always supposing of course that he has acquired the foundation of information which is necessary to support a judgment. Sound information is an inescapable prerequisite for sound judgment, and an adequate knowledge of the English language implies a knowledge both of the background and of the immediate life of English speech.

Especially is it incumbent upon persons who undertake to impose upon themselves or others any kind of formal discipline in the language to know the grounds upon which their pronouncements are based. Even though they mean well, if they do not know well, such persons must be counted among the evil doers. The greatest obstacle to the dissemination of the knowledge of good English is the bland evasion of all independent criticism of speech by obedient adherents to authority. In spite of their comfortable assurance of virtue, they are of those who vainly attempt to pass on the torch of knowledge without themselves adding any fuel to keep the flame burning. His own heart's blood must enter into every man's knowledge of good English. To be merely a conserver and transmitter of a tradition of good English is therefore impossible. English is good only when it experiences a new birth and a new life, when it becomes genuinely a part of the person who uses it.[15]

(5)

When things get so balled up that the people of a country have to cut loose from some other country, and go it on their own hook, without asking no permission from nobody, excepting maybe God Almighty, then they ought to let everybody know why they done it, so that everybody can see they are on the level, and not trying to put nothing over on nobody.

All we got to say on this proposition is this: first, you and me is as good as anybody else, and maybe a damn sight better, second, nobody ain't got no right to take away none of our rights; every man has got a right to live, to come and go as he pleases, and to have a good time however he likes, so long as he don't interfere with nobody else That any government that don't give a man these rights ain't worth a damn; also, people ought to choose the kind of government they want themselves, and nobody else ought to have no say in the matter.[16]

[15] From *The Knowledge of English*, by George Philip Krapp. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, publishers

[16] From *The American Language*, by H. L. Mencken. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., publishers.

(6)

INTERRUPTIONS, INTERRUPTIONS[17]

"This seat taken?" Mr. Stacey asked hurriedly, glancing back at the crowd struggling down the aisle.

The man with the book glanced up briefly. "No."

Mr. Stacey stretched his stubby figure, shoved his bag into the overhead rack, and sank into the vacant seat. "Boy, was I lucky!" he observed.

"Yes," responded the other, abstractedly.

Mr. Stacey permitted himself a slight chortle. "Yes, sir, guess I was the early bird, all right, all right. Like to read?"

"Yes," said the other.

"Me, too," Mr. Stacey said, gratified at their kindred tastes. "Only I don't get much time for it. Always interruptions, interruptions. That way with you?"

The other glanced up while turning a page. "Yes," he said and turned back to his book.

"Yes, sir," Mr. Stacey continued musingly, "don't guess I've read a whole book for several years. Just can't get the time." He reached into his pocket. "Have a smoke?"

"No."

"Mind if I do?" Mr. Stacey asked considerately.

"No," said the other, his eyes going back to the beginning of a paragraph.

"Remember once," Mr. Stacey said, "feller gave me a Mexican cigarette. Boy, was that something! I don't see how anybody can smoke 'em. Just cigar scrapings and chocolate; what a taste! Yes, sir, give me an American cigarette every time. Sure you won't have one?"

"Yes."

"That's America for you," Mr. Stacey declared, holding up his cigarette. "Best cigarette, best everything. Greatest country in the world. We've got our problems, all right, but we'll lick 'em. Won the war, now we'll win the peace. Yes, sir, I'm a one-hundred-per-cent believer in America."

The man lowered his book and considered for a moment. "Which America?" he asked.

"Beg pardon?" Mr. Stacey said.

"I asked," the other repeated, "which America?"

"I don't get you," Mr. Stacey said. "You mean North America? The United States?"

"Weren't you referring to the United States?"

"Yes—that's right," Mr. Stacey said with relief.

"Well, which United States?"

Mr. Stacey's mystification was complete. For a wild moment he glanced around to assure himself that he was in his right mind, on the right train.

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[17] Edgar Brooke, "Interruptions, Interruptions," *Collier's*, February, 1948. Reprinted by permission of *Collier's* and Ann Watkins, Inc.

"Look," he said uncertainly, "we aren't connecting. I don't know what you're talking about."

"Why," said the other quietly, "I'm simply asking you to which United States you were referring."

The pale, soft hands of confusion fumbled over Mr. Stacey's brain. His eyes took on a hunted look.

"Listen," he exclaimed, "there isn't but *one* United States. It's all around us. We're in it right now."

"Ah," said the other, "but are there not many United States—or, if you prefer, many Americas?"

"Look," Mr. Stacey said, "imagine we are in a plane flying over the Mississippi, halfway between Chicago and Miami. High, you see, so high that we can see from Canada to Mexico, from Maine to California. That's America. That's the United States. That's what I'm talking about."

"Very clear," said the other, and Mr. Stacey sighed. "But, there is a difficulty. By the time our plane reached the ground again, the America which we viewed from the air would be a different America."

"How's that?" Mr. Stacey was startled.

"By the same reasoning," the other continued evenly, "America is not the same as it was when this train departed from New York. The change, in all likelihood, has been slight, but still, unquestionably, change has occurred. So, that America of the recent past and the one of this precise instant are not the same."

"What's happened to it?" Mr. Stacey asked dully. He involuntarily glanced out of the window at the landscape passing at blurring speed.

"Happened to it?" said the man. "If all the human beings in the world were to undertake together the problem of measuring all the minute changes—psychological, physical, human, social, cultural, economic—which have occurred in America since we left New York, they would fail ignominiously."

"That so?" said Mr. Stacey.

"Again," the man proceeded remorselessly, "America may be viewed as the embodiment of a political concept, framed by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and evolving through the years under such influences as the activities of political parties, Supreme Court decisions, governmental changes effected by vested interests operating through lobbies, and so forth, with the result that 'America' as a political concept is seen to be an ever-changing one. Then, there is the historical America, by which we mean the land and the people, and the story of all that has happened here since our forefathers landed on these shores—the opening of the West, the Civil War, the growth of cities, and so on. There is yet another America—the member-state of an anarchic world community, in which we see our country playing a role analogous to that of one of the original thirteen colonies before the Union was formed, attempting to act as if complete independence of all other countries were possible in a world community which has already inextricably bound our interests, responsibilities and destinies together. There are, of course, still other Americas, as you are doubtless fully aware. So," and he turned full upon Mr. Stacey, "I ask: Which America?"

"What America?" Mr. Stacey replied blankly.

"Precisely," said the other, "which America—or, if you prefer, *what* America do you have in mind?"

"If you don't mind," said Mr. Stacey feebly, "let's skip it."

"Skip it?" said the man. "Very well, but which?"

"Which what?" Mr. Stacey mumbled thickly.

"America," the other replied, lifting his eyebrows in surprise.

A dizziness passed over Mr. Stacey. He wiped his face with his hand. He began to climb lumberingly to his feet. "Very interesting, but if you don't mind," he said heavily, "think I'll go and have a beer. You understand. Some other time, maybe."

"Not at all," said the other. "Perhaps we can take it up again."

In the diner, the steward ushered Mr. Stacey to a chair beside a sharp-faced woman eating a salad. He ordered a beer and methodically reviewed the puzzling conversation. It began to make sense now. This fellow had simply given him the brush-off. Mr. Stacey was nettled. But —it must be admitted that the guy did a fancy job. In fact, a superduper job. Not only that, the guy was a really deep thinker. Possibly a college professor. Well, he was not the one to harbor a grudge. Mr. Stacey smiled wryly. Yes, sir, that was one for the books. He took a long satisfying draw on his beer. As he lowered the glass, he glanced at the woman beside him and found her looking with distaste and disapproval at the beer bottle.

"Hope you don't mind my having this beer," Mr. Stacey said politely. "Like with smoking, I like to consider the other fellow."

"Well," the woman said with a cold semblance of a smile, "I shan't pretend that I approve of drinking in any form. But you are within your legal rights, of course." She paused and added primly, "Not that I approve of those either. I sometimes wonder where America is headed."

With great deliberation, Mr. Stacey poured the rest of the beer into his glass, lighted a cigarette, turned slightly toward her and said, "Which America?"

13

EFFECTIVE DICTION

THIS CHAPTER is, in a sense, a summary. Actually, effective diction has been the subject of all of Part Two of this book. But now we may sum up what will be most pertinent to you as a writer facing the problem of expressing ideas in words.

Let us begin with the reminder that your choice of diction is governed by the size and range of your vocabulary. As far as you individually are concerned, the only words available to you are those which you have learned to use. The problem of choosing effective diction is therefore the problem of selecting from your active vocabulary the word or phrase which will best allow you to say what you want said. Obviously, the smaller your vocabulary, the less choice you have. But even with a limited vocabulary much can be done if you have a working knowledge of the characteristics which *generally* make diction effective. In this chapter we shall discuss these characteristics under four headings: *appropriate diction, specific diction, figurative diction,* and *concise diction.*

APPROPRIATE DICTION

The effectiveness of any word you use will finally depend on how well it serves the purpose for which you use it. Words are not effective or ineffective in themselves; therefore they cannot be wisely chosen without careful attention to the environment in which they will appear. The best diction is always that which best fits the context. The most important question, then, to ask of any word is, "Is it appropriate?" It will be appropriate only if it suits the writer's intention and is in harmony with his style.

Appropriateness to the Writer's Intention

You will recall that the speakers who used "riot of dice" for "diet of rice" and "gasoline" for "vaseline" (page 193) escaped misunderstand-

ing because their meanings were quite obvious from the context. While it is true that context will often make sense out of nonsense, it is also true that the context of the written word is more restricted than that of the spoken word. A speaker has an opportunity to qualify his words when he sees that they are being misinterpreted, but the only control a writer has over his reader's interpretation is the control he secures before his writing leaves his hands.

Evident blunders like "gasoline" for "vaseline" are so easy to detect in proofreading that they are not likely to survive revision, but certain other confusions are less easy to spot. For instance, words which are similar in appearance but different in meaning may be confused in the rough draft and may pass uncorrected into the finished version. Often (as in *principal, principle; stationary, stationery*) the confusion is identified by the reader as an error in spelling, but in certain contexts the meaning taken by the reader may not be what the author intended. For example, a confusion of the words in parentheses in the following sentences might cause real misunderstanding.

I do not think he should be (accepted, excepted).
It was a most (affective, effective) word.
He laughed loudly, for it was an amusing (allusion, illusion).
They are such a (complementary, complimentary) couple.
They were (formerly, formally) married.
The petitions were (respectfully, respectively) submitted.

A list of the words most likely to be confused is given below. Study these words carefully. Check those which you have confused in the past or of which you are uncertain and look them up in the *Glossary*.

accept, except
adapt, adopt
adaptation, adoption
affect, effect
all together, altogether
berth, birth
born, borne
canvas, canvass
capital, capitol
censor, censure
cite, sight, site
coarse, course
complement, compliment
conscience, conscious
council, counsel
dairy, diary
decent, descend, descent
desert, dessert
dining, dinning
dying, dyeing
emigrant, immigrant
euphemism, euphuism
fare, fair
formally, formerly
forth, fourth
hear, here
holy, wholly
instance, instants
irrelevant, irreverent
its, it's

knew, new
know, no
later, latter
lead, led
loath, loathe
loose, lose
luxuriant, luxurious
moral, morale
past, passed
peace, piece
plain, plane
precede, proceed
presence, presents
principal, principle
prophecy, prophesy
quiet, quite
respectively, respectfully
right, rite, write
shone, shown
sleight, slight
speak, speech
staid, stayed
stationary, stationery
straight, strait
suit, suite
threw, through
to, too, two
troop, troupe
vain, vein, vane
weak, week
weather, whether
who's, whose

A more subtle error in appropriateness is the choice of a word which, because of meanings which the author overlooked, may be misunderstood. Thus, in certain contexts the word *radical* is roughly synonymous with *thoroughgoing*. But unless the context prevented misinterpretation, a writer would be unwise so say, "The committee has just published a radical report," if his intention was that the report was thoroughgoing. The reader may think he is condemning the report and so misinterpret the statement. And the fact that the writer can prove that *radical* may mean *thoroughgoing* will be small consolation to him, since the obligation of a writer is to prevent misinterpretation, not to justify his diction after the misinterpretation has occurred.

Appropriateness to the Writer's Style

It should be clear from the preceding chapter that words which are too formal or too informal for their contexts may produce awkward or ludicrous effects. Consider the following excerpt from a freshman essay. The student is relating how his service in the Army helped him to free himself from the domination of his twin brother.

> I was never allowed to fight my own battles, for he was at my side and would step in and pound the hell out of my diabolical enemies. This, too, contributed to my shyness.
>
> During the terminating days of my high-school career I came to the conclusion that army life would cure me of this bad attribute. I quickly told my brother. His eyes seemed to be glaring like a dragon's. He then told me, "I am going to join the army and you shall do such also."

The mistakes of this paper are obvious. First of all, except in some kinds of dialogue, the use of profanity is seldom justifiable in college writing. If it is used at all, the whole style of the paper must be so obviously colloquial that the profanity does not call attention to itself. Yet here is a student using profanity in the first paragraph and learned words like *terminating* and *attribute* in the second. These two levels of usage, however justifiable either might be alone, are impossibly inconsistent in the same paper. Other choices of diction are almost as uncritical. The brother's eyes "glaring like a dragon's" is a trite and far-fetched metaphor, and his words "you shall do such also" are overformal and comically unidiomatic. What the brother would probably say is, "I'm going to join the army, and so are you."

Such incongruous diction will be most conspicuous in writing which is clearly formal or clearly colloquial, as may be shown by substituting inappropriate diction in two passages quoted in Chapter 12.

> There are, indeed, other objects of desire that if *got* leave nothing but restlessness and *griping* behind them. These are the objects pursued by fools. That such objects ever attract us is a proof of the *cussedness* of our nature, which drives us in contrary directions and is at war with itself. If we had attained anything like steadiness of thought or fixity of character, if we knew ourselves, we should know also *what's good for us*. To say that all goods become worthless in possession is either a piece of *half-baked bunk* that intentionally denies the normal in order to make the abnormal seem more shocking, or else it is a confession of frivolity, a confession that, as an idiot never learns *what the score is*, so we have never learned to distinguish true goods amid our extravagances of whim and passion. That true goods exist is nevertheless a fact of moral experience. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever"; a great *yen*, a *bright idea*, a profound and well-tried faith, are eternal possessions. And this is not merely a fact, to be asserted upon the *say-so* of those who know it by experience. It is a psychological necessity.

There are certainly contexts in which *got, griping, cussedness, what's good for us, what the score is, yen, bright idea,* and *say-so* might be appropriate, but this paragraph is not one of them. These colloquial and slang expressions are as out of place in a formal style as a ukelele in a symphony orchestra.

Similarly, the italicized words in the following selection are hopelessly inappropriate.

> Have you ever tried to quit smoking? It's quite simple. I know. I have *achieved abstinence* thousands of times already. In fact, I quit every

day. I awaken in the morning—my nose and throat dry and parched. Then, I decide to *renounce all further association with the weed.* But it's a terrible vice over which I no longer have any control. I've got to have a smoke. Just one. Then I'll *refrain from further indulgence* the rest of the day. Just one to take care of my terrible longing. I can go without food, without drink. But I must have a cigarette. Just one.

So I smoke one before going to school. Only that one. I promise myself, I'm not going to smoke any more today. I'll leave my cigarettes home today. Yeh, that's what I'll do. And since I have no cigarettes, I *shall be unable to make even a momentary concession to appetite.*

The formal expressions in this passage are clearly out of tone. They are just as awkward as the colloquialisms in the preceding one.

SPECIFIC DICTION

In this chapter the words *specific* and *abstract* must be understood as opposite terms which are meaningful only in relation to each other, as may be seen by referring again to the abstraction ladder used earlier:

5. Educated person
4. College student
3. Freshman
2. Member of Dr. Jones' English section
1. Bill Mason

With the exception of *Bill Mason,* all these labels are abstractions, but in different degrees. Thus, *college student* is more abstract than *freshman,* but less so than *educated person.* Similarly, *member of Dr. Jones' English section* is abstract as contrasted with *Bill Mason,* but specific as contrasted with *freshman.* The word *tree* is abstract in relation to *White Oak,* but specific in relation to *vegetation.*

From our study of class names in Chapter 10 we have seen that abstract words point less clearly than do specific words to particular objects or events. We saw that words like *business* and *government* (see pages 205-206) are capable of being interpreted in so many ways that we are often uncertain what they mean until they are brought down the abstraction ladder. Similarly, a word like *horrid – She was a horrid creature* – may be interpreted as *mean, rude, ugly,* or *vicious; horrid* in this example being more abstract than any of the suggested synonyms. Even when an abstract term is relatively clear – *athlete, car, disease* – it will still communicate less precisely than a more

specific word — *golfer, Chevrolet, diphtheria.* In the following pairs of sentences, consider how much more meaningful are those at the right:

He is known throughout the state for his athletic accomplishments.	He is known throughout the state as a top-flight golfer.
He drives an old car.	He drives a 1942 Buick.
The boy has a dangerous disease.	The boy has diphtheria.

The following contrast will further illustrate the distinction between abstract and specific words:

abstract	*specific*	*abstract*	*specific*
crime	theft	making preparations for a journey	packing his suitcase
dance	rhumba	Shakesperian play	Macbeth
red	crimson	terrible thought	blasphemous belief
speak	whisper	terrible thought	disturbing suggestion
thief	pickpocket		
walk	shuffle	terrible thought	unfair judgment
work	dig		

Whenever you have a choice between abstract and specific diction, you will be wise to choose the specific. Of course, you will not always have such a choice. When you are dealing with ideas, when your purpose requires you to discuss not particular events in the physical world, but generalizations made about them, your diction will necessarily be abstract. A paper written for a course in economics or philosophy must contain a good many abstract terms. Even so, care should be taken to make these terms no more abstract than is necessary, and a liberal use of illustrative details and examples would be helpful. But within the limits of a 500-word paper it is not possible to discuss, let us say, compulsory arbitration of labor-management disputes completely at the level of specific instances. Abstract diction is not undesirable in itself. It is undesirable *only when it is more abstract than the writer's purpose requires.*

For example, let us contrast the student theme, "A Terrible Experience" (pages 65-67), and the Declaration of Independence. If you look back at "A Terrible Experience" you will recognize that to carry out his purpose the writer had to use words which would recreate his experience in all its details. One of the major differences between the successful and unsuccessful versions of the event was that

the successful one used specific diction ("I could feel the muscles of the snake's body slowly contract, then relax as it slid smoothly across my naked arm. . . ."), whereas the unsuccessful version dismissed the most dramatic part of the episode with the relatively abstract statement, "I could feel the snake crawl slowly across my body." In a sense the difference between these two versions was that the successful writer took the words "crawled" and "body" down the abstraction ladder. His purpose required diction as specific as possible.

On the other hand, the committee appointed to write the Declaration of Independence had a double duty to perform. It had, in the same document, to make a general statement of the relationship between free people and their governors and a particular statement of the abuses which George III had committed against the Colonies. The first part of the Declaration is necessarily, and wisely, abstract:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. . . . That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

These remarks could apply to any nation, and have been interpreted by other nations as applying to them. The second part is more specific:

> For quartering large bodies of troops among us. . . .
> For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
> For imposing taxes on us without our Consent:
> For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury. . . .

These charges refer to particular acts of a particular monarch. This makes this part of the Declaration less valuable as a universal inspiration, but a more informative statement of why the Colonies renounced their allegiance to George III.

The contrast between the two parts of the Declaration of Independence shows that there is a time to be abstract and a time to be specific. Your own analysis of the nature of your assignment should guide you in your choice, but you should know that the emphasis which college instructors place upon specific diction arises from the fact that much freshman writing is more abstract than it need be.

The following paragraphs show how an unnecessary use of abstract words will rob a piece of writing of most of its effectiveness:

In the past, girls in rural communities had no facilities for bathing except those offered by some neighboring creek. In such circumstances a bathing suit was not always a necessity, but if one was worn it was likely to consist of nothing more than some discarded article of clothing tailored to fit the occasion. Women in urban areas seldom owned their own costumes. Only those who moved in the more wealthy and sophisticated social circles had private bathing suits. The usual practice was to wear a rented one. This distinction no longer exists. Now the modern country girl owns a bathing suit similar to those worn at fashionable beaches in the East.

Twenty years ago if the farmer's daughter went swimming she swam in the crick below the pasture, and if she wore a bathing suit, which was not as customary as you may think, it was likely to be a pair of her brother's outgrown overalls trimmed with scissors as her discretion might suggest. Her cousin in such a town as Great Bend (Kansas) rented a shapeless gray cotton suit at an amusement park. Only the Banker's daughter, who had been to a finishing school, had a bathing suit of her own. There are no such distinctions now; all women have bathing suits, and they are exactly like those worn at Hyannis, Southampton, and Narragansett Pier.[1]

A careful study of the differences in the diction of these two paragraphs will show you that the more specific diction is, the more pictorial it is likely to be. "A pair of her brother's outgrown overalls trimmed with scissors" makes a clearer picture than "some discarded article of clothing tailored to fit the occasion." "The crick below the pasture" is easier to visualize than "some neighboring creek." "Her cousin in . . . Great Bend [Kansas]" is much more real than "Women in urban areas," and the "Banker's daughter" is less abstract than "those who moved in the more wealthy and sophisticated social circles."

To find the sharply evocative specific word or phrase takes thought, and too many students are willing to "let it slide," to take the easy way out and use "utility words" instead. Of these words, Professor Kennedy says, "Any long used and well-developed language accumulates ultimately a supply of general-utility words which have such broad meaning and general application that they can be utilized in a great many different ways with no special change of meaning."[2] These, as their name implies, are useful words. In conversation, their general meaning is often sharpened by tone of voice, facial expression, or gesture. Their discreet use in writing needs no defense, but when a writer uses them to excess, his work is likely to be colorless and inexact:

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[1] Bernard DeVoto, "Main Street Twenty Years After," *Harper's Magazine*, November, 1940. Reprinted by permission of *Harper's Magazine*.

[2] *Current English* (Ginn and Company, 1935), p. 552.

1. It had been an *awful* day and we felt *awfully* tired.
2. It was such a *nice thing* to do. It made me feel *grand.*
3. It was a *strange sensation* to see the *queer* look on his face.

The italicized words in these sentences are so vague, could mean so many different things, that the sentences simply fail to communicate any precise meaning. They reveal either fuzzy or lazy thinking and should never be allowed to get beyond the first draft. The way to revise them is, first, to sharpen the idea that is to be expressed and, second, to choose words which will specify that particular idea. Notice how the following revisions make the original sentences more meaningful.

(1)

After such a frustrating day we felt emotionally exhausted.
Or, It had been a day of repeated shocks which had finally left us numb.
Or, We had been under such a strain all day that we were on the point of collapse.

(2)

It was such a friendly gesture that I felt immediately at home.
Or, It was such a generous remark that it brought tears to my eyes.
Or, It was flattery, of course, but I flushed with happiness.

(3)

It was pathetic to watch the hurt in his eyes
Or, It was amusing to observe his evident embarrassment.
Or, The vindictiveness of his look terrified me.

Here are some other common utility words:

affair	funny	outfit
awkward	fuss	peculiar
beautiful	gadget	pretty
big	give and take	proposition
business	glamorous	quaint
case	goods	regular
circumstance	gorgeous	scale
colossal	grand	silly
comfortable	line	situation
condition	little	smooth
cute	lovely	sort of
field	marvelous	thing
fierce	nature	thought
fine	organization	way, shape, or form

You will be able to add many more from your own reading and writing. If you find yourself overusing such words, discipline yourself to substitute more specific diction during revision.

FIGURATIVE DICTION

For our purposes, the term *Figurative diction* may be defined as diction which attempts to communicate by means of analogy. The thing to be described is likened to something already known and there is an implied appeal to the reader's imagination to see the underlying similarity between the two. For example, a writer wishes to describe the structure of an atom to a reader who is not a scientist. The writer knows that the reader is familiar with the pattern of the solar system – the elliptical rotation of planets around a central sun – so, instead of attempting a scientific description of the atom, he says, "an atom is a submicroscopic solar system, in which electrons, like tiny planets, swing in their orbits around a central nucleus." Now, an atomic system is not a solar system and electrons are not planets, but by suggesting a similarity between the two, the writer is able to give the reader a general notion of atomic structure.

The commonest figures of speech are *metaphors, similes, allusions,* and *personification.*

Metaphors and Similes

The distinction between metaphors and similes is essentially one of form. Both make comparisons, but the metaphor asserts the two things to be the same, whereas the simile merely says they are similar. Thus the metaphor says that an atom *is* a submicroscopic solar system; whereas the simile says the atom *is like* a submicroscopic solar system. Here are other examples:

Metaphors	*Similes*
The sky was a vast black blanket riddled with tiny star holes.	The star-dotted sky was like a vast black blanket riddled with tiny holes.
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.	As fresh she was as is the month of May.
Marriage had modified his conception of her. Once she had been his lovely wild rose; now she was the thorn in his flesh.	Like summer tempest came her tears.

Metaphors

His words fanned the fire of her indignation and caused it to flame again.

Mussolini's attack on France was not only a stab in the back. It was a stab with a pocket-knife by a small boy who was taking advantage of the fact that his victim's arms had already been securely tied.

Similes

The judge's head oscillated from one side of the net to the other, for all the world like the pendulum of a grandfather clock.

Her death destroyed all that was meaningful in his existence. Thereafter his life was like a building which had been gutted by fire.

The effectiveness of metaphors and similes lies in their power to suggest ideas too abstract to be easily communicated at an informative level. They picture in a few words what would be less effectively described in many. Consider how the following figure of speech describes abstract and complex phenomena in terms which a reader will at least think he understands:

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

One might write a long essay on the insignificance of life without driving the point home as thoroughly as Shakespeare did in this triple metaphor in which Macbeth pictures his own life as being as unsubstantial as a shadow, as unreal and unconvincing as a poor play, and as meaningless as a madman's babbling.

Or consider how effectively the authors of the following figures of speech pictorialize for us the abstract ideas with which they are dealing, and do it in such a way that years after reading these passages they will remain in our memories as sources of instruction and pleasure:

> Such appears to me, king, this present life of man on earth in comparison with the time which is unknown to us, as though you were sitting at the banquet with your leaders and thanes in winter and the fire was lighted and the hall warmed, and it rained and snowed and stormed outside; and there would come a sparrow and quickly fly through the house, come in through one door and go out through the other. Now in the time that he is inside he is not touched by the storm of winter; but that is only the twinkling of an eye and the least interval, and at once he comes

from winter back to winter again. So this life of men appears save for but a little while; what goes before or what follows after we do not know.

—Bede, *King Edwin's Conversion*

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or another, depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chessboard is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated – without haste, but without remorse.

—T. H. Huxley, *A Liberal Education; and Where to Find It.*

When, as in these examples, the figure of speech is drawn out in detail, we say it is *sustained.* The analogies we considered in Chapter 3 are thus seen to be sustained metaphors and similes. Tolstoy's analogy between deserted Moscow and an abandoned hive (page 58) is an exceptionally good example of a sustained figure of speech.

Many words and phrases no longer thought of as figures of speech were originally metaphors and similes. Thus *foil* and *parry* derive from the sport of fencing; *checkmate* was a metaphor from chess; *rosy red* and *sapphire blue* were similes, as were *dirt cheap* and *silver hair. At bay* was once the phrase used to describe a hunted animal when it finally turned to face the baying hounds; a *crestfallen* cock was one which had been injured in a fight; and an *alarm* was a call to arms. Many other expressions retain their metaphorical appear-

ances, but are so common that we fail to recognize them as figures of speech – expressions such as the mouth of a river, the face of a clock, the front (originally "forehead") of a house, the brow of a hill, the top of the morning.

Clichés

Good figures of speech owe a great deal of their effectiveness to their freshness and originality. But when they become widely and often used they tend to become mere stereotypes. Such trite expressions or *clichés*, though common in conversation, are almost as objectionable as slang in college writing. The following phrases, once effective figures of speech, are now so threadbare that they call unfavorable attention to themselves:

apple of her eye
bathed in tears
beard the lion
birds of a feather
black sheep
black as pitch
blind as a bat
bolt from the blue
brave as a lion
brown as a berry
budding genius
busy as a bee
clear as crystal
close as a clam
cold as ice
cool as a cucumber
dead as a doornail
diamond in the rough
die is cast
fit as a fiddle
fly in the ointment
hard as nails
hook, line, and sinker
hot as Hades
keen as a hawk
lean as a rake
lock, stock, and barrel
mountains out of molehills
pay the piper
poor as a pauper
quiet as the grave
rain cats and dogs
red as a rose
safe as the bank
sleep like a log
slow as a snail
sober as a judge
soft as silk
sweet as honey
teeth like pearls
thick as thieves
tired to death
wide as a house
white as snow

If clichés slip into the first draft, they should be weeded out in revision. The best safeguard against them is to recognize that the effectiveness of figurative language lies mainly in its freshness and originality and that the more a metaphor or simile has been used the less value it has. The safest practice is to create your own figures. Certainly you should reconsider any which you recognize as ready-made expressions. If they seem at all trite, it would be safer not to use them.

Inappropriate Figures

The power of figures of speech to call up vivid images in our minds sometimes leads an uncritical writer to trouble. For if the figures are inappropriate, they may call up images which are ludicrous or incredible. The student who described his brother's eyes as "glaring like a dragon's" was writing without thinking. If he had asked himself, "Is this really the way he looked?" he might have realized that his simile was neither fresh nor appropriate. Obviously the exaggerated image of ferocity did not occur to the student or he would not have used it. This habit of using figurative language without considering its probable effect often results in the confused imagery illustrated below:

> When spring comes, the face of old Mother Earth is arrayed in garments of breath-taking beauty.
>
> Efforts to help the veterans were sidetracked by a bog of red tape.
>
> The President's ill-advised action has thrown the ship of state into low gear, and unless congressmen wipe out party lines and carry the ball as a team, it may take the country months to get back on an even keel.
>
> The venerable Bede retired to a nunnery and became the father of English literature.

The best way to see what is wrong with metaphors like these is to visualize the pictures they suggest. If you imagine a face arrayed in garments of breath-taking beauty, you will agree that the metaphor should be revised, perhaps as follows:

> When Spring comes, the face of old Mother Earth becomes young and beautiful again.

Mixed images, like shifts in sentence structure (pages 148-152), illustrate the confusion that comes from changing purpose halfway through a sentence. To say that efforts to help the veterans are being sidetracked is to use an appropriate though common metaphor, since it suggests a railroad car switched to a side track and left there. To say that efforts are being "sidetracked by a bog of red tape" is to confuse three common images of obstacles. Any attempt to include the sidetrack, the bog, and the red tape in a single sensible picture is hopeless. Similarly, the third of the above examples confuses images of a ship, a car, a football team, and a ship again — all in the same comparison.

Similes as well as metaphors may go wrong by mixing images inappropriately.

He felt as uncomfortable and out of place in the room full of ladies as a wolf in a sheepfold.

The huge rock went crashing down the hill like a lover rushing to meet his beloved.

Like storm-lashed waves flinging themselves in angry but futile desperation against the unyielding rocks of the coast, the team failed to make the necessary yardage.

Strained or far-fetched similes like these invite the reader to see unlikely similarities which are difficult to imagine. It is hard, for instance, to think of a wolf being uncomfortable in a sheepfold. Similarly, it is difficult to picture a rock crashing downhill in the same mood and manner as a lover going to meet his sweetheart. Finally, consider the football team. There is some likeness between a ball-carrier being thrown back by an opposing line and a wave beaten back by the rocks. But after the rhetorical opening, the final clause is a ludicrous anticlimax. Had the sentence been revised to read, "The team could no more push back the opposing line than a wave could smash down the rocks against which it beat," the figure would have been more appropriate.

Allusions

Allusions are figures of speech which suggest a similarity between people, places, or events, real or imaginary, as in 'the Babe Ruth of bowling," "the Athens of the Midwest," "a dog-in-the manger attitude," "meeting his Waterloo."

Like metaphors and similes, allusions are useful short cuts to effective communication. Instead of trying to describe the relationship between Mark Anthony and Caesar, a writer may suggest that relationship by referring to "Mark Anthony, whose worship of Caesar was much like Harry Hopkins' worship of F.D.R. in modern times." He may sum up a story of world suffering as "the Gethsemane of our age," or characterize a peace conference as "another Munich." In each allusion he counts on his readers' familiarity with the character or event to which he is referring to provide the comparison he wants drawn.

Allusions must be used with discretion. If successful, they not only communicate effectively but also give the reader the satisfaction that comes from recognition. If, however, the reader does not recog-

nize the allusion, it will mean nothing to him and will probably annoy him. Rather than blame his own ignorance for this failure, he will label the allusion "pedantic" – that is, so erudite that no "normal' reader should be expected to understand it.

The use of allusion, therefore, requires that a writer consider his readers. He may safely assume that every reader will understand what he means when he describes a clown as "the Charlie Chaplin of the circus," but not all readers will understand him if he describes the same clown as a "modern Pagliacci." If he describes political policy as "Machiavellian," a crude joke as "Rabelaisian," or a strategic retreat as "a Fabian withdrawal," he should be reasonably sure that his readers will remember who Machiavelli, Rabelais, and Fabius Maximus were.

Like other figures of speech, allusions should be fresh. Trite allusions, although common in conversation, are of little use in informal writing and are worse than useless in formal writing. There is, of course, less opportunity for the creation of original allusions than of original metaphors, since the writer must allude to people and events which are well known or have achieved historical significance. But certainly such trite allusions as the following should be avoided:

a colossus of industry	the kiss of Judas
a Napoleon of finance	crocodile tears
a Pollyanna attitude	between the devil and the deep blue sea
the Midas touch	all's well that ends well

The test of a good allusion is this: will it actually create the comparison intended? Will, for example, "the Babe Ruth of Bowling" cause the reader to transfer to the bowler all the color and prowess and legend associated with Babe Ruth? If not – if it is merely another way of saying that the bowler is the best in his sport – it has no value as an allusion.

Personification

Personification is the device of endowing animals, inanimate objects, abstractions, and events with human qualities and abilities:

The eagle, perched on his mountain throne, surveyed the far reaches of his kingdom.

Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again.

The flames ate hungrily at the wooden foundations.

The once proud trees bent meekly before the storm.

All around, the forest united in a conspiracy against them.

Her clothes not only invited attention, they commanded it.

Personification, like metaphors, similes, and allusions, implies and pictures a similarity. It differs from metaphor in this: whereas the metaphor may identify any two things as being similar, one of the elements of a personification must be a human characteristic. The subject must be described in terms of human actions, attitudes, feelings, or responses.

Personification may range from an obvious identification of an abstraction or an object with a person (compare "Sing Heavenly Muse," "O Tiber, Father Tiber, to whom the Romans pray," and "Rock of ages cleft for me, let me to thy bosom flee") to what is little more than a suggestion of human qualities in inanimate objects (compare the fifth and sixth examples above). Obvious personification is more common in poetry than in prose and is rare in student writing. Suggested personification is much more common. If, like strained similes, the personification is overdone, it is likely to be conspicuous as a mere literary flourish. It should therefore be used with restraint by college freshmen, especially by those whose writing suffers from misguided ambition to achieve a "literary" style.

CONCISE DICTION

Wordy writing is poor writing. Economy should not be carried to the point where meaningful details are omitted, but words which serve no real function are excess baggage — cumbersome, confusing, and useless. Consider, for example, the following paragraph from a freshman essay:

> It was fortunate, or unfortunate, depending on the circumstances and the evaluation thereof, that I had no formulated or precise conceptions when I left high school and commenced work as a telegraphist in the Public Service. While on duty one evening, a colleague, who was interested in weight lifting, allowed me to peruse a book on the subject entitled *Big Arms*, by Bob Hoffman. Not yet having realized my latent interest in athletic endeavors, I was surprised at the manner in which the book held my interest. This I only realized after a while. It was that book which stimulated me to make a purchase of a weight-lifting set, and despite the inhibiting influences of long work hours, little sleep and irregular meals, to exercise in my free moments.

It would be hard to imagine a less successful piece of writing, yet this student has something to say: that his interest in weight-lifting stems from a book which a fellow worker in the telegraph office once

lent him. That is not a difficult idea to convey. It presents almost no problem of composition. Yet the student's inability – or unwillingness – to put it down in simple language traps him into a pseudo-literary style and smothers his fact with words, many of them inappropriate and most of them unnecessary. The revised version that follows has no special literary merit, except the greatest merit of all – it expresses a simple observation in suitable and concise language.

> I became interested in weight-lifting while I was working as a telegraphist. One of my office mates, who was enthusiastic about the sport, lent me a book called *Big Arms,* by Bob Hoffman. That book so stimulated me that I went out and bought a weight-lifting set and began to exercise in every spare moment.

The second version has less than half as many words as the first; yet it includes everything that bears on the writer's purpose. It contains no distinguished diction, but none is required. The big words of the original version ("evaluation thereof," "formulated or precise conceptions," "commenced," "colleague," and "latent interest in athletic endeavors") are liabilities in such a paragraph. The second version, then, is not only more concise, it is much more effective.

To say one's say in the fewest possible words is admittedly easier to preach than to practice. If we ignore poetry and proverbs, we will probably find few writings, even among the best English prose, that could not be condensed in some measure without injury either to content or to style. But though perfect conciseness is more often an ideal than a practical achievement, it is worth working toward. Certainly there are few habits more useful to a writer than the habit of being concerned, as he revises his first draft, with any alterations that will allow him to communicate his meaning in fewer and better words.

EXERCISES

A. Write out and return to your instructor the statement in each group (*a, b,* or *c*) which most precisely corresponds to what was said in this chapter.

1. The effectiveness of any word will finally depend on:
   a. whether it is standard or nonstandard usage,
   b. whether it is appropriate to the writer's purpose,
   c. whether it is good English.
2. Diction will be appropriate if it is consistent with:
   a. the personality of the writer,

b. the rules of grammar,
c. the writer's intent and style.

3. Words which are inappropriate to the style will be most conspicuous:
a. when the words are abstractions,
b. when the style is an extremely personal one,
c. when the style is either formal or colloquial.

4. As contrasted with specific words, abstract words:
a. point less clearly to particular objects or events,
b. point to the writer's attitude toward his subject,
c. are indications of a philosophical mind.

5. There is likely to be a relationship between:
a. abstract words and figures of speech,
b. specific words and detailed illustration,
c. abstract and specific words.

6. Utility words are characterized by:
a. their usefulness,
b. the clarity with which they convey an idea,
c. their capacity of being interpreted in different ways.

7. Figures of speech are useful because:
a. they add a poetic flavor to the writing,
b. they provide an effective and economic way of communicating difficult ideas,
c. they introduce a colloquial element into the writing.

8. A mixed metaphor is one in which:
a. two elements are skillfully blended together,
b. a metaphor and a simile are confused,
c. the writer shifts his image during composition.

9. A strained simile is one which:
a. is either far-fetched or difficult to imagine,
b. is worked out most intricately,
c. is no longer fresh or vigorous.

10. A cliché is:
a. a device that clinches the point,
b. a trite expression,
c. a successful analogy.

11. An allusion is:
a. essentially the same thing as an illusion,
b. something that should be put in quotation marks,
c. a reference which suggests a similarity between people, places, or events.

12. Personification is:
a. the introduction of a personal note into the writing,
b. the device of endowing inanimate objects with human characteristics.
c. an unjustifiable use of name calling.

B. Substitute more appropriate diction for the italicized words in the following sentences:

1. Her husband insisted on the right to *censure* her letters.
2. The reprimand had no *affect* on him whatever.
3. He was of Scandinavian *decent.*
4. After we had eaten the *desert* we adjourned to the living room.
5. The mammoth is no longer *exempt.*
6. I think his *conscious* is hurting him.
7. She was dressed in one of her sister's *customs.*
8. He cited a supreme court judgment as an *instant.*
9. This ointment is supposed to be good for *course* skin.
10. She had a *luxurious* head of hair.
11. He addressed her most *respectively.*
12. These angles are said to be *complimentary.*
13. For Pete's sake, Jim, *extinguish* the light.
14. I like to talk to small, *homely* audiences.
15. He is the fairest umpire in the league. His decisions are always completely *indifferent.*
16. For sheer *veracity* I've never seen such a fight.
17. Even their mannerisms were *of a similitude.*
18. The tramp knocked him down, rifled his pockets, and *absconded with* his watch.
19. The minister told the congregation that in his estimation the issue was *a fifty-fifty proposition.*
20. The jury recommended a light sentence because of *attenuating* circumstances.
21. Tomorrow we are to take scholastic *attitude* tests.
22. *Sensual* perception means learning about things through your senses.
23. Stop worrying about it. Just *discharge* the whole thing from your mind.
24. At least you ought to listen to the *corresponding* side of the question.

C. In the following paragraph some of the bracketed words harmonize with the context and some are either too formal or too informal. Underline the expression you would have chosen had you written the paragraph, circle others which would be acceptable even though they are not your first choice, and cross out those which would be completely unacceptable.

When George Bernard Shaw was [composing, inditing, writing, batting out] *Pygmalion,* he had in one scene to make an extremely [discriminating, meticulous, nice, subtle, tricky] choice of diction. His hero, a speech expert, had, as the result of a [bet, wager, sporting proposition], guaranteed to [change, make over, metamorphose, transform, transmogrify] a dirty, ignorant, [foul-mouthed, dirty-talking, profane] girl of the slums into a beautiful and refined lady. With the aid of baths, cosmetics, and

costumes it was easy to make her look like a lady. The real [arduous undertaking, difficulty, stumper] lay in getting her to [orate, gab, speak] like one. The speech professor put her through a [grueling, hard, tough, difficult] course of instruction. When he felt that, although not perfect, she could [masquerade, pass, get by] as a lady if she [canalized, constricted, kept] her conversation within narrow limits, he arranged to have her attend a tea at his mother's [domicile, joint, house, place of residence]. By following his instructions carefully and by [adhering, sticking] to the speeches she had [brushed-up on, conned, grooved in her cortex], she was able to [carry-off, execute, get by, swing] the impersonation, stiffly but satisfactorily. Finally, as she [got up to go, gave indications of betaking her departure, rose to go], a young aristocrat who [had fallen for her, was enamored of her presence, had found her most attractive] offered to walk home with her. Since such a [proposal, proposition, overture] had not been anticipated, no [canned, pat, preconceived, ready-made] answer had been provided for it. Shaw's problem then, was to put into her [oral cavity, mouth, trap] an answer that would [betray, give away, tip off, divulge] both the economic and lingustic level from which she had sprung. She must, in the fewest possible words, refuse to walk home because she thought that no one who was attempting to pass as a lady would [acquiesce, agree, condescend, stoop] to anything less than a taxi-ride, and to refuse in terms that were both profane and in the uneducated idiom of her slum environment. The speech Shaw gave her was: "Me walk? Not bloody likely!"

D. Revise the following sentences to avoid the vagueness caused by the use of utility words.

1. It gave me a funny feeling to hear him say that another war might be necessary.
2. It was an awful journey. The condition of the car and the nature of the roads were both terrible.
3. His wife always dresses smoothly. Today she wore a lovely outfit which was a nice shade of blue and a red hat with a kind of yellow trim.
4. I don't want to belong to an organization that holds such queer ideas. I admit the members have some grand times together, but some of the things they support don't appeal to me in any way, shape, or form.
5. The Declaration of Independence is based on the proposition that all men are created equal. That was a terrific idea in 1776 and no doubt some people thought it silly, but it is pretty generally accepted today.
6. When I said that, a peculiar light came into her eyes and her face took on a far-away look. I had an uncomfortable sensation that I had said the wrong thing.
7. That kind of publicity is always bad business for an organization, and the boys in our chapter felt pretty bad about it, but under the circumstances we just had to make the best of an awkward situation.
8. Except that Bill Mason injured his leg when he lost his balance on the highly polished floor, the affair went off pretty smoothly and everyone seemed to have a lovely time.

9. A democracy is something like a family, in which there has to be a lot of give and take between the various members, except that in the case of the democracy the things that are being argued about are of a different nature.

10. It is a fine movie. The plot is a little bit peculiar, but it has lots of beautiful girls in gorgeous costumes and there are a couple of swell bands which produce some grand music. Altogether I thought it was pretty nice.

E. 1. By using each of them in a phrase or sentence, distinguish between specific uses of the following words and the general use of the italicized utility word which precedes them:

a. call: bark, bellow, bleat, cackle, chirp, croak, hoot, howl, neigh, squeal, trumpet, whinny.

b. collection: armada, band, batch, bevy, bunch, cluster, colony, fleet, flock, gang, herd, litter, pack, school, swarm.

2. Consult the color charts between pages 528 and 529 of *Webster's New International Dictionary, Revised Edition* and list the shades which we generalize under the more abstract names *red, green, blue, yellow.*

F. As a review of metaphors, similes, clichés and inappropriate figures, analyze the following examples and write a report in which you identify each example and judge its effectiveness:

1. The Senate has not yet passed this bill despite the gracious curb service of certain of its members to the oil companies.

2. Her head is as empty as a baby's rattle.

3. The grades that a student makes are not the only yardstick for his academic success.

4. She had the unenviable distinction of being the ugly duckling of the family.

5. Physically, they were as like as two peas in a pod, but intellectually they were as different as day and night.

6. The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.

7. The facts were presented in all their stark nakedness, and their implication hit us like a bolt from the blue.

8. Life, like a dome of many colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity.

9. She was cute as a bug's ear and he looked like something the cat had dragged in. They made a strange pair, a lily of the valley and a disheveled dockweed.

10. Shelley that beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain.

11. I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light.

12. Our hands were firmly cemented
With a fast balm, which thence did spring;
Our eye-beams twisted and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string.
13. But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near.

G. In a short report, identify the allusions or personifications in the following sentences and indicate whether you judge them effective or ineffective figures of speech.

1. Once the "phony war" was over and the German invasion of the Lowlands had begun, Hitler had committed himself irrevocably. In a very real sense he had crossed the Rubicon.
2. The atom bomb may yet prove to be another Frankenstein.
3. He had hoped to live until his granddaughter graduated from college, but Death, the Grim Reaper, mowed him down.
4. On this question we would be glad to stand with our opponents if our opponents would only stand still.
5. All afternoon this pigskin Proteus consistently eluded his all-American opponent.
6. Drivers who drink keep Charon working overtime.
7. Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?
8. How well Mussolini has illustrated that the evil men do lives after them.
9. Of course Hitler abolished unemployment. He did it by persuading the German people to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage.
10. The great liner acknowledged the acclaim of the passing tugs with dignified blasts of her horn.
11. For anyone who has slept in one of those hammocks the bed of Procrustes would have no terrors.
12. Along the river bank the willows were whispering in the wind.
13. The trouble with arguing with your wife is that, even if you win, it's a Pyrrhic victory.
14. You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.
15. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue . . . that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.
16. We expected Bill to win the debate in his rebuttal but, like Casey at the bat, he muffed every chance.

H. In the light of all that has been said about diction in the preceding chapters, study the following selections and write a report in which you evaluate the diction of each passage.

(1)

Rhoda was not a slim girl. As she skipped her way to school, her flesh

bobbed and jiggled like jelly. Her arms were like long balloons, her short sleeves biting deeply into the thick flesh of her upper arms. Her chin was lost in the folds of fat that covered her neck. This lent her a bulldog appearance – as though she had no neck at all. Her legs were hardly legs at all – but rather little stumps of thick fatty tissue. When she moved, one could hardly say that she walked or ran. Rather – she seemed to undulate. The movement looked more like that of an amoeba putting forth a pseudopodium, the rest of the mass flowing into the projection of the ectoplasm. No. Rhoda was not a slim girl.

(2)

As in the case of prefixes, repetition of the meaning of a suffix by a modifying word may sometimes be justifiable for the sake of emphasis. The diminutive may be used to classify a small person or thing in relation to others in the same category of size. If you speak, for instance, of a short novelette you may indicate a novelette that is shorter than the average writing classified as novelette. Inasmuch as there is no positive standard of length for a novelette – since it may be, as far as mere length is concerned, a long short story or a short novel – the term *short novelette* may be not only correct but even desirable in certain connections. In the same way *This is a very small hillock indeed in comparison with other hillocks hereabout* and *This is a little baby*, in which *small* repeats *ock* and *little* repeats *y*, may in certain circumstances be correct as classifying within a classification. But such connections or circumstances as these are rare, and diminutive endings do not as a rule require modifying re-enforcement.[3]

(3)

Long before sunrise country people streamed towards the narrow neck. The town was awakened by a rattle of wooden wheels, the hooves of horses, the cries of drovers. The carts were mostly drawn by one horse or a tandem. The streets were so cramped and the corners so difficult, two wheels and a tandem were handier than four wheels and the horses harnessed abreast. Some of the streets were so narrow a single cart would fill the alley and pedestrians had to step inside the houses until it had passed. Loads were also carried in on the horses' backs, the market man or woman leading the horse, which hardly showed more than a nose or tail under the prodigious load of vegetables, sacks of grain, slaughtered hens, hams, firkins of butter.

Farmers who owned slaves sent them in with loads of produce. The black men were jolly, popular, and good bargainers. Crispus Attucks' master had a high regard for his ability as a salesman. In many reminiscences of the period, the poor boy (grown rich) tells how he first saw Boston, as he walked in with a basket of gingerbread his mother (usually widowed) had baked to sell on market day. Or the difficulties he had

[3] From *Say What You Mean*, by John B. Opdycke. Reprinted by permission of the author and of Funk & Wagnalls Company, publishers.

getting a flock of turkeys to market. The wary birds could only be coaxed along by a sparse scattering of grain, all the way from Chelmsford to Boston. At night they roosted in a tree and the child slept under the tree.

By the time the bells rang to open the market and the clerk had seen that all was in order, the horses were unharnessed and the wares arranged. From all over North End, men, women, and children would hurry with their baskets, intent upon that old New England sport of getting the most for one's money. The scene was identical with that of any market town in Old England, colorful, voluble, picturesque.[4]

(4)

He abandoned himself to his ploughing to such an extent that he became a part of the total process and identified himself with the machine beneath him. He could detect the resistance of the damp soil to the impact of the plough, and whenever an obstacle of any sort was encountered, he felt the repercussion in his own body. He was conscious too of the noises that the team and the harness produced as the work continued, and of the appearance of the horses and their immediate environment. All around him was a confusion of sensory impressions, the strongest of which was the odor of the horses and the characteristic smell of upturned earth.

(5)

Man seeks many vantage points to observe the beauty of nature. He scales mountains, climbs a knoll; in short, he surmounts many obstacles to better his view of nature's splendid fantasy. There is one mode, however, that surpasses all others. It is cruising some swift stream in a canoe.

From the canoe the woodsman, the hunter, the fisherman can better appreciate the bold strokes, the chromatic hues, or the somber tints of Mother Nature's brush more readily, more easily than their uninitiated brethren. In fact, they are a part of nature, integrated into the composition of that cacophony of color, sound, and aroma that constitutes the varied paradise.

Pick your canoe. Regardless of make it is a thing of beauty – a true esperanto in which to enjoy this paradise. Kneel in it. Look up about you. Breathe deep. Aye, and hearken well, also. Now dip your blade into the liquid azureness about you. But easily, for the freeness from parasitic resistance of your craft requires not the task of other water-borne craft. Glide away from the earthen bounds that previously handicapped your acuteness. Straighten out in midstream and settle into the rhythm of paddling.

(6)

The ploughing, now in full swing, enveloped him in a vague, slow-moving whirl of things. Underneath him was the jarring, jolting,

[4] From *Paul Revere and the World He Lived in*, by Esther Forbes. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

trembling machine; not a clod was turned, not an obstacle encountered, that he did not receive the swift impression of it through all his body, the very friction of the damp soil, sliding incessantly from the shiny surface of the shears, seemed to reproduce itself in his finger-tips and along the back of his head. He heard the horse-hoofs by the myriads crushing down easily, deeply, into the loam, the prolonged clinking of trace-chains, the working of the smooth brown flanks in the harness, the clatter of wooden hames, the champing of bits, the click of iron shoes against pebbles, the brittle stubble of the surface ground crackling and snapping as the furrows turned, the sonorous, steady breaths wrenched from the deep, labouring chests, strap-bound, shining with sweat, and all along the line the voices of the men talking to the horses. Everywhere there were visions of glossy brown backs, straining, heaving, swollen with muscle; harness streaked with specks of froth, broad, cup-shaped hoofs, heavy with brown loam; men's faces red with tan, blue overalls spotted with axle-grease; muscled hands, the knuckles whitened in their grip on the reins, and through it all the ammoniacal smell of the horses, the bitter reek of perspiration of beasts and men, the aroma of warm leather, the scent of dead stubble — and stronger and more penetrating than everything else, the heavy, enervating odour of the upturned, living earth.[5]

[5] From *The Octopus*, by Frank Norris. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, publishers.

PART THREE

GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

14

A POINT OF VIEW TOWARD GRAMMAR

ENGLISH, like all languages, has developed a great many conventions popularly and generally known as "the rules of grammar." The nature of these rules is widely misunderstood, and because of this misunderstanding, the study of the conventions of educated usage is often less profitable than it might be, both in high-school and college classes. The first step toward using your native language with confidence is to acquire a sensible attitude toward these rules. This chapter will attempt to foster such an attitude by showing you what we mean when we talk about rules of grammar, how these rules have grown up and are still growing, and how you can use this knowledge to solve your own language problems. In short, this chapter will try to give you a point of view from which you can see particular questions of usage in perspective and judge for yourself which usages are acceptable, and when.

THE RULES OF GRAMMAR

Contrary to popular belief, the rules of grammar do not determine how the language should be spoken and written. Grammar is a science, and it follows the general scientific method of reporting not what *ought to be* but what *is*. Except for differences of subject matter, the rules of grammar are exactly like the laws of physics and chemistry: they are scientific generalizations about the facts. In grammar, as in physics, these generalizations must be verifiable. If the rule does not fit the facts or if it ceases to fit them, it must be revised or discarded.

Both in grammar and in physics statements are sometimes proposed and accepted as rules which, on investigation, prove to have little relation to the facts. It used to be a "rule" of physics that the sun

went around the earth, but the investigations of Copernicus proved that that rule was an inaccurate description of what really happened. Similarly, it used to be a rule of grammar that the complement of the verb *to be* never took the objective case and that, therefore, educated people did not say, "It is me." But a great many grammarians have shown over and over again that educated people say "It is me" more often than "It is I." Therefore the rule that the complement of the verb *to be* never takes the objective case is no longer acceptable as an accurate description of usage.

Both in grammar and in physics old rules sometimes die hard. Galileo, you remember, was imprisoned for denying that the sun went around the earth. His prosecutors felt that a rule which had so long been accepted *must* be true and that any attempt to discard it would undermine the morality of society. A similar tendency prevails in grammar. People develop moral attitudes toward the rules, and when they find the rules and the facts at variance, they tend to deny the facts or condemn them.

The fact that, as individuals, we are often unscientific about grammar does not discredit the usefulness of the grammarian's work. Without his painstaking study of usage and his periodic reports on it, we could have no comprehensive picture of current English. If all grammarians were to stop work tomorrow we would soon be as ignorant of the facts of usage as we would be of the facts of population if census-taking were abolished. Unfortunately, while nearly everyone understands that the census reports of one hundred years ago would give a false picture of the population today, few people realize that grammatical reports must likewise be kept up to date. Consequently, while nobody blames the census-taker for reporting a change in the population, many people seem to want to condemn the grammarian for reporting a change in our speech habits.

A scientific attitude toward grammar assumes three things: first, that usage determines the rules, and that therefore the validity of any rule depends on its agreement with the facts; second, that in a living language usage changes from time to time, and that therefore the rules must be revised to fit these changes; and, third, that a moral or emotional attitude toward these changes is not pertinent, and that therefore any argument about whether the facts ought to be what they are is meaningless. These assumptions hold true for the scientific study of any living language. Much of the work of this and succeeding chapters is to show how they apply to English.

THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH

The language that we Americans speak and write is descended from the language spoken by the English, Scottish, and Irish immigrants who founded the British colonies in America. Their language, in turn, was descended from the dialects of Germanic tribes which during the fifth and sixth centuries, invaded Britain and settled there. One of these tribes, the Angles, later became known as the Englisc (English) and thus gave their name to a country and a language, both of which they shared with other peoples – the Saxons, the Jutes, and, later, the Danes and the Normans.

All these races were the Founding Fathers of the English language, but other peoples, too, have made their contribution to its development. As England grew in political, economic, and cultural importance, the language borrowed from various sources the words it needed to express the things and ideas that Englishmen were acquiring. Today the vocabulary of the English language is international in origin, and to talk, as some people do, of "pure" English is to use an adjective that is as inappropriate as it is misleading.

Needless to say, the language which has come down to us through some fifteen centuries has undergone great changes. A modern college student could understand, not without difficulty, the speech of any ancestors of his who came over on the *Mayflower*. But the English that Chaucer wrote is something of a puzzle to him. And before Chaucer's time – well, judge for yourself! Here are the opening lines of the Lord's Prayer in the English of about a thousand years ago:

> Fæder ūre,
> Þu Þe eart on heofonum,
> sī Þīn nama gehālgod.
> Tōbecume Þīn rīce.
> Gewurþe ðīn willa on eorðan swā swā on heofonum.

A contrast of this version of the Lord's Prayer with the modern version offers a brief but revealing impression of the changes that have occurred in the language during its development from an insignificant German dialect to the mightiest language the world has ever known. It is important to recognize that these changes were the product of evolution rather than of revolution. True enough, there were times when so many basic changes occurred so rapidly that they must have seemed revolutionary to those who witnessed them. But,

by and large, the language changed slowly as it reflected gradual and unprompted shifts in the speech habits of those who spoke English. Often the old and new forms persisted together in competition for centuries, and sometimes an older form which was threatened with extinction enjoyed a renewal of popularity and survived at the expense of its rival. But the process of evolution always put a premium on survival value. The test of competing usages was not which was the more logical, the more beautiful, or the more "correct," but which one was more *used.* Usage has always been, as it still is, the ultimate maker of rules.

It is important also to recognize that the changes which occurred during the development of the English language were not always made painlessly. Whenever any two usages compete for popularity there is a tendency on the part of speakers to be confused about which one to accept. And the closer the competition, the greater the confusion. There must have been a time, for example, when our ancestors were perplexed whether to call a certain garment a *shirt* or a *skirt,* since both forms of the word were applied to the same garment and both were popular. That particular difficulty was resolved by using one form for a man's garment and the other for a woman's. This solution was not a deliberate one. It was not laid down by any authority, and it was not reached overnight. It just happened that people gradually drifted into the habit of using the two forms in different ways and thus established a new usage.

Finally, it is important to recognize that this evolutionary process is still going on. Any one of us can notice hundreds of examples of it in our own experience. We can hear the older pronunciations of *penalize* (pee*n*alize), *status* (stay*t*us) and *detour* (de *toor*) being challenged by pronunciations which were at first labeled "uneducated" but which have gradually become more common, even in the speech of highly educated people. We can observe words acquiring new meanings. And we can watch grammatical distinctions which once were generally observed falling more and more into disuse as substitutes take over their work. Like our ancestors puzzling over *shirt* and *skirt,* we will fluctuate between the old usage and the new until one or another triumphs. Then all the uncertainty will be forgotten, or if we remember it at all it will seem amusing rather than serious.

The habit of personal observation. In the midst of this ceaseless change it is not surprising that some of our descriptions of usage are controversial. When specific usages are in active competition it is

often difficult to decide which form is preferred Even the evidence of a good dictionary is not always decisive, and certainly an emotional allegiance to either form is not likely to produce an unbiased answer. Under these circumstances a tolerant rather than a dogmatic attitude would seem to be in order, especially when one realizes that the most vigorous condemnation of any usage usually comes when that usage is beginning to make a strong bid for popular acceptance.

A student who sees such controversies in their historical perspective will understand what is involved and will get pleasure from the knowledge that he is watching a struggle for linguistic survival. Such a student will develop a scientific curiosity about the language. He will listen more closely to what people actually say and watch more alertly what they write. He may even make an interesting hobby of keeping track of the frequency with which he observes allegedly unacceptable constructions in the speech of the educated people about him. The more he does this, the more he will develop a feeling for the way English is used, and thus gain a new confidence in his own handling of the language.

This is the only way to win any practical mastery of one's native tongue. A language which has to be written and spoken by rules is still a foreign language. It may be necessary – for most freshmen it usually is – to revise one's work to fit the conventions, but, like learning the mechanics of a golf stroke, that should be a preliminary discipline. It should not be ignored, but the ideal should be to make it automatic. That ideal is more likely to be brought about by the habit of sustained observation of how educated people speak and write than by any other method. The discussion of grammatical conventions in the succeeding chapters is an introduction to that habit, not a substitute for it.

15

THE FORMS OF WORDS

ENGLISH GRAMMAR is studied under two headings: **Morphology** and Syntax. Morphology deals with the forms of words, syntax with the relationship between units within a sentence. Thus we are studying morphology when we learn the principal parts of a verb or the declension of a pronoun. We are studying syntax when we consider sentence structure, word order, and questions of agreement. In this chapter we are concerned with morphology.

We cannot study either morphology or syntax without some scheme for classifying words. The traditional system is to set up eight categories of words which are called parts of speech. These are, as you no doubt remember, *nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions,* and *interjections.* These terms are usually defined as follows:

1. A noun is the name of a living being (*John Brown, woman, horse*), a place (*New York, prairie, desert*), an object (*stone, tree, bullet*), a quality (*happiness, honesty, hate*), or a collection (*herd, flock, army, team*).

2. A pronoun is a word used as a substitute for a noun or another pronoun. (Don't wait for John; *he* won't be here.)

3. An adjective is a word used to modify a noun or a pronoun. (He is a *ruthless* man. You have the *wrong* one.)

4. A verb is a word or a phrase that asserts action, state, or being. (He *has run* away. They *remained* standing. He *is* ill.)

5. An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. (He fought *furiously.* She is *very* young. I talked *most* bluntly.)

6. A preposition is a word showing the relationship between a noun (or pronoun) and some other word in the sentence. (We stood *at* the door. Sue lives *with* her aunt. They ran *to* the window.)

7. A **conjunction** connects words, phrases, or clauses. (You *and* I. To be *or* not to be. I'd like to *but* I can't.)

8. An **interjection** is a word or phrase used to express an emotion or feeling. (Oh! Rot! Hurrah! Thank goodness!)

For various reasons, few grammarians are satisfied with these classifications. But the fact that the eight parts of speech have been used to classify English words for a thousand years makes it almost impossible to discard them. However, only five of the eight need be used in a study of morphology. Since prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections are not inflected (changed in form to show number, case, or tense), they may be ignored in this chapter.

NOUNS

English nouns undergo changes in form to indicate **number, case,** and, occasionally, **gender.** Such changes as from *ship* to *ships,* from *tooth* to *teeth,* from *ox* to *oxen* are changes from singular to plural forms. The change from *man* to *man's* is a change from the nominative to the genitive (or possessive) case. The change from *host* to *hostess* or from *hero* to *heroine* is a change from masculine to feminine gender. Words which so change are said to be **inflected.**

Gender

In modern English the gender of a noun indicates the sex of the thing named. If a noun refers to a male, it is masculine in gender; if it refers to a female, it is feminine. When the thing referred to has no sex (*house, ocean, park*) or its sex is not distinguished (*animal, bird, cousin, friend, musician*), the noun is not inflected for gender.

The gender of English nouns is indicated in four ways:

a. By using a pronoun which reveals the gender of its antecedent:
The youngster evidently wanted *his* breakfast.
If you don't muzzle that dog *he* will bite someone.
The thief gave *herself* up.
The teacher said *she* was tired of that joke.

b. By contrasted couplets:
beau-belle, boy-girl, bull-cow, drake-duck, fox-vixen, king-queen, uncle-aunt.

c. By compounding a noun with a prefix that shows gender:
billy goat, manservant, maidservant, she-bear, tomcat.

d. By adding a feminine suffix to the masculine form of the noun:
count-countess, hero-heroine, aviator-aviatrix.

This last method is the only one that really involves inflection of the noun, and by far the commonest inflection is the *-ess* ending. The following list includes most of the *-ess* inflected nouns that you are likely to use:

abbot—abbess
actor—actress
adventurer—adventuress
baron—baroness
benefactor—benefactress
count—countess
deacon—deaconess
duke—duchess
emperor—empress
enchanter—enchantress
god—goddess
heir—heiress
host—hostess
hunter—huntress
Jew—Jewess
launderer—laundress
proprietor—proprietress
protector—protectress
shepherd—shepherdess
songster—songstress
sorcerer—sorceress
lion—lioness
master—mistress
murderer—murderess
Negro—Negress
patron—patroness
priest—priestess
steward—stewardess
tempter—temptress
tiger—tigress
waiter—waitress

Number

English nouns show number by having singular and plural forms. Since perhaps 95 per cent of all nouns form their plurals by adding *-s* or *-es* to the singular form [1] and since irregular plural forms are given in a dictionary (see page 181), the simplest method of deciding about troublesome plurals is to consult your dictionary. Nouns which do not take *-s* plurals usually belong to one of the following classes.

a. **-en Plurals** (*children, oxen*).

b. **Vowel-Changing Plurals** (*foot-feet, goose-geese, louse-lice, man-men, mouse-mice, tooth-teeth, woman-women*).

c. **Unchanged Plurals** (*deer, sheep, swine*).

These irregular plurals are relics of Old English plural inflections which once were common but which, during the evolution of the language, have been superseded by the *-s* plural.

d. **Foreign Plurals** (*agenda, alumnae, bacilli, data, synopses*). Words borrowed from foreign languages bring with them their foreign methods of forming the plural. If these words pass into popular speech there is a strong tendency to ignore their foreign plurals and to treat them like the great majority of English nouns. However, until that

[1] The conditions under which the *-es* plural is used are essentially a matter of spelling and are summarized on pages 381-382.

change has become accepted, it is conventional to use the foreign plural. If you have had a little Latin or Greek you may remember that:

1. Latin nouns ending in *-a* take *-ae* in the plural (*alumnae, antennae, larvae, nebulae, vertebrae*).
2. Latin nouns ending in *-us* take *-i* in the plural (*alumni, bacilli, loci, radii*).
3. Latin nouns ending in *-um* take *-a* in the plural (*agenda, bacteria, data, dicta, errata, residua, strata*).
4. Greek nouns ending in *-is* take *-es* in the plural (*analyses, crises, diagnoses, emphases, hypotheses, oases, parentheses, synopses, syntheses*).

But since no law requires modern Americans to follow the speech habits of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the fact that certain plural endings were used in Latin or Greek is not proof that they are used in English. Therefore, the best practice when you are in doubt about foreign plurals is to consult your dictionary.

The Plurals of Compounds. Nouns which are compounds of two or more words vary in their methods of forming plurals. Most compounds (like *billiard balls, blackboards, class reunions, footballs, fountain pens, girl scouts, heartbreakers, pick-ups, policemen, seamen, wallflowers*) merely use the plural form of the last word in the compound. But exceptions are so numerous that if you are not confident about the accepted plural form you should consult your dictionary. The following exceptions are worth noting:

1. Compounds which inflect the first word (*brothers-in-law,* (or any other relative-in-law), *commanders-in-chief, editors-in-chief, justices-of-the-peace, lookers-on, passers-by*).
2. Compounds which inflect more than one word (*men servants, men-shoppers, women students, women teachers*).

Notice that compounds in group (2) have two characteristics in common. The first word is either *man* or *woman* in the singular, and the gender of the whole compound is indicated by the first word. When both these characteristics are present, both elements of the compound have plural forms. Contrast, for example, *woman haters* with *women workers* and *man-eaters* with *men-patients.*

3. Compounds ending in *-ful* (*cupful, handful, mouthful, spoonful*).

In such sentences as *I left two cupfuls of coffee in the pot* and *I left*

two cups full of coffee on the table the terms *cupfuls* and *cups full* have somewhat different meanings. Whether or not *cups full* should be classified as a compound is open to dispute. But *cupfuls, handfuls, mouthfuls, spoonfuls* are the plural forms when the compound is used to signify a unit of measure.

Case

Case is usually defined as that property of a noun (or pronoun) which shows its relation to other words in a sentence. This is another way of saying that the case endings of a noun or pronoun show how the word is being used in a sentence.

The definition will be clearer if we use an illustration. Old English nouns had four cases: nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative, generally indicated by different endings. Roughly, the nominative case was used when the noun was the subject; the accusative when it was a direct object; the dative when it was an indirect object; and the genitive either for a modifier of another noun or to indicate possession. Thus the cases of Old English *scip* (pronounced "ship") would be used as follows:

CASE	FORM	ILLUSTRATION
Nominative	scip	The ship sailed at dawn.
Genitive	scipes	The sails of the ship were torn.
Dative	scipe	They gave the ship a new mast.
Accusative	scip	They took the ship to port.

You will observe that in modern English the single form *ship* can perform all the functions for which Old English required four cases. For in modern English the position of the noun in the sentence tells us whether it is being used as a subject or as a direct or indirect object, and the phrase *of the ship* can perform the function of the genitive case. But the second sentence could also have been written *The ship's sails were torn.* We have, therefore, two ways of expressing the genitive function in modern English: (1) by a modifying phrase, (2) by an apostrophe. If it were not for the form with the apostrophe, we could say that modern English nouns are not inflected for case, that they have a common form for all case functions. Even when we include the form with the apostrophe, English nouns have only two case forms: a common form and a genitive or possessive form. Thus,

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Common case	ship	ships
Genitive case	ship's	ships'

Indeed, if it were not for the pronouns, case would hardly have to be mentioned in modern English grammar.

PRONOUNS

English pronouns are usually divided into eight classes: personal, relative, reciprocal, indefinite, intensive, interrogative, demonstrative, and reflexive. But since we are concerned in this chapter only with the *forms* of words, we need consider here only those pronouns which have inflected forms. These are the personal, relative, demonstrative, and reflexive pronouns.

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns are inflected for gender, number, and case, and also for *person.* There are three persons: the first person is used when the pronoun refers to the speaker, the second person when it refers to the person spoken to, and the third to the person spoken about. The complete inflection of the personal pronouns is given below.

NUMBER	CASE	1ST PERSON	2D PERSON	3D PERSON		
				mas.	*fem.*	*neut.*
Singular	*Subjective*	I	you	he	she	it
	Possessive	my (mine)[2]	your(s)	his	her(s)	its
	Objective	me	you	him	her	it
Plural	*Subjective*	we	you	they		all
	Possessive	our(s)	your(s)	their(s)		genders
	Objective	us	you	them		

Notice that the cases are here called *Subjective, Possessive,* and *Objective.* These names better describe the functions that the cases perform in modern English than do the older labels, *Nominative, Genitive, Dative,* and *Accusative.*

Relative Pronouns

The pronouns *who, which, that, what,* with their compounds, *whoever, whosoever, whichever, whatever,* and *whatsoever,* are often used to relate a subordinate clause to its main clause. When they are

[2] The forms in parentheses are used in such constructions as *These papers are mine* (*ours, yours, hers, theirs*) — that is, when the pronoun alone is used after the verb to complete the verb and to modify the antecedent.

so used, they are called **relative pronouns.** The only one of these pronouns that is fully inflected for case is *who,* which has the forms: *who* (Subjective), *whose* (Possessive), *whom* (Objective). This pronoun is not inflected for number or gender. The compounds *whoever* and *whosoever* have no distinct forms for the possessive, but become *whomever* and *whomsoever* respectively in the objective case – thus:

Whoever did this should be horsewhipped.
I'll take *whomever* I can get.
Whosoever believeth in me shall not perish.
To *whomsoever* it may concern.

Demonstrative Pronouns

When *this* and *that* are used as pointing words they are called **demonstrative pronouns.** When they are so used, they are inflected for number. Their plural forms are *these* and *those* respectively – thus:

This is mine; *these* are yours.
That was the seventeenth; *those* records were lost.

Reflexive Pronouns

In such sentences as *He corrected himself, You will hurt yourself, They are deceiving themselves,* we call *himself, yourself,* and *themselves* **reflexive pronouns** because the subject and the object refer to the same individual or group of individuals. Reflexive pronouns are inflected as follows:

	Singular	*Plural*
1st person	myself	ourselves
2nd person	yourself	yourselves
3rd person	himself, herself, itself	themselves

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Modern English adjectives and adverbs have sloughed off all the inflectional endings they had in Old English except those which show **degree of comparison.** There are three such degrees: positive, comparative, and superlative.

There are three methods of indicating comparison in adjectives and adverbs in modern English: (1) by adding to the positive form *-er* for the comparative and *-est* for the superlative; (2) by placing before the positive form the prefix *more* for the comparative and *most* for the

superlative; (3) by using different words for each degree. The following comparisons illustrate all three methods:

Positive	*Comparative*	*Superlative*
strong	stronger	strongest
soon	sooner	soonest
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
quickly	more quickly	most quickly
good	better	best
little	less	least

Irregular Comparison. Of these three methods the last is the least common and is usually described as **irregular comparison.** Many words that are irregularly compared have the same form for adjectives and adverbs. Here are the most common irregular comparisons:

Positive	*Comparative*	*Superlative*
bad, ill	worse	worst
far	farther, further	farthest, furthest
good, well	better	best
little	less, lesser	least
much, many	more	most

Regular Comparison. Comparison by means of *-er* and *-est* endings is an older method than that by the prefixes *more* and *most*, but the latter method is becoming more popular. At present both forms must be considered regular, though the rise of the *more – most* comparison suggests that the older, inflected pattern is giving way to the other.[3] Such a change, if it takes place, would be similar to the replacement of case endings by the function words *of the, to the,* etc.

In general, words of one syllable take the *er – est* endings; words of more than two syllables use *more* and *most*. The usage in two-syllable words is divided, though words common in popular speech tend to retain the *er – est* endings.

Double Comparison. Although the use of both methods of comparison in the same construction was once current in Standard English (compare Shakespeare's "That was the most unkindest cut of all"), such a practice is no longer acceptable.

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[3] Professor Fries estimates (*American English Grammar*, p. 98) the ratio of the *er–est* to the *more–most* methods in his study as follows:

	Standard	Nonstandard
Comparative	*er*:*more*::56:44	*er*:*more*::90:10
Superlative	*est*:*most*::47-53	*est*:*most*::89:11

Superlative Used in Place of Comparative. The use of the superlative form when only two things are being compared (*Of these two, I like the blue one best. I like both boys, but I think John is the nicest. Of two disputants, the warmest is usually wrong.*[4]) is accepted as standard usage by several reputable grammarians. This usage, however, is generally condemned in college writing.

VERBS

English verbs are usually said to be inflected to show number, person, mood, voice, and tense. The changes in the form of a verb to show number, person, mood, and voice are very simple. The only complexity about the morphology of verbs lies in the changes to show tense.

Principal Parts

All tenses are made by taking certain forms of the verb and using them either alone or in combination with other verbs. Thus, all tenses of the verb *to talk* are made from the forms: *talk, talking, talked* (I *talk,* I am *talking,* I *do talk,* I *talked,* I *have talked,* I *have been talking,* I *will talk,* etc.). Similarly, all tenses of the verb *to speak* are made from the forms: *speak, speaking, spoke, spoken.* These forms are called the **principal parts.**

As the last example shows, we can recognize four principal parts: the present and past tense forms, and the present and past participles. Thus, for the verbs *to come, to see, to conquer,* the principal parts are:

Present Tense	*Present Participle*	*Past Tense*	*Past Participle*
come	coming	came	come
see	seeing	saw	seen
conquer	conquering	conquered	conquered

The great majority of English verbs form the past tense and the past participle by adding *-ed* or *-d* to the first principal part (*talk, talked, talked; blame, blamed, blamed*). Such verbs have two characteristics: the vowel remains unchanged in all principal parts; and the principal parts show only two forms – present and past. Verbs which do not have both of these characteristics are said to be **irregular.** Irregular

[4] See Marckwardt and Walcott, *Facts About Current English Usage,* p. 42, for judgments that this sentence is "Literary English."

verbs may be grouped toegther, according to the nature of their irregularity, as follows:

Group I – verbs which have two sets of principal parts, one regular and the other irregular.[5]. Examples are:

burn	burned	burned	kneel	kneeled	kneeled
	burnt	burnt		knelt	knelt
cleave	cleaved	cleaved	lean	leaned	leaned
	cleft	cleft		leant	leant
dwell	dwelled	dwelled	loan	loaned	loaned
	dwelt	dwelt		lent	lent

Group II – verbs in which the vowel of the present form is shortened in both past forms.

bleed	bled	bled	hear	heard	heard
creep	crept	crept	lose	lost	lost
flee	fled	fled	speed	sped	sped

Group III – verbs in which the vowel of the present form is changed in both past forms.

bind	bound	bound	spin	spun	spun
buy	bought	bought	strike	struck	struck
hold	held	held	win	won	won

Group IV – verbs in which the present, past, and past participle forms are all different.

begin	began	begun	freeze	froze	frozen
break	broke	broken	rise	rose	risen
drink	drank	drunk	take	took	taken

The Evolution of Principal Parts. Regular and irregular verbs are descended from two great classes of Old English verbs, called *weak* and *strong* verbs, the former merely adding *-ed* and the latter changing the root vowel in past and past participial forms. In the course of centuries the old weak class has become so dominant that more than half of all the surviving strong verbs have been drawn into its pattern. On the other hand, a few verbs which were once weak have gone over to the irregular groups. This conversion of the principal parts from one pattern to another is still operating in the language and, for that reason, many principal parts which were once unacceptable have slowly become established usage. Because of this slow

[5] The present participle has been omitted in this summary.

but persistent evolution, the best authority on the present status of the principal parts of any irregular verb is a reliable, up-to-date dictionary.

Tenses

Literally, the tense of a verb is its inflection to show the time at which the action of the verb occurs. In practice, however, the tense of an English verb sometimes has little relationship to the time of the action. For example, the present tense may be used to refer to past, present, or future actions, or to actions that run through past, present, *and* future time, as the verbs in the following sentences show:

While Sharkey *is claiming* a foul, Dempsey *knocks* him out. (Tense, present; time, 1927.)

This summer he finally *gets* a chance at the title. (Tense, present; time, future.)

At the moment he *objects*. (Tense, present; time, present.)

History always *repeats* itself. (Tense, present; time, past, present, and future.)

Moreover, the English language has ways of indicating time that make use of idiom rather than of tense. For example, in the following sentences the events have not yet occurred, yet not once is a future tense used. The "progressive" present, various uses of the infinitive, and adverbs of time are used instead.

I am going to do it tomorrow.

We are to see them next week.

They are to be married this summer.

I expect to hear from him in a day or two.

Be sure to call me when you come to town.

Tense Formation

It is customary to recognize six basic tenses in English: the *simple* past, present, and future tenses; and the past, present, and future *perfect tenses*. The simple tenses are formed directly from the first and third principal parts of the verb, with the exception of the simple future, in which the first principal part is compounded with the auxiliary *shall* or *will*. The perfect tenses are all verb phrases combining an auxiliary verb (*have, had*) with the past participle of the main

verb. The complete tense inflection (or conjugation) of typical regular and irregular verbs is given below.

	Regular verb, *to talk*		Irregular verb, *to write*	
	Singular	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Simple Present	1. I talk 2 you talk 3. he talk*s*	1. we talk 2. you talk 3. they talk	1. I write 2. you write 3. he write*s*	1. we write 2. you write 3. they write
	Method of forming: Use first principal part unchanged for all forms except addition of *s* in third person singular.			
Present Perfect	1. have talked 2 have talked 3. *has* talked	1. have talked 2. have talked 3. have talked	1. have written 2. have written 3. *has* written	1. have written 2. have written 3. have written
	Method of forming: Add past participle to simple present tense of verb *to have*. Except for third person singular, forms are the same throughout.			
Simple Past	1. talked 2 talked 3. talked	1. talked 2. talked 3. talked	1. wrote 2. wrote 3. wrote	1. wrote 2. wrote 3. wrote
	Method of forming: Third principal part unchanged throughout.			
Past Perfect	1. had talked 2. had talked 3. had talked	1. had talked 2. had talked 3. had talked	1. had written 2. had written 3. had written	1. had written 2. had written 3. had written
	Method of forming: Add past participle to simple past tense of *to have*			
Simple Future	1. will talk 2. will talk 3. will talk	1. will talk 2. will talk 3. will talk	1. will write 2. will write 3. will write	1. will write 2. will write 3. will write
	Method of forming: Add *will* before the first principal part. In formal usage *shall* is commonly used instead of *will* in the first person singular and plural.[5]			

[5] The question whether the distinction between the use of *shall* and *will* in future tenses should be retained is still controversial. Despite the most impressive evidence that, except in formal utterance, the "rule" that *shall* must be used in the first person and *will* in the other two is not generally practiced in American usage, there is still a tendency in the schools to insist on that distinction. In spoken usage, the popularity of the contracted forms *I'll* and *we'll* largely nullifies the distinction. In written usage, *will* instead of *shall* to express simply futurity in the first person is acceptable at all stylistic levels except the most formal. In so far, then, as it refers to simple futurity, the distinction between *shall* and *will* is stylistic rather than grammatical. This observation does not affect the use of *shall* instead of *will* in all persons in the so-called emphatic future – that is, when the tense is used to express necessity, command, or determination rather than unqualified futurity (*He shall obey the court; the regiment shall proceed as directed; this promise you may rely upon: we shall never surrender!*) – or its use in questions with the first person (*Shall I see you tonight? Shall we dance?*). For an excellent review of the whole problem of the shall-will distinction, see Fries, *American English Grammar*, pp. 150-166.

Future Perfect will have talked (same form in all persons and numbers).
will have written (same form in all persons and numbers).

Method of forming: Add *will have* before the past participle. In formal usage *shall* is commonly used instead of *will* in the first person singular and plural. See note on simple future tense.

Mood

Of the three moods of English verbs – the indicative, imperative, and subjunctive – the indicative is by far the most common. A verb is in the indicative mood unless:

1. It expresses a command or entreaty (*Sit down! Please listen to me!*), in which case it is in the imperative mood.
2. It is used in one of the following ways, in which case it is in the subjunctive mood:

a. To express a condition contrary to fact (If I *were* you, I would go).

b. To grant a concession (*Be* it as you say).

c. To state an improbability (If this *were* the end of the matter, I'd be happy).

d. To conduct certain parliamentary proceedings (I move that the committee *go* on record; it is moved and seconded that this measure *be* adopted).

The use of the imperative mood presents no problem of inflection, since the imperative is always the same form as the first principal part. The subjunctive, once fully inflected, is so little used in modern English that attention to it in college classes may reasonably be confined to the forms for the simple present and past tenses of the verb *to be.* The following contrast will show the differences between the indicative and subjunctive forms of these tenses:

	Indicative		*Subjunctive*	
	1. am	1. are	1. be	1. be
Simple	2. are	2. are	2. be	2. be
Present	3. is	3. are	3. be	3. be
	1. was	1. were	1. were	1. were
Simple	2. were	2. were	2. were	2. were
Past	3. were	3. were	3. were	3. were

Voice

English verbs have two voices, active and passive, which show whether the subject performs or experiences the action indicated by the verb. These voices may be illustrated as follows:

Active (Subject acts)	*Passive* (Subject is acted upon)
The man scolds the boy.	The boy is scolded by the man.
The attendant washed the car.	The car was washed by the attendant.

Notice that the object of the active voice becomes the subject when the verb becomes passive.

Exercise

1. Identify the part of speech represented by each word in the following sentence: At the northern end of Lake Michigan, about fifty miles south of the Straits of Mackinac, lie a group of islands known as the Beaver Islands.
2. Write the plural forms of the following words: alumna, alumnus, analysis, bacillus, crisis, deer, handful, hypothesis, larva, looker-on, radius, sister-in-law, stratum, vertebra.
3. Classify the following pronouns as *personal, relative, demonstrative,* or *reflexive*: this, which, herself, its, whatever, our, those, them, who.
4. Write the comparative and superlative forms of the following words: cheap, badly, good, little, much, tired, well.
5. In the following sentences adjectives are sometimes used instead of adverbs. Whenever necessary, write the correct adverbial form:

   The children played together real good.
   These shoes will go nice with your new dress.
   They were no match for us; so we won easy.
   I hear that most everyone failed the test.
   Take it easy; you are trying to do it too quick.
   Pull steady on the rope.

6. For each of the six basic tenses write the third person singular form of *to be, to call, to ride, to say, to think.*

16

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

A SENTENCE is an accepted pattern of expression by means of which one user of the language conveys a complete thought or feeling to another. The pattern may make a statement (*Tomorrow will be Sunday*), ask a question (*What is his name?*), express a command or a wish (*Speak quietly! No parking! Oh, if she could only cook!*), or utter an exclamation (*Of all the nerve! What a ridiculous statement! Bravo!*). It may range in length from one word to more than a hundred; it may refer to a preceding sentence or anticipate one which is to follow, but it is grammatically independent of other sentences and is therefore a unit in itself.

TYPES OF SENTENCES

English sentences may be divided into two classes: full and minor sentences.[1] A full sentence (*Tomorrow will be Sunday*) is said to be grammatically complete: it contains two related parts, a *subject* and a *predicate*. The subject identifies the person, thing, or event being spoken about in the sentence; the predicate makes an assertion about the subject. In the following sentences the italicized words are the subject; those not italicized are the predicate:

John smiled.
That dog needs a bath.
The man you were expecting called a few minutes ago.
Nobody that I know of will believe a word he says.
Please try again!

[1] I am here following the classification given by Bloomfield in *Language*, pp. 171-177. Full and minor sentences are often referred to by other names, such as: complete and incomplete sentences, sentences and sentence fragments, formal and informal sentences.

Notice that in the last example there is no italicized subject. The subject (*you*) is said to be "understood," and therefore this example is not considered to be an exception to the definition of a full sentence. Commands, therefore, in which this *you* is understood are traditionally classified as full sentences.

A minor sentence is one which is not grammatically complete: the subject, the predicate, or both may be omitted. Professor Bloomfield recognizes three types of minor sentences: [2]

1. Exclamatory:

Oh! Nonsense! Wonderful! Good Heavens!

2. Completive (in response to a question or to supplement a situation):

Maybe. No, thanks! Whenever it's convenient. As you wish. This one here? Lemon or sugar? Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones (an introduction). Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.

3. Aphoristic:

The more, the merrier. First come, first served. Like father, like son. Easy come, easy go.

The use of a minor sentence, especially one of the completive type, is often frowned upon in freshman compositions. The objection is not against the minor sentence in itself, but against its inappropriateness in a particular context. No instructor is likely to object to the use of minor sentences in dialogue, or in a passage like the following:

> Happy? Oh, yes, John was happy. You bet! He had a brand-new bicycle. A beauty! It was red, the reddest thing he had ever seen. Red as an apple. Redder! Redder than a fire engine. Yes, sir! It was redder than *red*. And the sprocket was as big — as big — as big as — ; it was as big as the biggest sprocket in the whole world. Could that bicycle go? Could it? Oh, boy! *Could* it? Say, that bicycle could go as fast as a train. Oh, lots faster than that! It could go as fast as the fastest automobile. You bet! Faster than the fastest automobile. It could go as fast as an airplane. Fast as the wind.[3]

But college composition assignments seldom encourage such informality of style, and a student who argues that because minor sentences are acceptable in the passage above, they should be accept-

[2] *Language*, pp. 176-177.

[3] From *Better Themes*, by Percy Marks, copyright, 1933, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

able in his paper is ignoring the all-important question of appropriateness.

Since the acceptability of a minor sentence depends on its appropriateness to the rest of the context, two things may be useful to remember about this construction. First, it is more common in speech than in writing, and the more the writing attempts to imitate the rhythms and idiom of speech, the more likely will minor sentences be appropriate.

Second, since the full sentence is the predominant type in expository writing, the use of a minor sentence is justified only when it achieves effects that a full sentence would not obtain. In this respect it is like a deliberate slice in golf. We usually associate slicing with incompetence, but a professional golfer may deliberately slice the ball to play around a dog-leg or avoid a natural obstacle. If, then, you reserve the minor sentence for special effects, you are not likely to use it carelessly or indiscriminately.

SENTENCE ELEMENTS

Just as a family consists of several related members, so a sentence consists of elements which are related to one another. These elements are **subject, verb, complement, modifier,** and **connective.** If we use the letters *S, V, C, M,* and *K* respectively, to label these elements, we can see the nature of their relationship in the following sentence:

S K S V C M
Dad and mother liked her at once.

The key word in this sentence is the verb *liked.* The nouns, *Dad, mother,* tell us who did the liking, and are joined by the connective *and.* The pronoun *her* tells who was the object of the liking. The phrase *at once* tells when the liking took place. In our example all the elements except the connective are in one way or another related to the verb.

Some of the names of these related elements will be familiar to you. Others may be new. In either event, the following summary will be useful.

The Subject. Any word or group of words which tells us who or what performed the action indicated by the verb is the subject of the sentence. The subject may be a simple one (*John* has arrived), it may be a compound of two simple subjects (*Dad and mother* liked . . .) or

even a series of simple subjects (*Fred, Mary, Bill, and Jane* are all going to the dance). Although most subjects are nouns or pronouns, any part of speech may serve as a subject. Thus, in *'And' is one of the commonest words in the language,* and *'Bravo' comes from the Italian, And* and *Bravo* are the subjects, although the first is a conjunction and the second an interjection. The term *subject,* therefore, is not a name for a part of speech; it is a name for a relationship within the sentence.

The Verb. *Verb* is a name both for a part of speech and for a relationship within the sentence. The chief troubles with verbs arise out of a failure to distinguish between *verbs* and *verbals.* A verbal is a word which is derived from a verb but does not act as a verb in the sentence. The verbals are gerunds, present and past participles, and infinitives:

Swimming is a good exercise. (*Swimming* is a gerund used as the subject.)

I don't like *swimming.* (Gerund, complement of the verb.)

Although *defeated* in his first attempt, he was not discouraged. (*Defeated* is a past participle serving as part of a modifying phrase.)

To succeed requires effort. (*To succeed* is an infinitive acting as the subject.)

He is a *fighting* fool. (*Fighting* is a present participle modifying the complement, *fool.*)

He loves *to fight.* (*To fight* is an infinitive acting as the complement of the verb, *loves.*)

His *fighting* days are over. (*Fighting* is a present participle modifying the subject, *days.*)

Goldsmith wrote a poem about a *deserted* village. (*Deserted* is a past participle modifying *village.*)

In a consideration of sentence structure it is useful to distinguish between two kinds of verbs: those which are complete in themselves and those which require a complement. In the sentence, *The two men agreed,* the verb *agreed* is a complete statement of the action, and the verb alone is the predicate of the sentence. But in *He conceded the putt,* the verb *conceded* requires the complement, *the putt,* to complete it, so that the predicate consists of the verb and the complement together. Verbs which are complete without a complement we call **verbs of complete predication** or **intransitive verbs;** those, like *conceded,* which require a complement, we call **verbs of incomplete predication** or **transitive verbs.** In the first of the following groups of sentences the verb requires a complement to complete the predica-

tion; in the second group the verb makes a complete predication by itself.

Transitive verbs	He *asked* an embarrassing *question.*
	We *want* none of their *sympathy.*
	The thing *is impossible.*
Intransitive verbs	The evidence *has vanished.*
	All the girls *have left.*
	Tomorrow our vacation *begins.*

The Complement. It should now be evident that the main task of the complement is to complete a verb of incomplete predication.[4] The complement, however, may complete constructions other than verbs:

I am looking at *the picture.* (Completes the preposition *at.*)
He wants to be *boss.* (Completes the infinitive *to be.*)
She regrets knowing *him.* (Completes the participle, *knowing.*)

The Modifier. Any word or group of words which describes or qualifies another element in the sentence is a modifier of that element. In general, a modifier describes a subject, a complement, or another modifier, or tells how, where, when, why, under what conditions, or despite what conditions the action of the verb took place. The italicized modifiers in the following sentences illustrate these characteristics:

Old soldiers never die. (Modifies subject.)
Honesty is the *best* policy. (Modifies complement.)
It was a *most* unlikely story. (Modifies the modifier *unlikely.*)
He arrived *late.* (Modifies the verb – tells when.)
He arrived *at the party.* (Modifies the verb – tells where.)
He went *for my sake.* (Modifies verb – tells why.)
I will go, *if you pay my way.* (Modifies verb – tells under what conditions.)
I will go, *even if I'm not invited.* (Modifies verb – tells despite what conditions.)

The Connective. The connective, as its name implies, joins together other elements in a sentence. The most common connectives are the simple conjunctions (*and, or, nor, but, either . . . or, neither . . . nor*)

[4] The more familiar term, **object**, designates only one of several types of complements, and is therefore less desirable as a general label for the relationship being discussed in this chapter.

which always join similar, or co-ordinate elements. Two other types of connectives – the subordinating and the transitional – are defined in the Glossary under *Conjunctions.*

The Absolute Construction. Finally, we should observe a construction which is often an element in a sentence but which has no clear grammatical relationship to the other sentence elements. Consider the following sentences:

Nonsense, it is all a hoax!
Good heavens, is it that late?
Mr. Hughes, may I talk to you for a moment?
No, I won't do it!
I wish, *madam,* you would make up your mind.
She said – *as if I cared* – that she was through with me.

In these sentences, the italicized expressions serve useful purposes, but they are not grammatically related to other elements in the sentence. Because they are grammatically independent they are called absolutes.

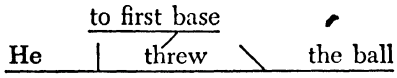
DIAGRAMMING

The different relationships we have been considering may be indicated by marking each element with an appropriate symbol, as we did on page 304. For sentences which are not too complicated, however, a similar and more pictorial analysis may be achieved by means of a diagram. The following system is only one of many ways of diagramming a sentence:

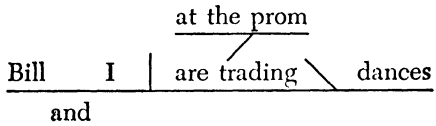
1. Put the subject, verb, and complement (if any) on a base line, with a vertical line between subject and verb, and a diagonal line between verb and complement.
2. Put modifiers on a level above the base line and connect them with the elements which they modify.
3. Put simple connectives below the base line, if possible between the elements which they connect.
4. Enclose absolutes in parentheses at the left of the base line.
5. Separate compound clauses by parallel lines.

The following diagrams will illustrate the procedure:

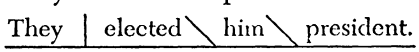
1. He threw the ball to first base.



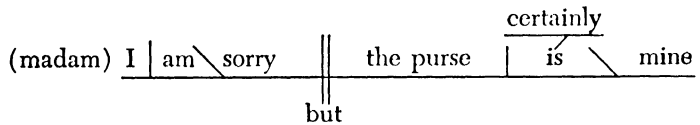
2. Bill and I are trading dances at the prom.



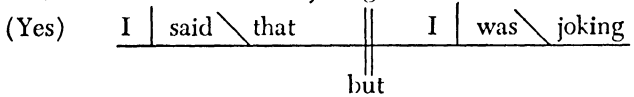
3. They elected him president.



4. I am sorry, madam, but the purse is certainly mine.



5. Yes, I said that, but I was joking.



PHRASES AND CLAUSES

As a result of the preceding analysis we can now define phrases and clauses as follows:

A **phrase** is a group of two or more words acting as a single element in a sentence but not having a subject and verb. Thus, in *He threw the ball to first base,* the phrase *to first base* is a single element modifying the verb. Similarly, *the ball* is a phrase acting as complement of the verb. In the sentence, *He has been calling you,* the phrase *has been calling* acts as a single element (verb). A phrase can also act as a subject or as a transitional connective (see Glossary).

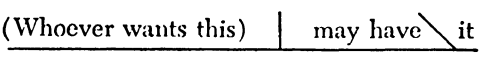
A **subordinate clause** is a group of words acting as a subject, complement, or modifier, and having a subject and verb of its own:

Whoever did that will be punished. (Subordinate clause is subject.)
Ask *whatever you want.* (Subordinate clause is complement.)
This is the book *I'm looking for.* (Clause modifies *book.*)

The subjects of the italicized clauses are, respectively, *Whoever, You,* and *I*; the verbs are *did, want,* and *am looking.* The presence of subject and verb distinguishes a subordinate clause from a phrase.

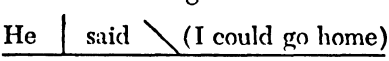
Since phrases and subordinate clauses act as elements in a sentence, they may be diagrammed by the system we have already used:

1. Whoever wants this may have it. — *clause*



as subject

2. He said I could go home. — *clause*



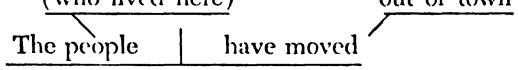
as complement

3. I will go wherever you send me. — *clause*

(wherever you send me) — *as modifier*

I will go — *of verb*

4. The people who lived here have moved out of town. — *clause as modifier of subject; phrase as modifier of verb*



A main clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate, but differing from a subordinate clause in that it does not act as a subject, complement, or modifier in a sentence. It is capable of being a complete sentence in itself or of being an absolute in a larger sentence. Thus, in the sentence,

He said — wasn't it mean of him? — that I was an irresponsible adolescent.

the words between the dashes are a main clause and an absolute. They are capable of being written as a separate full sentence, thus:

He said that I was an irresponsible adolescent. Wasn't it mean of him?

Notice that if the preceding example had been written, *He said I was an irresponsible adolescent,* the omission of the word *that* would

not change the relationship of the words following *said.* These words — *I was an irresponsible adolescent* — could be a main clause in another sentence, but in this sentence they act as the complement of *said,* and are therefore a subordinate clause.

Sentences which consist of a single main clause (*The groceries have arrived*) are called **simple sentences;** those which consist of two or more main clauses but have no subordinate clause (*You go by the highway and I'll try the river road*) are called **compound sentences;** those which consist of a main and one or more subordinate clauses (*If you will give me clear instructions, I will get what you want*) are called **complex sentences.** A **compound-complex sentence** has two or more main clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

SUMMARY

Of the two types of sentences — full and minor — the full sentence is the conventional type for expository writing. Minor sentences are more common the more the writing attempts to imitate natural speech, but in most college assignments the use of the minor sentence is reserved for special effects. Structurally, the full sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. The subject may be a single word, a phrase, or a subordinate clause. The predicate may consist of an intransitive verb alone or a transitive verb and its complement. The subject, verb, and complement may each have modifiers.

The key word or phrase in a sentence is the verb. The subject and complement are related to the verb. Modifiers qualify or describe subjects, verbs, complements, or other modifiers. Connectives join elements together. Absolutes are so called because they have no grammatical relation to the rest of the sentence.

A clause is a group of words containing its own subject and verb. A subordinate clause may serve as a subject, complement, or modifier in a sentence. A main clause is an absolute, since it can stand independent of the rest of the sentence. A phrase is a group of words, without subject and verb, constituting a single element in the sentence. Phrases may serve as subjects, verbs, complements, modifiers, and, occasionally, connectives.

EXERCISES

A. In each of the following passages the sentences are numbered. For each passage, copy and hand in to your instructor the numbers of the minor sentences. If any of the minor sentences seem inappropriate to their context, write the word "Inappropriate" opposite the corresponding number.

(1)

(1) You're going to paint that picturesque old barn. (2) All right. (3) One vertical line (better use charcoal) will place the corner of the barn, another line the base. (4) A couple of lines for the trunk of the tree, and maybe a branch or two. (5) Then a line to indicate the horizon—whatever divides the sky from whatever meets it (tree, barn, hill). (6) That's all! (7) No leaves, doorknobs, cats, mice, or daffodils. (8) It's the painting that's fun, and any time wasted in getting into a mess of details is to be deplored. . . .[5]

(2)

(1) This spring my father had to make a very difficult decision. (2) Whether to sell his business and go to California. (3) Or to remain here where all his friends are. (4) He finally decided to go to California. (5) Which pleases me very much.

(3)

(1) And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? (2) And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first.[6]

(4)

(1) If I didn't think about it, maybe the telephone might ring. (2) Sometimes it does that. (3) If I could think of something else. (4) If I could think of something else. (5) Maybe if I counted five hundred by fives, it might ring by that time. (6) I'll count slowly. (7) I won't cheat. (8) And if it rings when I get to three hundred, I won't stop; I won't answer until I get to five hundred. (9) Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, fifty . . . (10) Oh, please ring. (11) Please.[7]

(5)

(1) The army moved into Miami Beach and took over the best hotels. (2) For the officer's candidate school of the air forces.

(6)

(1) No doubt some of the girls I have met would be as glamorous as movie starlets if they dressed as Hollywood coeds do. (2) But, dressed as they are, they seem pretty much like the girls you would expect to see wherever several hundreds of them are brought together. (3) A little more mature, perhaps, than the girls I knew in high school, a bit smoother, and a lot quieter, but still very much the same.

(7)

(1) White is down! (2) Get that over first. (3) Which hand did it? (4) Left or right? (5) No time to think back. (6) You must know in-

[5] From "Get in There and Paint," by Joseph Alger, *Recreation*, November, 1944. Reprinted by permission of *Recreation* and the *Reader's Digest*.

[6] Judges, 20.18.

[7] From "A Telephone Call," by Dorothy Parker in *The Portable Dorothy Parker*. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

Fragmentary Sentence Structure	*Explanation*	*Full Sentence Structure*
He made a point of entering each misspelled word in a notebook. *Which he kept for that purpose.*	*Italicized subordinate clause modifies* notebook *and is not an independent statement.*	He made a point of entering each misspelled word in a notebook which he kept for that purpose.
What he wants to know is. Will you date him?	*Not two sentences, but two parts of one. The question is the complement of the verb* is. *It might be a main clause in another context, but is a subordinate clause here.*	What he wants to know is, will you date him?
I just stood there and looked silly. *Trying desperately to think of a satisfactory excuse.*	*The italicized phrase is not a sentence, but a modifier of* I.	I just stood there and looked silly, trying desperately to think of a satisfactory excuse.
I refused to go to the show. *Because I had been up late last night and needed sleep.*	*The italicized clause explains the refusal and is therefore a modifier of* refused.	Because I had been up late last night and needed sleep, I refused to go to the show.
He is always complaining about his grades. *Although he does nothing to improve them.*	*The italicized clause is a modifier of* is complaining, *not an independent statement.*	He is always complaining about his grades, although he does nothing to improve them.

A study of the revisions at the right will show that such fragmentary sentences may be corrected by incorporating them within the full sentences to which they belong. Usually the simplest revision is merely to eliminate the period between the fragment and the main clause or to reduce it to a comma. Sometimes, as the following alternative revisions show, the fragment itself may be expanded into a full sentence.

I filled out the necessary papers and made a deposit. Then I was assigned to my room.

Will you date him? That is what he wants to know.

I just stood there and looked silly. I was trying desperately to think of a satisfactory excuse.

He is always complaining about his grades. Yet he does nothing to improve them.

c. A Verbal Cannot Substitute for a Verb in a Full Sentence

Verbals are words derived from verbs but acting as subjects, complements, or modifiers (see page 305). The common verbals are infinitives (*to try, to have tried, to give, to be given*) and participles

(*trying, having tried, having been tried*). Unless care is taken, it is easy to confuse participles with verbs, especially past participles, which, in regular verbs, have the same form as the simple past tense. The best test of whether a particular construction is a verb or a participle is to see what it does in the sentence. If it forms the predicate, either with or without a complement, it is a verb. If it acts as a subject, complement, or modifier, it is a participle. Of the illustrations given under b above, the first and fourth contain present participles (*filling, making, trying*) which have been confused with verbs.

In the following, the italicized verbals at the left have been mistaken for verbs. An acceptable revision is shown at the right.

Unacceptable	*Explanation*	*Acceptable*
The Tigers made two runs in the ninth. *Thus tying* the score.	Tying *is not a verb, but a present participle modifying the predicate.*	The Tigers made two runs in the ninth, thus tying the score.
It was difficult to decide which choice to make. *To return* to school or *to accept* the job.	*The italicized infinitives m o d i f y* choice; *therefore they do not act as verbs.*	It was difficult to decide whether to return to school or to accept the job.
I think I would do as I did then. Conditions *remaining* the same.	Remaining *is a present participle modifying* would do.	I think I would do as I did then, if conditions remained the same.
We slept until noon. *Being exhausted* by the long drive.	Being exhausted *is a present participle modifying* we.	Being exhausted by the long drive, we slept until noon.
It was a wonderful week. *Fishing* and *swimming* every day and *dancing* every night.	*The italicized words are present participles. They should either be made into verbs or should serve as complements of another verb.*	. . . We fished and swam every day and danced every night. (or) We went fishing and swimming every day and dancing every night.
He died alone and in poverty. *Deserted* by those who had once sung his praises and borrowed his money.	Deserted *is a past participle acting as a modifier. It has the same form as the simple past tense* (He deserted his wife) *but it does not act as a verb in this sentence.*	He died alone and in poverty, deserted by those who had once sung his praises and borrowed his money.

The revisions at the right show that fragmentary sentences created by confusing a verbal with a verb may be revised by incorporating the verbal phrase with the main clause to which it belongs or by changing the verbal into a verb, thus making two full sentences.

Fragmentary Sentence Structure	*Explanation*	*Full Sentence Structure*
He made a point of entering each misspelled word in a notebook. *Which he kept for that purpose.*	*Italicized subordinate clause modifies* notebook *and is not an independent statement.*	He made a point of entering each misspelled word in a notebook which he kept for that purpose.
What he wants to know is. Will you date him?	*Not two sentences, but two parts of one. The question is the complement of the verb* is. *It might be a main clause in another context, but is a subordinate clause here.*	What he wants to know is, will you date him?
I just stood there and looked silly. *Trying desperately to think of a satisfactory excuse.*	*The italicized phrase is not a sentence, but a modifier of* I.	I just stood there and looked silly, trying desperately to think of a satisfactory excuse.
I refused to go to the show. *Because I had been up late last night and needed sleep.*	*The italicized clause explains the refusal and is therefore a modifier of* refused.	Because I had been up late last night and needed sleep, I refused to go to the show.
He is always complaining about his grades. *Although he does nothing to improve them.*	*The italicized clause is a modifier of* is complaining, *not an independent statement.*	He is always complaining about his grades, although he does nothing to improve them.

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I filled out the necessary papers and made a deposit. Then I was assigned to my room.

Will you date him? That is what he wants to know.

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Verbals are words derived from verbs but acting as subjects, complements, or modifiers (see page 305). The common verbals are infinitives (*to try, to have tried, to give, to be given*) and participles

(*trying, having tried, having been tried*). Unless care is taken, it is easy to confuse participles with verbs, especially past participles, which, in regular verbs, have the same form as the simple past tense. The best test of whether a particular construction is a verb or a participle is to see what it does in the sentence. If it forms the predicate, either with or without a complement, it is a verb. If it acts as a subject, complement, or modifier, it is a participle. Of the illustrations given under b above, the first and fourth contain present participles (*filling, making, trying*) which have been confused with verbs.

In the following, the italicized verbals at the left have been mistaken for verbs. An acceptable revision is shown at the right.

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The Tigers made two runs in the ninth. *Thus tying* the score.	Tying *is not a verb, but a present participle modifying the predicate.*	The Tigers made two runs in the ninth, thus tying the score.
It was difficult to decide which choice to make. *To return* to school or *to accept* the job.	*The italicized infinitives m o d i f y* choice; *therefore they do not act as verbs.*	It was difficult to decide whether to return to school or to accept the job.
I think I would do as I did then. Conditions *remaining* the same.	Remaining *is a present participle modifying* would do.	I think I would do as I did then, if conditions remained the same.
We slept until noon. *Being exhausted* by the long drive.	Being exhausted *is a present participle modifying* we.	Being exhausted by the long drive, we slept until noon.
It was a wonderful week. *Fishing* and *swimming* every day and *dancing* every night.	*The italicized words are present participles. They should either be made into verbs or should serve as complements of another verb.*	. . . We fished and swam every day and danced every night. (or) We went fishing and swimming every day and dancing every night.
He died alone and in poverty. *Deserted* by those who had once sung his praises and borrowed his money.	Deserted *is a past participle acting as a modifier. It has the same form as the simple past tense* (He deserted his wife) *but it does not act as a verb in this sentence.*	He died alone and in poverty, deserted by those who had once sung his praises and borrowed his money.

The revisions at the right show that fragmentary sentences created by confusing a verbal with a verb may be revised by incorporating the verbal phrase with the main clause to which it belongs or by changing the verbal into a verb, thus making two full sentences.

d. The Structure of a Sentence Is Revealed by Its Punctuation

Readers assume that writers will signal the end of a sentence by an end mark of punctuation – a period, a question mark, an exclamation mark. Failure to observe this convention often results in fused sentences and comma splices.

(1) Avoid Fused or Run-on Sentences. When two sentences are run together without any separating punctuation or without an intervening connective, they are said to be fused. Unless these sentences are separated they will create difficult and perhaps confused reading.

Fused Sentences	*Separated Sentences*
I want that boy how I want it.	I want that. Boy, how I want it!
I knocked on the door when the lady came I gave her my most ingratiating smile.	I knocked on the door. When the lady came I gave her my most ingratiating smile.
Why should I apologize when he insulted me he did not apologize.	Why should I apologize? When he insulted me he did not apologize.
It is difficult to believe that he said that what could he have been thinking of?	It is difficult to believe that he said that. What could he have been thinking of?
Why do you ask what concern is it of yours?	Why do you ask? What concern is it of yours?

(2) Avoid Comma Splices. The use of a comma, instead of a period or semicolon, between two full sentences not joined by a connective is called a comma splice – for example: *It's a beautiful day, the park will be crowded.* This use is not uncommon in informal writing, but because it often suggests that the writer was not aware that he was stringing two sentences together, it is unconventional in college writing. And in some sentences it may be confusing (see page 142).

Comma Splices	*Conventional Punctuation*
His chances of election are not good, because the independents do not like him, it would be safer to nominate one of the other candidates.	His chances of election are not good, because the independents do not like him. It would be safer to nominate one of the other candidates.
The game was lost in the third quarter, when our only passer was injured, we had almost no chance to even the score.	The game was lost in the third quarter. When our only passer was injured we had almost no chance to even the score.
This is the best book I have ever read, it kept me up all night.	This is the best book I have ever read. It kept me up all night.

Comma Splices	*Conventional Punctuation*
She says she doesn't like football, I don't think she has seen two games in her whole life.	She says she doesn't like football. I don't think she has seen two games in her whole life.
I admit that he is honest and conscientious, nevertheless, I cannot vote for him.	I admit that he is honest and conscientious; nevertheless, I cannot vote for him.

The use of a comma instead of a semicolon is accepted in informal usage between two short and closely related sentences:

Informal	*Formal*
I passed, Mary doubled.	I passed; Mary doubled.
The women like him, the men don't.	The women like him; the men do not.

e. Sentence Elements Which Are Parallel in Function Should be Kept Parallel

This convention has been discussed in detail in Chapter 7 (see pages 148-150). Essentially, the convention requires that two or more sentence elements joined by connectives should have the same form. Thus a phrase should be followed by a phrase, a clause by a clause, a participle by a participle, and a verb by a verb.

Faulty Parallelism	*Explanation*	*Acceptable Structures*
I like his looks, his manners, and *because he is witty.*	*The sentence consists of subject, verb, and a series of complements. The third complement should be of the same form as the other two — a phrase, not a clause.*	I like his looks, his manners, and *his wit.*
He was not noted for kindness, tolerance, or *to overlook* the faults of others.	*Following* for *is a series of complements. The first two are nouns; the third is an infinitive phrase. All should be in the same form.*	He was not noted for kindness, tolerance, or *a willingness to overlook* the faults of others.
Many of our laws are descended from old Roman laws, but *being changed* to fit our modern needs.	*Before* but *is a main clause; after it is a participial phrase. Remove the* but, *thus removing the need for a parallel sentence; or make the phrase into a main clause.*	Many of our laws are descended from old Roman laws *which have been changed to . . .* (or) Many of our laws are descended from old Roman laws, but *these Roman laws have been changed* to . . .

Faulty Parallelism	*Explanation*	*Acceptable Structures*
Few people understood the full extent of his disappointment or *how angry* he really was.	*Compound complement of* understood. *The first complement is a phrase, the second a subordinate clause. The two should be in parallel form.*	Few people understood the full extent of his disappointment or *the degree of his anger.*
Because he has always been wealthy *and with indulgent parents,* he has never been forced to accept responsibility.	*Compound modifier consists of a subordinate clause and a phrase. Should be two clauses or two phrases.*	Because he has always been wealthy and *has been protected by indulgent parents,* . . . (or) Because of *his wealth* and *his indulgent parents,* . . .

f. Introductory Modifiers Should Not Be Left Dangling

Dangling modifiers are discussed and illustrated in Chapter 7 (see pages 151-152). The convention is that when a sentence opens with a modifying infinitive or participial phrase, there should be some element in the main clause for that phrase clearly to modify. The italicized dangling modifiers at the left are revised to fit the convention at the right:

Dangling Modifiers	*Explanation*	*Acceptable Version*
Walking downtown, a streetcar jumped the track.	*In the absence of anything else to modify,* walking *seems to describe the streetcar.*	*Walking* downtown, *I saw* a streetcar jump the track.
Hitting the line with all his power, the touchdown was finally scored.	*Whom does the introductory phrase describe? It cannot be the touchdown.*	*Hitting* the line with all his power, the *fullback* finally scored the touchdown.
Impressed by the newspaper stories, war seemed inevitable.	*Who was impressed? The phrase needs something to modify.*	*Impressed* by the newspaper stories, *people* felt that war was inevitable.
To qualify for the position, a rigorous examination must be passed.	*The introductory infinitive phrase has been left without anything to modify.*	*To qualify* for the position, *you* must pass a rigorous examination.

Here the dangling modifiers are corrected by rephrasing the main clause so that its subject may be modified by the introductory phrase. It is also possible to change the introductory phrase to a clause:

While I was walking downtown, a streetcar jumped the track.

The fullback hit the line with all his power and finally scored a touchdown.

People were so impressed by the newspaper stories that they felt war was inevitable.

If you wish to qualify for the position you must pass a rigorous examination.

EXERCISES

A. Rewrite the following passages to remove all fragmentary sentences:

In explaining such changes we say that *dived* has tended to become *dove*. By analogy with *drive, drove*. Analogy, therefore, is the pull of one pattern upon another; it is the tendency for different forms to drift into a common pattern. Analogy has always been a powerful force in the language. It is most easily illustrated in the speech of children. When they first begin to talk. Even in the homes of educated parents. Children tend to say *buyed* for *bought, blowed* for *blew, drinked* for *drank,* and *catched* for *caught*. Only slowly do they learn. That such forms are not acceptable in educated speech.

I am answering your advertisement expressing need of experienced draftsmen. Which appeared in a recent issue of the *Toledo Blade*. I should like to apply for one of these positions. And submit the following credentials.

B. Copy and return to your instructor the following sentences. Distinguish between verbs and verbals by underlining all verbs once and all verbals twice.

1. Swimming is fun. I would like to swim well. I was swimming yesterday. My brother has been swimming since he was four.
2. They say that a rolling stone gathers no moss; they could just as truthfully say that a stone that is rolling isn't gathering anything but momentum.
3. It is easier to win a letter in college than to receive a Phi Beta Kappa key. That is a point worth remembering when we are tempted to make fun of serious students.
4. The statement that a watched kettle never boils is not true. Water in a kettle boils just as quickly watched or unwatched. But you are more conscious of time when you are watching the kettle and therefore the time seems to be longer.
5. I am tired of having to be told what I may and may not do. My parents seem to have forgotten how they resented too much supervision when they were my age.
6. Discouraged by his grades, he was thinking of quitting school. But the dean persuaded him to revise his habits of studying and finish the semester before making a decision.

7. Leave him alone! Let him do it his own way. He has to learn some day to discover his own mistakes and correct them, and he might as well make a beginning now.

8. Having tried everything to get good grades without studying, we reluctantly decided to give that method a try.

9. Weakened by hunger and exposure the old couple were in serious condition.

10. He said nothing would interfere with his ambitions, but he has found that it is easier to profess ambitions than to achieve them.

C. Revise the punctuation of the following sentences so as to remove the fused sentences and the comma splices:

1. He just received a wire that his mother is in the hospital, she is recuperating from an operation.

2. I will not object on the other hand, don't expect me to contribute.

3. It could have been anyone I know no way of finding out who did it.

4. It will cost a great deal of money, there is no guarantee that the plan will succeed at best it remains a considerable gamble.

5. There is still plenty of opportunity in this country, if a young man really cares about building a career, his chances of success are as good today as ever they were.

6. At Roosevelt's death Truman succeeded to the Presidency without any real executive experience, without previous training, and without a unified party to direct him, he was called on to fill the most exacting job in the world.

7. The difficulties are great but not insuperable, although the answer is not in sight, it can be obtained by patient and persistent work.

8. The first couple of years will be difficult after that much of the work will be routine.

9. The Northern Pike is the gamest fish in these waters pound for pound he will outfight a musky every time.

10. I wrote to mother when she answered I knew that the story had been exaggerated, since then I have learned that the newspaper printed a retraction.

D. Rewrite the following sentences to revise the faulty parallelism.

1. We knew that he was lying, but being unable to prove it because of lack of evidence.

2. In his radio talk he said he was opposed to OPA because it had not held down prices, because it had stifled production, and for the reason that it was no longer necessary.

3. For a settlement I will accept either twelve new blinds or having the old ones perfectly repaired.

4. She is inclined to be giggly and always embarrassing her escort.

5. My two ambitions are to have my own business, thus being my own boss, and having enough money to provide my children with a good home and education.

6. There is no happy ending such as occurs in most novels, but rather how people that sin usually do not have a happy life as they grow older.

7. These discoveries may have been thought of back in the seventeenth century and being used now.

8. A recent shipment consisting of Venetian blinds was found damaged and for which some adjustment should be made.

9. He continued his work, without hope, without pleasure, and having no assurance that people would understand the significance of what he was trying to do.

10. For the sake of your parents, your friends, and in the interests of your future, I hope you will reject the offer.

E. Revise the following sentences so as to remove the dangling modifiers:

1. After making the speech, tea was served.

2. Knowing how particular Aunt Kate was about these things, the letter was answered immediately.

3. Thrilled by the opportunities that the new job offered, marriage began to seem possible.

4. In order not to disturb those who were sleeping, the lights were turned off.

5. By getting your purpose clearly in mind at the beginning, the actual writing will be easier.

6. Without any expectation of getting a reply, a letter was written to the President.

7. Understanding how sensitive he was about his trouble, no mention was made of it.

8. With no intention of sinking good money in such a hair-brained scheme, dad's refusal was anything but polite.

9. Having done everything that could be thought of, and having no hope of finding a satisfactory solution, the project was finally abandoned.

10. After all that rush to get to the station on time, it was announced that the train would be an hour late.

REVIEW EXERCISE

Revise the following sentences to make them conventionally acceptable:

1. The judge said that the court was not inclined to show mercy. This being the third time he had been convicted of that offense.

2. This school had an attendance of 1500 students, this includes night school.

3. The author of such books or magazine articles writes to appeal to the general public, not a select few.

4. The sheriff's office is not willing to carry out the rulings of the court even though the evictions are legal they are afraid of public sympathy with the tenants.

5. The water beneath the dock has a tendency to lift the floor up and which is called the hydrostatic uplift.

6. Although the mere frankness of his statements makes it difficult to conceive that we are actually living in such a world.

7. The panel is left in the jig for sixteen hours so that it will be sufficiently dry and hardened.

8. As a cub reporter, eager to learn his trade, every opportunity of learning from older newspapermen was fully exploited.

9. Somewhat of the same procedure is used in the running of wind sprints as was used in the long runs. Twenty minutes of exercises, two warm-up turns about a quarter-mile track, followed by several fast sprints of 220 yards.

10. After all the plans and preparations we had made, and after all the expectations we had, it was agreed that the party had been pretty much of a dud.

11. In learning to fly the Piper Cub, there is no stick and rudder precision timing needed.

12. Do you believe that children should never be spanked, or do you think that moderate spanking helps them to develop self-discipline, this is a question on which most parents disagree.

13. Informative lectures bore me, when information is available in books, I would rather read it than listen to it.

14. During all these years when he had scarcely enough money to pay the rent of a shabby little room and buy the simplest of food, there was no feeling that life was hard or that his parents ought to support him.

15. The technique of the Communists was to publicize every act of oppression and intolerance and at the same time assuring minority groups that the Communists were concerned about their plight. Thus exaggerating the failures of democracy and implying that communism was a philosophy of brotherly love.

16. Completely unaware that the landing gear had been injured and that a crash landing at the end of the flight was inevitable, the plane, with its carefree passengers, sailed confidently through the night.

17. There is no adequate denial against such a lie for the more you insist your words are being misrepresented the more you admit having uttered them.

18. Because of its involved forms for case and gender and its queer script, German is a difficult language to learn for most students it is the most difficult language in college.

19. The student of English grammar should recognize that there is likely to be some shuttling about between regular and irregular principal parts. That principal parts which were unacceptable a generation ago may have become established usage. While forms which were previously acceptable have passed out of fashion.

20. His attitude toward society was harsh, cynical, and in constant hostility.

B. THE FORMS OF VERBS

The various inflectional forms of the verb are summarized on pages 296-301). The discussion that follows is restricted to the most troublesome conventions governing the use of verb forms.

a. Use the Accepted Principal Part

Since the use of the wrong principal part (*blowed* for *blew* or *seen* for *saw*) is often an advertisement of nonstandard speech habits, failure to use the accepted verb forms is regarded as a serious error in college writing. As pointed out on page 296, the great majority of English verbs form the past tense and past participle by adding *-ed* or *-d* to the first principal part. The following list contains the principal parts of a number of irregular verbs. Forms enclosed in parentheses are accepted variants. Verbs like *build, cleave,* and *dig,* which have two sets of principal parts – one regular, the other irregular – are not included in this list.

Present	*Past*	*Past Participle*
abide	abode	abode
am, is, are	was, were	been
arise	arose	arisen
bear	bore	borne
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bereave	bereft	bereft
bet	bet	bet
bid	bade (bid)	bidden (bid)
bind	bound	bound
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
breed	bred	bred
bring	brought	brought
buy	bought	bought
cast	cast	cast
cost	cost	cost
choose	chose	chosen
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
creep	crept	crept
cut	cut	cut

Present	*Past*	*Past Participle*
deal	dealt	dealt
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fling	flung	flung
fly	flew	flown
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got (gotten)
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground
grow	grew	grown
have	had	had
hang[1]	hung	hung
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden (hid)
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
put	put	put
read	read	read
rend	rent	rent
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang (rung)	rung
run	ran	run

[1] Notice that the verb *to hang*, meaning execute, is regular: *hang, hanged, hanged.*

Present	*Past*	*Past Participle*
rise	rose	risen
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
shed	shed	shed
shine[2]	shone	shone
shoe	shod	shod
shoot	shot	shot
shrink	shrank (shrunk)	shrunk
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang (sung)	sung
sink	sank (sunk)	sunk
sit	sat	sat
slay	slew	slain
slide	slid	slid (slidden)
sling	slung	slung
slink	slunk	slunk
smite	smote	smitten
speak	spoke	spoken
speed	sped	sped
spend	spent	spent
spin	spun	spun
spit	spat (spit)	spat (spit)
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang (sprung)	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
sting	stung	stung
stink	stank (stunk)	stunk
stride	strode	stridden
strike	struck	struck
string	strung	strung
strive	strove	striven
swear	swore	sworn
sweep	swept	swept
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn

[2] When used in the sense of *to cause to shine* the principal parts of this verb are regular. The regular and irregular parts, however, cannot always be used interchangeably.

Present	*Past*	*Past Participle*
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
thrust	thrust	thrust
tread	trod	trodden (trod)
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
weep	wept	wept
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

b. Distinguish Between the Forms for the Past Tense and the Past Participle.

In verb phrases the past participle, not the past tense form, should follow an auxiliary verb (is *done,* has *been,* was *broken*). Except when the verb is acting as an auxiliary (*had* gone, *was* crying), the past tense form is not used in combination with another verb.

Confusion of Forms	*Conventional Forms*
It is *broke.*	It is *broken.*
These tires are *wore* out.	These tires are *worn* out.
He has *began* all over again.	He has *begun* all over again.
I *seen* him do it.	I *saw* him do it.
The river is *froze* solid.	The river is *frozen* solid.
Everybody has *went* home.	Everybody has *gone* home.
Have you *wrote* to him?	Have you *written* to him?
They *come* back yesterday.	They *came* back yesterday.

c. Distinguish Between the Uses and Forms of *Lie, Lay, Rise, Raise, Sit, Set*

The principal parts of the verbs are:

Present	*Present Participle*	*Past*	*Past Participle*
lie	lying	lay	lain
lay	laying	laid	laid
rise	rising	rose	risen
raise	raising	raised	raised
sit	sitting	sat	sat
set	setting	set	set

Grouped as they are above, these verbs can be seen as three pairs, each pair having principal parts which are similar, though not the same, in form and general meaning. The basic difference within each pair is that the first member is intransitive, the second transitive; that is, the first member is a complete predicate, the second needs a complement.[3] Thus, whether we *lay* a rug, *raise* an alarm, or *set* a bone, we always *lay, raise,* or *set something.* But we never *lie, rise,* or *sit* anything. Determining the accepted form, therefore, depends on the answers to two questions: (1) Does the sentence require the transitive or the intransitive verb? (2) What are the principal parts of the required verb?

In the examples that follow, the unacceptable forms at the left are revised at the right.

Unacceptable	*Explanation*	*Accepted*
We *laid* breathless with suspense.	*The sentence contains no complement; therefore the intransitive verb is wanted. The past form of* lie *is* lay.	We *lay* breathless with suspense.
It was *setting* on the table.	*No complement; therefore intransitive form* sitting *is required.*	It was *sitting* on the table.
They have *lain* the carpet.	Carpet *is a complement; therefore transitive* laid *is required.*	They have *laid* the carpet.
It has been *laying* there all night.	*No complement; therefore intransitive* lying *is required.*	It has been *lying* there all night.
After a while he *raised* up and walked to the bench.	*No complement. Intransitive* rose *is required. But by providing a reflexive pronoun as a complement the transitive* raised *could be used.*	After a while he *rose* and walked to the bench. (or) After a while he *raised himself* and walked to the bench.

d. Use the Tense Forms Appropriate to Your Purpose

(1) Distinguish Between the Conventional Uses of Different Tenses. Although English employs various idiomatic uses of verbs and verbals to indicate time (see page 298), the following generalizations hold true for the uses of common tenses:

Simple Present. The chief uses of the simple present tense are to indicate present action, action which occurs at all times (the timeless present), and action which occurred in the past but which, for dramatic purposes, is described as occurring in the present (historical present).

[3] Notice that *The sun sets early now* is an exception to this generalization. In this sentence *sets* is used intransitively.

Present time:

Bill *is* absent; his father *is* ill.

Timeless present:

The rain *falls* alike on the just and the unjust.
Nature *abhors* a vacuum.
The sum of the angles in a triangle *equals* 180 degrees.

Historical present:

Finally, Caesar *makes* his decision. He *gives* the order, and his troops *begin* the fateful march to the Rubicon.

Present Perfect. The present perfect tense indicates that the action has recently been completed.

She *has broken* her engagement.
They *have built* a new house.
He *has moved* to New York.

Simple Past. The simple past tense is used to indicate an action which may have occurred at any time in the past. It therefore is not so close to the present as is the present perfect.

She *broke* her engagement.
They *built* a new house.
He *moved* to New York.

Notice that the use of an adverb of time along with the simple past tense achieves the same effect as the use of the present perfect:

She broke her engagement yesterday.
They recently built a new house.

Past Perfect. The past perfect is used to indicate that, of two actions occurring in the past, one took place before the other.

He *had been* sick only a few days before he died.
I *had left* before she arrived.
We *had expected* little, but we received nothing.

Simple Future. The simple future is used to indicate an action still to occur.

He *will sail* tomorrow.
They *will try* to persuade you.

Future Perfect. The future perfect is used to indicate that, of two future actions, one will occur before the other.

By the time you get there they *will have gone.*
He *will have spent* all his allowance by the end of the week.

Verbals. The tense of a verbal is not determined by the tense of the verb in the main clause. Regardless of the tense of the verb, a present participle is used to express an action occurring at the same time as that of the verb. A perfect participle expresses time prior to that of the verb. A present infinitive indicates the same time or a time later than that of the verb. A perfect infinitive suggests time prior to that of the verb.

Rounding the last turn he *was* ahead by two yards.	The present participle (*Rounding*) and the past tense verb refer to simultaneous actions.
Having finished housecleaning she *washed* her hair.	The perfect participle (*having finished*) refers to an action prior to that of the verb (*washed*).
I *tried to telephone* you.	The verb (*tried*) and the present infinitive (*to telephone*) refer to actions occurring at the same time.
I *expect to hear* from him tomorrow.	The expectation is now; the hearing has yet to occur. Therefore the present infinitive refers to a time later than that of the verb.
They *are reported to have adopted* a child.	The perfect infinitive points to a time prior to the reporting.

(2) Avoid an Illogical Sequence of Tenses

(a) Within a Unit of Writing, Keep the Tenses of All Main Clauses Consistent.

Do not shift needlessly from present to past or from the historical present to the simple past tense:

Inconsistent	*Consistent*
When she *laughed* I *ask* her, "What do you know about it?" She *laughs* again and *said,* "Wouldn't you like to know?"	When she laughed I *asked* her, "What do you know about it?" She *laughed* again and said, "Wouldn't you like to know?"
The eleventh round was the best of the fight. Walcott followed his usual tactics. He danced and jabbed and kept away from that right. Then Louis *finds* an opening—and Bam! The fight *is* over.	The eleventh round was the best of the fight. Walcott followed his usual tactics. He danced and jabbed and kept away from that right. Then Louis *found* an opening—and, Bam! The fight *was* over.

(b) Keep the Tense of a Subordinate Clause in Logical Sequence with that of the Main Clause.

Illogical Sequence	*Explanation*	*Logical Sequence*
They *have made* so much money last year that they bought a second store.	*Since the present perfect* (have made) *suggests a more recent action than the simple past* (bought), *it is illogical to use the present perfect for the earlier of the two actions.*	They *made* so much money last year that they *have bought* a second store.
Before I was introduced to her I *heard* rumors of her unsavory reputation.	*Since the rumors came before the introduction, the past perfect tense should be used in the main clause.*	Before I was introduced to her I *had heard* rumors of her unsavory reputation.
I said that he *is* a good financial risk.	*In indirect discourse, the verb in the subordinate clause should agree as much as possible with the verb of the main clause. But a change in tense may be necessary in direct quotation.*	I said that he *was* a good financial risk. (But) I said, "He *is* a good financial risk."
I asked if he *consulted* his physician.	*The past perfect is required to show that the consultation occurred before the asking. In direct discourse* consult *would go in the present perfect.*	I asked if he *had consulted* his physician. (But) I asked, "*Have* you *consulted* your physician?"

(c) Observe the Conventional Tense Relationships Between Verbs and Verbals.

Asking the blessing, we began to eat.	*Since the blessing was asked before the eating began, the perfect participle is required.*	*Having asked* the blessing, we began to eat.
Having faced the spectators, the referee signalled a holding penalty.	*Since both actions took place at the same time, the present participle is required.*	*Facing* the spectators, the referee signalled a holding penalty.
We meant *to have told* you earlier.	*The perfect infinitive suggests that the telling occurred before the intention. The present infinitive is the required form.*	We meant *to tell* you earlier.
I am sorry *to overlook* that fact.	*Since the overlooking occurred before the regret, the perfect infinitive should be used.*	I am sorry *to have overlooked* that fact.

e. When Usage Requires It, Distinguish Between Indicative and Subjunctive Forms

The chief uses of the subjunctive in college writing are to express a condition contrary to fact and to state a motion or resolution. The

verb most commonly used in the subjunctive is the verb *to be.* For its subjunctive forms and for other uses of the subjunctive, see page 300.

In the following examples the italicized verbs are in the subjunctive mood. The first three sentences contain contrary-to-fact conditional clauses; the last two report parliamentary proceedings:

If I *were* his father, I would cut his allowance.

If he *were* wealthy, such extravagance would be less serious.

If it *were* not for the principle involved, I might agree.

I move that a committee *be appointed* to investigate the question.

The motion is, that the word "man" *be stricken* out and the word "person" *be substituted.*

f. In a Formal Style, Substitute *Shall* for *Will* as the Auxiliary Verb Under the Following Conditions

(1) When the verb is intended to express determination, emphasis, or command as well as future action:

They shall not pass.

We shall never agree to such a proposal.

You shall do as you are told.

(2) In asking a question in the future tense:

Where shall we go for our vacation?

Shall he be told of the accident?

Shall this announcement be made public?

(3) In place of *will* in the first person singular and plural of the future tenses.

We shall be expecting you next week.

I shall be disappointed if these figures are inaccurate.

In informal usage, and often in formal usage, *will* is used instead of *shall* in such sentences. See note, page 299.

g. Distinguish Between the Specialized Uses of *Should* and *Would*

(1) *Should* is used:

(*a*) To express a sense of obligation or necessity, in statements in which *ought to* might be used.

The two sides of the equation *should* balance.

The answer *should* be 3.712.

You *should* hear from me in a day or two.

I really *should* call on her.

I am sorry; I *should* have known better

(*b*) In a subordinate clause expressing a supposition.

Should he be there, will you stay?
If I *should* be late, will you wait for me?
If they *should* miss that train, will they be able to get a later one?

(*c*) In a formal style, as a substitute for *would* in the first person singular and plural.

I *should* like to request an extension of time.
We *should* be happy to welcome him into the family.

Again, as we saw with respect to *shall* and *will*, *would* is generally used in an informal style, and is frequently used even in a formal style.

(2) *Would* is used:

(*a*) To express customary action in the past.

I *would* be paid regularly on the first of each month.
During that time he *would* see her about twice a week.

(*b*) As a synonym for "were willing."

We could do it, if we *would*.
Oh, if he only *would*.
If they *would* do that, it would help us greatly.

h. Avoid the Overuse of the Auxiliary *Would*

In the following examples the overuse of *would* at the left has been revised at the right:

Awkward	*Revised*
If they *would have done* that earlier, there would have been no trouble.	If they *had done* that earlier, there would have been no trouble.
It would be a great deal easier to prevent strikes if both sides *would look* at the dispute through neutral eyes.	It would be a great deal easier to prevent strikes if both sides *looked* at the dispute through neutral eyes.
We would want some assurance that they *would* accept before we *would make* such a proposal.	We would want some assurance of *their acceptance* before we *made* such a proposal.
I would apologize if she *would admit* that she also was wrong.	I would apologize if she *were willing to admit* that she also was wrong.

EXERCISES

A. Write out and hand in to your instructor the conventional verb form in each of the following sentences:

1. They said they had (went, gone) home.
2. I was told that you had (come, came) to an agreement.
3. Prices have (fell, fallen) considerably.
4. As soon as I had (wrote, written) the letter I mailed it.
5. They must (choose, chose) their own way.
6. I (seen, saw) him yesterday.
7. Dodds has (run, ran) the mile under 4.09.
8. One of the prisoners was (hung, hanged).
9. That is the best horse I have ever (rode, ridden).
10. She is reported to have (drunk, drank) poison.
11. The wind (blew, blowed) all night.
12. I would have (swore, sworn) that he was innocent.
13. This is the third time he has (broken, broke) that arm.
14. All the tomato plants were badly (froze, frozen).
15. I would have called if I had (knew, known) you were sick.
16. I have never (saw, seen) anything so vicious.
17. After a while we (begun, began) to get tired.
18. It was a good fight. He was (beaten, beat) fairly.
19. You should do as you are (bid, bidden).
20. The plane has (flew, flown) out of sight.

B. Write out and hand in to your instructor the conventional verb form in each of the following sentences:

1. They were (sitting, setting) the chairs in a circle.
2. The hat was (lying, laying) in the corner.
3. We (lay, laid) the money on the counter and left.
4. We (lay, laid) on the pier and dozed.
5. I have (laid, lain) out your new suit.
6. I should like you to (rise, raise) my wages.
7. Go out and (rise, raise) the flag.
8. Finally, the curtain (raised, rose).
9. They (raised, rose) the curtain promptly.
10. I could (sit, set) here all day.
11. It was (sitting, setting) there a minute ago.
12. (Sit, set) down and rest for a while.
13. (Sit, set) the book on the table.
14. These tools have been left (lying, laying) in the rain.
15. They were (laying, lying) in wait for us.
16. He (raised, rose) himself on his elbow.
17. (Sit, set) up and take this.
18. She has (laid, lain) down for a rest.
19. Clothes were (lying, laying) all over the room.
20. He is out (rising, raising) the money.

C. Revise the following sentences to correct any illogical sequence of tenses:

1. There is little chance of promotion in that job unless you had a college degree.
2. While the outlook wasn't hopeless, it is discouraging.
3. We wanted to have reported the robbery earlier, but we thought we had better wait until we are sure.
4. Before I arrived they had a serious quarrel.
5. I asked if she has seen him recently.
6. She answered, "I had not seen him for more than a year."
7. We wondered what they are thinking now.
8. Finishing the job, he put away his tools.
9. For years now they had been good friends but they disagree more and more frequently.
10. He asked if I consider him a good teacher.
11. I said that I thought he is better than average.
12. Meeting Bill's wife I have asked her when he would be home.
13. She said that he had been coming next Saturday.
14. I intended to have ignored the gossip, but I could not.
15. They sat up all night studying, having hoped to get at least a B on the final examination.
16. They have worked so hard on the farm that they lost weight.
17. Before I heard her story I thought she was the first to give offense.
18. Committing himself to this extent, John could not be indifferent about the trial.
19. I asked if she bought the car she had been talking about.
20. I would have liked to have seen that movie.

D. Write out and hand in to your instructor the form in parentheses which would be preferred in a formal style:

1. When we were children they (would, should) be at our house most of the time.
2. If I (was, were) in your plight I (should, would) talk to my father.
3. (Shall, will) we ask them to accompany us?
4. If this (is, be) treason, make the most of it.
5. It would be a relief if they (would be, were) pleasant for a change.
6. I move that the committee (goes, go) on record as approving the report.
7. Nevertheless, if it (be, is) possible, let this cup pass from me.
8. We (will, shall) not tolerate such negligence.
9. You (will, shall) be very happy together.
10. Had I thought about it, I (would, should) have known that you were right.
11. If I (would, should) have difficulty, will you help me?
12. If you (would, should) do it, I should be very grateful.
13. If they (would have, had) come, the family would have been complete.

14. I would go with her if I (would feel, felt) I was welcome.
15. (Was, were) there any alternative, I (should, would) refuse.
16. I think that you (would, should) know within a week.
17. All branch offices (will, shall) follow this procedure.
18. It (would, should) be awkward if they (would, were to) refuse.
19. If he (was, were) older I might be less tolerant.
20. I (would, should) like to invite your cooperation.

C. CASE

It has already been shown (pages 292-293) that the complex inflections for case that existed in Old English have been greatly simplified. We have seen that, except when they are used as possessive modifiers, English nouns have no case endings and that, therefore, the study of case is essentially a study of the conventional uses of a small number of pronoun forms.

a. The Case of a Pronoun Is Determined by Its Function in Its Own Clause.

Thus if a pronoun serves as a subject in its own clause, it takes the subjective case; if it serves as an object, it takes the objective case; if it serves as a modifier, it takes the possessive case. There are two modifications of this practice: (1) a pronoun subject of an infinitive takes the objective case (I want *him to see* it); and (2) the complement of the verb *to be* takes the subjective case in formal writing (It was not *I* who said that).

The general convention stated above may be broken down as follows:

Pronouns take the subjective case when:

1. They are subjects of verbs (*I think* that *he missed*).
2. They are in apposition with subjects (Three men – Fred, Roy and *I* – were elected delegates).
3. They are complements of the verb *to be* (I am sure it *was he*).

Pronouns take the objective case when:

1. They are objects of verbs (Mother *likes her*).
2. They are objects of prepositions (They pointed *at me*).
3. They are in apposition with objects (They gave *us* – Dave and *me* – the money).
4. They are subjects of infinitives (I want *her to be* there).

Pronouns take the possessive case when:

1. They modify a noun or a pronoun (Those *are* my six *children;* this is *his one*).

2. They precede and modify a gerund (What's wrong with *his swimming*? *His winning* was a surprise).

As these examples show, a gerund is a participle used as a subject or complement.

The following sentences illustrate the general convention that the case of a pronoun is determined by its function in its own clause:

Please don't misunderstand *me*. (Objective case, object of *don't misunderstand.*)

Try to be nice to *her*. (Objective case, object of preposition *to.*)

I asked *him* to write. (Objective case, subject of infinitive *to write.*)

Find out *who* did it. (Subjective case, subject of *did.*)

Whoever wrote that was a genius. (Subjective case, subject of *wrote.*)

Tell *whoever* will listen. (Subjective case, subject of *will listen.*)

I wish it were *he*. (Subjective case, complement of *were.*)

I like *his* dancing. (Possessive case, modifier of gerund *dancing.*)

We can't stop *his* drinking. (Possessive case, modifier of gerund *drinking.*)

The terrible thing is *his* having lost all that money. (Possessive case, modifier of gerund *having lost.*)

His hopes are shattered. (Possessive case, modifier of noun *hopes.*)

He whom I love is dead. (He, subject of *is dead; I,* subject of *love; whom,* object of *love.*)

b. Most Errors in Choice of Case in College Writing Occur in a Relatively Few Constructions.

In general, such errors occur for two reasons: (1) because the construction is such that the student does not clearly see what function the pronoun is performing; and (2) because the case which is inappropriate in writing is so frequently used in speech that the colloquial form seems more natural than the formal one. Often these two reasons merge into one. That is, the construction requires more deliberate analysis than speakers are willing to give it and therefore begets a colloquial usage which competes with the formal usage.

The following constructions create most of the "case" troubles in college composition:

(1) *Parenthetical Constructions.* Any construction which interrupts the normal pattern of a clause is likely to obscure the function of a pronoun in that clause. In the following sentence it is quite clear that *who* is the subject of *won* and therefore takes the subjective case:

That is the man *who* won the prize.

But if we introduce a parenthetical clause – *they say* – into the original sentence, the function of *who* becomes less clear:

That is the man who they say won the prize.

There is now a tendency to assume that *who* is the object of *say* and to put it in the objective case. Grammatically its function has not changed. The parenthetical clause is an absolute and has no grammatical relationship to any element in the sentence. Yet the faulty analysis suggested by the interrupting construction often leads to the selection of the wrong case form.

In the following sentences, the parenthetical constructions have resulted in the choice of the wrong case forms at the left.

Wrong Case	*Explanation*	*Correct Case*
The man *whom* they think did it has been arrested.	*Pronoun is subject of* did *and should be subjective.*	The man *who* they think did it has been arrested.
A girl *whom* I hear is her sister is being sought.	*Pronoun is subject of* is *and should be subjective.*	A girl *who* I hear is her sister is being sought.
She introduced me to a man *whom* she said was her employer.	*Pronoun is subject of* was *and should be subjective.*	She introduced me to a man *who* she said was her employer.
He is the general *whom* the reporters agree was most popular with the troops.	*Pronoun is subject of* was *and should be subjective.*	He is the general *who* the reporters agree was most popular with the troops.

As these contrasted forms show, *a parenthetical construction coming between a pronoun subject and its verb does not change the function of the pronoun and therefore does not affect its case.*

(2) *Misleading word order.* Any change in word order which makes the function of a pronoun less clear may result in the choice of the wrong case. For example, the italicized pronouns at the left below have been interpreted as subjects because they have been put at the beginning of their sentences – in "subject territory." As the revised versions show, the first three pronouns are objects of prepositions and the last three are objects of verbs.

Case confused by word order	*Revised*
Who are you pointing to?	To *whom* are you pointing?
Who is he waiting for?	For *whom* is he waiting?
Who are you looking at?	At *whom* are you looking?
Who are you inviting?	*Whom* are you inviting?
Who did she marry?	*Whom* did she marry?
Who is he calling?	*Whom* is he calling?

It should be noticed that although the case forms at the left ignore the general rule and are not acceptable in formal writing, they have won acceptance as colloquial usage. Their use, therefore, would be appropriate if the style of the writing justified colloquialisms.

(3) Whoever *and* whomever. These two pronouns follow the general rule that the case of a pronoun is determined by its function in its own clause, but because they often follow a transitive verb or the preposition *to,* they are often erroneously interpreted as objects.

Confused	*Explanation*	*Revised*
Give it to *whomever* wants it.	*Pronoun is subject of* wants; *its whole clause is the object of* to.	Give it to *whoever* wants it.
Invite *whomever* will come.	*Pronoun is subject of* will come; *whole clause is object of* invite.	Invite *whoever* will come.
Send it to *whomever* you think would like it.	*Pronoun is subject of* would like. *The preposition* to *and the absolute* you think *do not affect its case.*	Send it to *whoever* you think would like it.

(4) *Comparative with* than *or* as. The case of a pronoun following *than* or *as* in a comparison often causes difficulty. Such comparisons as

He is at least ten years older than *she.*
I am about twenty pounds lighter than *he.*
The judge liked us better than *them.*

are considered as contracted statements which in full would be

He is at least ten years older than *she is.*
I am about twenty pounds lighter than *he is.*
The judge liked us better than *he liked them.*

Than and *as* are connectives joining two clauses, and the pronouns are the subjects of the italicized clauses. The convention is that the pronoun in the contracted comparison takes the case it would have if the comparison were fully expanded. That is, it takes the subjective case if it is the subject of the unexpressed verb, and the objective case if it is the object of that verb.

There is often a conflict between colloquial and formal usage in such constructions. In colloquial usage, *than* and *as* tend to be interpreted as prepositions, and the pronouns are often in the objective case even when they are actually subjects. Unless the assignment permits a colloquial style, the more formal usage is required in college writing.

(5) *Possessive with a gerund.* We have already seen (page 336) that a pronoun preceding and modifying a gerund takes the possessive case (I am opposed to *his going*). In a formal style, a noun modifying a gerund also takes the possessive case (Imagine *John's saying* that!). The fact that colloquial usage usually ignores this convention and puts the modifier in the objective case (I am opposed to *him* going. Imagine *John* saying that!) has influenced both speech and informal writing. For this reason many students find the formal convention troublesome.

The following sentences further illustrate the use of the possessive case when a noun or a pronoun modifies a gerund:

There is really no excuse for *his failing* the course.
I resent *David's trying* to influence her.
We are embarrassed by *their* continual *begging*.
They object to *my having dated* you.
Mary's interrupting annoys him.
Their believing that doesn't surprise me.

In observing this convention it is necessary to distinguish between a participle used as a gerund and one used as a modifier. For example, in *Can you imagine him kissing a girl?* the event to be imagined is *him* in the act of *kissing* a girl. In such a sentence *him* is considered the object of the verb, and *kissing* a modifier of that object. This distinction, it must be admitted, is often a subtle one. The following contrast may illustrate it:

Participle as a Modifier	*Participle as a Gerund*
It was painful to see him *weeping*.	*Her* weeping is a triumph of art over nature.
We found him *sleeping*.	He gave up Sunday-morning golf because it interfered with *his* sleeping.
I want to see him *killing* the hog.	*His* killing that hog was a slick job of butchering.
You will see them *working* till all hours of the night.	We must put a stop to *their* working till all hours of the night.

(6) *The complement of* to be. In formal usage, the complement of the verb *to be* takes the subjective case – It is *I*. That is *she*.

In colloquial usage, however, the objective case is more common in statements beginning with an expletive or a demonstrative –It's *me*. That's *her*.

The choice between *It is I* and *It's me* is not a choice between standard and nonstandard usage, but between formal and colloquial styles. Since college composition is not usually colloquial, the more formal usage is generally more appropriate, and the need for making this choice arises chiefly in the writing of dialogue. Here the decision should depend on whether formal or colloquial usage is more appropriate to the character of the person speaking.

EXERCISES

A. Test your knowledge of the conventions governing the selection of case forms by scoring the following statements true (T) or false (F) in the space at the left. The correct answers may be obtained from the preceding pages after you have taken the test. In computing your score, start with a given score of ten and subtract two points for each wrong answer and one point for each sentence not answered.

....1. A pronoun acting as the subject of a verb takes the subjective case.

....2. The subject of an infinitive takes the subjective case.

....3. A pronoun modifying a gerund takes the objective case.

....4. A parenthetical construction coming between a pronoun subject and its verb requires the pronoun to take the objective case.

....5. In formal usage, the complement of the verb *to be* takes the objective case.

....6. In colloquial usage, the complement of the verb *to be* usually takes the objective case.

....7. In formal usage, an interrogative pronoun placed at the beginning of the sentence takes the subjective case.

....8. In informal usage, an interrogative pronoun placed at the beginning of a sentence usually takes the subjective case.

....9. After *than* or *as* in comparisons, the pronoun takes the subjective case.

...10. The object of an infinitive goes in the objective case.

B. In the following sentences some of the italicized case forms are conventionally acceptable in college writing and some are not. Write out and turn in to your instructor a report on the acceptability of each form. If the acceptable case has been used, merely write the word "Acceptable" opposite the number of the sentence. If the wrong form has been used, write the acceptable form opposite the number of the sentence and justify your revision. If the form depends on the style, assume that the style is formal.

1. Between you and *I*, his policies are going to cause trouble.
2. *Who* do you think you're talking to?
3. We took Mary and *her* to the show.
4. I think I'm a little older than *him*.
5. There is a girl *whom* I admire.
6. Was it really for mother and *I*?
7. *Whoever* wants this may have it.
8. Tell it to *whoever* will listen.
9. *Whoever* you are, come out!
10. I shall marry *whoever* I please.
11. We can play as well as *they*.
12. We can play better than *they*.
13. She wants you and *I* to get married.
14. Helen, *who* I dislike, is coming with her.
15. I am as much to blame as *her*.
16. All the men went fishing, *him* along with the others.
17. A group of *we* girls are planning a dance.
18. *Whom* can you imagine did such a thing?
19. Can you imitate *his* singing?
20. *His* refusing our offer was a serious disappointment.
21. I would like to catch *him* doing that.
22. Select *whoever* you wish.
23. I want *him* to be notified.
24. He means *us* two, you and *I*.
25. We were all relieved by *him* leaving early.
26. They asked the Johnsons as well as *we* to come.
27. *Who* is she engaged to now?
28. No one believed it was *me* who called
29. The instructor was disappointed at *us* doing so badly.
30. He was the kind of man *whom* everybody said would have made a fine minister.
31. Communism does not appeal to *we* Americans.
32. She does not care *who* she gets the money from.
33. That was the last of *me* running for office.
34. Let's keep this a secret between you and *I*.
35. I don't know whether I can do it as well as *him*.
36. There are few men more capable than *him*.
37. We had trouble finding out *whom* the thief was.
38. Had it not been for *her*, they would have quarreled.
39. The prize should go to *whomever* has the highest score.
40. That is the man *whom* they say used to be married to her.

C. Rewrite the following selection so as to revise the case forms which would be unacceptable in college writing:

When Dude Nissen turned down the nomination there was nothing for we sophomores to do but find someone who we could count on to represent our interests and who the sorority girls would vote for. Ted Newsome seemed to be our best bet. He was a good speaker, and we had no

doubts about him attending meetings regularly or about his following our advice. It was generally agreed that it was him who was most responsible for the success of the freshman formal last year, and the fact of him dating June Hallison would win sorority votes, both for him and for whomever served as his running mate. His grades were so low that there was some risk of him not being eligible next semester, but he was the only man who we could win with; so we agreed to nominate him.

D. AGREEMENT

In grammar the term agreement is used to describe the relationship between the inflectional forms of different elements within a sentence. When two related elements (subject and verb, pronoun and antecedent) show the same kind of inflection, they are said to agree. Thus a verb agrees with its subject if its form shows the same number and person as the subject. A pronoun agrees with its antecedent if both show the same gender, number, and person.

The fundamental convention of agreement is that the inflectional endings of two related elements should agree as far as possible. Since different parts of speech are inflected for different purposes (verbs for person, number, and tense, not for gender or case; nouns for number and case, not for person or tense), related elements can agree only in those qualities which they have in common. If they agree in these, complete agreement is taken for granted. Therefore, the general rule might be more usefully stated in the negative: *There should be no grammatical disagreement between the inflectional endings of related elements within a sentence.*

a. Verbs Agree with Their Subjects in Number and Person

A singular subject requires a singular form of the verb, a plural subject a plural form. If the subject is a personal pronoun, inflected for person, the verb agrees in person. If the subject is a noun it is always considered to be in the third person, and takes the third person form of the verb. The following sentences illustrate this agreement:

I am late. (Subject first person singular; verb first person singular.)

He is sorry. (Subject third person singular; verb third person singular.)

The *man works* slowly. (*Works* is third person singular to agree with *man.*)

Most troubles in agreement arise from about a dozen constructions, listed below.

(1.) When two or more singular subjects are connected by and, *a plural form of the verb is required.*

He and his brother *are* identical twins.
Tom, Joe, Graff, and I *make* a good foursome.
Both the bull and the calf *have won* prizes.
A fool and his money *are* soon *parted.*

There are three modifications of this convention. First, when each of the singular subjects is considered individually, the singular form of the verb is used. This usage is most frequent after *each* or *every*:

Here, every man and woman *works* for the good of the organization.
Each boy and girl *makes* a separate report.

Second, when the two singular subjects refer to the same person or thing, the singular verb is used.

My wife and boss *has* something to say about that.
Grapejuice and ginger ale *is* a good drink.

Third, mathematical additions may take either a singular or a plural verb.

Five and five *is* ten. Three and three *make* six.
Five and five *are* ten. Three and three *makes* six.

(2.) When two or more singular subjects are connected by or, nor, *or* but, *a singular form of the verb is required.*

Mason or Dixon *is* to be elected.
Neither Bill nor Hugh *has* a chance.
Not Sue but Sally *was invited.*
Neither the Giants nor the Dodgers *is* the team to win.
Not only his wife but even his mother *finds* him selfish.

(3.) When one of two subjects connected by or, nor, *or* but *is singular and the other is plural, the verb agrees in number with the nearer one.*

Neither Lewis nor his lawyers *were* there.
Not only the boys but also their father *encourages* it.

(4.) When two subjects connected by or *or* nor *differ in person, the verb agrees with the nearer.*

Jean or you *are* to go.
Either Red or I *have won.*
Neither Mary nor I *am* to blame.
You or he *is* the leading contender.

As the last two examples show, conforming to this rule sometimes creates a sentence so awkward that grammatical correctness does not seem to justify it. When this happens we usually restate the idea in a form which is both correct and natural – for example:

Mary is not to blame; neither am I.
You and he are the leading contenders.

(5.) A singular subject followed immediately by as well as, in addition to, including, no less than, with, together with, *or a similar construction, requires a singular verb.*

The husband as well as the wife *needs* advice.
The coach together with his assistants *was praised.*
The president no less than the secretary *is* responsible.
The store in addition to the farm *was sold.*

Because this convention sometimes seems illogical (since more than one person is included in the subject phrase), there is a tendency to avoid the construction altogether and to write:

Both the husband and the wife *need* advice.
The coach and his assistants *were praised.*
The president *is* just as responsible as the secretary.
The store and the farm *were sold.*

(6.) A singular subject followed by a plural modifier requires a singular verb.

The *attitude* of these men *is* definitely hostile.
The *leader* of the rebel forces *has* been captured.
One of the women in the back row *looks* sick.
A *list* of the names of all survivors *is* available.

In spoken usage, a plural modifier immediately preceding a verb frequently leads the speaker to use a plural verb. This is particularly true in a sentence like the fourth above, in which the subject is followed by a lengthy modifier containing two plural nouns. This colloquial usage has usually less justification in writing, since the more deliberate nature of writing and revision makes it easier to use the conventional form.

(7.) Such indefinite pronouns as anybody, anyone, each, either, everybody, neither, nobody, no one, *and* somebody *generally require a singular verb.*

Anybody who does that *is* just reckless.
Does anyone want to split this with me?
Each of them *makes* fifty dollars a week.
Somebody has been using my shaving soap.
Nobody in town *admits* seeing him.

(8.) *The pronouns* any *and* none *take singular or plural verbs, depending on whether they are referring to one or more people.*

Are any of you *going* to the show?
Any of these times *is* satisfactory.
None works so faithfully as he.
None are expected from that district.

In general, the preference is for the singular verb after these pronouns in a formal style, and for the plural verb in an informal one. Either form, however, is generally acceptable in college writing.

(9.) *When the subject is a relative pronoun, the verb agrees with the antecedent of that pronoun.*

He is one of the *men who act* as advisers.
This is one of those *problems which have* two solutions.
Each of *us who make* this promise *is obliged* to live up to it.
One of the *girls who sing* in the choir *is being married.*

The last two examples are rather tricky. Their construction may be better seen if we enclose the modifier in parentheses:

Each (of *us who make* this promise) *is obliged* to live up to it.
One (of the *girls who sing* in the choir) *is being married.*

(10.) *When a sentence is introduced by the expletive* There *or the adverb* Here, *the verb agrees with the following subject, not with the expletive.*

Here *is* your *money.*
Here *are* the *receipts.*
There *are* no second *chances.*
There *are* a *man* and *boy* in that boat.
Is there a *chance* of his winning?
Were there many *people* present?

This convention is not so strictly observed in spoken usage, because quite frequently we begin a sentence with an expletive followed by

a single subject and then add more subjects before we finish the sentence. For example:

Did you see anyone there that I know?
Well, there was Joe Botts, and Ray Carrell, and Dan Snader.

In speech, we cannot conveniently revise the verb to take care of these additional subjects. But we do have such an opportunity in writing, and we are expected to use a plural verb in such sentences.

(11.) When a sentence is introduced by the expletive It, *the verb is always singular, regardless of the number of the subject.*

It *is* two *strikes* and three *balls.*
It *is* the *Johnsons.*
It *is we* whom they want.

(12.) The complement of the verb to be *does not affect the number of the verb.*

Books are her chief source of enjoyment.
The one *thing* you must be ready for *is* their attempts to disguise the play.
What annoys me about them *is* their constant complaints.
Her chief *source* of enjoyment is books.

If the demands of this convention result in an awkward sentence the wisest thing to do is to recast it.

Conventional but Awkward	*Revised*
The amusing *thing* about campaign speeches *is* the attempts that both sides make to represent themselves as the only friends of the people.	In campaign speeches, it is amusing to see how both sides attempt to represent themselves as the only friends of the people.

(13.) A collective noun takes a singular verb when the class it names is considered as a unit; it takes a plural verb when the members of that class are to be considered individually.

Singular	*Plural*
The jury *is* finally complete.	The jury *were* divided in their opinions.
The family *holds* an annual reunion.	My family *have* never been able to agree.
The clergy *is* wretchedly underpaid.	The clergy *are* supporting this proposal from their pulpits.

This convention also applies to such nouns as *number, part,* and *rest.*

A large number *is* expected.

A number of errors *have* been found.

Only part of the order *was* delivered.

A great part of the people *have* no opinion on the question.

The rest of the page *is* illegible.

The rest of the votes *are* about equally divided betwen the three candidates.

(14.) Titles of books, magazines, movies, newspapers, plays, and the like take a singular verb.

The Good Companions is a fine novel.

The Outcasts was not a success at the box-office.

The New York Times is his bible.

The Little Foxes was a smash hit.

(15.) Certain nouns which are plural in form but singular in meaning generally take a singular verb. The most common of these are economics, ethics, dynamics, mathematics, news, physics, semantics, statics, whereabouts. *Plural numbers take a singular verb when they are used in a phrase to indicate a sum or a unit.*

A million dollars *is* a great deal of money.

Ten years *is* too long to wait.

Five per cent *is* good interest.

A thousand yards *is* more than a half mile.

Forty hours *is* the regular work week.

b. Pronouns Agree with Their Antecedents in Gender, Number, and Person

Thus, if the antecedent is a singular masculine noun, the pronoun should be the masculine form of the singular third personal pronoun (*he, his,* or *him*). A pronoun does not necessarily agree with its antecedent in case, since its case is determined by its function in its own clause (see page 335).

The *men* got *their* wages.

Their is third person plural to agree with *men.* The plural form of the pronoun is the same for all genders.

The *girl* found *her* watch.

Her is third person feminine singular to agree with *girl.*

The *boy* misses *his* dog.

His is third person masculine singular to agree with *boy*

The *ship* changed *its* course.

Its is third person neuter singular to agree with *ship*

Most troubles with the agreement of pronouns are confined to a half-dozen constructions, and frequently arise because of a conflict between formal and colloquial usage. In general, formal usage insists that the *form* of the antecedent, not its *meaning*, determines the number of the pronoun. Colloquial usage tends to be governed by the *meaning* of the antecedent rather than its form. For example, *everybody* is singular in form but, since it refers to more than one person, its meaning may be said to be plural. Formally, *everybody* requires the singular form *his;* colloquially, it often is followed by the plural form *their.* In general, formal usage is preferred in college writing, so that *his* rather than *their* is the safer form.

(1.) When two or more antecedents are connected by and, *a pronoun referring to them is plural.*

Bill and *Ted* are looking for **their** girls.
Helen and *I* are buying **our** tickets today.
That *man* and his *partner* have bankrupted **themselves.**

(2.) When the antecedent is each, either, *or* neither, *followed by a plural modifier, a singular pronoun is preferred.*

Each of the girls is sure **she** is going to win.
Neither of the men would admit **his** mistake.
Either of these women may lose **her** temper at any time.

In colloquial usage, the influence of the plural modifier often results in the pronoun's taking the plural form, *their.*

(3.) When the antecedent is everybody, each, either, everyone, neither, nobody, *or* a person, *a singular pronoun is preferred.*

Each has **his** own group of supporters.
Everybody had **his** work in good shape.
Nobody had **his** speech ready today.
Everyone was keeping **his** fingers crossed.
A *person* soon finds **himself** in trouble if he begins to cut classes.

Notice that the masculine form of the pronoun is generally used when the sex of the antecedent is unknown or when the antecedent refers to both sexes, thus:

Everyone should vote for the candidate of **his** choice.
The boys and girls have been told that *everybody* must do **his** share of the work.

But if the context clearly shows that the antecedent is feminine, the feminine pronoun is used:

When we girls have a picnic *everyone* brings **her** own utensils.

(4.) When the antecedent is the impersonal one, *the third person pronoun is generally used, unless the style is very formal.*

One must watch **his** step with that girl.
One can't really blame **himself** for that.
If *one* had a second chance, how much wiser **he** might be.

In a very formal style the impersonal pronoun is sometimes used throughout.

Under such conditions *one* laments **one's** utter incapacity to be of any genuine service.
One finds **oneself** wishing that the evidence were more convincing.

(5.) When the antecedent is a collective noun, the pronoun may be either singular or plural, depending on whether the group is considered as a unit or as a number of individuals.

Singular	*Plural*
The *family* keeps pretty much to *itself.*	The *family* may have *their* private quarrels but *they* always agree in public.
The judge reprimanded the *jury* for *its* disregard of the evidence.	At the request of the defense attorney, the jury were polled and *their* individual verdicts recorded.
The *team* had *its* back to the wall.	The *team* are electing *their* captain.

(6.) The relative pronoun who *is used when the antecedent is masculine or feminine;* which *is used when the antecedent is neuter;* **that** *is used to refer to any gender.*

This is the *man* **who** drove the car.
The *girl* **who** found it is here.
The *woman* **that** I mean had brown hair.
Here is the *parcel* **which** (or **that**) she left.

The possessive form *whose* is theoretically confined to persons, but in practice is often used as the possessive of *which* when the more formal *of which* seems awkward.

The *nation* **whose** conscience is clear on that score is exceptional.
The newspaper **whose** reporters are most alert gets the most **scoops.**

EXERCISES

A. As a test of your knowledge of the conventions of agreement, mark the following statements true or false. Start with a given score of twenty. Subtract two points for each incorrect answer and one point for each sentence not answered. The correct answers may be obtained from the preceding pages.

1. A verb agrees with its subject in number, person, and tense.
2. A pronoun agrees with its antecedent in number, gender, person, and case.
3. A plural modifier of a singular subject does not affect the number of the verb.
4. A pronoun referring to two singular antecedents which are connected by *and* is plural.
5. When a sentence begins with the expletive *There*, the verb is always singular.
6. When a sentence begins with the expletive *It*, the verb is always singular.
7. Two or more singular subjects connected by *or* take a plural verb.
8. Such phrases as *as well as, including, in addition to, together with* following a singular subject do not affect the number of the verb.
9. Such indefinite pronouns as *anybody, everybody, nobody* take a singular verb.
10. The pronouns *any* and *none* may take either a singular or a plural verb.
11. In colloquial usage, a singular subject followed by a plural modifier is likely to take a plural verb.
12. When the subject is a relative pronoun, the verb agrees with the antecedent of that pronoun.
13. When two antecedents are connected by *and*, the pronoun agrees in number with the nearer one.
14. In a sentence containing both a subject and a complement of the verb *to be*, the verb may agree with either the subject or the complement.
15. A pronoun referring to the title of a publication is singular if the title is singular, plural if the title is plural.
16. Nouns plural in form but singular in meaning always take a plural verb.
17. The masculine form of the personal pronoun is used when the gender of the antecedent is indefinite or when antecedents of different gender are used.
18. In colloquial usage a plural pronoun is often used to refer to *everybody, everyone, nobody*.
19. In formal usage these antecedents take either a singular or a plural pronoun.
20. When the antecedent is the impersonal pronoun, *one*, a personal pronoun is seldom used.

B. Write out and turn in to your instructor the form in parentheses which would be preferred in formal usage:

1. All hope of finding the victims alive (has, have) been abandoned.
2. One of my uncles (are, is) wealthy.
3. Neither of them (have, has) any children.
4. There (is, are) plenty to go around.
5. There (is, are) two mistakes in your work.
6. There (is, are) an apple and an orange for each child.
7. Helen or I (am, is) going.
8. Either Mary or Jean (was, were) here.
9. Neither Roy nor I (am, are) well.
10. The gangster, with all his henchmen, (were, was) arrested.
11. The father no less than the children (is, are) to blame.
12. The parents no less than the children (is, are) to blame.
13. Every one of the group (are, is) here.
14. Here (is, are) a piece of cake and a glass of milk.
15. (Is, are) there two pictures like that?
16. Two hundred pounds (were, was) his best weight.
17. The engine in addition to the body (was, were) in bad shape.
18. Bacon and eggs (are, is) the favorite breakfast.
19. It (is, are) the Thompsons.
20. There (is, are) one for each couple.

C. Write out and turn in to your instructor the form in parentheses which would be preferred in formal usage:

1. A person has to decide for (himself, themselves).
2. Neither of them will promise (their, his) support.
3. Everyone must bring (his, their) own food.
4. A person must do (one's, his) best.
5. Each of the boys (were, was) trying as hard as (they, he) could.
6. One must do (one's, their) utmost.
7. The team was cheered for (its, their) courage.
8. Nobody in the room (were, was) willing to give up (their, his) (seat, seats).
9. He would just as soon insult a person as look at (them, him).
10. One must work 20 years to be eligible for (their, one's, your) pension.
11. There is the man (which, that) lost the money.
12. Each girl must contribute (their, her) share of the expenses.
13. Every boy and girl in the class (were, was) awarded a certificate for (their, his, her) work.
14. The car (with the broken fender, whose fender is broken) is mine.
15. Give this to the lady (which, who) lost it.
16. The committee (has, have) always voted according to (its, their) consciences.
17. Has everyone got (his, their) own coat?

18. Each of the forty-eight states (has, have) (its, their) own governnor.
19. England expects that every man will do (their, his) duty.
20. After Michigan won the title (they, it) went on to play in the Rose Bowl.

D. Re-write the following sentences so as to revise or avoid unconventional verb or pronoun forms:

1. Neither of the applicants are fully qualified.
2. He is one of those men which votes against any measure which costs money.
3. The cost of food, clothing, and household goods have risen considerably.
4. Don't tell me that; it don't make sense.
5. He's something of a musician, ain't he?
6. There is two or three things that you ought to know about him.
7. What they are looking for are girls which can swim.
8. If it don't work, a person gets their money back.
9. Not only his clothes but even his appearance were shabby.
10. The money, including the day's receipts, were stolen.
11. The extent of his injuries are still not known.
12. Philadelphia led the league at the beginning of the season and are now in second place.
13. The works of such a poet contains something for each of us.
14. Investment in government bonds are a secure way of saving.
15. What I like best about summer are the attractive dresses that girls wear.
16. There has never been any reports made public.
17. The sophomore class is holding their annual dance on Saturday.
18. Tell your friends to keep up with one's assignments; it don't pay to get behind.
19. This is one of those questions that has two answers.
20. The nation to whom I am referring is not Russia.

E. WORD ORDER

In English, word order is grammatically meaningful. To a large extent we interpret the grammatical function of a word by its position in the sentence. Thus, *Dog bites man* will be given a quite different meaning if we interchange the positions of *dog* and *man*. For this reason, standardization of word order is more necessary in English than in a language, like Latin, in which grammatical function is indicated by inflectional endings.

a. The Normal Order of the Elements in a Typical English Sentence is as Follows:

(1) Subjects precede their verbs (*Robert* has gone), except in questions (How tall is *he*? Are *you* going?) and in sentences beginning with an expletive (There is a *ring* around the moon).

(2) Complements follow their verbs (we lost *them*). When the complement contains both a direct and an indirect object, the latter comes first if it is a single word (We gave *him* the book), but not if it is a phrase (We gave the book *to him*).

(3) Single adjectives precede the nouns they modify (The *old* man was here), but phrasal modifiers follow their nouns (He is a man *of the people*).

(4) Adverbs modifying verbs usually follow the verbs (He fought *desperately*), but adverbs modifying adjectives or other adverbs usually precede the words they modify (He is *very* old. They dance *remarkably* well).

(5) Main clauses usually precede subordinate clauses, but the following exceptions are common:

a. Adjectival clauses follow immediately the nouns they modify (The man *who did that* should be whipped).

b. Adverbial clauses, especially conditional clauses, often precede the main clause (*If you do that,* you'll be sorry).

c. Noun clauses may serve as subjects or complements of the verb in a main clause (*That he will accept* is taken for granted. He says *that you are afraid*).

(6) Closely related elements are kept as close together as possible. Thus prepositions immediately precede their objects except when modifiers of the object intervene (This is *for* you. This is the top *of* the highest mountain); modifiers remain close to the constructions which they modify (The girl *with the red hair* was absent; NOT The girl was absent *with the red hair*); and subject-verb, verb-complement, and pronoun-antecedent combinations are not separated unless the special needs of the sentence require such separation.

To sum up, in declarative statements the basic order of an English sentence is subject – verb – complement, with modifiers kept close to the elements they modify, and with all related parts of speech united as closely as possible. The order of the elements in a sentence should clearly reveal their relationships.

b. Accepted Variations

Within the normal pattern of word order, certain variations are acceptable. The most common of these variations are as follows:

(1) Provided that it does not create misinterpretation or an awkward sentence, an element may be transposed from its normal order for the sake of emphasis:

Normal Order	*Emphatic Order*
The skies cleared *slowly.*	*Slowly* the skies cleared.
No leaf stirred *in all the forest.*	*In all the forest* no leaf stirred.
He threw *out* the runner.	He threw the runner *out.*
That is a good country *from* which to come.	That is a good country to come *from.*
There is no excuse *for him.*	*For him* there is no excuse.

(2) For stylistic reasons, a normal sentence may be inverted into a periodic sentence (see pages 150-151).

Normal	*Periodic*
Think only this of me *if I should* die.	*If I should die,* think only this of me.

(3) Provided no vagueness or awkwardness results, related elements may be interrupted by absolute or modifying constructions:

Interruption	*Explanation*
These, *I am told,* were his last words.	*Absolute between subject and verb.*
Her only answer was — *and I quote* — "No comment!"	*Parenthetical clause between verb and its complement.*
I feel, *however,* that you could have spoken more moderately.	*Conjunctive adverb between verb and its complement.*
The conduct of our troops *in this situation* was heroic.	*Modifying phrase between subject and verb.*

c. Undesirable Variations

The following departures from normal order are not conventionally acceptable and should be avoided in college writing:

(1) Misplaced modifiers. (See pages 144-146.) Any modifying word or phrase which is unnecessarily separated from the construction it modifies is a potential source of confusion. Even if not actually ambiguous, it will result in an awkward sentence. Therefore, unless the separation is justified by the nature of a particular sentence, it should be avoided. The following illustrations will supplement those given in Chapter 7:

Misplaced Modifiers	*Revised*
He looked at the boy *with sad eyes.*	He looked *with sad eyes* at the boy.
They talked about going on a second honeymoon *frequently*, but they never did.	They talked *frequently* about going on a second honeymoon, but they never did.
The car is in that garage *which he smashed.*	The car *which he smashed* is in that garage.

(2) Unnecessary interruption. Although related elements may be interrupted for grammatical or stylistic considerations (see b (3) above), unnecessary interruptions of normal order should be avoided.

Unnecessary Interruption	*Explanation*	*Revised Order*
Her father, *even*, admits that she is extravagant.	*Awkward separation of subject and verb.*	*Even* her father admits that she is extravagant.
I was *until yesterday* of that opinion.	*Awkward separation of verb and complement.*	I was of that opinion *until yesterday.*
We have *since then* had no more trouble.	*Awkward separation of two parts of verb.*	*Since then* we have had no more trouble.
My grades are as good as *if not better than* his.	*Awkward interruption of comparison.*	My grades are as good as his, *if not better.*
I am neither in support of *nor opposed to* the measure.	*Awkward separation of preposition and its complement.*	I neither support nor oppose the measure.

(3) Split infinitive. The split infinitive construction is often misunderstood, although it is not essentially different from the other interrupted constructions just presented. An infinitive is said to be split when another element separates its parts (to *almost* laugh, to have *never* tried). Logically, it may be argued that these related parts should not be separated, but the facts of usage show that the perfect and passive infinitives are commonly split (to have *recently* examined, to be *quite* satisfied) but that the present infinitive is not split unless the nature of the sentence or the needs of emphasis justify its being so. The convention regarding the split infinitive may therefore be stated as follows: *No infinitive should be split if an awkward or unidiomatic expression results.*

Awkward split	*Justifiable split*
He is reported to *yesterday* have denied it.	It was an attempt to *deliberately* misrepresent the evidence.

(4) Unemphatic order. The most emphatic position in an English

sentence is the end. To put unimportant ideas in that position makes the sentence fade weakly away instead of finishing strong. A good maxim is to start strong, finish stronger, and put unimportant material in the middle.

Unemphatic Order	*Emphatic Order*
He is going to propose, I think.	I think he is going to propose.
Nothing can be done about it, however.	However, nothing can be done about it.
He was accused of cheating and was expelled from school after a hearing by the Discipline Committee.	He was accused of cheating and, after a hearing by the Discipline Committee, was expelled from school.
She does not intend to visit here, as far as I know.	As far as I know, she does not intend to visit here.
Last night someone stole our car while we were in the theater.	While we were in the theater last night, someone stole our car.

EXERCISE

Revise the following sentences so as to make the word order more conventional or more emphatic. For additional exercises, see pages 164-170.

1. I decided to almost quit.
2. The history of Democratic administrations is as good as if not better than that of Republican administrations.
3. Fortunately, the fire was put out before any serious damage was done by the volunteer firemen.
4. The chairman said that the committee would continue in session until all business had been dispensed with, if there was no objection.
5. My father, who had never been enthusiastic about the trip, after considering what it would cost and how long it would take, refused to go.
6. There is a lecture tonight about juvenile delinquency in the student lounge.
7. He said, in a quiet voice, that, while he had no objection to our going, he would, if we did not mind, stay at home.
8. A car came down the street decked with ribbons.
9. Who is the man whom you want to speak to?
10. Humphrey Bogart played the part of the man who was corrupted by gold superbly.
11. You I would not go with, unless you shaved.
12. I listened while he talked attentively.
13. He showed the book to his father that he had won as the prize.
14. The evidence shows, if you examine it objectively, and do not indulge in wishful thinking, that you cannot win.
15. Everyone stared at the girl who was dancing with the dean in the low-cut gown.

16. He scored through center after two unsuccessful end runs.
17. There is something to be said for his position, I think, on the other hand.
18. He had no desire to or expectation of getting married.
19. There was a noisy disturbance when the speaker said that at the back of the hall.
20. The cars crashed head-on in the middle of the intersection, thus causing a traffic jam.

18

PUNCTUATION

IN ENGLISH there are about a dozen common marks of punctuation: *period* [.], *comma* [,], *semicolon* [;], *colon* [:], *question mark* [?], *exclamation mark* [!], *quotation marks* [" " or ' '], *apostrophe* ['], *dash* [—], *parentheses* [( )], and *brackets* [ ]. Most of these marks have highly specialized functions and once these are understood, it is easy enough to use them conventionally. The chief exception, perhaps, is the comma, which is at once the most common mark of punctuation and the one with the most complex uses.

The Period

1. **A Period is Used to Mark the End of a Declarative Sentence.** Unless a sentence is intended as a question, a command, or an exclamation, it is a declarative sentence and is closed by a period:

Today is Tuesday.
We have three days to go.

Even when a sentence is mildly imperative or exclamatory, modern usage often prefers a period to an exclamation mark:

Be careful of the step.
Let's forget the whole matter.
How pleasant it would be to be there now.

2. **A Period is Used to Mark an Accepted Abbreviation.**

Titles: Col., Dr., Hon., Mrs., Rev.
Degrees: B.A., B.S., M.D., Ph.D.
Names: John A. Jones; Chas. W. Brown.
Months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Nov.
States: Ala., Ga., Me., Ill., Wash.
Miscellaneous: Ave., St., vol., p., U.S.A., B.C., A.D.

Notice, however, that when usage has sanctioned the dropping of the period, it is no longer required – *exam, gym, prom, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, percent.* Periods are usually omitted in abbreviations of government agencies – *USNR, WPB, TVA, ECA.*

3. **A Period is Used Before a Decimal and Between Dollars and Cents.**

The error is less than .01 of an inch.
The correct answer is 57.39.
The price tag read $11.98.

The Comma

The function of the comma is to make the internal structure of the sentence clear by separating elements which might otherwise be confused, by setting off interrupting constructions, and by marking words out of normal order. Following are the principal uses:

1. **To Prevent a Confused, Ambiguous, or Awkward Reading.**

Confused	*Explanation*	*Clear*
Mr Smith our milkman has been hurt.	*Is this a statement to or about Mr. Smith?*	Mr. Smith, our milkman has been hurt. (or) Mr. Smith, our milkman, has been hurt.
I do not care for money isn't everything.	*Lest* money *seem to complete* care for, *a comma should be inserted after* care.	I do not care, for money isn't everything.
A hundred yards below the bridge was flooded.	*Comma necessary to avoid misreading of* bridge *as the object of* below.	A hundred yards below, the bridge was flooded.
When we had finished eating the cigarettes were passed around.	*Comma necessary to show that* cigarettes *is not the object of* eating.	When we had finished eating, the cigarettes were passed around.

2. **To Separate Two Main Clauses Joined by a Co-ordinating Conjunction (*and, or, nor, but*).**

I tried to sleep, but the neighbor's radio made that impossible.

The huge elm had been cut down, and a garage now covered the spot where it once stood.

The real purpose of this convention is to prevent reading the conjunction as joining two objects rather than two clauses – for example:

He sprained his ankle and his temper was ruined.
He traded his car and his wife was angry.

In both these sentences the noun following the conjunction appears, at first reading, to be part of a compound object of the first verb. The comma before the conjunction shows clearly that the two nouns are in different clauses:

He sprained his ankle, and his temper was ruined.
He traded his car, and his wife was angry.

When there is no possibility of a confused reading, the convention becomes less significant and is therefore sometimes ignored.

3. **To Set Off an Interrupting or Parenthetical Construction.**

We thought, unfortunately, that we could get away with it.
There was a chance, on the other hand, that prices would go up.
You must try, first of all, to consider it objectively.

This is an important convention. Liberally interpreted, it may include 4, 5, and 6 below, since appositives, nonrestrictive modifiers, and nouns of address often act as interrupting constructions. But be careful not to label any construction that comes between two related elements as "interrupting." The italicized expressions in the following sentences are not interrupters and should not be set off by commas.

The girl *you mean* has gone.	*You mean* so closely modifies *girl* that the whole subject is everything before *has*.
The man *with him* is his brother.	The phrase does not interrupt. It is a necessary modifier.

4. **To Set Off an Appositive.** An *appositive* is an identifying word or phrase (a noun or pronoun and its modifiers) which is considered grammatically equivalent to the noun or pronoun it identifies:

Louis, *the champion,* has retired.
His father, *the president of the company,* will be responsible.
I want to see Dr. Roberts, *the English professor.*
His brother *John* left. (restrictive — no commas)

The first two examples illustrate that an appositive is often a particular kind of interrupting construction.

5. **To Set Off a Nonrestrictive Modifier.** The distinction between restrictive and nonrestrictive modifiers can best be explained by contrasted illustrations.

Restrictive	*Nonrestrictive*
All students *who were absent* will be required to do an additional assignment.	College students, *who represent a superior intellectual group,* must be asked to accept the responsibility of leadership.
Soldiers *who have flat feet* had better stay out of the infantry.	Soldiers, *who are selected by physical fitness tests,* should show a lower sickness rate than that of the total population.
The man *wearing the Stetson* is his uncle.	The tall man, *who happened to be wearing a Stetson,* said he had never been east of Cleveland.
The train *which he took* does not stop at Bryan.	The train, *which should have been here an hour ago,* is still ninety miles away

The modifiers at the left *restrict* the subjects to particular students, soldiers, and so on, while those at the right give additional information about the subjects without confining them to particular students, soldiers, men, or trains. The nonrestrictive modifiers could be dropped without changing the meaning of the main clauses they belong to. But if those at the left are dropped, the sentences communicate entirely different thoughts. Restrictive modifiers are not interrupters. They are essential to the element they modify, and to set them off by commas is to deny their importance. Nonrestrictive modifiers, on the other hand, are descriptive interruptions. They are conventionally set off by commas, and failure to set them off may distort their meaning or their function in the sentence.

6. To Set Off Nouns of Address.

I would like to ask you, *Mr. Jones,* for your opinion.
I think, *madam,* that you had better leave.
Sir, I'd like to ask a question.
Listen, *chum,* I've had enough of you!
I wish I were going with you, *Ted.*

Notice that the noun of address often interrupts the sentence. Even when it comes at the beginning or end of the sentence, it is grammatically independent. It is what in Chapter 16 we call an absolute.

7. To Separate Elements in a Series.

He promised them only *blood, sweat,* and *tears.*

Reading, swimming, and *dancing* are my favorite recreations.

It was said of Washington that he was *first in war, first in peace,* and *first in the hearts of his countrymen*

North passed, East bid two spades, South bid three hearts, and *West doubled.*

As these illustrations show, the series may consist of single words, phrases, or clauses. The comma before the conjunction joining the last two elements is optional – for example,

She is *small, dark* and *vivacious.*

8. To Set Off an Inverted Element. Any word, phrase, or clause transposed from its normal position is said to be *inverted.*

Myself, I will vote in favor of it.

Except for physics, my courses are not difficult.

But if the inversion is so common as to seem normal, the comma is usually omitted. No commas would be used in the following inversions:

Yesterday I had a bad time of it.

In 1918 the concept of total war was unknown.

In front of the house there was a beautiful garden.

The most frequent use of a comma to set off an inverted element occurs after a long phrase or a subordinate clause preceding the main clause.

With his coat slung over one shoulder and his necktie pulled loose, Dad came slowly up the walk.

If wishes were horses, beggars could ride.

9. To Separate Contrasted Elements in Such Constructions as the Following.

He is sick, not drunk.

We are disgusted, not angry.

The German schools became institutes of propaganda, not of education.

This is a problem which must be handled with sympathy, not harshness.

10. To Separate Direct Quotations from Such Constructions as *He said, she answered, we replied.*

He said, "You are only half right."

"This," I said, "is the last straw."

"Nobody asked you, sir," she said.

"But," he asked, "what if they refuse?"

Although this convention serves no useful purpose, since the quotation marks alone reveal the structure of the sentence, it is an established usage and must be observed. Notice that a question or exclamation mark replaces the comma:

"Are you going, too?" she asked.

"You idiot!" he said.

11. To Separate Elements in Dates, Addresses, and Place Names.

January 1, 1940; Dec. 25, 1910.

875 Main Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

Chicago, Illinois, is the second-largest city in the country.

He was born in London, England.

12. In the Following Miscellaneous Constructions:

In figures – 22,745; 1,000,000; 150,743,290.

In names followed by titles – R. W. Leeds, M.D.

At the end of the salutation in informal letters – Dear Joe,

Misuse of the Comma

The overuse of commas or their unconventional use is often more annoying or confusing than their omission; so the following "don't's" should be carefully observed:

1. Do Not Use a Comma as a Substitute for a Period Between Independent Sentences. Such a use may cause serious misinterpretation. (See *the comma splice,* pages 142 and 316.)

Comma Splice	*Conventional Punctuation*
He spoke very quietly, as I listened, I had the impression that he was speaking to himself.	He spoke very quietly. As I listened, I had the impression that he was speaking to himself.
There was nothing more to be said, when they took that attitude, further negotiation was impossible.	There was nothing more to be said. When they took that attitude, further negotiation was impossible.

2. Do Not Use a Comma Between Closely Related Elements Unless You Are Marking an Interrupting Construction. The comma should reveal the structure of a sentence, not disguise it. Closely related elements (subject-verb, verb-object, verb or noun and modifier) are unnecessarily separated if a comma is placed between them. If, however, these elements are interrupted, commas to set off the interrupting construction help to reveal the relationship between the interrupted elements.

Misuse of Comma Between Related Elements	*Correct Use of Comma Between Related Elements*
My car, is at the service station.	My car, which is at the service station, needs a thorough overhauling.
He said, that he would try.	He said, when I asked him, that he would try.
The student who lost this money, may need it badly.	The student, who had lost money on other occasions, was reprimanded for his carelessness.

The last illustration contrasts a restrictive with a nonrestrictive clause (see page 361). The commas are misused in the version at the left because the subordinate clause is not an interruption but a necessary part of the whole subject. It is a restrictive modifier.

3. **Do Not Use Commas Excessively.** The modern tendency, especially in informal writing, is to keep punctuation to a minimum. For this reason it is common to avoid commas which serve no recognizable purpose. Moreover, it should not be assumed that a comma *must* be used in a particular sentence because convention recommends its use in sentences of that type. The conventions are statements about general practice. There are times when a too-slavish following of the rules will chop a sentence to pieces by commas. Such usage should be avoided, either by revising the sentence or by ignoring the strict letter of the convention. The following examples illustrate the difference between excessive and adequate punctuation:

Excessive	*Adequate*
However, it is not, in my opinion, desirable.	However, it is not in my opinion desirable.
Yesterday, a little, old lady, in a dilapidated, old Ford, picked me up, and brought me home.	Yesterday a little old lady in a dilapidated old Ford picked me up and brought me home.
Sometimes, she would appear in an elaborate, beach outfit, sometimes she wore a simple, white suit and, occasionally, she put on a red, white, and blue bathing suit, with a detachable skirt.	Sometimes she would appear in an elaborate beach outfit, sometimes she wore a simple white suit, and occasionally she put on a red white and blue bathing suit with a detachable skirt.

OTHER MARKS OF PUNCTUATION

The Semicolon

The semicolon has the following uses:

1. **As the Separating Punctuation Between Closely Related Independent Clauses Not Connected by a Conjunction:**

Try this one; it seems to be your color.
His mother won't let him; she is afraid he might get hurt.
Your car is new; mine is eight years old.

In each of these sentences a period could be used instead of the semicolon. But the clauses, even though grammatically independent, are felt to be so closely related that a period makes too sharp a separation.

2. Before a Transitional Connective (Conjunctive Adverb) Between Two Main Clauses. The most common transitional connectives are *also, besides, consequently, furthermore, hence, however, likewise, moreover, nevertheless, in addition, since, so, then, therefore, yet.*

It won't work, *therefore* there is no sense in buying it.

His argument has some merit; *however,* he goes too far.

His eyes went bad, *consequently,* he had to resign his position as a proofreader.

3. To Separate Elements in a Series When They Contain Internal Punctuation.

Among those present were Dr. Holmes, pastor of the First Methodist Church, A. C. Levitt, superintendent of schools, B. L. Rainey, manager of the Benson Hotel; and M. T. Cord, vice-president of Miller and Sons.

Had commas been used between the elements in this series they might be confused with the commas which set off the appositives.

The Colon

The main uses of the colon are:

1. To Indicate that Something is to Follow, Especially a Formal Series:

Here are the facts: The money was there five minutes before he entered the room, it was missing immediately after he left; the next day he bought a new suit, although he had previously spent all of this month's allowance.

The slogan goes like this: Look sharp! Feel sharp! Be sharp!

2. Conventionally in Such Uses as the Following:

Dear Sir: After the salutation in formal correspondence.

Matthew 3:15. Between chapter and verse of Biblical reference.

8:05 A.M. Between hour and minutes in reports of time.

3. In Place of a Comma Before Long or Formal Direct Quotations:

In that speech Bryan said: "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor a crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

This is his statement as reported in the papers: "I have never advocated such ideas, I do not advocate them now; I do not approve of them; and I have no reason for believing that I ever will approve of them."

The Apostrophe

The apostrophe has three general uses:

1. To Indicate the Possessive Case of a Noun. With a singular noun not ending in *s*, the apostrophe is followed by an *s*:

boy's, girl's, John's, Smith's.

With a singular noun ending in *s*, the apostrophe is used either with or without an additional *s*:

Burns's poems, Keats's life, or Burns' poems, Keats' life.

With a plural noun ending in *s*, the apostrophe alone is used:

the boys' gymnasium, the Ladies' Aid, the teachers' teacher.

2. To Indicate the Omission of Letters or Figures:

I've, can't, hasn't, isn't; '48 (1948), the class of '39.

3. To Indicate the Plural of Letters or Figures:

Let's begin with the A's; look under the K's; the S's look like 8's.

The Question Mark

The question mark is used almost entirely to indicate that a sentence is to be understood as a question:

Whose is this? You mean he's ill?

It is sometimes used in parentheses to question the accuracy of the preceding word:

These amateurs (?) make a comfortable living out of sports.

As a device for irony, however, it is generally weak.

The Exclamation Mark

The exclamation mark is used to show that a statement is imperative or that it is spoken with strong emotion:

Be quiet! Attention! Leave the room at once! Good Heavens! Oh, you fool! God help us!

Distinguish between the use of a period (see page 358) for mild exclamations and that of an exclamation mark for strongly emotional statements.

Quotation Marks

Double quotation marks enclose the direct words of a speaker:

I said, "That's your worry."

They also, but less frequently, enclose a word specifically identified:

The word "garage" comes from the French; "piano" comes from the Italian.

Slang expressions are occasionally placed in quotation marks:

According to her story, her brother "socked" her in the eye and "beaned" her with a ruler.

But this use is easily overdone. Quotation marks do not make a slang word appropriate. In general, if it is appropriate it does not need the quotation marks.

Single quotation marks are chiefly used to indicate a quotation within a quotation:

As nearly as I can remember, these are her exact words: "Bill is crazy about me. Why only yesterday he said, 'If I can't marry you, I won't marry anyone.' "

Notice that such a sentence ends with both single and double quotes, the single inside the double.

Notice, also, that quotation marks come after periods and commas:

"I wish," he said, "you would reconsider."

But question and exclamation marks go inside the quotes if they refer to the quotation alone and outside if they belong to a sentence of which the quotation is only a part:

"Do you think I am crazy?" he asked.
Did he say, "I know nothing about it"?
"Get out of my sight!" he yelled.
He did, too, call me a "minx"!

The Dash

The dash is not a substitute for any other mark of punctuation and should be used only as follows:

1. To Stress a Word or Phrase at the End of a Sentence:

In the whole world there is only one person he really admires — himself.

And now it is my pleasure to present a man whom we all know and admire and to whom we are all deeply indebted — the Reverend Dr. Mason.

2. To Sum Up or Complete an Involved Sentence.

To live as free men in a free country; to enjoy, even to abuse, the right to think and speak as we like; to feel that the state is the servant of its people; to be, even in a literal sense, a trustee and a partner in the conduct of a nation – all this is what democracy means to us.

Double dashes are used to set off a pronounced interruption:

There will never again be – you may be sure of this – so glorious an opportunity.

This answer – if we can call it an answer – is completely meaningless.

Parentheses

The main use of parentheses is to enclose a parenthetical explanation, qualification, or example:

His wife (he married about a year ago) is a member of a very fine New England family.

Nice (in the old sense of discriminating) has almost fallen out of use.

Foreign words (*data*, for example) slowly become naturalized and lose their foreign characteristics.

This use is so closely related to that of the double dash that the two marks are often interchangeable.

Parentheses are also used for the following technical purposes:

1. To enclose cross-references:

(*See* Appendix A), (*See page 271*), (*Consult* Webster's Biographical Dictionary).

2. In formal business transactions, to repeat a sum previously stated in words:

I enclose three-hundred dollars ($300.00) to cover my share of the costs.

Brackets

Brackets are used chiefly to enclose an editorial explanation or comment within a passage being edited or reported. The words within the brackets are supplied by the editor; the rest is the work of the author.

According to the Associated Press, Mrs. Henry Thall [the former June Wexler of this city] was a passenger on the missing plane.

I have written to [name of correspondent illegible] that I will not be a party to that transaction.

Brackets are occasionally used to enclose symbols which cannot conventionally be left without some enclosing device. The first paragraph of this chapter offers several examples of this use.

EXERCISES

A. For each of the ten uses of the comma cited below write out two illustrations. Do not consult the text until you have finished the assignment. Then check your illustrations against the examples in the text. Pay particular attention to those uses which you found difficult to illustrate.

1. To avoid a confused reading.
2. To separate main clauses connected by a co-ordinating conjunction.
3. To set off a parenthetical construction.
4. To set off an appositive.
5. To set off a nonrestrictive modifier.
6. To set off a noun of address.
7. To separate elements in a series.
8. To set off an inverted element.
9. To separate contrasted elements.
10. To set off direct quotation.

B. The best way to develop a confident knowledge of the conventions of punctuation is to observe how punctuation marks are actually used in modern writing. In the following selection, which is fairly formal, particular punctuation marks have been numbered. Write down each number and describe the purpose for which the punctuation is being used.

Turning to the more modern theories,[1] which agree at least that language is of human rather than divine origin,[1] we encounter first what is best known by its nickname,[2] the "bow-wow" theory. This asserts that primitive language was exclusively *"echoic"*; that is,[3] that its words were directly imitative of the sounds of nature or of animals. All the word-stock is thought to have originated in a way parallel to the child's calling a dog "bow-wow" [4] or a duck "quack-quack." [4] The great objection to this theory is that it has not been demonstrated that early or primitive languages are composed exclusively or in great part of onomatopoetic words, on the contrary,[5] it is clear that the primitive languages of savage tribes are largely made up of words that are quite as conventional as those of civilized peoples. At best,[6] the "bow-wow" theory can explain the origin of but a part,[7] and not the largest part,[7] of language. Yet it seems fair to add that the theory has in the past been somewhat unjustly derided. Words that are imitative or at least partly so —[8] for there are many gradations between the purely imitative and the purely conventional —[8] do form an appreciable part of the vocabulary of most languages. There are many words that we instinctively feel to be symbolic, or semi-echoic. Thus,[9] such English words as *battle,*[10] *roar,*[10] and *thunder* have not perhaps a completely imitative quality, certainly not as compared with *hiss,*[11] *whistle,*[11] *bang,*[11] and *crash;* yet they approach echoism in a way that

the conventional words of language do not. If,[12] then,[12] the "bow-wow" theory does not solve the riddle of the origin of language,[13] it does at least help to account for the sounds of many words.[1]

C. Rewrite and hand in to your instructor the following sentences, inserting as you write any punctuation clearly required by the conventions. If no punctuation is necessary, do not copy the sentence. To make your insertions obvious, use red ink or red pencil for punctuation which you add.

1. He said I propose to transfer at the end of the semester.
2. He said he would transfer at the end of the semester.
3. I expect he said to transfer at the end of the semester.
4. Dr J A Frazer was born on March 18 1901
5. Dr Koch a German scientist discovered the tuberculosis bacillus.
6. The lecturer was the Rev Nelson Laird D D
7. Have you read his latest book.
8. The cars in that series were as follows Aerosedan Fleetline Fleetmaster and Stylemaster.
9. The manuscript was dirty blotched and unevenly typed.
10. I have not seen him since his wife left he has been keeping to himself.
11. Mr. Reynolds the insurance man called.
12. She is quite inexperienced and has never worked in an office before.
13. See the new revolutionary car of the year the Ford.
14. She said, when I asked his opinion, he answered, I don't give advice on such questions.
15. I am enclosing eighty-five dollars $85.00 for the semiannual premium.
16. This meaning See *The American College Dictionary* is now established usage.
17. He looked at it enviously. Its a beauty he exclaimed.
18. However I still have five payments to make.
19. That she wont like it may be taken for granted.
20. Do you think he will accept she asked.

D. Distinguish between restrictive and nonrestrictive modifiers by inserting commas around the nonrestrictive modifiers in the following sentences. Use red ink or red pencil for inserted commas.

1. Girls who hate cooking are poor matrimonial risks.
2. Girls who are physically less rugged than boys should not be subjected to strenuous athletic programs.
3. The man driving the Maxwell is Jack Benny.
4. Benny driving a Maxwell was charged with obstructing traffic.

[1] Reprinted by permission of Prentice-Hall, Inc., from *The Development of Modern English*, by Stuart Robertson. Copyright, 1934, 1938, by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

5. Salesmen who don't argue with customers make more money.
6. Salesmen most of whom are young men lead an unsettled life.
7. The pilot realizing his plight radioed for instructions.
8. The pilot who radioed for instructions does not answer.
9. His wife satisfied with these concessions wisely kept quiet.
10. His wife resentful of his extravagance asked for an increased allowance.
11. They questioned the man who reported the robbery.
12. The man who reported the robbery cannot be found.
13. The man at the back of the room was told to leave.
14. The man evidently seriously hurt was taken to the hospital.
15. The fighters who were quite obviously stalling were disqualified.
16. Their wives who needed the money were indignant.

E. In the following selections all punctuation has been omitted, except the periods at the ends of the sentences. Copy the selection, adding all necessary punctuation in red.

The Bible is written in very poor English isnt it remarked a grade school child to his father as they walked home from church.

What makes you say that inquired the astonished parent for whose ears the musical dignity of the King James Version approached the perfection of English prose.

Well our teacher said it was bad English to begin sentences with and. But almost every sentence the minister read this morning began with and replied the child.

The father smiled as he recognized the accuracy of the childs observation. The reading had been from the eighth chapter of the Gospel according to St Matthew it was true enough that almost every sentence began with and. He thought a moment longer before he spoke. Your teacher has made a natural mistake he began. In trying to give good advice to boys and girls just learning to write she has made a rule about and. The rule is too big. People who know how to write well use and correctly and effectively at the beginning of sentences. On the other hand boys and girls in schools use and too much. Your teachers purpose in trying to help you was good but the rule she stated is untrue.

In this trifling episode may be found the epitome of the problem of correctness in English. It lies in the recurrent conflict between rule and practice. Rules of usage are usually made to cover specific situations to govern the use of language at a certain time for a certain purpose. Gradually as the rule is taught and applied the specific purpose for which it was created is forgotten and the rule is applied universally often in defiance of a language custom centuries old. Take for example the much taught but erroneous rule that a sentence must not end with a preposition. Or as one grammar is supposed to have stated it A preposition is a bad thing to end a sentence with. In certain types of formal literary English the terminal preposition is considered undesirable because of the rhetorical looseness it gives to the style. Because certain formalists disliked

the construction the rule was created. It was repeated copied placed in school books. Teachers unaware of the reason behind the origin of the rule taught that a sentence must never end with a preposition. Teachers are still teaching this rule. Yet English for centuries has been idiomatically and correctly expressed in such sentences as Where are you from I didnt know whom to give it to. John will go but I dont expect to. What city has he lived in To apply the rule to such sentences as these which are characteristic of informal or colloquial English is to make an absurdity of a caution. Many such absurdities have been created and are being perpetuated through honest but misguided zeal.[2]

F. The following exercise is to be taken up orally in class. Before coming to class you are asked to study the passage and insert any punctuation which you feel is required. You should be able to explain orally in class why the punctuation is necessary.

A current attitude toward science is reflected in a recent cartoon which depicts two solicitous parents saying to their precocious son But what on earth do you want to be a scientist for Robert Isn't there enough trouble in the world already New and sensational developments in science and technology are usually accompanied by fears that we have created a monster that may devour us Even scientists appalled at the possible social consequences of their handiwork sometimes join in the hue and cry for a moratorium on science More frequently however the idea is advanced by a small group of romantics who are oppressed with their urban existence as contrasted with a dream world which they vaguely think of as the "simple" life. The most eloquent deprecators of the technological age often are "writers" living in New York apartments who would not know how to get downstairs if the elevators stopped running

Actually very few people seriously question the importance and the promise of the advancement of science Nearly everyone agrees that whatever troubles the advancement of science may have brought in its wake it has released us from some age-long fears and insecurities The natural sciences have undoubtedly given us a large measure of control over many of our traditional enemies although we may not always exercise this power

Even when we cannot do anything directly about averting natural events science is still invaluable in two principal ways First science forewarns us of certain events and thus enables us to avoid their more serious consequences If rain is predicted we carry an umbrella Ships are warned that a hurricane is likely to follow a certain path We may protect ourselves from certain diseases by proper inoculations and so forth Second the mere possession of scientific knowledge and scientific habits of thought regarding the natural universe relieves us of a world of fears rages and other unpleasant dissipations of energy Scientific knowledge operates as a sort of mental hygiene in the fields where it is applied If

[2] From *Teaching English Usage*, by Robert C. Pooley. Copyright, 1946, by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reprinted by permission of Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

the morning paper reports an earthquake an eclipse a storm or a flood these events are immediately referred to their proper place in the framework of science in which their explanation i e their relationship to other events has already been worked out Hence each new event of this character calls for very little if any "mental" or "emotional" strain upon the organism so far as our intellectual adjustment to it as an event is concerned.[3]

G. The punctuation in the following student papers is unsatisfactory. First, go through each paper and mark the errors successively 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Then, for each number, write down the revision you would make. Be prepared to explain and justify your revisions in class.

(1)

Probably sometime in everyone's life, there has been the urge to travel, to see the sights of the world. The many booklets and leaflets describing and picturing ocean cruises winter vacationlands, western deserts; and other ideal sight-seeing tours encourage that ambition that has so long been held close to the heart. But not all of us can afford the luxury of travel. That is the reason that reading is such an ideal substitute.

Reading is available to the majority of the people. While traveling at least of any distance takes from a week or two to several months reading need only occupy a few hours or an evening at a time. It can be done in the leisure hours of the busiest and most tiring day. The man, who since childhood has dreamed of making an ocean voyage around the world, can fulfill that dream by spending an evening in his easy chair reading a good book.

Reading not only takes less time; but less money. There are undoubtedly thousands of people who long to go abroad to Paris and London, or south to Mexico and even to South America, but they know that their incomes will not stretch far enough for such luxuries. Here again reading fulfills the hopes of many! Good books can be found by the hundreds in public libraries. Book clubs have flourished because so many people have chosen this substitute for travel. No longer as in Lincoln's day do people have to hunt for books to read. There is neither a lack of books, nor a lack of funds to buy books.

While traveling can occupy a lifetime, a book requiring only a few evenings rapid reading can cover a period of a year or two. The vast areas in this world would take even more than a lifetime to explore. Yet reading makes it possible to travel continually and accomplish it in much less time. Though one may never see the Grand Canyon or the famed sidewalk cafés of Paris, the vivid descriptions found in books can keep his imagination alive with these scenes forever.

It would be impossible for the most of us to explore the mountain peaks of the Alps or the cold tundra of Siberia. It would be out of the question to attempt to make a daring trip down the Mississippi in a canoe. But we can live and experience these adventures in remote places merely by

[3] From *Can Science Save Us?*, by George A. Lundberg, copyright, 1947, by George A. Lundberg. Reprinted by permission of Longmans, Green & Co., Inc.

reading the accounts, both true and fictional, that have been written by others, who enjoy traveling as much as we.

Though travel is said to be broadening and educational, it lacks these qualities somewhat when compared to reading. Reading, because it can include many finer details that are lost in traveling and sightseeing, is factual. Though a story of a missionary's life in South Africa may be fiction, the setting and surroundings may be so accurately described that, were you to go there you could actually point out the landmarks mentioned in the story. Likewise, from a fictional story of the cliff-dwellers of Arizona and New Mexico, the true story of their lives, customs and practices could be derived.

Books contain many facts that would be overlooked in traveling. Traveling is usually spent to gain pleasure and enjoyment. On the other hand, while reading, one can also gain knowledge and further his understanding and education.

Reading is definitely a substitute for travel – an ideal substitute. For all of us who don't have the opportunity to travel, books have helped make life worth-while! Our traveling can be done in our own living room with a good book.

(2)

What I Expect of Marriage

I do not believe that my parents have made too much of a success of their marriage because there has always been quarreling strife and dissatisfaction among our family members. I don't doubt but what there is a feeling of love and affection between my mother and father, but they have never learned to adjust themselves to each others individual lives. My father is powerful possessive and over-bearing while my mother is weak submissive and unable to go ahead and think for herself. I hope to learn from the example my parents have set before me, and I shall not make the same mistakes that they have.

I intend to give all that I am capable of giving to my marriage and my family. There will be no time for a career or excursions into the business world; unless the money I could earn was essential for the welfare of the marriage. Nevertheless, I want a good liberal education to prepare me to take my place as the wife and mother in a happy family unit. Such an education should teach me to get along with other people to understand their ways and beliefs and thus, to understand and know better my husband and his individual characteristics. Certainly, it would help in understanding and guiding my children through childhood or until they were capable of caring entirely for themselves.

I think it best if I marry a man from my own social financial and religious class. Then, if there were any changes to be made we would make them together. However, regardless of his standing in the world, I intend most of all to marry a man I can love and respect and one who is a Christian with the idea of raising his children to be Christians in a good Christian home.

From my marriage, I want children who will serve as a living part of me here on earth after my death. In those children I hope to mold all of the good traits of their parents, but undoubtedly some of the bad ones will also show up. To them I shall try to give every advantage for an easier, and happier life but not at the expense of having them lose the determination, and will power that comes from facing and overcoming hardships.

I expect an equal amount in return for the things I try to give my marriage. I want love, companionship, and devotion from a faithful husband in whom I can believe and trust. Our companionship through the years should include working together to own a home of our own. Also, it should include many compromises as to the training of the children, the balancing of the budget, and the deciding of whose family we spend holidays and vacations with.

I expect to face long years of hard work with probably a small income, but I also expect to be rewarded by a home of our own, a family, and a well-provided-for retirement in old age. With all of these things I could truly say I would be happy, but there is one last item I feel I must mention.

From all of these things I have discussed, I also need a feeling of contentment and satisfaction within myself along with the knowledge that I have tried to make my marriage a success and that it will not exist as an unhappy arrangement such as my parents failure.

I want to know when I die that I have a companion beside me forever and that my unfinished work will be carried on by our followers.

19

SPELLING

Why Spelling Is a Problem

STUDENT DIFFICULTIES with spelling are generally a result of two deficiencies – one in the language itself and the other in the student's method.

The eccentricity of English spelling is notorious. In many languages spelling consistently reveals pronunciation, and vice versa. These languages are said to have *phonetic* spelling. Not only has English spelling often no relation to pronunciation, but its departures from phonetic spelling follow no consistent pattern. Words like *bough, caught, cough, rough,* and *though* look similar but are pronounced quite differently; and such vowel combinations as *ea, ee, ei,* and *ie* look different but are often pronounced alike. Single consonants are generally pronounced, but in some words (quick, psychology) they are silent. Two consonants may be pronounced as one (little, million); they may have no sound at all (night, though); or they may combine to form the sound of still a third consonant (philosophy, quay). Different vowels may have the same sound (buy, pie, heard, word) and the same vowel may have several different sounds (bid, bird, bride, bunion, Bikini). Most of these irregularities have a historical explanation. Grammarians can show how these spellings or pronunciations came to be what they are. But eccentric spellings do not become less confusing because they can be explained. The sad truth is that many English spellings are neither phonetic nor logical. Because of this deficiency, spelling is more difficult in English than in any other major European language.

Nevertheless, the deficiencies of English spelling cannot be used to justify poor spelling by college students. The conventions of standard usage require that words be spelled as they are spelled by educated writers and recorded in reputable dictionaries. Unlike grammar and diction, usage in spelling is not affected by the style of the writing.

Except for contractions, there is no such thing as colloquial or informal spelling. A student who cannot spell correctly will be considered uneducated and will find himself at a social and economic disadvantage.

College students whose spelling is consistently bad usually act on one of three assumptions: (*a*) that spelling is not important, (*b*) that nothing much can be done to improve one's spelling, or (*c*) that the only way to learn to spell is to spend hours memorizing spelling lists. None of these assumptions is sound. Spelling *is* important. Provided misspelling is not a result of an organic or psychological impairment, there is no reason why any student cannot train himself to spell correctly. And an uncritical memorizing of spelling lists is not conspicuously effective.

How to Improve Your Spelling

The first step in improving your spelling is to take an inventory of your spelling errors. Specifically, you should keep a record of those words *which you actually misspell in your writing.* The best way to begin such an inventory is to take a standard spelling list, such as the one on pages 382-387, and check those words which cause you difficulty, ignoring those you seldom use or never misspell The checked words then become your basic, private spelling list. You should copy their correct spellings in alphabetical order into a special notebook, leaving space for later additions. Your basic list probably will not exceed fifty words. Even an unusually poor speller could probably correct ninety per cent of his spelling errors by concentrating on a carefully selected list of 100 words.

You should keep your basic list up to date by scoring out words you have mastered and adding new words you have misspelled. This step is most important. Your original list was merely an estimate of your spelling weaknesses, but actual misspellings are a record of errors. Remember, it is the errors you have made that you are really interested in, and the more accurately your list records them, the more useful it will be. Also, because the frequency with which you misspell a word is part of your spelling record, you should indicate repeated misspellings of the same word by adding a check mark each time you misspell it.

Keeping such a list will of itself help a great deal, but the list should be reviewed regularly. Any normal student who studies such a list for ten minutes a day should be able to eliminate all his common spelling errors within a single semester.

In studying your list, concentrate on the *part* of the word which you misspell. Generally we do not misspell words but syllables. For example, most students who misspell *secretary* interchange the second and third vowels; most misspellings of *tragedy* are a result of placing an extra *d* before the *g*; and misspellings of such words as *receive, belief,* and *friend* come from reversing the *i* and *e*. Identifying your specific errors allows you to concentrate on the syllable in which the error occurs.

For words which prove unusually troublesome it is often helpful to learn or invent some device for memorizing: a rule, a slogan, a jingle — anything, no matter how absurd in itself, which will remind you of the correct spelling of a particular syllable. The rule of *i* before *e* except after *c*, which is stated as a jingle on page 381, and the rules for prefixes and suffixes, are generally useful memorizing devices. Unfortunately some rules have so many exceptions that they are hardly worth learning. It is therefore often wise to invent your own memorizing device. Some students find it extremely helpful to remember statements like *A good secretary keeps a secret, Remember the gum in argument,* and *All are at ease in the cemetery.* Other students are helped by capitalizing the danger spots during spelling practice — tRAGedy, mainTENance, desPERate. If these devices help you, use them; if not, invent your own.

Finally, a concern with spelling during composition should, so far as is practicable, be postponed until revision. Interrupting the composition of a paragraph to consult a dictionary is not wise. If you keep a record of your misspellings, you will be conscious of troublesome words. If you are uncertain of the spelling, place a check in the margin and go on. Then, when the first draft is finished, look up the correct spelling of all checked words. Indeed, a student with severe spelling troubles will be wise to proofread his whole paper once for spelling alone.

In short, then: (1) Keep a spelling record, (2) study it at regular periods, (3) identify the trouble spot in the word, (4) devise a means of remembering the correct spelling, and (5) check your spelling when proofreading. If this procedure is followed conscientiously, spelling will soon cease to be a problem.

The Most Common Traps in Spelling

Although any word which is not spelled phonetically may give trouble, six types of words are especially likely to cause errors. These are:

1. Words containing a "colorless" vowel.
2. Words with *ie* or *ei*.
3. Words with similar sounds but different meanings.
4. Words with irregular plural forms.
5. Words which double the final consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel.
6. Common exceptions to general rules.

1. The Colorless Vowel. Vowels in unstressed positions (awkward, maintenance, incredible, bachelor, minute) are likely to be pronounced as a very weak *uh*. This sound is called the colorless or neutral vowel.[1] Because it is quite common in English and because its sound gives no indication of its spelling, the colorless vowel is responsible for many spelling errors. There is nothing to guide one in spelling this sound. The only solution is to memorize the vowel in any word which repeatedly causes trouble. The best help is a memorizing device, such as magnifying the syllable in question – *baLANCE, indepenDENT, eligIBLE, sponSOR, foREIGN, chauffEUR*.

2. The EI Combination. Words like *niece, receive,* and *friend,* are frequently misspelled through the interchanging of the *e* and the *i*. Most of these errors may be easily removed by following Rule 4 below and memorizing the ten exceptions.

3. Words with Similar Sounds but Different Meanings. Such words as *altar, alter; peace, piece; weak, week; weather, whether* are easily confused. Since this kind of error is usually considered a mistake in diction, a list of troublesome contrasted pairs is given on pages 256-257. You should study that list and copy into your personal spelling record any pairs which you tend to confuse.

4. Irregular Plurals. Since most English nouns take *s* plurals, all plurals formed in any other way may be considered irregular. The most troublesome plurals to spell are those of nouns ending in *o* or *y*. Such nouns have regular *s* plurals when the *o* or *y* immediately follows a vowel (*cameo, cameos; key, keys; studio, studios*), but are generally irregular when the *o* or *y* follows a consonant (*cargo, veto, lady, torpedo*). See Rules 6 and 7.

5. Doubling a Final Consonant. Some words double a final consonant before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel (*refer, referred*), while others (*benefit, benefited*) do not. This lack of consistency causes many spelling errors, and the "rule" which is usually offered to

[1] Students using *The American College Dictionary* should notice that in that dictionary the colorless vowel is represented by the phonetic symbol called the *schwa,* and written ə, like an inverted *e*.

explain when final consonants are doubled is so involved and has so many exceptions that it is not genuinely helpful. The best solution is to concentrate on those words which cause you trouble. If you conscientiously record such words in your private spelling list and study them, you will probably master them more easily than by attempting to apply a rule.

6. **Exceptions.** Any exceptional spelling is likely to be difficult because of the tendency to make it conform to the regular pattern. For example, a student who is not sure how to spell *seize* is likely to interchange the *e* and *i* because of the *ei* rule. Similarly the rule that a silent *e* at the end of a word is retained in adding a suffix beginning with a consonant leads many students to misspell *argument.* Words like these are exceptions to general rules and cause a high percentage of spelling errors. The only safe procedure is to *memorize the exceptions along with the rule.* Whenever a rule is given in the following pages the common exceptions are noted. Study these as carefully as you study the rule itself.

Rules of Spelling

The rules given here are those which are most generally useful.

Rule 1. Adding the prefixes *un-, dis-, mis-* does not affect the spelling of the root. The prefix is simply added before the first letter of the original word: thus, *unafraid* but *unnecessary, disappoint* but *dissatisfy, misrepresent* but *misspell.*

unable	disable	misbehave
unknown	disorder	misconduct
unopened	disregard	misguided
but	*but*	*but*
unnatural	disservice	misshapen
unnerved	dissimilar	misspent
unnoticed	dissolve	misstatement

Rule 2. When a suffix beginning with a consonant is added to a word ending in silent *e,* the *e* is retained.

Examples: *absolutely, achievement, extremely, indefinitely, sincerely.*

Exceptions: *argument, awful, duly, ninth, probably, wholly.*

Three common words have alternative spellings:

abridgment, abridgement; acknowledgment, acknowledgement; judgment, judgement.

Rule 3. When a suffix beginning with a vowel is added to a word

ending in a silent *e*, the *e* is dropped unless it is required to indicate pronunciation or to avoid confusion with a similar word.

Examples: *accumulating, achieving, boring, coming, grievance, icy.*

Exceptions:

To Keep a c *or* g *Soft*	*To Prevent Mispronunciation*	*To Prevent Confusion with Other Words*
advantageous	canoeist	dyeing
changeable	eyeing	singeing
courageous	hoeing	tingeing
manageable	mileage	
noticeable	shoeing	
outrageous		
peaceable		
serviceable		
singeing		
vengeance		

Rule 4. The order of the vowels in the *ie* combination (*ceiling, niece*) is explained in the jingle:

Write *i* before *e*
Except after *c*
Or when sounded like *a*
As in *neighbor* and *weigh*

Exceptions: *counterfeit, either, foreign, forfeit, height, heir, leisure, neither, seize, sovereign.*

Rule 5. Words ending with the sound *seed* are usually spelled *-cede.*

Examples: *accede, concede, intercede, precede, recede, secede*

Exceptions: *exceed, proceed, succeed,* and, note carefully, *supersede.*

Rule 6. Singular nouns ending in a consonant plus *y* form their plurals by changing the *y* to *i* before adding *-es.* This rule also applies to the third person singular of verbs.

Examples: *ally, allies; baby, babies; city, cities; cry, cries; try, tries.*

Exceptions: The plurals of proper names often add *s* immediately after the *y*: *the Kellys, the Marys, the Sallys.*

Notice that singular nouns ending in a vowel plus *y* are regular and simply add *-s* to form the plural:

attorneys, donkeys, valleys.

Rule 7. Singular nouns ending in a consonant plus *o* generally form their plurals by adding *-es.* There are, however, so many exceptions that it may be safer to dispense with the rule and learn troublesome words individually.

Examples: *buffaloes, cargoes, echoes, heroes, potatoes, vetoes.*

Exceptions: The chief exceptions are musical terms: *altos, bassos, oratorios, pianos, solos, sopranos.* Others are *autos, cantos, dynamos, Eskimos, halos, mementos, provisos, quartos.*

Notice that singular nouns ending in a vowel plus *o* are regular and simply add *-s* to form the plural:

cameos, folios, radios, studios.

EXERCISES

A. Following is a list of words frequently misspelled by college students. When two spellings are given for the same word, both are correct and the first is preferred.

As you read through the list underline those words which you recognize as being part of your writing vocabulary and which you have had trouble spelling. Then copy the correct spelling of the underlined words into a special notebook so that you will have a preliminary record of your spelling difficulties. Revise this list periodically by adding the correct spelling of any word which you misspell in subsequent papers and scoring out words which you no longer misspell.

abbreviate
absence
absolutely
absurd
accelerate
accept
access
accidentally
accommodate
accomplish
according
accumulate
accustom
achievement
acoustics
acquaintance
acquitted
across
adaptation
address
adoption
advice (noun)
advise (verb)
adviser, advisor
airplane
affect
aggravate
aggression
alley
allotted
allowed
all right
ally
already
altar (noun)
alter (verb)
although
altogether
always
amateur
ambiguous
ammunition
among
amount
analogous
analysis
analyze
angel
angle
annual
antecedent
anxiety
apartment
apparatus
apparent
appearance
appropriate
arctic
argument
arising

arithmetic
arouse
arranging
article
artillery
ascend
association
athlete
athletics
attempt
attractive
audible
audience
authorities
automobile
auxiliary
awkward
bachelor
balance
balloon
barbarous
barring
battalion
bearing
because
becoming
before
beggar
beginning
believe
beneficial
benefited
biscuit
borne
boundaries
breathe
brilliant
Britain
Briton
Britannica
buoyant
bulletin
bureau
buried
burying
business
busy
cafeteria
calendar
candidate
can't
canvas
canvass
capital
capitol
carburetor
carrying
casualties
causal
ceiling
celebrity
cemetery
certain
changeable
changing
characteristic
chauffeur
chief
choose
choosing
chose
chosen
clause
climbed
clothes
coarse
colloquial
colonel
column
coming
commission
committee
committed
commitment
companies
comparatively
compel
compelled
competent
competition
complaint
complement
completely
compliment
compulsory
concede
conceivable
conceive
condemn
condescend
condition
conjunction
connoisseur
conqueror
conscience
conscientious
considered
consistent
contemptible
continuous
control
controlled
convenient
co-operate, coöperate
copies
corner
coroner
corps
corpse
costume
council
councilor, councillor
counsel
countries
course
courteous
courtesy
cozy
cries
criticism
criticize
cruelty
cruise
curiosity
curriculum
custom
cylinder
dairy
dealt
debater
deceitful
deceive
decent
decide

decision
defendant
deferred
deficient
definite
definition
democracy
dependent
descend
descendant
describe
description
désert (noun)
desért (verb)
desirable
despair
desperate
dessert
destruction
develop, develope
developed
development
device (noun)
devise (verb)
diaphragm
diary
dictionary
dietitian
difference
digging
dining
dinning
diphtheria
disappearance
disappoint
disastrous
discipline
discussion
disease
dissatisfied
dissipate
distribute
divine
doctor
doesn't
dominant
don't
dormitories
dropped
drunkenness
dying
echoes
ecstasy
effect
efficiency
eighth
eligible
eliminate
embarrass
eminent
emphasize
employee
encouraging
encyclopedia
enthusiastic
equipment
equipped
equivalent
erroneous
especially
eventually
exaggerate
exceed
excel
excellent
except
exceptional
excitement
exercise
exhaust
exhilaration
existence
experience
explanation
extensive
extracurricular
extremely
exuberance
fallacy
fallacious
familiar
fascinate
February
fiery
finally
financial
financier
forehead
foreign
foremost
forfeit
formally
formerly
forth
forty
fourth
frantically
fraternities
freshman
friend
fulfill, fulfil
furniture
gaiety
generally
genius
genuine
glorious
government
grammar
grandeur
grievous
guarantee
guard
guardian
guerilla
guess
guidance
handicapped
handkerchief
harass
hearse
height
heinous
heroes
hesitancy
hindrance
hoarse
hoping
horde
human
humane
humorous
hundredths
hurries

hygiene
hypocrisy
hysterical
illicit
illiterate
illogical
imaginary
imagination
imitative
immediately
implement
impromptu
inadequate
incidentally
incredible
indefinitely
independent
indicted
indispensable
inevitable
influential
innocent
inoculate
intellectual
intelligence
intentionally
intercede
interested
interpret
interrupt
irrelevant
irreligious
irresistible
irreverent
its
it's (it is)
itself
judgment, judgement
judicial
khaki
kindergarten
knew
knowledge
known
laboratory
laid
later
latter
lead
led
legitimate
leisure
library
lightning
likable
likely
literature
loneliness
loose
lose
losing
magazine
magnificent
maintain
maintenance
maneuver
manual
manufacture
mathematics
mattress
meant
medicine
medieval
messenger
millionaire
miniature
minute
mischievous
misspelled
modifies
modifying
momentous
morale
mortgage
mosquitoes
mottoes
mountainous
murmur
muscle
mysterious
naïve, naive
naturally
necessary
necessity
Negroes
neither
nervous
nevertheless
nickel
niece
ninety
ninth
noticeable
notorious
nowadays
obedience
obliged
obstacle
occasionally
o'clock
occur
occurred
occurrence
official
officious
omission
omit
omitted
oneself
opinion
opportunity
optimistic
organization
original
orthodox
ought
outrageous
overrun
paid
pamphlet
parallel
parliament
participle
particularly
partner
pastime
peaceable
perceive
perform
perhaps
permissible
perseverance
personal
personnel

persuade
Philippines
phrase
physical
physician
piece
picnicked
planed
planned
playwright
pleasant
politics
possess
possessive
possible
potatoes
practice
prairie
precede
precedence
precedents
preceding
predominant
prefer
preference
preferred
prejudice
preparation
prevalent
primitive
principal
principle
privilege
probably
proceed
professor
prominent
pronounce
pronunciation
propaganda
propeller
prophecy (noun)
prophesy (verb)
protein
psychology
pursue
pursuing
putting
quantity
quarter
quarantine
questionnaire
quiet
quite
quizzes
realize
really
recede
receipt
receive
receiving
recognize
recommend
refer
reference
referred
referring
regard
regional
relevant
religion
religious
remembrance
reminiscence
rendezvous
repetition
replies
representative
reservoir
resistance
respectfully
respectively
restaurant
reverent
rhetoric
rheumatism
rhythmical
ridiculous
sacrifice
sacrilegious
safety
salary
sanctuary
sandwich
scarcely
scene
scenic
schedule
scrape
secretary
secretarial
seized
sense
sensible
sentence
sentinel
separate
sergeant
severely
shining
shone
shown
shriek
siege
sieve
similar
sincerely
sincerity
skeptical
slight
soliloquy
sophomore
source
speak
specifically
specimen
speech
sponsor
spontaneous
statement
stationary (adj.)
stationery (noun)
statue
stature
statute
stomach
stopped
straight
strength
strenuously
stretched
struggle
studying
subordinate

subtle
succeed
success
successful
suffrage
superintendent
supersede
suppress
surely
surprise
suspense
swimming
syllable
symmetry
synonym
synonymous
taboo, tabu
tangible
tariff
tasting
technique
technical
temperament
tenant
tendency
than
their
there
therefor
therefore
they're
thorough
though, tho
thought
threw
through
till
tired
to
together
too
tournament
toward, towards
traffic
tragedy
transferred
tremendous
tries
truly
Tuesday
twelfth
two
typical
tyranny
unanimous
undoubtedly
unnecessary
until
usage
useful
using
usually
vacancy
vacuum
valuable
vengeance
victorious
view
vigilant
vigorous
village
villain
volume
warrant
warring
weak
weather
week
weird
welfare
where
whether
which
whole
wholly
whom
who's (who is)
whose
wiry
woman
women
won't
worried
worrying
writing
written
yacht
your
you're (you are)
zoology

B. The following correct spellings are to some extent exceptional. State briefly why.

advantageous
argument
autos
awful
bassos
canoeist
changeable
courageous
duly
dyeing
either
Eskimos
foreign
forfeit
halos
height
judgment
mileage
ninth
noticeable
pianos
probably
proceed
seize
serviceable
shoeing
supersede

20

SUPPLEMENTARY MECHANICS

IN COMPOSITION COURSES the term *mechanics* is frequently used as a general name for the conventions of punctuation, spelling, and related subjects. Since punctuation and spelling have been discussed in the immediately preceding chapters, this chapter is confined to supplementary matters – Abbreviation, Capitalization, Hyphenation, Italics, and the use of Numbers.

Abbreviations

Dictionaries generally define an abbreviation as a shortened form of a word. It is useful, however, to recognize that not all shortened words are, strictly speaking, abbreviations. Such forms as *aren't, can't, e'er, I've, won't* are called contractions, not abbreviations. Also, such words as *auto, bike, cab, exam, gas* (gasoline), and *phone*, although originally shortened forms of longer words, are now considered separate forms called clipped words. The uses of contractions and clipped words are discussed in the Glossary and in Chapter 12.

The general principle governing the use of abbreviations in college writing is that they may be used only if they satisfy two conditions: they must be standard abbreviations which are recognized by dictionaries, and they must be appropriate to the context in which they are used. The first condition rules out such slang abbreviations as *b. f.* (boy friend), *hon.* (honey), and *n. g.* (no good). The second requires students to recognize that many standard abbreviations (*advt., Ave., etc., Feb., Xmas*) are inappropriate in a formal style and that abbreviations of certain titles (*Col., Dr., Mr., Rev.*) are used only when followed by the name of the person to whom the title applies.

The following is a summary of the most common standard abbreviations. For the correct form of abbreviations not included in this list, consult your dictionary.

Bibliographical terms: *cf., op. cit., vol., pp.* (For these and others, see page 462).

Names of days: *Sun., Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri., Sat.* (Used only in dates).

Names of months: *Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.* (Used only in dates).

Names of organizations: *A.F.L., C.I.O., D.A.R., U. S. Steel, W.C.T.U.*

Names of government agencies: *AAA, ERA, FBI, SEC, TVA* (Notice that abbreviations of government agencies generally do not require periods).

Names of states. *Calif., Del., Mass., N. Y., Ill.* (Used chiefly in addresses).

Signs: When the context permits, the following signs are used as abbreviations: & (ampersand: see *Glossary*), $ (dollar), £ (British pound sterling), % (per cent), " " (ditto marks, used in tabulations to repeat the item immediately above the marks).

Capitals

1. Capitalize the First Word of Each Sentence and of Each Line of Poetry.

Ask for Mr. Lane. He is in charge of service.
Too bad! Better luck next time.

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would be he of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:

—Wordsworth, "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge"

2. Capitalize the First Word of a Direct Quotation.

The President's answer was, "No comment."
"If you will give me a receipt," I said, "you can have the money now."

3. Capitalize Proper Nouns.

Sergeant York was one of the great heroes of World War I.
She works for the National Broadcasting Company.
Laurence Olivier was knighted after his production of *Henry V.*
I find French easier than German.
The *Saratoga* was sunk at Bikini.
The Amazon is longer than the Mississippi.

Note: Words which were originally proper nouns but have taken on more general meanings are regarded as common nouns and are not capitalized: *boycott, calico, port* (wine), *tweed.*

4. Capitalize Adjectives Formed from Proper Nouns.

They seem to be ignorant of the *American* point of view.
There is a *Miltonic* quality in this verse.
The *Renaissance* period was Italy's second hour of glory.
The inductive method has been called the *Baconian* method.
He is studying the *Pauline* doctrines.

Note: Words originally derived from proper nouns cease to be capitalized when they are used as allusions rather than as direct references to the original noun. For example, *colossus, gargantuan, herculean, meandering,* and *panic* do not take capitals. *Philippic* is capitalized when it refers directly to the orations made by Demosthenes, but not when it is used to describe some other denunciatory speech.

5. Capitalize Nouns or Pronouns Referring to the Deity:

God, Lord, our Father, Savior, Messiah, Trinity, Holy Ghost, He, His, Him.

6. Capitalize Names of Offices Only When They Are Used as Titles:[1]

Capitalized	*Not Capitalized*
States-Attorney Johnson	Tell it to the states-attorney.
Prime Minister Churchill	Churchill was prime minister.
Dr. A. L. Street, Chairman of the Civic Betterment Committee.	He was made chairman of the committee.

Note: *President, Presidential,* and *Presidency* are capitalized when they refer to the office of President of the United States: *One of these men will be our next President; the Presidency is at stake.*

7. Capitalize North, South, East, and West and Their Derivatives only When They Refer to Geographical Areas.

Capitalized	*Not Capitalized*
We found the South charming.	Next year we are going south.
Her parents live in the East.	New York is east of Chicago.
They live on the West Side.	The west side of the field is wet.
The Southern armies fought gallantly.	The house has a fine southern exposure.

[1] The convention stated here is a simplification of actual practice. The usage of newspapers varies: some capitalize important offices when they are not used as titles; others omit capitals even in titles.

8. **Capitalize Titles of Books, Magazines, Plays, etc.** The preferred practice is to capitalize all significant words in a title, including the first word:

A Child's History of the United States
The Return of the Native
Mourning Becomes Electra

Some publishers, however, capitalize every word in the title:

A Child's History Of The United States

Either form should be acceptable in college writing, but the form chosen should be used consistently.

9. **Capitalize the Names of Days, Months, and Holidays.**

New Year's Day will fall on Thursday.
Next Sunday is Mother's Day.
The favorite vacation months are July and August.

10. **Avoid Unnecessary Capitalization.** In general, do not use capitals unless they are required by one of the conventions stated above. The modern tendency is to use a small letter whenever the conventions permit. Especially avoid unnecessary capitalization of the names of the seasons, of family relationships (*father, mother, sister, uncle*), and of such words as *army, college, freshman, navy, sophomore, university* unless they are being considered as proper nouns.

Capitalized	*Not Capitalized*
He is a captain in the Army of the United States.	In foreign affairs an army is a political instrument.
Whom do you pick in the Army-Navy game?	The senator said we must have an army and a navy second to none.
Sanford Junior College	He wants a college education.
The University will have a strong team next year.	He is a university professor.
Are you going to the Freshman Hop?	Are you a freshman or a sophomore?
The Summer Festival starts next week.	I like summer best and winter least.

Hyphenation

Hyphens are used for two purposes: to divide a word at the end of a line, and to join two words as a compound.

Hyphen to Break a Word

The use of a hyphen to break a word at the end of a line is less frequently necessary in manuscript copy than it is in print. In student writing, words should be broken at the ends of lines only when failure to hyphenate would result in obviously awkward spacing. If hyphenation seems necessary, the following conditions should be observed:

1. **Do Not Break Words of One Syllable.** If there is not room at the end of a line for such words as *burst, change, drink, through,* carry the whole word over to the next line.

2. **Do Not Separate a Suffix of Less Than Three Letters from the Rest of the Word.** An *-ing* may be separated, but single letters or *-al, -le, -ly,* and *-ed* endings should not.

3. **Break Words Only Between Syllables.** When in doubt about syllables, consult your dictionary.

adverb-ial, ab-surd, al-ready, pre-tend

4. **Hyphenate Compound Words Between the Elements of the Compound:**

arm-chair, black-bird, sail-boat, white-caps.

5. **Subject to the Limitations of (2) Above, Hyphenate Between Prefix and Root or Between Root and Suffix:**

Between Prefix and Root	*Between Root and Suffix*
ante-cedent	adapt-able
be-loved	back-ward
com-mit	depend-ent
con-tagious	ego-ism
dis-appear	kitchen-ette
inter-rupt	lemon-ade
intro-duce	mile-age
per-suade	racket-eer
trans-late	trouble-some

Hyphen Between Elements of a Compound

Hyphenation of compounds varies so much that college students should keep two points in mind: (1) for any particular word, the only safe authority is a reliable, up-to-date dictionary; (2) whenever usage is uncertain, a writer is allowed a choice between competing usages.

Some compounds (*applesauce, blackboard, steamship*) are written solid; others (*dirt cheap, place kick, wedding ring*) are nearly always

written as separate words; still others (*father-in-law, ready-made, up-to-date*) are usually hyphenated. There is an increasing tendency to write compounds solid, especially in an informal style, but in general a hyphen is preferred in the following types.

1. **Hyphenate a Compound Modifier Preceding a Noun:**

A self-made man	An off-the-cuff judgment
A well-dressed woman	A tear-jerking movie
A pay-as-you-go tax	A Sunday-morning golf game
A round-by-round report	A dog-in-the-manger attitude

Notice that compound numerical modifiers fall into this class: *Fifty-seven dollars, one hundred and twenty-five pounds, a two-thirds majority.* However, numbers below twenty-one are not hyphenated: *Her nineteenth birthday; the sixteenth of the month.* Notice also that a compound modifier following a noun is usually not hyphenated: *The woman was well dressed; the machine is worn out.*

2. **Hyphenate a Compound Consisting of a Prefix and a Proper Noun:**

Pro-Russian, un-American (also unAmerican), anti-Hitler.

3. **Hyphenate Compounds of *ex* ("former") and a Noun:**

ex-wife, ex-sweetheart, ex-President.

4. **Hyphenate Most Compounds Beginning with *Self*:**

self-satisfied, self-government, self-conceit.

But *selfless* and *selfsame* are written solid.

Italics

Words in print are made to stand out by using a special kind of type called *italic;* they are similarly set off in manuscript by underlining. Italics and underlining are used for the following purposes:

1. **To Indicate that a Word is Still Considered a Foreign Element in the Language:** *en rapport, in absentia.* See "Foreign Words," page 181.

2. **To Mark Titles of Publications, Movie and Stage Productions, Songs, and the Names of Airplanes, Ships, and Trains.**

Mencken's *The American Language*	Da Vinci's *Last Supper*
The *Saturday Evening Post*	The New York Central's *Twentieth Century*
Beethoven's *Eroica*	Lindbergh's *Spirit of Saint Louis*
Berlin's *White Christmas*	The *Queen Elizabeth*

3. To Call Attention to a Word Being Named.

The word *judgment* has two spellings.
What does *discriminate* mean?
A good example is the phrase, *to go scot free.*

4. To Emphasize a Word.

Not *Angles* but *angels.*
That is *precisely* the point.

This last device should be used sparingly in college writing. If it is overused, it becomes a poor substitute for emphatic diction.

Numbers

Whether numbers should be written in words or figures depends partly on the nature of the writing. In general, scientific, statistical, and technical writing uses figures whenever possible. In essays and literary publications numbers are more frequently written out, and the more formal the style, the less figures are used. The following advice holds good for the kind of writing you will do in a composition class.

1. Figures Are Used:

a. In writing dates, hours, or street numbers.

January 22, 1949	5:00 A.M.	17 Main Street
January 1	6:15 P.M.	417 Fifth Avenue
The year 1860	0430	1021 Third Street

Notice that figures are used for street numbers but that street names, even when they are numbers, are written out. The reason for this is to avoid confusion.

b. In recording sums of money (*$2.75; 98 cents*) other than round sums (*a hundred dollars; thirty cents*). If the style is informal, even round sums may be expressed as figures (*100 dollars, 30 cents, 40,000 spectators*).

c. In dealing with large numbers that would be awkward to write out: *365 days, 1760 yards, 14,320 students.*

d. In citing chapter and page references: *Chapter 5, page 14.*

2. Numbers Are Written Out:

a. When they begin sentences: *Sixty per cent is a passing grade.*

b. When, especially in a formal style, they can be conveniently expressed in one or two words: *seventy-six, eighty, ninety-four.* In an informal style numbers over ten are frequently given as figures.

c. Whenever they are used in a formal invitation or reply: *on Saturday, the twenty-third of June, at seven-thirty o'clock in the evening.* This most formal usage is an exception to the practice recommended in 1*a* above.

3. **Roman Numerals.** Roman numerals are used today chiefly as volume numbers in bibliographical references and as page numbers in the front matter of books. Because they are so little used, they are often confusing to students. Most of this confusion can be eliminated by first recognizing the key numerals and then understanding the principle by which these are combined.

The key numerals are i (1), v (5), x (10), l (50), c (100), d (500), m (1000), which may be written in capitals: I, V, X, L, C, D, M. The basic principle is that higher numbers are created by adding another unit to the right of the number below it — i, ii, iii — or by subtracting a unit at the left of the number above it — iv (4), ix (9), xc (90).

	Units	*Tens*	*Hundreds*
1	i	x	c
2	ii	xx	cc
3	iii	xxx	ccc
4	iv	xl	cd
5	v	l	d
6	vi	lx	dc
7	vii	lxx	dcc
8	viii	lxxx	dccc
9	ix	xc	cm

Other numbers may be made directly from this table. For example, 215 would be written as two on the hundreds column, one on the tens column, and five on the units column — or ccxv.

25 = xxv	111 = cxi	1111 = mcxi
46 = xlvi	555 = dlv	1950 = mcml
89 = lxxxix	564 = dlxiv	1955 = mcmlv

EXERCISES

A. Rewrite the following sentences to substitute abbreviations and figures wherever permissible in college composition:

1. Have you seen the new professor? He has a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Cornell.
2. Mister Thompson is not here, but you can telephone him at Main five-seven-five-two.
3. My sister graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts degree in February nineteen hundred and forty-eight.

4. She was married on the twenty-first of October, nineteen hundred and forty-nine.
5. Her husband is Doctor William Reid, a research economist with the American Federation of Labor.
6. Look on page one thousand, four hundred and seventy.
7. He was born on January thirty-one at five minutes after eleven post meridian.
8. The date of the battle of Hastings is anno Domini 1066.
9. Send this letter to Colonel Donald Andrews, care of the Thirty-third Division at Fort Sam Houston.
10. Fifty-four people were hurt in the wreck, including the three top executives of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

B. Rewrite the following sentences to remove any abbreviations or figures which would be undesirable in college composition:

1. The speaker was a prof. from the U. of Indiana.
2. I saw her downtown this a.m.
3. 10 days later, the man died.
4. The candidate spoke as often as 8 times in a single day.
5. Somebody said to me "Mr., this man needs a Dr."
6. The party consisted of Brig. Gen. T. A. Smith, a Col., and two Lt. Cols.
7. The math exam will be held in Rm. 511 at 2:00 P.M.
8. He paid $20; he could have bought a good second-hand one for $5.

C. In the following sentences, change lower case letters to capitals wherever the conventions require such a change:

1. She asked, "what makes it spin?"
2. it is one of the best of the english movies.
3. Some of his activities are alleged to be unamerican.
4. The words are, "our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."
5. The greeks called their chief god *zeus;* the romans called him *jupiter.*
6. The king James bible is called the authorized version. It was translated by a committee of biblical scholars.
7. The title is *20,000 leagues under the sea.*
8. F. D. Roosevelt is the only president who won the presidency four times.
9. What did you get your mother for mother's day.
10. The bowl games are played chiefly in the west and south. The winter weather in the north and east is not suitable for post-season football.

D. In the following sentences remove unnecessary capitalization:

1. He is a Four Star General in the U. S. Army.
2. Our Navy is twice as large as that of the British.

3. This course is required for all Freshmen. Sophomores who are transfers from another University may also be required to take it.
4. My Father wants me to be a University Professor but I prefer a better-paying Profession.
5. Spring may be the most beautiful Season, but I prefer Fall.
6. Go East for three blocks and then turn North.
7. It will soon be time for the birds to start their Southern migrations.
8. Her Uncle is a Rear-Admiral in the Navy and an authority on Naval strategy.
9. He studied for the Ministry before going to Law School.
10. "I will do it," She said, "If you will help me."

E. Rewrite the following letter so as to revise any unconventional use of abbreviations, capitals, hyphens, or numbers:

Twenty-five Main Street
Ridgeville, Minnesota
Aug. 17, 1950

Doctor L. P. Wright
English Dept.
U. of Minn.

Dear Dr. Wright:

When I entered the University in Feb. I was notified that because of a one-Unit deficiency in High School english I would have to take a non credit course called remedial english. I took the course, but because I was ill most of the Semester I missed the Final Examination and received a Final Grade of f. My instructor, Mister Larsen, told me it would be possible to remove my failure by petitioning for a Make Up Examination.

If possible I would like to take the Exam before School starts in Sept. so that I can begin the regular comp. course this coming Semester. Would that be possible? I must complete 15 credit-hours next term to be eligible to join a Fraternity and therefore cannot afford to take a 3 hour non credit course. I could take the Make Up anytime before the 15th of Sept., preferably between the 5th and 10th.

Yrs. Sincerely

Geo. A. Jones

F. Write the following figures as Arabic numerals:

ix	xcv	cml
xiv	cxv	cmxc
xl	cccix	mclx
xlvi	cd	md
lxxi	dcx	mcml

Write the following figures as Roman numerals:

3	10	50	400
4	14	80	550
5	19	90	1776
9	30	154	1948

PART FOUR

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

21

USING THE LIBRARY

DURING the next four years your assignments in all courses will require you to make frequent use of your college library. You will use it more efficiently and with more confidence if, as early as possible, you make yourself familiar with the location of materials you are likely to use frequently. The most important units are the card catalog, the reference room, and the periodical room. Most of your library work will be easier if you become acquainted with these units early in the first semester.

The Card Catalog

The card catalog is a register of all the books in the library. As each book is purchased, it is "classified."[1] That is, it is given a "call number" which identifies its place in the total library collection. That call number, along with all other pertinent information, is put on a "3 by 5" card, and the card is filed alphabetically in one of the series of trays which make up "the card catalog."

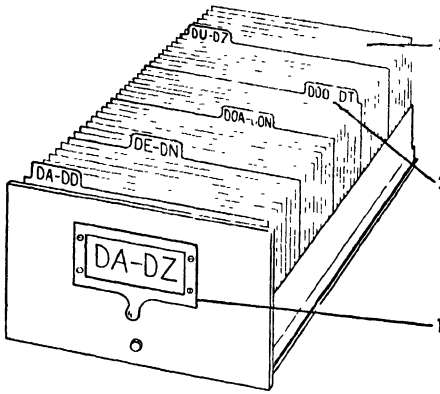
As far as you are concerned, the card catalog is the most important unit in the library. With a few exceptions you will have to consult

[1] A general knowledge of the Dewey Decimal Classification, the most popular system of classifying books, will be useful to any student who does considerable library work. That system classifies books according to the following scheme:

000-099	General Works	600-699	Applied Sciences
100-199	Philosophy and Psychology	700-799	Fine Arts and Recreation
200-299	Religion	800-899	Literature
300-399	Social Sciences	F	Fiction in English
400-499	Languages	900-999	History, Travel, Collected Biography
500-599	Pure Sciences	B	Individual Biography

While it is not necessary for you to know the complete classification, it would be useful to memorize the numbers of particular classes in which your major subjects lie. This is particularly true in those libraries in which students are permitted to go directly to the stacks.

A single tray in the card catalog looks like this:

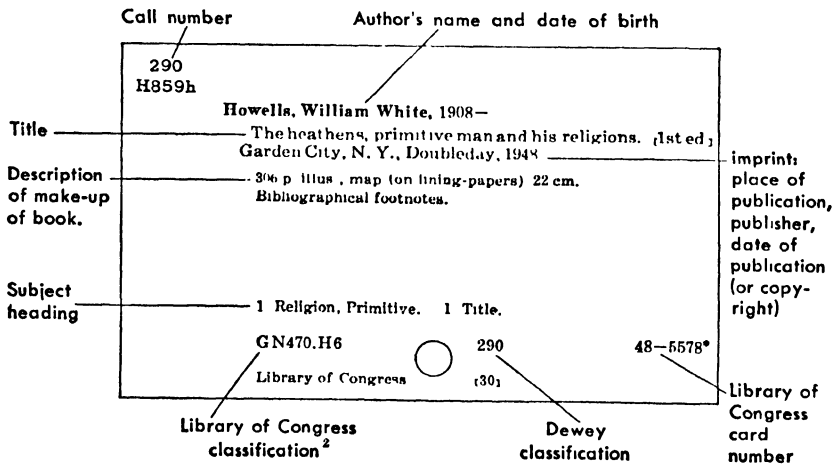


it for every book you want to withdraw. Unless you learn to use it easily, you will waste time and often fail to get the books you want.

The catalog contains five kinds of cards:

1. Author cards, a listing according to the author's surname.
2. Title cards, a listing according to the first significant word in the title.
3. Subject cards, a listing according to the subject of the book.
4. Cross-reference cards, usually called *see-also* cards, which refer the reader to other headings under which information may be found.
5. Analytic cards, which analyze a book into its parts and list the parts separately.

A typical author card looks like this:



Three items of information are of primary importance: the call number, the author's name, and the title. These are the items which you will probably be required to write on the withdrawal slip with which you order the book.

The Call Number. In most libraries the call number alone would be sufficient information to allow the librarian to find a required book quickly. Unless the Library of Congress system is being used – see the following footnote – a call number consists of two lines of figures. The first line is the Dewey classification number, which places the book in its proper class and, therefore, identifies its general location. The second line is the *book number* and consists of the first letter of the author's surname followed by figures which identify the specific location of the book within its class location. In our example, then, the call number will be translated by the librarian as follows:

290 (Dewey classification for non-Christian religions)
H (Surname of author starts with H)
859 (Cutter number identifying book within 290 H group)
h (first letter of first significant word in title, to help distinguish this work from work by same author on similar subject)

Since librarians generally work with call numbers rather than with the names of authors and titles, it is necessary to copy the call number carefully. For example, miscopying the first number as a 5 might send the librarian to the shelf containing books on zoology.

Title and Subject Cards. Usually, a title or subject card is merely an author card with the title or subject typed above the author's name. Thus the first lines of title and subject cards for the example above would be

Title card	The heathens, primitive man and his religions.
Subject card	Religion, primitive

The rest of these cards would be similar to the author card shown above.

Special Details of Arrangement. The following points are worth remembering in using the card catalog:

[2] In large libraries the Library of Congress classification is often preferred to the Dewey Decimal System, although the latter is generally more popular. In the example given above, GN is the class number, 470 the book number, and H6 the author number. If your library uses the Library of Congress classification, study that system in M. T. Eaton and C. M. Louttit, *A Handbook of Library Usage* or any similar handbook.

1. When books *by* a writer are listed with those *about* him, the books by him are listed first.

2. Abbreviations are listed as though they were written in full. Thus *Mr., Dr., St.,* and *U.S.* are listed as though they were Mister, Doctor, Saint, and United States. Notice, especially, that *Mac, Mc,* and *M,* are all listed as though they were *Mac.* Numbers are listed as though they were written out – that is, 50 = Fifty.

3. Prefixes in foreign names (*de, von,* etc.) are not listed as part of the surname. *Paul von Hindenburg* is listed as *Hindenburg, Paul von.*

4. Alphabetizing follows the rule of "short before long." Thus:

black	blackmail
black and tan	blackmail and robbery
black and white	blackmailer
blackboard	blacksmith

5. Within like subdivisions of a subject the arrangement is alphabetical, but subdivisions of history are arranged chronologically:

Dancing	U.S. – History
Dancing – Ballet	U.S. – History – Colonial
Dancing – Ballroom	U.S. – History – Revolution
Dancing – Folk	U.S. – History – Confederacy
Dancing – Gymnastic	U.S. – History – Civil War

6. Titles are listed alphabetically according to the first significant word. Thus, articles (*a, an, the*) and their foreign equivalents are ignored.

7. Cross-references to related subjects or to additional material on the same subject are placed after the last card on a subject. If your purpose requires you to consult all the material on a given subject, you should not ignore these *see-also* cards.

PRINTED CATALOGS

Printed catalogs (in book form) are often useful supplements to the card catalog. Your card catalog is a list of the books in your library, not of all books available. Printed catalogs may give you the titles of other books, quote the price of books you may wish to buy, allow you more easily to compile a bibliography of books on a particular subject, and sometimes provide a *selected* list of books on a subject. The fol-

lowing printed catalogs are standard references and are probably available in your library:

Children's Catalog. Selected list of 4,200 books for children. Published every five years, with annual cumulative supplements.

Cumulative Book Index. Index of all books published in English, except government publications. Listed by author, subject, and title. Available in monthly issues, also in annual and five-year cumulative volumes known as the *United States Catalog.*

Fiction Catalog, 1941, with cumulative annual supplements. Listed by authors, with subject index. Descriptive note for each entry. Best books are starred; those suitable for young people marked *y.*

Publisher's Trade List Annual. A collection of publishers' catalogs, arranged alphabetically by names of publishers. Useful for checking to see if a book is still in print, its present price, and address of publisher from whom to order.

Standard Catalog for Public Libraries. List of adult non-fiction books, arranged according to library classification, with index. This catalog, the catalogs of fiction and children's books cited above, and a fourth catalog for high school libraries, comprise a series known as *The Standard Catalog Series.*

U.S. Catalog. Annual and five-year volumes of *Cumulative Book Index* cited above. Only American listings given. Fourth edition, 1928, has been supplemented by *Cumulative Book Index.*

Vertical File Service Catalog. Subject-index to current pamphlets, with descriptive notes. Annual volumes, with monthly supplements.

In addition to these general catalogs, your library probably contains many specialized printed catalogs. You can obtain the titles of these by consulting the librarian.

REFERENCE WORKS

Your work on research papers, term papers, and collateral reading assignments for advanced courses will require you to make frequent use of the Reference Room. This is the heart of the library, and it would be worth your while to make a preliminary survey of the works it contains and to memorize the location of the most useful of them. You will not be allowed to take reference books out of the library. But you are at liberty to consult them, and should, as a general habit, turn to them first in any serious study.

It is not possible here to list all the major reference books available in most college libraries. The list that follows is restricted to those fields in which students are generally most interested. If your assign-

ments or interests lead you into other fields, consult Mudge's *Guide to Reference Books* (1936 and supplements) or ask a librarian about the best sources in your field.

Indexes to Periodical Literature

Periodicals are publications other than newspapers which appear at regular periods – weekly, monthly, quarterly, and so on. Since much of your reading, especially in advanced courses, will be based on magazine articles, and since these articles are not listed in card or printed catalogs, it will be necessary for you to use indexes to periodical literature. The most important of these are listed below, under the headings of *General* and *Specialized.* A specialized index lists only articles in magazines in the field to which it is confined – engineering, law and so on. A general index is not restricted in subject matter, though it usually excludes highly specialized or technical material. The most useful general index is *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature,* which will be available in your library in annual volumes, with semi-monthly supplements for the current year.

In using any of these indexes, first consult the explanatory material at the front of the volume. There you will find a list of the periodicals cited, thus: *Am City* (*American City*), *Am Econ R* (*American Economic Review*), *Am Hist R* (*American Historical Review*), *Am Home* (*American Home*). You will also find a key to the abbreviations used in the volume. Since every index makes extensive use of abbreviations, this key will be invaluable.

In general, entries in an index to periodical literature are listed alphabetically according to subject matter. Occasionally, as the following excerpt from the *Reader's Guide* shows, particular entries are also listed according to author or title, but the last two entries are more common than the first two.

ABERNETHY, Edgar Dogwood winter; poem. Sat Eve Post 219:73 Ap 5 '47	Author listing – author, title, and source of poem.
ABIE'S Irish Rose; drama. See Nichols, A.	Title listing, with cross-reference to author.
ABILENE, Kansas Little Ike's home town. J. A. Arndt, C S Mon Mag p4 My 19 '45	Subject listing. For identification of magazine, see List of Periodicals at beginning of volume.

ABILITY

Inequalities in adult capacity, from military data. W. V. Bingham. bibliog Science 104: 147-52 Ag 16 '46; Same abr. Science N L 50: 134 Ag 31 '46	Same article published in two periodicals. Original article in first source, abridgement in second.
Limitation of creative years; reply to H. C. Lehman. J. Bjorksten. Sci Mo 62:94 Ja '46	62:94 Ja '46 = volume 62, page 94, January issue, 1946.

See also

Efficiency	Musical ability	Cross-references to related subjects and specialized abilities.
Great men	Talent	
Mechanical ability		

Since the abbreviated titles used in an index are not conventional in a formal bibliography, it is good practice to expand the magazine title in copying the reference. Thus you should write Sat Eve Post as *Saturday Evening Post*, Science NL as *Science News Letter*, and Sci Mo as *Scientific Monthly*. If your library requires a withdrawal slip (call slip) for magazines, you will be expected to put the full title on that slip anyway. Remember that index abbreviations are not always self-evident when removed from the explanatory List of Periodicals at the front of the index.

General Indexes

International Index to Periodical Literature, 1907——. In general, confined to the more scholarly magazines in English and foreign languages. Most valuable for serious articles in science and humanities.

Poole's Index to Periodical Literature, 1802-1906. First of the magazine indexes and the only one listing articles published before 1890; therefore it should be used to complement *Reader's Guide*. Arranged alphabetically by subject only, except that titles are listed for plays, poems, and stories.

The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, 1900——. See above.

Specialized Indexes

The selected indexes below are presented in alphabetical order according to subject fields.

Agricultural Index, 1916——. Lists books, magazine articles, pamphlets, and reports dealing with agriculture. Available in annual volumes, with monthly supplements for current year. Listing is by subject, but full index is appended in annual volumes.

Art Index, 1929——. Best reference to magazine articles on fine arts and to museum bulletins. Listing by author and subject.

Book Review Digest, 1905—. Digests, with excerpts, book reviews on general subjects. Arranged alphabetically by author of book, with subject and title index appended. To use, first find date of book being reviewed, then check author and subject index for that year and the year following. Annual volumes and monthly supplement.

Debate Index, 1939—. Subject index of debated questions.

Dramatic Index, 1909-1933. Best index of books and articles on the theater, actors, plays, playwrights, and related subjects. Arranged by subject. Since 1933 similar materials available in the Bulletin of *Bibliography.*

Education Index, 1929—. Best index of books and articles on education and educational psychology. Listed by author and subject.

Engineering Index, 1906—. Lists articles in English and foreign engineering journals and transactions of technical societies. Arranged, since 1919, according to subject, with author index. Before 1919, arranged by subject classes – civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, etc.

Facts on File, 1940—. Weekly digest of world events. Available in libraries in annual volumes, with supplements for current year. Arranged by subject divisions.

Index to Legal Periodicals, 1908—. Authoritative list of articles in legal journals.

Index Medicus, 1879-1926, and *Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus,* 1927—. Together these indexes, both arranged by author and subject, constitute a bibliography of significant articles on medicine appearing in English and foreign languages.

Industrial Arts Index, 1913—. Lists books, magazine articles, and pamphlets on chemistry, commerce, engineering, geology, and physics. Arranged by subject.

Psychological Index, 1894-1933. An index of the literature of psychology and related subjects in all languages. Arranged according to classified subjects, with author index appended. Since 1933 material available in *Psychological Abstracts.*

Psychological Abstracts, 1927—. Contains summaries of current literature on psychology, with subject and author index to publications. Replaces *Psychological Index.*

Public Affairs Information Service, 1915—. Subject index of books, articles, and pamphlets on economics, political science, and sociology. Available in annual volumes, with weekly supplements for current year.

Song Index, 1926; supplement, 1934. Lists alphabetically the titles and first lines of songs and the names of their authors.

Other Indexes

Both the New York and the London *Times* are fully indexed. *The New York Times Index* may be available in your library in annual

volumes, with monthly supplements for the current year. Since news is usually published in all papers at about the same time, a story may be checked in any paper by first finding when it appeared in *The New York Times* and then consulting the same issue of the paper you are concerned with. Thus *The New York Times Index* can serve as a substitute index for any paper.

The *Document Catalogue* is an index of all government publications from 1893 to 1934. All documents are listed under author and subject, sometimes under title also. For government publications after 1934, the best source is the *Monthly Catalogue*, which is available in annual volumes, with monthly supplements for the current year.

Yearbooks

Yearbooks are annual publications which digest the year's activities. The following list includes the most generally used yearbooks:

American Yearbook. Provides an excellent review of current events and of developments in all major fields during the year. Confined to the United States and its territories. Arrangement is by subject, but detailed index is appended.

Britannica Book of the Year. Annual supplement to *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* Arranged alphabetically by subject, like the *Britannica,* with detailed index.

Congressional Directory. Best source of information about Congress, its members, committees, functions, etc. In using, check subjects against alphabetical list of contents; check persons in appended *Individual Index.*

New International Year Book. Annual supplement to *New International Encyclopedia.* It does for all countries what *American Yearbook* does for the United States.

Statesman's Yearbook. Best general reference for information about government activities in all countries, including such related topics as agriculture, commerce, defense, production, and so on. Fully indexed.

Statistical Abstract of the United States. Best source for official statistics on any aspect of American life. Fully indexed.

Who's Who. Authoritative, highly-condensed biographies of famous living men and women. Published annually in England. Emphasis is on British citizens. Alphabetically arranged.

Who's Who in America. Published every two years; otherwise, the American counterpart of *Who's Who.*

Who's Who in —. Many special fields have their own *Who's Who* — for example, *Who's Who in Art, Who's Who in Education.* Whatever such works your library has will be recorded in the card catalog. Check cards following *Who's Who.*

World Almanac. A comprehensive source of miscellaneous information.

Its general usefulness and low cost justify its purchase as a private reference work. Detailed index in *front* of each volume.

Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Other Reference Works

The following reference works are classified as *General* or *Specialized* on the same basis as the general and specialized indexes presented above.

General

General dictionaries are listed on page 176. Specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias will be given below in their respective subject-fields. The three best-known general encyclopedias are:

Encyclopaedia Americana, 30 volumes, 1945. Supplemented by *Americana Annual.*

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 24 volumes, 1944. Supplemented by *Britannica Book of the Year.*

New International Encyclopedia, 27 volumes, 1922-30. Supplemented by *New International Year Book.*

Specialized Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

Art

Adeline, J. *Art Dictionary,* 1910. A comprehensive dictionary of terms used in fields of art.

Architectural Publishing Society, *Dictionary of Architecture,* 1852-92, 6 vols.

Fielding, M. *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers,* 1925.

Harper's Encyclopedia of Art, 1937, 2 vols.

Biography

Current Biography, 1940—. Sketches of contemporary celebrities.

Dictionary of American Biography, 1928-37, 20 vols. and index. The standard reference work on American biography. Does not list living persons.

Dictionary of National Biography, 1908-1909, 22 vols. and supplements. The standard reference on British biography. Also condensed as one-volume *Concise Dictionary of National Biography.* Does not list living persons.

Webster's Biographical Dictionary, 1943. Contains 40,000 short notices of people of all countries and times. Gives pronunciations of names.

Who's Who, etc. See page 409.

Education

American Council on Education, *A Guide to American Universities and Colleges,* 1948.

Baird, W. R. *Baird's Manual.* Fourteenth edition, 1940. A standard reference on American college fraternities.

Education Index. See page 000.

Monroe, P. ed., *Cyclopedia of Education,* 1911-13, 5 vols.

Monroe, W. S., *Encyclopedia of Educational Research,* 1941.

Watson, F., *Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Education,* 1921-22, 4 vols.

Engineering

Condensed Encyclopedia of Engineering, 1928.

Engineering Index. See page 408.

Glazebrook, Sir R., *Dictionary of Applied Physics,* 1921-23, 5 vols.

Industrial Arts Index. See page 408.

Tweney, C. F. and Shirslov, I. P., *Hutchinson's Technical and Scientific Encyclopedia,* 1935, 4 vols.

History

Adams, J. T. and Coleman, R. V., *Atlas of American History,* 1943. 147 maps, indexed.

Cambridge Histories (*Ancient,* 10 vols.; *Medieval,* 7 vols.; *Modern,* 13 vols.). Excellent bibliographies, tables, and indexes.

Channing, E., Hart, A. B., and Turner, F. J., *Guide to Study and Reading of American History,* 1912.

Dictionary of American History, 1940, 5 vols. and index.

Dutcher, G. M. and others, *Guide to Historical Literature,* 1937.

Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1937, 8 vols.

Keller, H. R., *Dictionary of Dates,* 1934, 2 vols.

Langer, W. L., *An Encyclopedia of World History,* rev. ed., 1948.

Paullin, C. O. and Wright, J. K., *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the U.S.,* 1932.

Literature

Baker, E. A. and Packman, J., *Guide to the Best Fiction.* Third edition, 1932.

Baker, E. A., *Guide to Historical Fiction,* 1914.

Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations.* Eleventh edition, 1941.

Cambridge History of American Literature, 1917-21, 4 vols.

Cambridge History of English Literature, 1907-27, 15 vols.

Brewton, J. E. and S. W., *Index to Children's Poetry,* 1942.

Eastman, M. H., *Index to Fairy Tales, Myths, and Legends,* 1926. Supplement, 1937.

Firkins, I. T., *Index to Plays (1800-1926)*, 1927. Supplement (1927-34), 1935.

Index to Short Stories. Second edition, 1923. Supplements, 1929, 1936.

Hefling, H. and Richards, E., *Index to Contemporary Biography and Criticism.* Second edition, 1934.

Moulton, C. W. ed., *Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors,* 1901-05, 8 vols.

Peck, H. T. ed., *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature,* 1897.

Warner, C. D. ed., *Library of the World's Best Literature,* 1917, 30 vols.

Music

Apel, W., *Harvard Dictionary of Music,* 1944.

Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 1929-30, 6 vols. Supplement, 1940.

Kobbe, G., *The Complete Opera Book,* 1935.

Oxford History of Music, 1929-34, 7 vols.

Pierre Key's Music Year Book, 1925-38. Annual volumes within this period.

Sears, M. E., *Song Index,* 1926. Supplement, 1934.

Mythology

Edwardes, M. and Spence, L., *Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology,* 1923.

Frazer, Sir J. G., *The Golden Bough,* 1905-15, 12 vols. Also one-volume condensation.

Gayley, C. M., *Classic Myths in English Literature and in Art,* 1911.

Mythology of All Races, 1916-32, 13 vols. The standard reference work on the subject.

Philosophy and Psychology

Baldwin, J. M., *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology,* 1901-05, 3 vols. Revised edition, 1928.

Louttit, C. M., *Handbook of Psychological Literature,* 1932.

Psychological Abstracts, 1927 ——. See page 408.

Psychological Index. See page 408.

Warren, H. C., *Dictionary of Psychology,* 1934.

Religion

Canney, M. A., *Encyclopaedia of Religions,* 1921.

Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907-22, 15 vols. and 2 supplements. New edition in process.

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1911-27, 12 vols. and index.

Jewish Encyclopedia, 1925, 12 vols.

Hastings, J., *Dictionary of the Bible,* 1898-1902, 5 vols. Also independent one-volume edition by the same author.

Mathews, S. and Smith, G. B., *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics,* 1921.

New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1908-12, 12 vols. and index.

Strong, J., *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,* 1894.

Science

Atomic Information, 1946——. Monthly publication of Committee on Atomic Information.

Crane, E. J. and Patterson, A. M., *Guide to the Literature of Chemistry,* 1927.

Glazebrook, Sir R., *Dictionary of Applied Physics,* 1922-23, 5 vols.

Henderson, I. F. and W. D., *Dictionary of Scientific Terms.* Second edition, 1929.

International Catalogue of Scientific Literature, 1902-19. A bibliography of books and articles in all fields of science.

Sarton, G., *Introduction to the History of Science,* 1927-31, 2 vols. Contains good bibliographies.

Thorpe, E., *Dictionary of Applied Chemistry,* 1922-27, 7 vols. Supplements (1934-35) 2 vols.

Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia, 1938.

Sociology

Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1937, 8 vols.

Fairchild, H. P. ed., *Dictionary of Sociology,* 1934.

London Bibliography of the Social Sciences, 1931-34, 4 vols. and supplement. Prepared by British Library of Political and Economic Sciences.

McLaughlin, A. C. and Hart, A. B., *Cyclopedia of American Government,* 1914, 3 vols.

Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy, 1923-26, 3 vols.

Political Handbook of the World, 1927——. Annual volumes.

Social Science Abstracts, 1929——.

PREPARING A BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the sense in which you will be using the term in your college work, a *bibliography* is a list of books and articles dealing with a particular subject. A *preliminary* bibliography is one which lists the

works you expect to use in gathering material for a paper. A *final* bibliography is the list you actually used in preparing a paper. Since the preliminary bibliography is the better test of a student's ability to use the library, the following account is chiefly concerned with the preparation of such a list.

The Process

In preparing a bibliography, as in other tasks, a few minutes' careful consideration of the problem may save hours of needless work and result in a better product. Most students rush uncritically to the card catalog. Before you begin your actual search for titles, sit down and ask yourself two questions: What kind of material do I want? What are the most likely places to find it?

The reason for these questions is that different subjects require different approaches to the preparation of a bibliography. If you are dealing with a subject just recently developed, the card catalog will be of little use to you. It records only books, and since most books require more than a year – sometimes many years – to write and publish, even the newest book may not be up to date in a rapidly developing subject. For such a topic you must get most of your information from newspapers and recent magazine articles. On the other hand, many subjects – the development of the alphabet, for example – have been thoroughly treated in books and little of significance will be found about them in current periodicals. For some subjects, the best approach will be through an index to technical publication; for others, *The New York Times Index* may yield the required information most readily. A little time spent analyzing your problem should reveal the most profitable sources.

Subject to this general caution, the following procedure is recommended:

1. Make a preliminary survey of your subject by reading an article about it in a general reference work. A good encyclopedia is often the best jumping-off point, for it not only gives you a reliable general account, but it usually supplies a selected bibliography which may be useful.

2. Once you are familiar with the subject, in a general way, decide whether your material will be drawn from books or magazines, or both. You will find the books listed in card and printed catalogs; you will find the magazine references in the indexes to periodicals discussed earlier in this chapter.

3. Work first with general sources, then with specialized ones. As you read articles in encyclopedias, watch for cross-references to useful material. You will find the most authoritative works on your subject quoted most frequently.

4. Be on the alert for critical bibliographies, which evaluate the works they list and thus tell you what sources are best and for what part of the subject. Many serious studies contain such a bibliography and so give you expert advice on what publications will be most useful to you.

5. If your bibliography is an important one, try to make it selective as you prepare it. There is no point in putting down three titles if they all contain the same information, or in listing books which have little to say on your subject. Develop the habit of guessing intelligently whether a book will be useful to you. In some subjects – atomic energy, for example – an old book is likely to be outdated. Often the best way to guess at a book's usefulness is to draw it out and look at it quickly. Read the preface, or part of it; check the table of contents; see how much space it gives to your subject. With a little practice you will usually be able to tell within three minutes whether the book is worth further consideration.

6. Study the indexes of books on related subjects. A book on physics may contain a pertinent discussion of atomic energy. But do not begin to read it through merely in the hope that it may contain such information. Instead, turn to the index at the back of the book and see how many references are given under *atomic energy*. If necessary, sample the most likely of these references. Similarly, if your study is a biographical one, check the indexes of memoirs and letters by people acquainted with your subject.

All this advice may be summed up in two words: *act purposefully*. You will save much time, and work with more confidence and enjoyment, if you feel that you are not just drifting around in a library hoping to pick up useful information but are actually following a calculated plan for discovering your material.

The Form of the Bibliography

Each bibliographical entry should precisely identify the work cited, though the form of the entries will vary with the nature of the publication.

Books. For any book other than a reference work the following information is required:

1. Name of author (surname first, then first name or initials).

2. Exact title of the book (italicized in print, underlined in manuscript).

3. Facts of publication (place, publisher, date. If no date is given on title page, last date of copyright may be used).

Marckwardt, Albert H., *The Future of English.* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.

For certain books, other information may be required – for example: the name of translator or editor, the number of volumes, the edition number. If no volume or edition number is given, the entry is interpreted as a first edition of a one-volume work. The following samples illustrate:

A translation:

Silone, I., *Bread and Wine,* translated from the Italian by Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1937.

An edited collection:

Crane, R. S., ed., *A Collection of English Poems, 1600-1800.* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1932.

An edition of the works of an author:

Wordsworth, W., *The Complete Works of William Wordsworth,* edited by Andrew J. George. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1904.

A multi-volume work:

Cummins, S. and Linscott, R. N., eds., *The World's Great Thinkers.* New York, Random House, 1947, 4 vols.

Later editions:

Steadman, J. M and Foerster, N., *Writing and Thinking,* rev. ed. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1941.

Wyld, H. C., *A Short History of English,* 3rd ed. London, John Murray, 1937.

Punctuation. Either of the following types of punctuation is acceptable:

Hixson, J. C. and Colodny, I. *Word Ways.* New York: American Book Co., 1939.

Hixson, J. C. and Colodny, I., *Word Ways.* New York, American Book Co., 1939

That is, author and title may be separated by either a comma or a period; place of publication and publisher by either a comma or a colon; and the final period may be omitted. When, as in informal bibliographies, the publisher's name is omitted, commas are often used to separate all parts:

Wyld, H. C., *A Short History of English*, 3d ed., 1937.

Magazines. Articles from magazines are entered as follows:

1. Author's name if known (as in books).
2. Title of the article (in quotation marks).
3. Title of the magazine (italicized in print, underlined in manuscript).
4. Volume number (Roman or Arabic numerals).
5. Date of issue (usually in parentheses. If Roman numerals are used for volume, date comes between volume and page numbers. If Arabic numerals are used, date usually comes after volume and page numbers).
6. Page numbers.

Huxley, J. S., "The Growth of a Group Mind in Britain," *The Yale Review*, XXX (June, 1941), 669-684.

Huxley, J. S., "The Growth of a Group Mind in Britain," *The Yale Review*, 30:669-684 (June, 1941).

Notice that the punctuation is slightly different from that used for books. Except for the parentheses and the colon in the second example, commas are used throughout the entry. Publisher and place of publication are not given in the magazine entry.

Newspapers. If the author and title of an article in a newspaper are known, the form is similar to that used for magazine articles, except that the volume number is omitted and a column number may be given. If no author is known, the entry begins with the title or headline:

Handler, M. S., "Yugoslavs Show Mollifying Mood," *The New York Times*, June 1, 1948, p. 8, col. 3.

"Small Army Tends Illinois' Hybrid Corn," *Chicago Daily News*, July 22, 1948, p. 1.

Reference Works. The bibliographical form for an article in an encyclopedia resembles that for a magazine article, except that the edition must be indicated for works of more than one edition:

Potts, W. H., "Medicine and Surgery," *The New International Year Book for 1945*, pp. 355-360.

"Samoan Islands," *The New International Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition, XX, 402-403.

Fisher, M. S., "Parent Education," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, XI, 573-576.

EXERCISES

A. Test your knowledge of the library by marking the following statements True or False. The correct answers are given within this chapter.

1. The Dewey Decimal Classification divides all books into twelve major groups.
2. This system is also used for classifying magazines.
3. The "call number" of a book is its Dewey classification.
4. The card catalog lists books but not magazine articles.
5. In the card catalog, "Union Pacific" is listed ahead of "U. S. Army."
6. "Utopia" is listed before "U. S. Army."
7. "San Salvador" is listed before "St. Louis," and "Bluebells" before "Blue skies."
8. *The Life of Julius Caesar* is listed under "Julius."
9. The *Reader's Guide* is another name for *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature.*
10. Listings in the *Reader's Guide* are arranged alphabetically by subject, sometimes also by author and title.
11. The *Reader's Guide* lists magazine articles published since 1800.
12. Titles of magazines are abbreviated in the *Reader's Guide.*
13. The *Book Review Digest* includes excerpts from the reviews it digests.
14. *Facts on File* is a statistical abstract.
15. *The Britannica Book of the Year* is a supplement to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*
16. *The New International Year Book* is a supplement to *The New International Encyclopedia.*
17. *The Statesmen's Yearbook* is a good reference for government activities in all countries.
18. *Who's Who* is an American publication.
19. The *Encyclopaedia Americana* is confined to American subjects.
20. The *Dictionary of National Biography* contains studies of famous people in all countries.
21. The *Dictionary of American Biography* is confined to the lives of Americans.
22. Many specialized fields have their own dictionaries, encyclopedias, and indexes.
23. The Cambridge Histories are a series of one-volume histories of several countries.

24. The Cambridge History of English Literature is a good reference work on that subject.

25. There is no dictionary of classical literature available.

26. One of the best reference books for music is *Grove's Dictionary.*

27. Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough* is an index to financial literature.

28. Reference sources on atomic energy are not yet available.

29. The best reference work on mythology is *Mythology of All Races.*

30. In preparing a bibliography, the first step is always to consult the card catalog.

31. Before beginning a bibliography, it is useful to read a general article on the subject.

32. A critical bibliography contains brief evaluations of the works listed.

33. It is wise to guess at the usefulness of a book before listing it in a bibliography.

34. All indexes list books and magazines in complete bibliographical form.

35. In a bibliographical entry, the author's surname comes after his given name.

36. If the book is a translation, the translator's name comes immediately after the name of the author.

37. If no edition number is given in a bibliographical entry, the book is understood to be a first edition.

38. The number of volumes is always shown in a bibliographical entry, even if there is only one volume.

39. The facts of publication are the place of publication, the publisher, and the date of publication.

40. If no date of publication appears on the title page, the last date of copyright is used.

41. There is more than one way of punctuating a bibliographical entry.

42. In citing a magazine article, you may use either the title of the article or the title of the magazine.

43. Otherwise, the form for a magazine article is the same as that for a book.

44. Either Roman or Arabic numerals may be used for the volume number of a book.

45. In listing a newspaper story, all that is required is name of newspaper, date, and page number.

46. The name of the author never appears in a listing of an article in an encyclopedia.

47. The edition number of an encyclopedia is not required.

48. The volume number of a newspaper is usually required.

49. *The New York Times Index* may be used as a substitute for indexes to other newspapers.

50. No index is available for pamphlets.

B. Test your ability to tell what sources would be best for different subjects by placing in front of the subjects at the left the number corresponding to the best source at the right. If more than one source would be useful, put the number of the preferred source first.

....A bibliography of pamphlets	1. *Cambridge History of English Literature*
....Oliver Wendell Holmes	2. *Current Biography*
....The date of *Hamlet*	3. *Dictionary of American Biography*
....Ratio of faculty to students in the Big Nine universities	4. *Dictionary of American Painters*
....Photography	5. *Dictionary of National Biography*
....Failure of the Tacoma Bridge	6. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*
....William Pitt the Elder	7. *Engineering Index*
....Grant Wood	8. Firkins' *Index to Plays*
....Robert M. Hutchins	9. Gayley's *Classic Myths*
....Nineteenth Century plays	10. *The New York Times Index*
....Slang terms derived from animals	11. Kenyon and Knott's *Pronouncing Dictionary of American Usage*
....Cost-of-living indexes for last ten years	12. *Oxford Dictionary*
....The labors of Hercules	13. Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang* 14. *Poole's Index*
....Historical development of the meanings of English words	15. *Publishers Trade List Annual*
....Nomination of Governor Dewey	16. *Statistical Abstract of the United States*
....Disputed questions of American written usage	17. *Vertical File Service Catalog*
....Volumes of poetry and drama published in U.S. last year	18. *Webster's New International Dictionary*
....American pronunciation	19. *Who's Who in Education*
....College population of the United States	20. *World Almanac*

C. Rewrite the following bibliographical entries to make the form conventionally acceptable:

1. *Autobiography of Earth,* by J. H. Bradley. New York, Coward-McCann, 1935.
2. E. J. McGrath, and others, *Toward General Education.* Macmillan, New York, 1948.
3. Graff, W. L., "Language and Languages," New York, Appleton, 1932.
4. Nesbitt, G. L., *Benthamite Reviewing:* New York, 1934. Columbia University Press.
5. Harcourt, Brace and Co., *On Reading Shakespeare,* by L. P. Smith, New York, 1933.
6. Abild, R. M., "Take Time To Have Fun With Your Baby," Bet. Hom. & Gard. 24:30 Jl. '48.
7. Beck, W., *How Good Is Sinclair Lewis? College English,* IX, 173-180 (Jan., 1948)
8. Clyde R. Miller and Minsky, L., Propaganda – Good and Bad – for Democracy, "Survey Graphic," 706-709:28.
9. Cole, G. D. H., "Socialism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 20-886-890.
10. Mark Van Doren, "Let the Movies Be Natural," in 6:435-444 of *The American Scholar* for October, 1937.

D. Prepare a short preliminary bibliography (about 10 titles) for one of the following topics:

Jazz as a legitimate art
Radio's contribution to musical education
The history of the movies
Famous American political assassinations
Martha Washington
Florence Nightingale
The early days of baseball
The history of the Olympic Games
Fraternities: pro and con
The development of sororities
The development of the atom bomb
Strange marriage customs
Primitive tabus
The first automobiles
The history of compulsory military service in the United States
Jet propulsion airplanes
The Electoral College
Equal rights for women

22

SYNOPSES AND SUMMARIES

PROBABLY the basic skill required for success in college is the ability to read effectively. College success is largely determined by examinations, and examinations are necessarily concerned with finding out how well the student can reproduce what he has read. The ability, therefore, to restate in one's own words the ideas and information contained in books, articles, and essays is, to a very large extent, the test by which academic success is measured. This is true even when an examination is deliberately designed to test a student's evaluation of his reading, since he must understand what he reads before he is in a position to evaluate it.

Because of the importance of good reading habits in college work, any device which helps a student to read more effectively is worthy of serious attention. You are already familiar with one such device – the outline, which was discussed as a reading aid on pages 89-92. In this chapter we shall consider two other reading aids – the *synopsis* and the *summary*.

THE SYNOPSIS

In your literature courses you will be asked to read novels, plays, and stories, on which you will later be examined. Every student knows that after reading a number of plays or stories, it is often difficult to keep the details of each plot clearly in mind and to keep the separate characterizations from becoming confused. While the pre-examination review helps to eliminate much of that confusion, there is never time to reread all the original material. What is required for reviewing is some record of the original short enough to read quickly but detailed enough to be thoroughly useful. For such purposes the synopsis is most useful.

A synopsis is a summary of a plot. When you return from a movie and are asked what it was about, your answer is in the form of a synopsis. You identify the main characters and tell what happened to them. By so doing, you review the whole movie in a small fraction of the time required to see it.

The following is a synopsis of a play that you may have read or are likely to read in college. In order to be clear, even to a student who has not read the play, the synopsis has been made fuller than would be required for purposes of one's own review.

IBSEN, "A DOLL'S HOUSE," 3 ACTS

Characters: Torvald Helmer; Nora, his wife; Dr. Rank; Nils Krogstad; Mrs. Linde

Act I. The play opens with a picture of the domestic happiness of the Helmer household. Nora is represented as a pretty, helpless woman, dependent on her husband in all worldly concerns. Torvald is the strong, wise husband who paternally guides his wife's life. *From the man's point of view,* he is the ideal husband, and she the ideal wife. Their home is a doll's house, with Nora the doll.

From Mrs. Linde, a woman who has earned her way in the world, we learn that the tranquillity of the doll's house rests on a deception. At a time when her father was dying and her husband was seriously ill Nora had borrowed from Krogstad enough money to finance a trip to Italy, ostensibly a pleasure trip for her but really a journey to save her husband's life. Rather than worry her dying father, who would have given her the money, Nora forged his name to the security she gave Krogstad. Since then she has been paying the interest by practicing all sorts of domestic economies. Her husband, who knows nothing about the transaction, is always teasing her about her domestic extravagance.

At the moment the play opens the finances of the Helmers are about to improve, for Torvald has been appointed manager of the bank and Nora hopes soon to retire the debt. But the dramatic turn from happiness to disaster is occasioned by Torvald's giving Mrs. Linde the job at the bank now held by Krogstad. Krogstad threatens to reveal Nora's forgery unless she persuades her husband to retain him in his position. Nora tries to do this but fails.

Act II. Nora determines to borrow the money to pay Krogstad from Dr. Rank, a good friend of the family. Knowing that he is about to die, Rank visits her and confesses his love for her. Under the circumstances she feels she cannot ask for the loan, although there is no question that she

would get it. Krogstad brings pressure on Nora, but she refuses to interfere with her husband's decision, and in her refusal indicates that she is thinking of committing suicide or of leaving her family in order to spare her husband's name. Krogstad leaves a letter for Torvald, explaining the whole transaction. Nora, who wants to postpone the showdown until after the Christmas party, delays her husband's reading of the letter.

Act III. While the Helmers are at the party, Krogstad and Mrs. Linde decide to get married. Krogstad says that he will ask Torvald for the letter unread, but Mrs. Linde, who understands that Nora is not happy in her role of doll, tells him it would be better if Torvald read the letter.

The Helmers return from the party, and are visited by Rank who leaves a marked card which Nora understands as a notice that he is about to die. Torvald later reads Krogstad's letter and bitterly accuses Nora as an immoral woman, unworthy to be the mother of his children. His conduct opens her eyes and she prepares to leave the house. Meanwhile a letter arrives announcing that Dr. Rank has died and left the Helmers his money. Torvald is overjoyed and announces his forgiveness of Nora. But the experience has made a serious woman out of her. She reviews for her husband their relationship together and denounces the doll-like status in which she has been kept by both him and her father. They talk it over quietly, with Torvald getting the worst of it. Nora decides to leave him. There is a suggestion that their marriage may be resumed after they prove themselves. Then the door slams as Nora leaves.

The next synopsis will have less meaning for a student who has not read the play, but it would probably be adequate to recall the whole action to a student who had read *Candida* several months earlier.

G. B. Shaw, "Candida," 3 Acts

Characters: Rev. James Morell; Candida, his wife; Eugene Marchbanks, a young poet; James Burgess, Candida's father; Proserpine, Morell's secretary; Mill, Morell's assistant.

Act I. The main job of this act is to portray the characters of Morell, Candida, and Marchbanks. Morell is drawn by showing: (*a*) the attitudes of Proserpine and Mill toward him; (*b*) the attitude of Burgess toward him; (*c*) his activities in affairs of the church and of socialism; (*d*) the attitude of Marchbanks toward him; and (*e*) his own attitude toward Marchbanks and Burgess. Marchbanks' character is revealed by his own actions and by the attitudes of Morell and Candida toward him. The action of the play during this act sets up the triangle between Morell, Candida, and Marchbanks and develops the theme far enough so that

Morell's final defeat is indicated. At the beginning of the act Morell is almost a symbol of the confident and competent master of every situation, while Marchbanks is a symbol of naïve incompetence. During the act Marchbanks succeeds in reversing this judgment.

Act II. This act carries on the conflict to the point at which Morell decides to leave Marchbanks and Candida alone while he goes to a meeting. His decision is a desperate attempt to force the issue and find where he stands in Candida's affections.

Act III. Marchbanks makes poetic love to Candida while Morell is gone. Morell returns and forces Candida to make a decision between the two men. Marchbanks is horrified at his crudeness. In the auction scene Candida chooses her husband as the weaker of the two men and therefore the one who needs her most. Marchbanks, who had anticipated her decision, leaves after receiving Candida's final advice.

Although this second synopsis will seem less satisfactory to a student who is not familiar with the play, it is actually more useful to one who is, since it not only identifies the characters and reviews the plot, but also shows the relationship which the separate acts have to each other and to the whole drama. A synopsis need not do this, but since the relation of a particular act to the play as a whole may well be asked about on a final examination, this kind of synopsis has an additional merit.

It takes from fifteen to thirty minutes to write an adequate synopsis. A student who feels that he has the details of a play or a novel clearly in mind when he has just finished reading it may see no reason for spending additional time on the assignment. But the test of his reading is not how clearly he knows the work then but how clearly he knows it at the end of the semester. For most students the discipline of making a synopsis as a part of the total reading assignment is rewarded by easier and more accurate recall and hence by better examination grades.

THE SUMMARY

The use of the synopsis is limited to novels, plays, and stories. For all other reading the summary is used. A summary is a condensation of the original. In its simplest form it is nothing more than purposeful note-taking. The student boils down the original passage to the bare facts which it contains, as illustrated by the following examples:

Original	*Summary*
When the site of government was changed to Washington in 1800, there were only one hundred and forty officers and clerks; today there are close to three quarters of a million.	Gov't employees in Washington: In 1800, 140 In 1933, about 750,000
The sun is a fiery, flaming star well toward a million miles in diameter and nearly a hundred million miles from us. Surrounding it is a very deep atmosphere at temperatures running up to 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit, composed of gases and vapors all of which are common on the earth.	Diameter of sun, one million miles Distance from earth, 100 million miles Highest atmosphere temperature, 10,000°
When comparing the financial success of two business firms of the same kind, we do not simply say that the firm making the greater profit is the more successful. What we compare is not profits alone, but profits relative to total investment. That is, if p and i represent profit and investment, respectively, the value of the quotient p/i (that is, the percentage of profit) serves to measure relative financial success.[1]	Comparative financial success of two firms not measured by profits alone, but by formula p/i, when p = profit, and i = investment.

For many purposes the notes at the right offer the most useful kind of summary. We shall see in the next chapter that the use of such notes is recommended in carrying out investigations for a research paper, because this habit of gleaning the facts from a passage encourages alert reading and avoids the possibility of unintentional plagiarism.

However, the kind of summary with which we are principally concerned in this chapter is the **paragraph summary**, in which the reader condenses the content of the whole paragraph into a few sentences. He reads the paragraph, determines what it says, and expresses its essential meaning in short and simplified form. He thus achieves two results: he proves that he understands the paragraph by translating

[1] From *Introduction to Mathematics*, by Cooley, Gans, Kline, and Wahlert. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

it into his own words, and he reduces it to a more convenient form for review. The following examples illustrate:

Original

I often wish that this phrase, "applied science," had never been invented. For it suggests that there is a sort of scientific knowledge of direct practical use, which can be studied apart from another sort of scientific knowledge, which is of no practical utility, and which is termed "pure science." But there is no more complete fallacy than this. What people call applied science is nothing but the application of pure science to particular classes of problems. It consists of deductions from those general principles, established by reasoning and observation, which constitute pure science. No one can safely make these deductions until he has a firm grasp of the principles; and he can obtain that grasp only by personal experience of the operations of observation and of reasoning on which they were founded.[2]

Summary

The attempt to differentiate "pure" and "applied" science misleadingly suggests that "pure" science is not useful. It is useful in two ways: it provides the scientific principles to be applied, and it provides the method which makes application possible.

Explanation

The first sentence of the summary expresses in 16 words the idea stated in 50 words in the first two sentences of the original The second sentence of the summary restates in 23 words the content of the last four sentences of the original (76 words). The summary, therefore, conveys the basic meaning of the original in less than one-third of the space.

Original

Economists write of the "agricultural revolution," of greater productivity per farm worker, of the advantages of farm mechanization and the ability of the farmer to feed more people than he did prior to the nineteenth century. What most of them completely fail to recognize is that production - per - farmer is utterly meaningless divorced from production-per-acre. For a few decades the Western world was able to get along on this assumption — while it still had new lands to open up and while it produced by mining its topsoil. But modern agriculture has not raised the earth's biotic potential; ex-

Summary

The belief that improved agricultural techniques will increase the productivity of land is an illusion. Mechanization will allow one man to farm more acres and, hence, get a bigger crop, but it will not produce a greater yield per acre, except in rare instances. On the contrary, by exploiting the natural resources of the soil it may in time decrease the yield per acre.

[2] From T. H. Huxley, *Collected Essays*. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Original

cept in very limited areas, it has not reduced environmental resistances. Over most of the earth it has enormously increased them, to the point of destroying hundreds of millions of productive acres. Discussion of the agricultural revolution in terms of increased production-per-farmer — or even in terms of pure agriculture, leaving aside the problem of water tables, forests, nonagricultural lands, fauna and noncrop plants, etc. — expresses a most fallacious and dangerous form of thinking. One man, under an improved technology, might be able to farm a full section; this would not bring into being more sections of agricultural land — nor raise or even maintain productivity on other acres.[3]

Explanation

The summary reduces the 209-word original to 64 words by picking out the two main reasons why the "agricultural revolution" will not increase the biotic potential of the earth and ignoring the details by which these reasons are elaborated. In other words, the summary confines the argument to a statement of the thesis and the two factors into which that thesis is broken.

Original

The object of this Essay is to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for

Summary

The thesis of Mill's essay *On Liberty* is that society has no right to interfere with the liberty of an individual in matters which concern only himself. He cannot be restrained by penalties or social pressure so long as his conduct does not harm others. The belief that it would be better for him to change may justify persuasion, but not compulsion.

[3] From William Vogt's *Road to Survival*, William Sloane Associates, 1948. Reprinted by permission of William Sloane Associates, Inc.

Original

him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or reasoning with him, or persuading him, or entreating him, but not for compelling him, or visiting him with any evil in case he do otherwise. To justify that, the conduct from which it is desired to deter him, must be calculated to produce evil to some one else. The only part of the conduct of any one, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.[4]

Explanation

The original paragraph takes 80 words to state the thesis and then elaborates that thesis by seven restatements through 180 words. By stating the thesis in 27 words and restating it only twice in 35 words, the summary boils down the 260-word original to 62 words. Of course, the summary leaves much that has to be inferred, but for a student who had read the original, it would probably be adequate to allow him to restate Mill's position in an essay-type examination.

The preparation of such digests is more a matter of reading than of writing, and the reading is made easier by an understanding of paragraph construction. As we have seen from Chapter 6, most paragraphs develop a single idea by elaborating it through repetition, explanation, or illustration. The first task in writing a digest is to find the basic idea of the paragraph. If that idea is not explicitly stated, it must be distilled out of the sentences which come closest to stating it. In the selection from *Liberty*, the introductory phrase, "That principle is," has almost the effect of turning a spotlight on the main idea of the paragraph. The topic sentences of the other two examples are less obvious, since neither is explicitly stated in a single sentence. Both paragraphs have to be read completely before we can be sure of their purpose but, once read, the central thought of each becomes clear.

The second step in preparing a paragraph summary is to eliminate whatever is not essential to a clear understanding of the topic. For ordinary readers a writer must elaborate his topic sentence to be sure that its implications will not be missed, but a person preparing a summary of a paragraph is not an ordinary reader. He is unusually alert and so he can dispense with the repetition and illustration which

[4] From John Stuart Mill's *Essay on Liberty*.

might otherwise be necessary. Therefore, he concentrates on just those sentences which are necessary to explain the topic idea, and ignores the rest. As he does so, he makes up his mind exactly what the paragraph is saying.

The third step is to write the summary. The safest way to do this is to put the original aside and rewrite the paragraph out of the knowledge already obtained. A student who cannot do that has not read the paragraph carefully enough. If he follows the original as he writes his digest, he may be tempted to pick out a few sentences in their original form and string them together. If he does this, he is quoting from the paragraph, not summarizing it, and what he produces may distort the meaning of the original. The real value of the summary as a reading device is that it requires the student to master the paragraph and make it his own. This value will not be obtained by copying selected sentences.

The final step is to compare the digest with the original for accuracy and to make whatever revisions this comparison suggests. Even for students who have had considerable experience writing paragraph summaries this final step often results in further condensation and simplification of the summary.

To summarize:

1. Read the paragraph to determine its basic idea.

2. Read it again to pick out the essentials, summarizing mentally as you read. If necessary, make notes.

3. Without consulting the paragraph, express its content in your own words. If you get stuck, stop writing and repeat step two.

4. Compare your summary with the original and make any necessary revisions.

The technique of the paragraph summary may be applied to a series of paragraphs or to a whole article. In summarizing a selection consisting of many paragraphs, remember that not all paragraphs are equally significant. Some may introduce or restate main points; others may be transitional; still others may consist entirely of illustrations of a point already made. Since the summary requires you to restate the content, not the paragraphing, it is not necessary to summarize each paragraph separately. The best procedure is first to determine the purpose of the selection, then outline the main topics, and finally summarize each of these without being unduly influenced by the

original paragraphing. For example, "The Distinction Between War and Peace" (pages 42-44) contains ten paragraphs, yet structurally it consists of three parts – the *legal, political,* and *military* distinctions between war and peace. These three parts would be the real units of the summary, and the essay would be summarized as though it contained three paragraphs instead of ten.

In the illustration that follows, the organization of the article is shown by the outline symbols at the left; the main points are underlined in the text; and the significance of the material is indicated in the notes at the right. In its present form, therefore, the illustration represents the first two steps in preparing a summary of a long article.

LANGUAGE PLANNING FOR A NEW ORDER [5]

OUTLINE SYMBOLS		NOTES
I.	As far as we can see into the future, there will always be a multiplicity of regional languages for everyday use. Those who advocate the introduction of an international medium do not dispute this. What they do assert is the need for a second language as a common medium	
1.	for people who speak mutually unintelligible tongues. They envisage a world,	
A.	of at least federations of what were once sovereign states, where people of different speech communities would be bilingual. Everyone would still grow up to speak one or other of existing national languages, but everyone would also acquire a single auxiliary for supranational communication. This prospect is not in-	
2.	compatible with the mental capacities of ordinary human beings; nor does it involve a total break with existing practice. Bilingualism exists already in Wales, Belgium, South Africa, and many other	

[5] Reprinted from *The Loom of Language,* by Frederick Bodmer, by permission of W. W. Norton and Company, Inc. Copyright 1944 by W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York. Permission to reprint in Canada by courtesy of George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., publishers.

OUTLINE SYMBOLS

NOTES

parts. Throughout the English-speaking world all secondary-school children study at least one foreign language, that is, French, Spanish, or German; and in some countries pupils who leave school with a smattering of a foreign language are in the majority.

In Britain they are not. Most of the children enter the labor market with a knowledge of no language other than their own. Consequently millions of adult workers are excluded from direct communication with their Continental comrades. Postponement of the school-leaving age will provide an opportunity for bringing the curriculum for elementary instruction in Britain into line with that of many other countries. Thus the adoption of an international auxiliary implies no more than regularization of existing educational practice, i.e., universal instruction in a second language and agreement to use one and the same second language everywhere. Creation of conditions for uniformity of educational practice by international agreement, as a prelude to universal bilingualism, as defined above, is not a language problem. It is a political problem.

This evidence for the doubt expressed in B1 may be omitted in the summary.

This paragraph explains an exception to A2 above and need not appear in summary.

B.

1. Many well-informed people still doubt whether the social need for a single universal second language will prove strong enough to override human laziness. At first sight the plight of modern language teaching in Great Britain and elsewhere lends some support to pessimism. Hitherto our schools have produced poor results. After years of travail the British public-school produce may have mastered enough French to get in Paris what Paris is only too willing to sell without

OUTLINE SYMBOLS

NOTES

French. This need not make us hopeless. Any society ripe for adopting an interlanguage will be faced with a new set of problems. Pupils who now take French or German as school subjects rarely have a clear-cut idea of the purpose for which they are learning them and, more rarely still, the chance of using what knowledge they acquire. The future is likely to pro-

2. vide incentives and opportunities hitherto unknown. Fantastic delays, misunderstandings and waste due to the absence of a single common language for international cooperation will impress even those who are not knowingly affected by it at present.

A hundred years ago Europe witnessed perhaps less than a dozen international congresses in the course of a whole decade. Delegates were invariably drawn from the upper class. So communication was easy enough. Deliberations were in French. When international congresses became more numerous, they assumed a more gaudy linguistic character. Consequently procedure had often to be conducted in two or more "official" languages. One could choose delegates who were able to compete with the polyglot attendant of an international sleeping car, but the delegate with the best linguistic equipment would rarely be one with the best understanding of relevant issues. This obstacle to international communication becomes more formidable as time goes on. People of new strata and more diverse speech habits discover community of interest, and no single language enjoys the prestige of French during the eighteenth century.

This paragraph is an illustration of the difference between the past and the future and may be ignored in the summary.

OUTLINE SYMBOLS

NOTES

This paragraph develops B2 above. Most of these details may be omitted in the summary.

In short, the prospects for language planning depend on the extent to which the impulse to international co-operation keeps step with the new potential of prosperity for all. Socialist planning, that is planning for the common needs of peoples belonging to different nations or cultural units, will bring about incessant contact between medical officers of health, town-planning experts, electrical engineers, social statisticians, and trade-union representatives. Increased leisure combined with improved traveling facilities will give to a large floating section of the population opportunities to establish new social contacts through the medium of an interlanguage; and its adoption would find a ready ally in the radio. Even those who stay at home perpetually would be tempted to avail themselves of opportunities to learn more of large-scale social enterprise in neighboring communities of the supranational state.

II. The choice for those of us who cherish this hope lies between a constructed language and an already established medium, either in its existing shape or in some simplified form, such as Basic English. The second involves nothing more than an agreement between educational authorities expressing the will of the people. On account of its grammatical simplicity, its hybrid vocabulary, its vast literature, and, above all, its wide distribution over the planet, the claims of

A. Anglo-American would undoubtedly exclude those of any other current language which could conceivably have a large body of promoters in the near future; but political objections to such a choice are formidable. It is most unlikely that a socialist Continent would decide for

OUTLINE SYMBOLS		NOTES
B.	Anglo-American as its interlanguage if Britain remained hostile to the new order. The chances might improve if a Britain free of its imperial incubus entered into close co-operation with its neighbors next door to build up a world without class, war, and want. Even so there is much to say for the adoption of a neutral medium cleansed from the all too evident defects of existing natural languages.	
III. A.	Some linguists meet the plea for a constructed auxiliary with the assertion that language is a product of growth. It is less easy to detect the relevance than to recognize the truth of this assertion. Admittedly it is beyond human ingenuity to construct a live skylark, but the airplane has advantages which no flying animal possesses. Apple trees and gooseberry bushes are also products of growth, and no reasonable man or woman advances this trite reflection as sufficient reason for preventing geneticists from producing new varieties of fruit by combining inherited merits of different strains or allied species. The work accomplished by pioneers of the science of synthetic linguistics shows that it is also possible to produce new language varieties combining the inherent merits of different forms of natural speech. In the light of their achievements and shortcomings we can now prescribe the essential features of a constructed language which would be free from the conspicuous defects of any natural, or of any previously constructed, language.	*First of two objections against constructed language.* *Answer to objection.*
B.	Professional linguists who do not dispute the possibility of constructing a language to meet the requirements of international communication, sometimes raise another objection. They say that	

OUTLINE SYMBOLS

NOTES

the adventure would be short-lived, if ever attempted; that no auxiliary could remain intact for long. Even if confined to the territory of Europe itself, it would split into dialects. Each speech community would locally impose its own phonetic habits and its own system of stress; and the Tower of Babel would come crashing down on the builders. Only a perpetual succession of international congresses could thus prevent a new disaster. Such is the gloomy view which Professor Wyld of Oxford takes. There are three sufficient reasons why it need not intimidate us.

Second objection.

C.

To begin with there is nothing inherently absurd in a suggestion for setting up a permanent interlinguistic commission to check the process of disintegration. For three centuries the forty immortals of the Academie Francaise have tried, not without success, to keep literary French in a strait jacket; and Norway has changed its spelling and grammar by three Acts of Parliament in less than forty years. If national governments can control the growth of national languages, an international authority could also maintain an accepted standard for its own medium of communication. Though international committees to supervise scientific terminology, e.g. the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, are already in existence, our universities cling to the conviction that intelligent language planning on a world-wide scale is out of the question.

1.

First answer to that objection.

By the nature of their training academic linguists are unduly preoccupied with times when few people could travel beyond a day's journey on horseback or

OUTLINE SYMBOLS		NOTES
	by cart, when reading and writing, like stenography today, were crafts confined to a few, when there were no mechanical means for distributing news or information. It is true that languages have broken up time and again in the past, because of dispersion over a wide area, geographical isolation, absence of a written standard, and other disintegrating agencies. Those who entertain the hope of international communication by an auxi-	*Second answer to same objection.*
2.	liary envisage a future in which these agencies will no longer operate. Indeed, we have experience to sustain a more hopeful view than is customary in academic quarters. During the centuries which have followed the introduction of printing, the gradual dissolution of illiteracy, and revolutionary changes in our means of communication, English has established itself as the language of North America and of Australasia. It is not true	
3.	to say that the three main Continental varieties of the common Anglo-American language are drifting further apart. It is probably more true to say that universal schooling, the film, and the radio are bringing them closer together. In any case, experience shows that geographical isolation during several centuries has not made the speech of New England unintelligible to the people of Old England, or vice versa. Experience should therefor encourage, rather than discourage, us in pressing for an international auxiliary.	*Third answer to same objection.*

It is clear from this illustration that the article is an argument in favor of creating a synthetic language as an international auxiliary language. The argument consists of three parts: that an auxiliary language is feasible, that a synthetic language would be more acceptable than any existing natural language, and that the old objections

against synthetic languages no longer hold good. It would be logical to summarize each part in a single paragraph, but since the third part deals with two different objections, it might be better to devote a paragraph to each of them and to write the summary as follows:

The hope of a universa auxiliary language, by which people who speak different national languages may have a medium of international communication is not an impractical one. In many countries people now use two languages, and the practice of teaching some foreign language in secondary schools is generally established. It is true that the level of student achievement in mastering these secondary languages is low, but this lack of success can be explained by the fact that students of foreign languages have little motivation for learning them and little opportunity to use them after they have been learned. Those who advocate the adoption of a universal auxiliary foresee a world in which the needs and opportunities of international cooperation will both demand a universal second language and provide the incentive to make its study efficient.

Whatever auxiliary is chosen must come either from some existing national language or from a constructed language. Of all existing languages, English, because of its grammatical simplicity, its hybrid vocabulary, its vast literature, and its wide distribution, would seem to have the strongest claim to become the world language. But political considerations might make it unacceptable to many nations. A constructed language would not be subject to political objections and would be free of defects which all national languages now show.

There are two common objections against a constructed language. One is that since language is a product of growth there is no chance of constructing a living language. This objection is hardly significant. The work already done on synthetic languages proves that the creation of a successful constructed language presents no linguistic impossibilities.

The second objection is that, while a constructed language could be made, it would not remain a universal language but would break up into mutually unintelligible dialects. While such disintegration has been common in the past, there are three reasons why we need not fear it: (1) as the experience of France, Norway, and the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature shows, the tendency towards disintegration can be held in check by an authoritative commission; (2) the agencies of disintegration are less likely to operate in the interdependent world for which the auxiliary language is to be designed; (3) that fact that the common language of Britain, America, Australia, and New Zealand has not broken up into mutually unintelligible dialects proves that the agencies of disintegration can be offset by such integrating influences as universal education and improved means of communication.

If a shorter summary is required, the whole argument may be condensed to little more than its thesis:

> The advocates of an international auxiliary language believe that it is quite possible to make people bilingual and that the needs of the future will make the task easier. They think that Basic English would be the best natural auxiliary but that political and linguistic considerations favor a constructed language. The chief objections to a constructed language are (1) that languages cannot be constructed, but must grow; and (2) that a constructed language would soon disintegrate. The proponents of a constructed language reply (1) it is now possible to construct a satisfactory synthetic language, and (2) experience shows that, under modern conditions, disintegration need not occur.

This version reduces a 1700-word article to about 100 words. Whether such drastic revision is wise will depend on the purpose of the summary. If the shorter version satisfies that purpose, it is adequate.

EXERCISES

A. For each of the following paragraphs, write the shortest possible summary which will still communicate the author's meaning fairly:

(1)

> We do not believe that the objectives of science study in general education are best met by survey courses covering a large area in a limited time. These are too likely to be courses about science rather than courses in science. They are apt to be dogmatic rather than inherently convincing. The student is likely to be taught a great many dramatic contemporary results of science rather than underlying principles and fundamental facts. If a survey course is to be completely outmoded in a few years by new advances, one cannot blame the student for failure to appreciate the basic fundamental truths, science is indeed to him a casual, ephemeral thing. This is not to imply that no advantage should be taken of new applications of science or recent discoveries to stimulate interest and secure motivation; however the cake should not be all frosting. It is usually less confusing and far more satisfying actually to learn and understand the principles behind a group of phenomena and how they bring these phenomena into being than to learn and attempt to remember a large number of superficial facts about the phenomena.[6]

(2)

> It is not possible to depend entirely upon what each nation says of its own habits of thought and action. Writers in every nation have tried to

[6] From Earl J. McGrath and others: *Toward General Education.* Copyright, 1948, by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission.

give an account of themselves. But it is not easy. The lenses through which any nation looks at life are not the ones another nation uses. It is hard to be conscious of the eyes through which one looks. Any country takes them for granted, and the tricks of focusing and of perspective which give to any people its national view of life seem to that people the god-given arrangement of the landscape. In any matter of spectacles, we do not expect the man who wears them to know the formula for the lenses, and neither can we expect nations to analyze their own outlook upon the world. When we want to know about spectacles, we train an oculist and expect him to be able to write out the formula for any lenses we bring him. Some day no doubt we shall recognize that it is the job of the social scientist to do this for the nations of the contemporary world.[7]

(3)

We should know that all the money in the world could not have built an atomic bomb in 1936. Atomic energy was known, and many of its properties were understood. It had been released in small quantities in laboratories, and its release in large quantities in the sun and the stars had been studied. But the critical information and the critical direction to follow for releasing it in large amounts on earth were lacking in 1936, and no one could have used two billion dollars for making an atomic bomb at that time. It is this that is important in understanding the relation of science to industry, to medicine, and to the public. There has to be knowledge before it can be applied. At a certain stage of scientific development, theoretically critical knowledge becomes available. Before that moment — which no one can guarantee in advance — the knowledge cannot be applied. After that moment application is reasonably certain and only the special technics for its utilization need be worked out.[8]

B. Write a one-page summary of "The Distinction Between War and Peace" (pp. 42-44).

C. The following selection is a unit of a longer essay. Study it carefully with a view to purpose and organization, then write a 400-word summary:

ARE SOCIAL SCIENTISTS BACKWARD?[9]

In discussing the relative difficulties of analysis which the exact and inexact sciences face, let me begin with an analogy. Would you agree that swimmers are less skillful athletes than runners because swimmers do not move as fast as runners? You probably would not. You would

[7] From Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword.* Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

[8] From Selig Hecht's *Explaining the Atom.* Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, publishers.

[9] From "Are Social Scientists Backward?" by Donald L. Kemmerer, in the *American Association of University Professors Bulletin,* Autumn, 1948.

quickly point out that water offers greater resistance to swimmers than the air and ground do to runners. Agreed, that is just the point. In seeking to solve their problems, the social scientists encounter greater resistance than the physical scientists. By that I do not mean to belittle the great accomplishments of physical scientists who have been able, for example, to determine the structure of the atom without seeing it. That is a tremendous achievement; yet in many ways it is not so difficult as what the social scientists are expected to do. The conditions under which the social scientists must work would drive a physical scientist frantic. Here are five of those conditions. He can make few experiments; he cannot measure the results accurately; he cannot control the conditions surrounding the experiments; he is often expected to get quick results with slow-acting economic forces; and he must work with people, not with inanimate objects. Let us look at these conditions more closely.

1. Before a physical scientist will admit that his experiment has proved successful, he generally repeats it in his laboratory a great many times, sometimes hundreds of times. The economist, or the political scientist, however, has no laboratory other than the world before him, and its history. An economist who wants to find the effect of war on national income in the postwar period in major nations in modern times can uncover perhaps a score of usable examples. The business-cycle analyst knows that business cycles are a product of only the past century and a half, and that the major business cycles in leading industrial nations are comparatively few in number.

2. Chemists and physicists can weigh and otherwise measure solids, liquids, and gases fairly accurately, but the economist has less effective means of measurement. True, statisticians have devised many ways of correlating figures, determining and eliminating margins of error, and so forth, to the nth decimal point. Unfortunately, this exact mathematics is all too often used to measure units of differing quality or figures collected under uncontrolled conditions. Being able to measure to the nth decimal place has less meaning under such circumstances.

One or two examples will illustrate the point. For the past generation Americans have attached increasing importance to wholesale price indexes and cost-of-living indexes. As you know, in calculating these, a so-called normal year like 1896, 1913, 1926, or 1939 is selected as a base, and prices of several hundred representative goods and services are collected for that year and allotted their proper importance or weight in figuring the index. The prices of these same goods and services are again collected and similarly weighed for each subsequent year. This is done every month now. These indexes have proved extremely useful to social scientists, and I do not want to underestimate their importance. They do have their limitations, however.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics figures, the cost of living in December, 1947, was 136 per cent higher than it was in 1913. The comparison cannot be so accurate as that. For example, the quality of many of the manufactured goods involved in the 1913 index has improved

greatly. Automobile tires cost about the same but will run five times as many miles before wearing out; also gasoline will carry the car farther; and, of course, the cars themselves are greatly improved. Transportation by car or train is faster, thereby saving valuable time; medical knowledge is better so that the average doctor's advice is worth more; fuel for heating homes is cleaner; and so on.

To take a more modern example of difficulties in using indexes, some of you may recall the Battle of the Indexes that raged in 1944. The government maintained that the cost of living had risen only about 23.1 per cent since January, 1941, and did not justify further wage increases, but the AFL and the CIO contended that 43.5 per cent was a more accurate measurement. That was a sizable difference of opinion. The labor statisticians emphasized that some important goods in the index were simply not available at OPA prices and could be obtained only on the black market. All of us had some experience with the poorer quality of numerous wartime goods and learned firsthand that items like white shirts or rented houses were virtually unobtainable at the ceiling prices on which the indexes were based. Under the circumstances, price indexes should be regarded as valuable trend indicators but should not be accepted as highly accurate measuring devices. When someone starts analyzing a price index to explain why it has risen, say 0.45 of 1 per cent, skepticism is in order. Yet it is by such accurate measurements that physical scientists reach significant conclusions.

3. The physical scientist can generally control the conditions surrounding his experiments, whereas the social scientist cannot. As my colleague, Professor Ralph Blodgett, has neatly described the situation, "The student of chemistry, for example, can place a quantity of iron filings in a test tube, cover them with a certain amount of hydrochloric acid under controlled conditions, and be fairly confident of being able to observe and measure the results accurately. The economist cannot place the consumer in a test tube, pour a solution of lowered prices over him, and measure the results. Instead, he must rely on his observations of the consumer in the ordinary business of life where he will react to lowered prices in some way or other, amid a welter of other influences."

Let us take the example of a specific economic experiment. In 1933-34 the government, on advice of certain economists, devalued the gold dollar by 41 per cent. It was expected by the authors of this scheme that it would shortly raise the price level by 69 per cent and thereby restore prices to the so-called normal level of 1926. The purpose was to lighten the debt burden of farmers and others. But the wholesale price level rose only about 21 per cent in the next two years, much less than the experimenters anticipated. Even this disappointing rise could not be definitely ascribed to any single cause. There was good reason for believing some of it was owing to severe droughts, some to the AAA program, some to price increases due to rising wage and other costs under the NRA, and some to normal recovery from the depths of the depression. How much of the price rise was due to each of these? Who can do more than make a rough guess?

4. At this point some thoughtful person may interject, "Ah, but you are asking too much to expect the full results of that experiment to be apparent in so short a time as two years." The objection is well taken. In fact, the matter of time is the fourth difficulty which the social scientists must attempt to solve and yet cannot solve very well. The longer time he allows for his experiment to work out, the more extraneous factors are likely to creep in; and the shorter the time he allows, the more open he is to the accusation that his experiment is incomplete. Yet as the country and the world become more populous and more industrialized, the longer it takes economic and other forces to make themselves felt. At the same time, if the experimenting social scientist is, say, a government economist trying out some plan he has sold the administration, he must be able to show results quickly, convincingly, and on the first try. Otherwise, his theory is tagged as a failure. Would the physical scientists like to make experiments under such conditions?

5. Another reason a government economist's experiment may fail is that people are necessarily the subject of the experiment; they know they are the subject, and they may want the experiment to succeed or to fail. In wartime, by economizing and working harder than usual to help win the war and combat inflation, they may successfully delay the operation of inflationary forces. Or people may sabotage an experiment because they dislike the political and economic philosophy behind it – many persons found the intricate regulations of NRA and OPA distasteful – or because the experiment hurts their pocketbook or the prestige they enjoy in their business, or both. The nature and purpose of any experiment cannot long be kept secret in a democracy. Increased pump-priming by the government in the latter 1930's seems to have made businessmen more distrustful. It slowed down the turnover of currency and the investment of risk capital and partially neutralized just what pump-priming was intended to achieve. As late as 1940 we still had considerable depression left if a figure of ten million unemployed means anything. Professor Joseph Schumpeter of Harvard went so far as to say about that time that recovery from depression had been slowest where the greatest efforts had been made by governments to promote it – in France and in the United States.

Let us take another example. There has been a fairly serious depression in every major nation after every long war in modern times. We have been expecting one almost daily since V-J day in August of 1945. Government economists were especially sure in 1945 that widespread unemployment would follow the war and urged the administration to lay its plans accordingly and the public to prepare for the worst. But the depression has not come yet. It is frequently said that when a depression does come, it will be the best advertised one in history. This may be one important reason that it does not come, or at least that it has been so long delayed. To sum up the situation: the physical scientist does not have to contend with iron filings that resist being dissolved or whose character may change because they expect to be dissolved.

Once you understand the social scientist's difficulties, you will have more patience with him. You will recognize that he can make few experiments, that even history offers him few clear-cut, documentable examples, and that he therefore has to supplement his findings with logic and intangible common sense. That is admittedly to depart from the realm of science and to invade that of judgment. It is at this point that the social scientist is most apt to make mistakes and that disagreements are most likely to arise. You should therefore be most skeptical when he relies on logic alone; yet at the same time you have to admit the necessity for his doing so.

In the past two generations few new principles have been established in the social sciences. This is contrary to the layman's beliefs, but it is true. If you doubt it, name some. True, many interesting theories have been advanced, but most of them have not been widely accepted. The reasons, it may be surmised, lie in the five difficulties just described, namely fewness of experiments, uncontrolled conditions, difficulties of measuring results, concluding experiments at the right time, and resistance by the subject of the experiment. Even if the social scientists eventually accept some of the new theories as principles, it will take many more years before the public and its leaders do likewise.

23

THE RESEARCH PAPER

THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

IN ONE FORM or another the research paper is a standard assignment in college classes. It may go under various names, but whether it is called a "research paper," a "term paper," or a "reading report," it is a paper written to present the results of the student's investigation of a topic. Theoretically, the investigation may be carried on through personal observation, experimentation, questionnaires, reading, or a combination of these methods. But in practice the freshman research paper is usually based on printed sources. It is an assignment in library research. The student selects a topic, reads about it in books and magazines, takes notes, and writes a long paper based on the information he has uncovered.

The purpose of the assignment is fourfold: to teach the student to use the library efficiently; to develop habits of purposeful reading and note-taking; to present him with a composition problem that will require him to organize information drawn from a variety of sources and to develop it into a unified essay or article; and to make him familiar with the conventions of bibliography and footnoting. Since a successful research paper must satisfy each of these purposes, the following types of topics should be avoided for the reasons noted below:

1. *Topics which would be developed largely from personal experience.* Since such topics do not require library research they would ignore at least three of the four purposes stated above.

2. *Topics which would result in simple descriptions of processes.* Such subjects as "How Plastics Are Made," "Producing Synthetic Rubber," and "The Role of the Quarterback in the T-Formation" are undesirable for three reasons: first, all the information necessary may be obtained from a single article, thus eliminating the need for con-

sulting various sources; second, since the organization of the paper would inevitably follow that of the source, the paper would offer no real problem of composition; third, the whole assignment could be adequately treated with a few hours' work, and is therefore not worth the four to six weeks usually allowed for the research paper.

3. *Topics for which no evidence is available.* Such questions as "Are Women More Honest Than Men?" "Do Extroverts Make Good Husbands?" "Who Was the Greater Poet – Chaucer or Milton?" would finally have to be answered by the writer's preference. These topics could be as well treated without research as with it. At any rate, no generally acceptable answers to these questions are available in libraries.

4. *Unrestricted topics which could be treated only superficially within the scope of a single paper.* All that was said about restriction in Chapter 2 applies with added emphasis to the research paper. An unrestricted topic offers almost no problem either in research or composition. Since *the most common cause of failure in freshman research papers is lack of restriction,* review pages 16-29 carefully before choosing a subject.

If these four types of topics are avoided, almost any subject may be made to yield a satisfactory research paper. The important requirement is that your topic allow you to meet the four purposes of the assignment. This requirement still leaves you abundant leeway. Your actual choice may be influenced by a long-unsatisfied curiosity or by the new knowledge you are acquiring in your history, economics, sociology, or science courses. Any student who needs specific suggestions may find the list of topics on pages 31-33 helpful.

TYPES OF RESEARCH PAPERS

In general, freshman research papers are of two types – reports and judgments. As explained in Chapter 11, a report is chiefly concerned with conveying information, and a judgment with supporting a conclusion. In research writing, reports and judgments are both based on facts. The difference is that in a report the student merely presents the facts without attempting to prove or disprove anything, whereas in a judgment he is developing a thesis based on his study of the facts, and all his material is selected to support that thesis. This difference may be illustrated by contrasting a report and a judgment

written on the same general topic – say, the re-election of President Truman in 1948.[1]

A student writing a report of this event would present the story as it revealed itself – the major conventions, the split in the Democratic party, the campaign, the attitudes of the press and polls, the election returns as they came in, the gradual realization that an upset was in progress, the crucial states, the final tally, and the nation's surprise at the results. The paper would be developed chronologically and would be essentially a summary of what happened. The student would not attempt to evaluate the facts he was reporting. He would simply fit these facts into a pattern to convey a clear picture of the election.

A student writing a judgment would probably dismiss the story of the election in his introduction. Most of his paper would be concerned with *interpreting* the results and showing *why* Truman won. He would have to analyze the voting – the loss of states previously carried by Republicans, the Democratic trend in farm areas, the slight vote in favor of Wallace. He might discuss such factors as the personalities of the candidates, the type of campaign each waged, the record of the previous Congress, and then go on to show the influence of these factors on the final results. He might even write a strictly argumentative paper to show that one specific factor was chiefly responsible for the re-election of President Truman. Whatever he did, he would be as concerned with what the facts *meant* as with what they *were*. And the purpose of his paper either would be or could be expressed as a thesis.

It will be obvious from this contrast that the judgment is a better test of the student's mastery of his subject, since it requires not only a detailed knowledge of the facts but also the ability to weigh the evidence and develop a conclusion from it. It therefore offers a greater challenge to the student and, if well done, is more valuable as a composition assignment. For these reasons many instructors require that the freshman research paper be a judgment rather than a report.

PREVIEW OF RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Before we consider separately the successive steps in preparing a research paper, let us preview the whole procedure from choosing

[1] See also the two sample research papers quoted on pages 477-492.

a subject to completing the reading. Suppose you have been asked to choose a topic, study it, and write a 2000-word judgment. You have five weeks for the assignment. At the end of that time you are to hand in a paper complete with sentence outline, adequate footnotes, and a final bibliography.

Because you have recently become interested in photography you choose that as your general subject. You know you will have to restrict that topic, but at present you do not know enough about photography to limit it intelligently. You decide that for this subject the first thing to do is to make a preliminary survey of the books listed in the card catalog. As you take out these books and skim their tables of contents you see how the general subject is broken down into subtopics. You find chapters, even whole books, devoted to the history of photography, the chemistry of photography, celestial photography, commercial photography, color photography, miniature photography, and to studies of developers, lenses, and photographing techniques.

You realize almost at once that each of these limited topics would be enough for a 2000-word paper and that the first step in your restriction is to select one of them. You recognize that some topics require more chemistry or mathematics than you can handle and that others would result in highly technical papers. Miniature photography seems both interesting and possible. You begin to prepare a preliminary bibliography on that subject, and with the aid of the card catalog, the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature,* and the *Photo-Lab Index,* you soon compile an impressive list of sources.

Since you know very little about miniature photography, you wisely decide to begin with some introductory reading – books and articles which will give you a general background for more detailed reading later. Accordingly, you begin with the most general and popular works on the subject – perhaps the *Leica Manual,* an elementary textbook on visual aids, and a promising magazine article. Because these works are designed merely to give you an introduction to your subject, you skim them quickly. You have already recognized that even miniature photography is a large topic, and you decide that you had better postpone careful reading and note-taking until you have decided what *precisely* you intend to do with miniature photography.

At the end of the first week you have a general knowledge of your subject – its history, its popularity, its wide range of uses. You know its advantages and limitations as contrasted with other types of photography – and you see that the topic is still too big for 2000

words. Already certain specific phases of the subject have begun to suggest themselves as suitable for intensive study. You are particularly impressed by references to the ways microphotography has revolutionized techniques in a wide variety of professions, and you think you would like to write a paper on these developments.

You now discard from your preliminary bibliography all titles which seem to have no relation to your restricted subject. When you see how much has to be discarded, you are glad you did not waste time taking notes on your general subject. But now it is time to take notes; so, as you begin to read intensively on the uses of microphotography, you copy significant evidence on 3 × 5 inch cards, making sure that the source of the material (author, title, and page number) is shown on *each* card. You use a new card for each note so that you will be able to organize your notes according to whatever scheme you later decide is best.

At the end of the second week you have a respectable pile of note cards and you have become something of an expert on the application of microphotography to industrial and professional uses. Indeed you know so much about the subject that you are beginning to be worried about discussing all these uses in a 2000-word paper. You begin to think it might be wise to limit your topic still further. As you review your notes with this thought in mind, you see that you could turn your research project into any one of several more specialized studies. With more work, you could show what miniature photography has done for visual aids programs; you could show its uses in banking; you could show how it has revolutionized the techniques of scholarly research; and you could sketch its possibilities in a half-dozen uses which are beginning to emerge. Your material, however, is best suited for a paper on banking or scholarly research. After some thought, you reject the use of photography in banking, because that subject has been rather fully described in two of the articles you have studied, and you want to avoid a paper which will be merely a digest of other studies. You decide to show what the miniature camera has done for academic research. You even think of a title for such a paper—"Streamlined Scholarship."

It has taken you almost three weeks to see exactly what you wanted to do. Until now you have been groping toward a decision, but now that your purpose is precise, the rest of your work will move forward rapidly and economically. There are still some gaps in your material. You need more evidence about the development of microfilm libraries

in universities. You require estimates of the comparative cost of photostating and microfilming. You need more information than you have about the different types of reading machines. But, at least, you know exactly what you are looking for, and probably you know where to find it. If in the next two weeks you can organize and present your material to develop your final purpose, you will have a superior paper.

The imaginary assignment which we have been considering illustrates the recommended procedure preparatory to writing a research paper. That procedure may be summarized as follows:

1. Make a survey of the material available on your general subject and prepare a preliminary bibliography.
2. Become familiar with the general subject through introductory sources, but postpone note-taking.
3. Restrict the general subject as quickly as you can. Remember that your reading does not become fully pertinent until you have decided the specific phase of the subject that you wish to develop.
4. When you feel that your subject is becoming specialized begin to take notes.
5. Continue to restrict your subject as soon as the results of your specialized reading suggest further restriction.
6. When you feel that restriction of the subject is complete, begin to consider what precisely you intend to do with that subject. Remember that when you decided to show how microphotography had streamlined scholarship, you had a thesis as well as a subject.
7. Fill in by additional investigation the blank spots that remain from your reading.
8. When the research is complete, proceed to the outlining and composition of your paper.

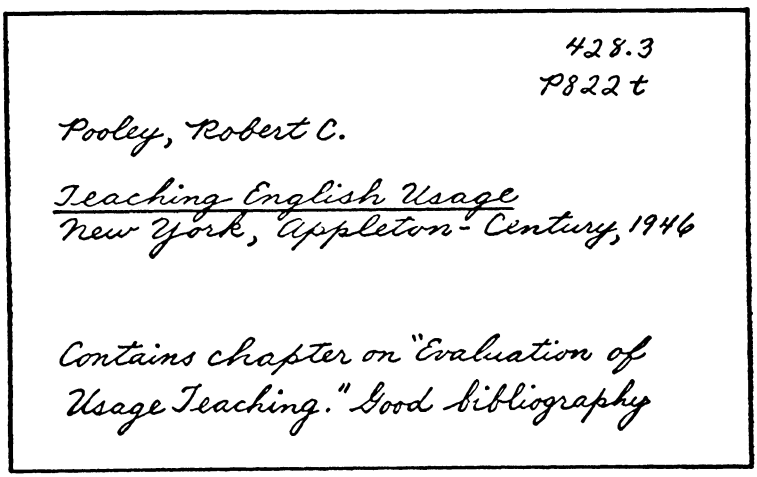
Most of the steps summarized above are preparatory. The total research would be considerably shortened if you knew at the beginning what you know by the time you have reached step 6. The more quickly you arrive at step 6, therefore, the more profitable will be your investigations and the less time they will require. Under favorable conditions you may be able to skip some of the preliminary stages, but even if you cannot, a clear realization that you are looking for a phase of the subject that may be dealt with completely within the limits of your paper will help you to speed up the first four steps.

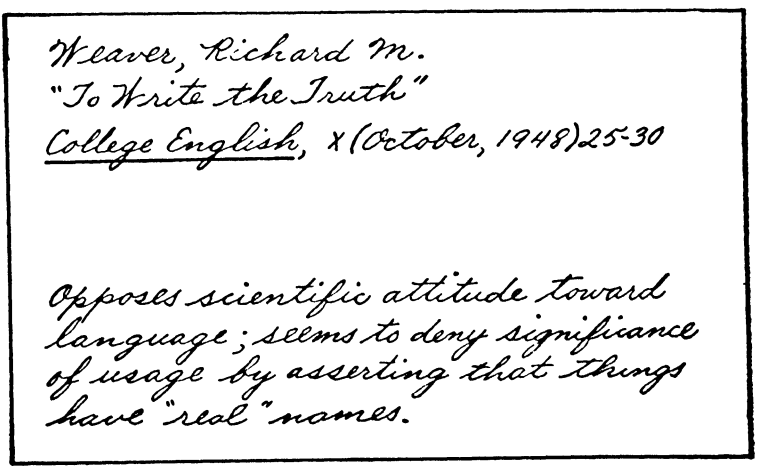
We may now profitably consider the separate stages of carrying out the research assignment.

PREPARING A PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

The recommended procedure and the conventional forms to be used in preparing a preliminary bibliography have been discussed in detail on pages 413-418. Before beginning your work on the research paper you should review these pages carefully.

In preparing your bibliography you should use 3 × 5 cards, with a separate card for each title. In addition to the name of the author, the title, and the facts of publication, the card should contain the library call number and any reminder you care to make to yourself about valuable features of the work. The accompanying cards will illustrate the form:





The preparation of a good preliminary bibliography takes considerable time. It should be obvious from our paper on "Streamlined Scholarship" that the more the topic is restricted, even before the preparation of the bibliography, the less time will be wasted in copying out bibliographical cards which will later be discarded. Actually drawing out books and looking at their tables of contents will save time in the long run, since you can then ignore works which are merely a rehash of other sources. *Remember it is not length but usefulness which is the test of the preliminary bibliography.* You do not have to list all the works on your subject; you are merely trying to decide what works will be worth serious attention later.

INTRODUCTORY READING

For most research studies the reading may be divided into three stages – introductory, intensive, and supplementary. The introductory reading gives the background needed in order to begin the investigation intelligently. The intensive reading provides the bulk of the information from which the paper will be written. The supplementary reading is to fill gaps in the intensive reading, to provide added information which you have discovered is needed to make your paper complete.

Thus all reading done before the decision to restrict photography to the uses of microphotography in industry and the professions was introductory. All reading done after the final decision to write on "Streamlined Scholarship" was supplementary. That in between was intensive. Of course, it would have been more economical if no introductory or supplementary reading had been required, if you had known from the beginning that you were going to write on "Streamlined Scholarship." But few research papers actually develop that way. Nevertheless a careful concern with purpose can reduce the introductory and supplementary reading to a reasonable minimum.

Once the function of the introductory reading is understood, it will be apparent that note-taking at this stage is not profitable. The information obtained from this reading is probably not going to appear in your paper, or if it does, it will probably be so general that notes are not needed. This reading should therefore be done quickly. Indeed, the early accumulation of miscellaneous notes may be actually confusing, since a student who has notes on every aspect of his subject is likely to have a more difficult time deciding which particular aspect

to concentrate on. Again, as in the preliminary bibliography, the test is usefulness, not quantity. And it is therefore wise to take no notes until you have a reasonable expectation of using them.

Usually, the best sources for introductory reading are general sources – articles in encyclopedias, chapters in elementary textbooks, histories, biographical references, and specialized dictionaries. For example, a student setting out to answer the question, "How Did English Spelling Become so Illogical?" might profitably begin with the article on the English Language in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* or with such textbooks as Kennedy's *Current English,* Baugh's *History of the English Language,* or Jesperson's *Growth and Structure of the English Language.* These works would not only refer him to more specialized studies but would also provide him with the background necessary to profit from such studies.

For some subjects a good popular article is the best introduction. A student investigating the development of the atomic bomb might profitably begin with an article in *The New York Times, Newsweek,* or *Time,* and then move through other magazine articles and reprints or round-table discussions to Selig Hecht's *Explaining the Atom* and finally to the *Smyth Report.* In such a study he will find that the last two works include almost everything he first found in the magazine articles, but by the time he reaches the *Smyth Report* he will be better prepared to appreciate this document than if he had come to it first. Reading – intensive as well as introductory – should be from the general to the specialized and from the popular to the scholarly.

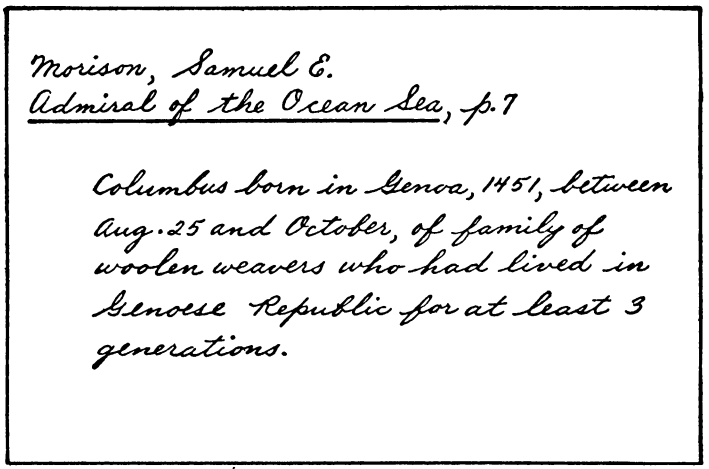
NOTE-TAKING

Once you begin intensive reading it will be necessary to take notes. The results of your preliminary reading may be carried in your head, but you are now beginning to collect the actual evidence from which your paper will be written, and it is important to the success of all the rest of your work that both the form and the content of your notes be satisfactory.

The Form of the Notes

All notes should be placed on cards (preferably 4 × 6 inches to avoid confusion with bibliographical cards) and should contain two kinds of information: (1) the information being noted, and (2) the exact source from which you took it. This second information is abso-

lutely necessary, since you will be required to identify the sources of your information in the footnotes to your paper. Usually that means you must identify the author, title, and page of the book or article from which the note was taken. Here is a typical note made from a book:



If you are making a number of notes from the same source, the complete identification given above may be abbreviated. Thus, if you are using no other work by Morison, "Morison, p.7" would be enough, since your bibliographical card would provide the full title. But no matter how many notes are taken from a single source, each must be accurately identified. To avoid any possibility of a slip, *always write down the identification before you begin the note.*

The use of note cards instead of notebooks is a convention that has grown out of the experience of thousands of research workers. To be really useful your notes must be so flexible that you can shuffle them to suit whatever order you finally decide upon. Notes written solid in a notebook cannot conveniently be rearranged. They are fixed in the order they had in the source from which they were taken, and the order which suits your final purpose may be entirely different. Recording information in a notebook is therefore inefficient, no matter how easy it may seem at first glance.

For the same reason, only one note should be placed on a card. Two notes on one card are inseparably bound together. Since you must leave yourself free to reshuffle your notes, to discard useless ones

and add supplementary ones, the only satisfactory method is to use a separate card for each.

It is wise to leave enough space at the top of each card so that you may write in a subject heading when you group your cards and develop your outline, thus:

Learned Superstitions

Danzig, T., Number, p. 40

Pythagoreans identified numbers with human qualities. Odd numbers male, even numbers female.

1 = reason 2 = opinion

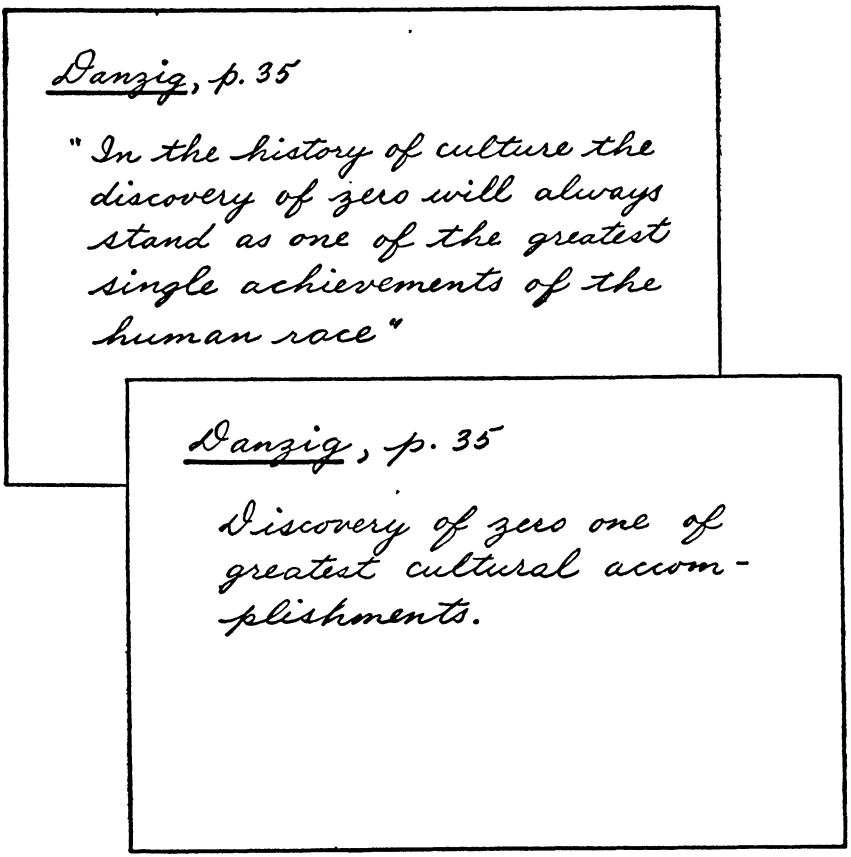
3 = justice 4 = marriage

Because these subject headings may be changed as the organization of your material is changed, it is wise to enter them in pencil.

The Content of Notes

Your notes may contain statements of fact or statements of opinion, either in your own words or in the words of the author from whose work they came. If the wording as well as the content is taken from a source, be extremely careful to use quotation marks, both on your note card and, later, in your paper. Failure to use quotation marks on the note card may later lead you to think that the information is expressed in your own words and thus may trap you into an unintentional plagiarism. The cards on the next page contrast a quoted opinion and the same opinion stated in the student's words.

You should take pains, also, to be sure that the passage from which you are taking a quotation does not contain any qualification that prevents even direct quotation from being an accurate report of what the author meant. Thus, if a writer says, "I have never subscribed to the belief that the best rule governing class attendance is no rule at all," you misrepresent him when you quote only his last eleven words to show that he is opposed to all attendance rules. This is merely



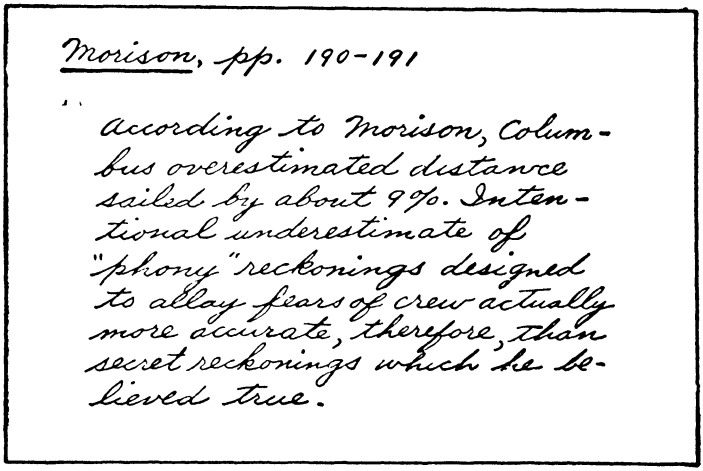
another way of saying what was said in Chapter 9: *statements taken out of context must represent the meaning they had in their original contexts.*

Whenever possible your notes should be summaries of the source material, not direct quotations. Too many quotations result in wordiness and give the impression that the student has merely strung together statements made by others without digesting these statements or doing any thinking about them. The technique of summarizing has been discussed in Chapter 22 and should be reviewed before beginning an intensive reading for the research assignment.

If the information you are noting is factual, confine yourself to a bare statement of fact; do not copy out the whole paragraph in which the facts are embedded. Most students need practice in this discipline, for it takes less thought to copy a paragraph verbatim than to thresh

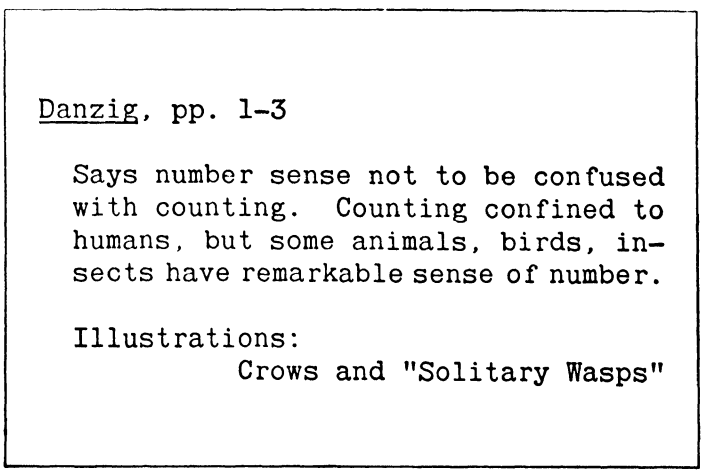
out the facts that are significant. But the threshing has to be done some time before the paper is written, and it might as well be done as the notes are taken. Even if the job seems at times like extracting a needle from a haystack, remember that taking home the whole haystack does not help at all.

Long statements of opinion or of fact and opinion combined should nearly always be summarized. Nothing is more irritating to an instructor or more detrimental to the purpose of the research assignment than the habit of padding the paper with several long quotations, each of which could have been summarized in two or three sentences. The accompanying cards show economical but effective summaries of extensive passages.



Morison, pp. 190-191

according to Morison, Columbus overestimated distance sailed by about 9%. Intentional underestimate of "phony" reckonings designed to allay fears of crew actually more accurate, therefore, than secret reckonings which he believed true.



Danzig, pp. 1-3

Says number sense not to be confused with counting. Counting confined to humans, but some animals, birds, insects have remarkable sense of number.

Illustrations:
Crows and "Solitary Wasps"

Notice that these cards are identified just as carefully as if they contained direct quotations. The material was taken from the work of another and must be acknowledged in footnotes.

What we have said about note-taking may be summarized as follows:

1. Put notes on cards, not in notebooks, with one note to a card.

2. On each card identify the exact source of the note, including the page number. Abbreviations may be used only if there is no danger of ambiguity.

3. The actual words of an author must be placed in quotation marks, regardless of whether the notes are statements of fact or opinion.

4. Be careful that direct quotation does not distort the original meaning when taken out of context.

5. Summarize extensive quotations if possible, but still identify the source.

6. Digest factual information out of a long passage before making the note.

7. Finally, remember that these conventions governing note-taking are designed to teach you good research habits as well as to protect you from beginners' mistakes. Follow the conventions at all times, even when a home-made system might seem more convenient.

DOCUMENTING THE EVIDENCE

As we have said, all information taken from a specific source must be identified in a footnote.[2] That is, the evidence must be *documented.* The purpose of this convention is twofold: (1) to avoid the appearance of representing as your own the work of another; (2) to let the interested reader consult your sources and so check the accuracy of your investigation or carry on his own. This convention is so important in research writing that inaccurate documentation – or none at all – is

[2] The kind of footnote discussed here is called a "reference footnote." Footnotes may also qualify, explain, or comment on statements made in the text when it would be awkward to include such matters in the main discussion. Such footnotes may be called "explanatory footnotes." This footnote is explanatory. It provides an explanation which, though necessary, would be awkward to include in the body of the text.

regarded as a serious offense. For the research writer it is both good manners and good morals to acknowledge sources fairly and accurately.

When to Footnote. Inexperienced research writers often have difficulty in deciding what statements require documenting. The general principle is that you should cite the source of any statement for which you are indebted to the work of another. For most student research this general principle can be broken down into six conditions. You should provide a footnote whenever:

1. You use a direct quotation.
2. You copy a table, chart, or other diagram.
3. You summarize a discussion in your own words.
4. You construct a diagram from data provided by others.
5. You paraphrase an opinion which you have read rather than reached independently.
6. You present specific evidence which cannot reasonably be considered common knowledge.

The first four of these conditions are sufficiently definite to require no discussion. Difficulties, if any, will come from the last two, and these difficulties are better resolved by experience than by definition. By the time you have got well into any research project, you will have reached conclusions you did not have when you began your study. Unless these conclusions came specifically from one of your sources, they need not be documented. They are products of your total reading, not borrowings from any specific source.

Similarly, as you become familiar with a subject, you will find that facts of which you at first were ignorant are so commonly accepted that they must be considered common knowledge. For example, you probably do not now know the dates of Matthew Arnold's life. But if you were writing a research paper on Arnold you would find them common knowledge to all the writers you were reading. It would be unnecessary, and a little naïve, to footnote these dates. This does not mean that no factual information need be footnoted. If you were recording the number of fatalities at Gettysburg, the tonnage and dimensions of the *Santa Maria*, or the population of London in 1450, you would be expected to cite your source in a footnote.

It is often asked how many footnotes a freshman research paper should have. Despite the popularity of this question it cannot be answered specifically. The number will vary with the length of the

paper and the nature of the data. Most student papers have from two to five footnotes on a page, but that is an average estimate only. Some pages may require no footnotes; others may need seven or eight. If you understand the purpose of footnotes and the six requirements discussed above, you should be able to make your own decisions. If by the time you come to write your paper you are still uncertain, submit a sample of your work to your instructor and get his advice.

How to Footnote. A footnote consists of two parts: the footnote marker, a number placed in the text at the end of the statement to be documented and slightly above the level of the typed or handwritten line; and the footnote proper, which comes at the foot of the page or between ruled lines within the text, immediately after the line containing the footnote marker. Either method is acceptable though the former is preferred. Both are illustrated below:

. . . There, almost a hundred years ago, lived and ruled the only crowned king in America, James Jesse Strang.[1] Strang was a strange and fascinating character: loved and revered by his followers as "apostle, prophet, seer, revelator, and translator;"[2] likened by his enemies to Judas, Cain, and Lucifer;[3] but acknowledged by all who knew him to be a man of great talent, fearless and capable in debate, and equal to any man in general knowledge.[4]

[1] Walter Havighurst, *The Long Ships Passing*, p. 147.

[2] Charles Backus, "An American King," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 44 (Sept., 1882), 557.

[3] Henry Legler, "A Moses of the Mormons," *Parkman Club Publications*, 2 (1897), 216.

[4] Riegel, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

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3 Henry Legler, "A Moses of the Mormons," Parkman Club Publications, 2 (1897), 216.

4 Riegel, op. cit., p. 218.

The following conventions should govern the form of your footnotes:

Conventions	*Illustrations*
1. The basic information required is author, title, and page or pages. Notice that, unlike the form for a bibliography, the author's given names precede his surname.	Helen M. Walker, Elementary Statistical Methods, p. 63. G. A. Lundberg, Can Science Save Us?, pp. 29-32.
2. If the work contains more than one volume, the volume number must be given. Notice that the abbreviations "Vol." and "p." are not used when both volume and page numbers are given.	John Stuart Mill, Principles of Political Economy, 1, 19. Justin McCarthy, A History of Our Own Times, Vol. II.
3. After the first reference to a work, simplified forms are acceptable if clear. Initials or given names may be omitted and titles may be shortened. These short forms cannot be used if they are likely to cause confusion between the works of two authors or between two works by the same author.	Mill, Principles of Political Economy, II, 76-78. Mill, Political Economy, II, 76-78.
4. After the first reference to a work, the abbreviation *op. cit.*, for *opere citato* ("in the work cited") may be used after the author's name instead of the title. This form cannot be used if more than one work by the same author is being cited, since the reader would not then know to which title you were referring.	Mill, op. cit., I, 14. McCarthy, op. cit., III, 117.
5. When a footnote refers to a work cited in the *immediately preceding* footnote, the abbreviation *ibid.* for *ibidem* ("the same") is used. If the reference is to the same work but to a different volume or page, then *ibid.* is followed by the new volume or page number.	1. Lundberg, Can Science Save Us?, p. 49. 2. Ibid. 3. Ibid., p. 17. 4. Mill, Political Economy, I, 42. 5. Ibid., II, 127.
6. *Ibid.* cannot be used if another source is cited between two references to the same work. If *Ibid.* were used in footnote 3 at the right, it would be interpreted as a reference to Bloomfield's book, not to Curme's.	1. Curme, Syntax, p. 163. 2. Bloomfield, Language, p. 94. Curme, op. cit., p.

Conventions

7. The first reference to a magazine article gives author, title of article (in quotes), name of magazine (underlined), volume, page, and date. Thereafter *op. cit.* and *ibid,* may be used if the conditions satisfy the requirements discussed in 4 and 5 above. Notice that illustrations 1 and 3 at the right show two methods of indicating volume and page numbers. The second is the more formal, but the first is quite acceptable and most students prefer it.

8. References to newspapers vary. That to a signed article or column follows much the same form as that to a magazine article. Reference to news or editorial comment cites the name of the paper, the date of issue, the page number, and (sometimes) the column number. Whether the definite article is included in the title and whether the name of the city is italicized depend on the official title —for example, the *Times* (London), but *The New York Times.*

9. When an article in a periodical or newspaper is unsigned but contains a title, the footnote begins with the title of the article.

Illustrations

1. Richard R. Wherry, "A Public For Poetry," College English, 10:8 (October, 1948).
2. Ibid., p. 12.
3. C. R. Brown, "The Camera Eye," The Green Caldron, XVI (December, 1946), 12.
4. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
5. Wherry, op. cit., p. 14.
6. Brown, op. cit., p. 13.

1. Neil M. Leckie, "Curiosities of Literature," The United Church Observer, October 1, 1948, p. 14.
2. Chicago Daily News, December 16, 1948, p. 3.
3. The New York Times, December 7, 1948, p. 5, col. 3.
4. Toledo Blade, January 10, 1949, p. 8.

1. "Rhet as Writ," The Green Caldron, 17:40 (November, 1947).
2. "Splitting The Infinitive," The Kalends, 27: 19-20. (July-August, 1948).

10. The following abbreviations are in common use in footnotes:

cf., "compare."
chap(s)., chapter(s).
col(s)., column(s).
ed(s)., editor(s) or edition.
ff., "and the following pages." (p. 17 ff.).
Fig(s)., Figure(s). (Fig. 3).
Ibid., "the same." See 5 above.
l., line. (l. 10).
ll., lines, (ll. 6-12).
loc. cit., "the place cited." Used to refer to collections of material. Not a synonym for *op. cit.*
op. cit., "the work cited." See 4 above.
p. (pp.), page(s). Not *pg. (s).*
passim, "in various places in the text." Used to indicate a number of scattered references to a subject.
sic or (*sic*), "thus." Used to indicate

that apparent error in a quotation is not a miscopying but appeared thus in the original.	tr., translator
	Vol.(s)., Volume(s). Also spelled with small *v*.

All information recorded in a footnote should be available from the bibliographical and note cards. In practice, therefore, you should be familiar with the basic conventions of footnoting before you begin to take notes. This precaution has been stressed both in Chapter 21 and in the section on note-taking. A student who has to return to his original sources before he can document his notes puts himself to a great deal of unnecessary trouble, and may find himself in the unfortunate position of not being able to get the books which he used earlier.

GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS

Often a research paper will be made more effective by the use of tables, charts, and other diagrams. These devices allow the writer to present complex data in compact form, and they make the reader's task easier by pictorializing the material which the writer wishes to communicate. Not all research papers are suited to graphic illustration, but when the data can be cast in the form of a table or a chart, the advantages justify the time spent.

Graphic illustrations may be borrowed from a printed source or they may be created by the student to summarize or explain evidence which he has found verbally presented in one or several sources. In either case an acknowledgment is required. If the student copies an illustration, he must explain in a footnote that it is borrowed from a specific page of a specific book. If he creates the illustration himself, he must state in a footnote the sources of the data on which his illustration is based.

Tables

The most common graphic illustrations are tables, graphs, and charts. A table is a means of communicating in a clear and concise form numerical data which might be confusing or difficult to read if written in paragraphs. A good table consists of several parts — title, captions, columns, and footnote:

Title Relation of College Success to College Aptitude ratings[3]

Captions College Aptitude Percentile	Number	"C" or Better	Per Cent	Prospects
96 - 100	88	85	96.6	Excellent
91 - 95	125	116	92.8	
86 - 90	156	121	76.3	Superior
81 - 85	135	98	69.5	
76 - 80	137	89	65.0	
71 - 75	123	69	56.1	Good
66 - 70	131	57	43.5	
61 - 65	144	66	45.2	
56 - 60	144	57	39.6	
Columns 51 - 55	150	45	30.0	Fair
46 - 50	141	34	24.1	
41 - 45	129	20	15.5	Poor
36 - 40	137	19	13.7	
31 - 35	116	13	11.2	
26 - 30	90	6	6.4	Very Poor*
21 - 25	76	1	1.3	
16 - 20	85	2	2.3	
11 - 15	47	—	—	
6 - 10	44	—	—	
1 - 5	14	—	—	

Footnote * In the years under consideration not less than 5 per cent of those whose entrance scores were below the twenty-fifth percentile graduated. See J. B. Johnston and E. G. Williamson. "Follow-up Study of Early Scholastic Prediction at the University of Minnesota," *School and Society,* 40:730-38, 1934.

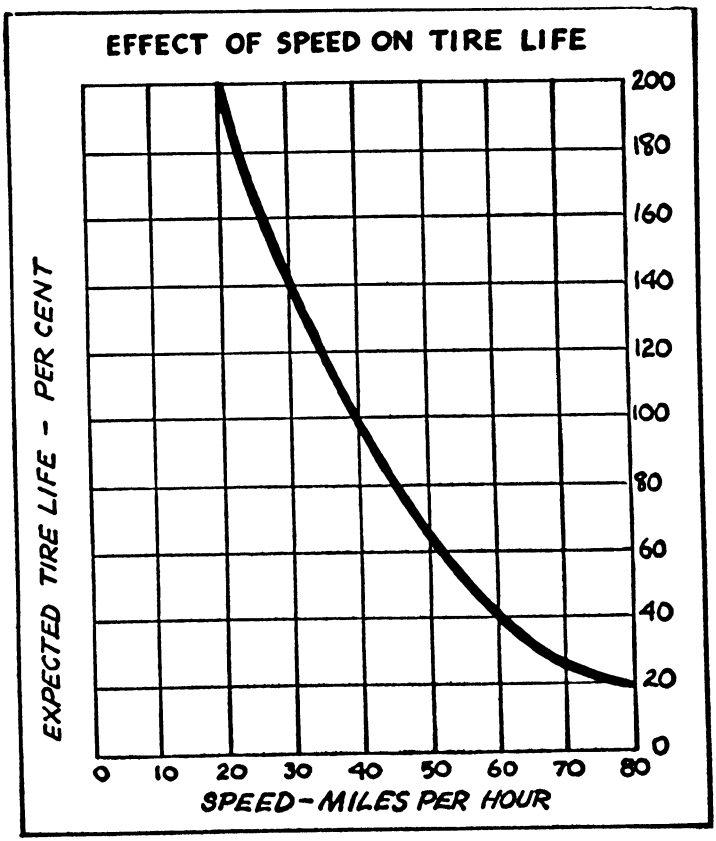
The title describes accurately what the table is intended to show. The captions provide the basic organization of the table and describe the data listed in the columns. The footnote may do several things: it *must* show the source of the data; it may also define or explain terms in the title or captions (though as far as possible these should be self-explanatory) or provide additional information about the data, as is done in our example. When several tables are used in a paper, they should be numbered for easy reference.

Graphs

The graph in its simplest form is a rectangle which measures one

[3] From Luella Cole's *The Background for College Teaching,* Farrar & Rinehart, 1940. Reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc.

kind of unit along the base (X-axis) and another kind along the altitude (Y-axis). Within this frame successive relationships of the two types of units may be plotted as a curve. In the graph below, the base measures the rate at which a car is driven; the altitude measures the length of time that tires will last. The curved line shows the relationship of driving speed to tire life, based on the assumption that tires driven at 40 miles per hour will achieve normal life expectancy. The value of the graph is that it gives the reader a simple picture on which he can see at a glance what percentage of the life expectancy of his tires he is likely to get if he drives steadily at any given speed. Thus, if the life expectancy of his tires is 20,000 miles, the graph shows him that he will achieve only 40 per cent of that expectancy (8,000 miles) at 60 m.p.h., but 200 per cent (40,000 miles) at 20 m.p.h.



SOURCE: BUICK OWNER'S MANUAL, 1939, P53

The example used here illustrates the minimum essentials of any graph. These are:

1. Title. *Effect of Speed on Tire Life.*

2. Axes. The base-line (X-axis) and the vertical line (Y-axis) form the framework of the graph and show the units being measured.

3. Grid. The cross-ruled field on which successive relationships between the two units are plotted. In practice most graphs are prepared on a special graph-paper, thus eliminating the need for ruling the grid. If a student prepares his own grid, he must be careful to see that the squares are drawn to a scale, since careless ruling could distort the curve.

4. Description of Measurements. When convenient, the description of the units being measured by the Y-axis is often placed *above* the measuring scale of the Y-axis. Like the captions of a table, these descriptions show what kinds of units are being measured on each axis. If they are omitted or are not clearly stated, the reader will find the graph confusing and the advantage of pictorial illustration will be lost.

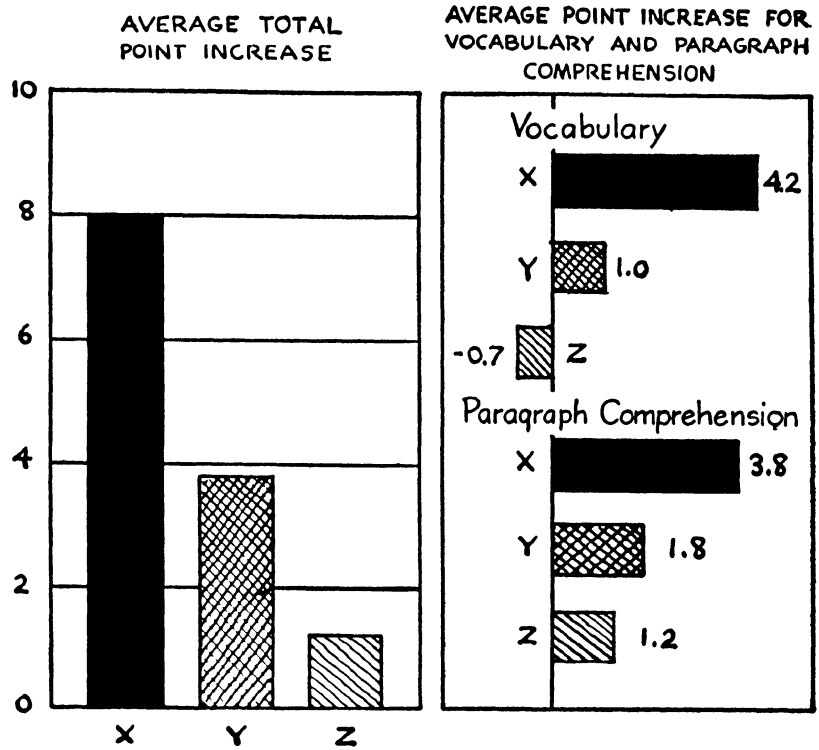
5. Scale of Measurements. In our example the scale of the X-axis is ten m.p.h. to a square; that of the Y-axis is 20 per cent of life expectancy to a square. It would have been possible to use a different scale – say 5 m.p.h. and 10 per cent of life expectancy – but once a scale has been determined it must be used consistently. The scale you use will depend partly on the size of the graph you want and partly on the nature of your data.

6. Curve or Line. Sucessive values plotted in the grid may be connected by a straight line, a curve, or a jagged line. The function of this "curve" is to allow a reader to compute the corresponding measurement on one axis for a given measurement on the other.

Bar Charts

A bar chart is a diagram which shows measurements as vertical or horizontal bars drawn to scale. The examples given below graph the results of an experiment in improving reading proficiency involving three similar groups of students, X, Y, and Z. Group X followed one method of improving reading proficiency; group Y, another; and group Z (the control group) did nothing about reading. The vertical bar chart at the left shows the total increase for each group – vocabulary

and reading comprehension combined. The horizontal bars at the right show the separate increases for vocabulary and reading comprehension.



To illustrate different forms, grid lines have been used in chart 1 and specific increases have been noted in chart 2. The same scale is used in both charts, though it would have been permissible to use different scales. All that is required is that *within any chart the same scale should be used consistently.* Notice, also, that in chart 2 a negative quantity is shown to the left of the Y-axis.

Pie Charts

A pie chart is a circular diagram in which percentages are indicated by sectors of the circle. These charts are constructed by dividing the circumference into arcs proportional to the percentages which the "pie" is to show. The division is done with a protractor placed on the diameter. Since 100 per cent of the circle equals 360 degrees, one per cent will equal 3.6 degrees, and a 60 per cent arc will enclose 216

When either a pie or a bar diagram may be used, the choice should depend on which provides the more effective illustration. Each has advantages. The pie chart is perhaps the better when a large number of items have to be shown – for example, percentage of income spent on food, shelter, clothing, education, insurance, medicine, recreation, and savings – but contrasted pies can be used only to show percentages; whereas bar charts can be used for comparisons in which the totals are not equal – for example, the contrasted dollar values shown on page 489.

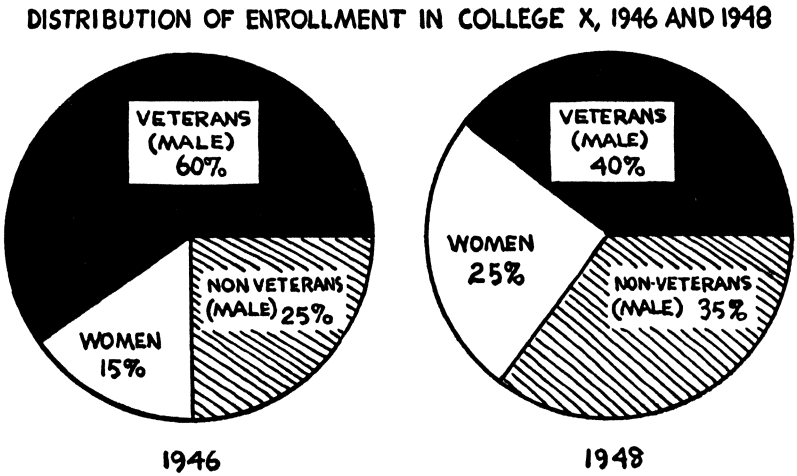
OUTLINING

It was pointed out in Chapter 5 that the need for a formal outline will depend largely on the length and complexity of the material to be organized. Since the research paper is usually the longest and most complex paper written during the freshman year, it nearly always requires a careful outline. Indeed, many instructors make the writing of a detailed outline a critical stage in the preparation of the paper and do not allow students to begin actual composition until the outline is approved.

The best preparation for outlining your research paper is a careful review of Chapter 5, with special attention to pages 101-107, which discuss shaping and testing the organization. However, it should be pointed out here that most good students begin to develop the outline mentally while they are doing their intensive reading. From time to time they spread their notes on a table and study ways of grouping individual notes together. When they find them falling into recognizable groups they begin to write the subject label of each group on individual note cards within the group. Students who work this way have much of the organization done before they sit down to prepare a formal outline. The final outline then is merely a refinement of the organization already achieved within the notes. This method not only makes the writing of the outline easier but also helps direct the intensive reading, since the student who sees the pattern of his paper develop has a better understanding of what material he still needs and can therefore read more purposefully.

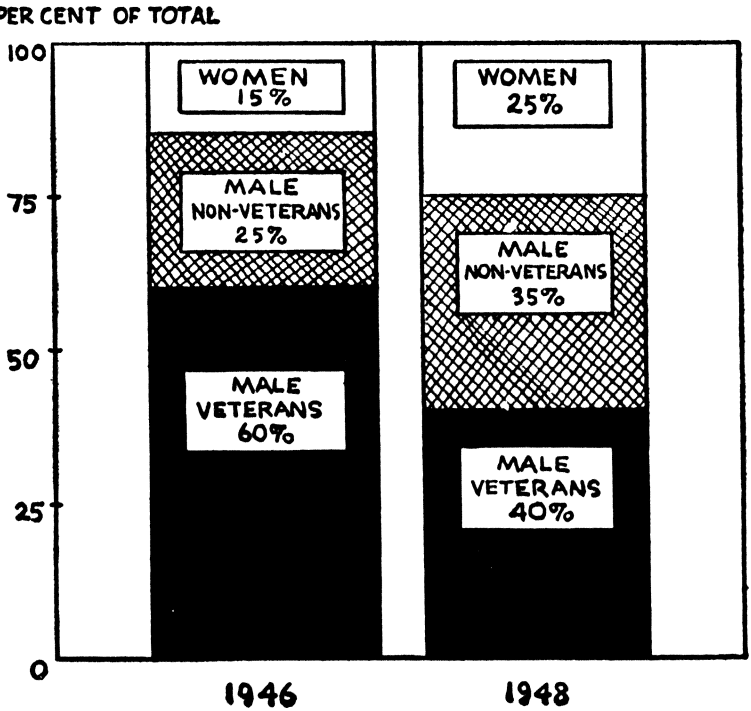
COMPOSING THE PAPER

All that has been said about the problem of composition in Part One of this book applies to the research paper. But in addition the research



degrees ($60° \times 3.6$). The formula is: *multiply the desired percentage by 3.6 and the result is the number of degrees which the arc encloses.*

The data illustrated by the pie chart above could also have been shown by a bar graph.



assignment has its special problem – the relationship between what the student has borrowed from the writings of others and what he has provided himself. The research paper is admittedly and necessarily written from information derived from printed sources. But that information has to be woven into an essay which is essentially the student's own work. A student who has worked purposefully will not have too much difficulty reconciling these two conditions, for he will have selected his material with a view to using it in support of judgments he has been forming as he reads. In a sense he is like a man who is building a house with bricks obtained from others. The bricks are not his, but the design and construction of the house are. The composition of a research paper, then, is not just the stringing together of statements taken from books and magazines. It is a complete reorganization and reworking of the source material into an original composition.

Failure to recognize this sometimes results in a paper which is merely a transcription of the information in the note cards. The following excerpt from a student research paper reveals this weakness:

> Article 123 of the Mexican Constitution has the sole purpose of solving the labor problem. It is looked upon as the declaration of the rights of the workmen.[1]
>
> The workers' hours have a maximum limit of eight hours for a day's work. At least one day's rest for every six days' work is to be enjoyed by everyone.[2]
>
> Children over twelve and under sixteen years of age can work only six hours a day, and children under twelve are not permitted to be made the subject of a contract.[3]
>
> The minimum wage that can be received by a workman should be considered sufficient according to the conditions of life prevailing in the workman's particular region of the country. This same compensation is to be paid without regard to the sex of the worker.[4]

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[1] Tannenbaum, op. cit., p. 529.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

> Wages are required to be paid in legal currency rather than by any other representative token with which it is sought to substitute money.[5]

It is quite obvious that all this student is doing is setting down the contents of five note cards, all of them taken from the same source and four of them from the same page. He has not organized his material to develop any judgment of his own. The noticeable inequalities of style suggest to a reader that he has occasionally copied the actual wording of his source without using quotation marks. At any rate, there is nothing in the excerpt to suggest the student's own contributions. The same facts built into a paragraph which the student has actually created himself might come out like this:

> Article 123 of the Mexican Constitution attempts to standardize labor conditions by setting up basic principles governing hours and salaries. It provides a maximum work-week of six eight-hour days, prohibits the contractual hiring of children under twelve years of age, and limits the employment of children between twelve and sixteen to six hours a day. It requires that all wages be paid in legal currency, thus eliminating company script and other cash substitutes. It provides for a minimum wage scale which takes into account differences in the standard and cost of living in various parts of the country. It abolishes discrimination against women by making the wage rate the same for both sexes. In general, therefore, it seeks to establish a uniform code which will provide the general pattern of labor-management relations throughout the country.[6]

The difference between these two versions is that the first is a series of raw notes and the second is a unified paragraph created by the student. Both contain exactly the same facts, but the revised version rearranges and rewords the facts to make them develop the idea stated in the opening sentence. It also avoids the overdocumentation of the first version by acknowledging the two pages of Tannenbaum's book as the source for all the information in the paragraph. If an instructor were to compare the second version with the notes from which it was written, he would clearly see that the writer had mastered the information he was using and had shaped it to suit his own purpose.

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[5] Ibid., p. 530.

[6] Tannenbaum, op. cit., pp. 529-530.

Because of the importance of the research paper and because it is not always easy to weave factual material into a finished essay in one try, the composition should usually be done in three stages: writing the rough draft, preparing the final revision, and proofreading the finished paper. No two of these stages should be completed at a single sitting; indeed, it is best to allow a day between the completion of one and the beginning of the next.

How a student should compose the rough draft will depend partly on the student himself and partly on the nature of his material. For the average student the best advice is to break the total job into the main units of the outline and to tackle these units in order. A paper so developed is likely to be a bit stiff, to proceed rather mechanically from one step to the next, and to lack the qualities that make for an interesting or effective style. But these are not serious weaknesses if a careful job of revision is to follow. Footnotes should be written into the rough draft. Even if they finally appear at the foot of the page, it will be more convenient at this stage to insert them between ruled lines within the text, as illustrated on page 460.

The revision should turn the rough draft into a finished essay. It should provide smooth transitions between the units – a more difficult task in a long composition than in a short one – it should polish the diction and sentence structure and remove whatever awkward constructions existed in the first draft. It should check the relationship of detailed information to the topic idea it is developing. It should make sure that direct quotations are clearly marked and that indirect quotations and summaries actually serve the purpose of a paragraph and are not merely strung together without any purpose other than to get *something* written.

When the paper has been revised, the final bibliography should be added. This will be a list of the sources actually used in preparing the paper. It should include all sources cited in the footnotes and may contain one or two works which were valuable as background material even though not actually cited in the paper. The form of this bibliography should follow the conventions discussed on pages 415-418. If the bibliography is long, it should have separate sections for books and periodicals, each section arranged alphabetically.

Finally, the paper should be proofread at least twice to detect any errors which may have survived the revision. These readings should be mainly concerned with mechanical matters – doubtful spellings, punctuation, usage, and typographical errors. The proofreadings

should include both the footnotes and the bibliography, and it is wise at this stage to check these against the recommended forms. Proofreading should be done slowly – more slowly than reading for content. Some students find it helpful to read the paper aloud slowly so as to concentrate on the appearance of words.

Presenting the Finished Assignment

The assignment has not been fully met until the paper has been presented to the instructor in the form which he has stipulated. Your paper should look like the two samples on pages 477-492. A typical freshman research paper consists of the following parts:

1. A title page containing at least the title of the paper and the student's name and section number.
2. A detailed sentence outline of the paper.
3. The body of the paper, typed if possible, each page numbered and adequately footnoted. If the paper is typed, the text should be double spaced. Quotations of five or more lines should be indented and single-spaced without quotation marks.
4. Conventional footnotes with corresponding footnote markers at appropriate points in the text.
5. A bibliography of works used in preparing the paper.
6. The note cards used in writing the paper, arranged in the order in which they were used, and tied together or sealed in an envelope. The purpose of handing in the notes is to allow the instructor to trace the development of your paper from outline and notes to finished composition.

If your instructor wishes to modify these requirements, he will notify you. Make sure that you understand clearly what is wanted. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor well in advance of the deadline.

EXERCISES

A. As a test of your understanding of good research procedure, mark the following statements True or False:

.... 1. A description of a simple process makes a good topic for a research paper.
.... 2. A topic which allows one to draw heavily on personal experience will make a good research subject.
.... 3. A research topic should never be controversial.
.... 4. A good research topic should be a restricted one.
.... 5. "Blondes are more intelligent than brunettes" would make a good research topic.

.... 6. The preparation of a preliminary bibliography should come before any attempt to restrict the subject.

.... 7. In preparing a preliminary bibliography, it is not necessary to record the facts of publication.

.... 8. The bibliography should be prepared on cards.

.... 9. To save space, different works may be cited on both sides of a card.

.... 10. The most important requirement of a preliminary bibliography is completeness.

.... 11. It is wise to examine works briefly before entering them in the bibliography.

.... 12. By the term "introductory reading" we mean a careful reading of the textbook instruction on how to write a research paper.

.... 13. One should always make notes on the introductory reading.

.... 14. The main purpose of the introductory reading is to help one to restrict the subject.

.... 15. The best materials for introductory reading are usually general sources.

.... 16. For some subjects a popular magazine article might be the best introductory source.

.... 17. All notes should be taken on note-cards.

.... 18. Each note must be identified to show the exact source from which it came.

.... 19. By "exact source" is meant the actual title of the book or article.

.... 20. Under certain conditions abbreviations may be used to identify the source of a note.

.... 21. Notes should always be copied in the exact words of the author.

.... 22. The identification of the source should be written on each card before the note is made.

.... 23. To avoid the possibility of losing a note-card it is often wiser to use a notebook in preference to cards.

.... 24. When copying the exact words of a writer in a note, quotation marks are sometimes helpful but not necessary.

.... 25. It is wiser to digest a long note while the note is being made rather than when the paper is being written.

.... 26. No page reference is required when a student converts the author's statement into his own words.

.... 27. The habit of summarizing lengthy statements from a book is an undesirable practice.

.... 28. Summarized statements should be identified as fully as direct quotations.

.... 29. Separate notes may be made on both sides of a card, provided they are both taken from the same source.

.... 30. It is important to make sure that a direct quotation taken out of context does not distort the meaning it had in the original passage.

.... 31. It is a rule of research writing that every page must contain at least two footnotes.

.... 32. Footnotes must be accurate, but they need not follow any conventional form.

.... 33. Footnotes are generally placed at the bottom of the page.

.... 34. A footnote marker is usually a number inserted at the appropriate place in the text.

.... 35. The function of a reference footnote is to identify a direct quotation.

.... 36. If diagrams are borrowed from a work, they must be footnoted.

.... 37. Diagrams constructed by the student himself usually require no footnote.

.... 38. The abbreviation *op. cit.* may be used the first time a book is cited, provided that a complete description of the book is given in the bibliography.

.... 39. *Ibid.* can be used only to refer to a work which has been cited in the immediately preceding footnote.

.... 40. If the volume or page number must be changed in the new footnote, *ibid.* cannot be used.

.... 41. The following abbreviations are correct: V. (volume), ps. (pages), ff. (folios), cf. (can't find).

.... 42. Either Roman or Arabic numerals may be used to indicate volume numbers.

.... 43. If both volume and page numbers are used, the abbreviations Vol. and p. are omitted.

.... 44. In referring to a magazine article, the title of the article is placed in quotation marks and the title of the magazine is italicized (underlined).

.... 45. Volume numbers are required for magazines, but not for newspapers.

.... 46. *Loc. cit.* is the Greek variant of *op. cit.* and either form may be used for similar references.

.... 47. *Op. cit.* cannot be used if more than one work by the same author has been cited in the footnotes.

.... 48. Many instructors require students to hand in their note-cards along with their research paper.

.... 49. Not counting the notes, a complete research paper usually consists of title page, outline, text, footnotes, and bibliography.

.... 50. Typographical errors are considered less significant in a research paper than in most other assignments.

B. Consider the list of topics given below and do the assignments following them.

1. The sinking of the Graf Spee.
2. The abdication of Edward VIII.
3. What caused the popes to become voluntary prisoners in the Vatican?
4. Co-educational colleges offer the best education.
5. Was Mrs. Lincoln a Southern spy?
6. Is an international language practical?
7. The rules of football.
8. The development of big time football.
9. The Scopes trial.
10. The contemporary reputation of George Washington.
11. Why did the U.S. refuse to enter the League of Nations?
12. Primitive taboos.
13. The life of Franklin D. Roosevelt.
14. The first 100 days of the New Deal.
15. How did our spelling get this way?
16. Soil conservation.
17. Why did Chamberlain sign the Munich Pact?
18. What every woman wants in a husband.
19. A defense of progressive education.
20. Is weather-predicting just a guess?
21. The development of hybrid corn has raised the farmer's standard of living.
22. Compulsory military training.
23. Leif Ericson.
24. Why did Hitler invade Russia?
25. In what order were the first five books of the Bible written?
26. The building of the Panama Canal.
27. The development of democracy.
28. Proportional representation.
29. The electoral college should be abolished
30. The caste system in India.
31. Condition of workers in the 19th century.
32. Medieval medicine.
33. The origin of the barber's pole.
34. The development of the jury system.
35. The drafting of the Constitution.
36. Attempts to scale Mount Everest.
37. The opening up of Japan.
38. The rise of the Japanese emperor worship.
39. The attitude toward insanity in 18th century England.
40. Witchcraft in New England.
41. Huxley's defense of evolution.
42. America's most famous citizen.
43. Is Mars inhabited?
44. Is health better than wisdom?

45. The characteristics of a Greek tragedy.
46. Are our natural resources being wasted?
47. The merits of the feudal system.
48. The importance of religion in the middle ages.
49. A day in the life of an 18th century American.
50. Building a model airplane.

1. Indicate by number five topics which would be unsuitable for a 2000-word research paper, even if they were restricted.
2. Indicate by number ten topics which would require so much restriction that they are bad risks in their present form.
3. Indicate by number ten topics which are sufficiently restricted in their present form to justify the preparation of a preliminary bibliography.
4. Choose one of these ten topics and explain briefly what procedure you would follow in preparing a preliminary bibliography for it.

C. Following the procedure you have explained in Part 4 of Exercise B, prepare a bibliography of ten sources for the restricted topic you have chosen. Try to include both books and magazine articles in your bibliography. Do not include any source until you have examined it, and indicate on each bibliographical card the features for which you selected that source. Do not spend more than two hours on the assignment, but try to get the best sources available in your library.

D. The two student papers that follow illustrate quite different types of research papers. Read each of them carefully, observing the documentation as well as the composition. When you have finished do the following assignment. Assume that these papers have been selected as the best of their types and are now to compete for a $25.00 prize for the best freshman research paper. The conditions of the contest require that the prize be awarded to the paper which best reveals clarity of purpose, restriction of the topic, carefulness of organization, effective composition, and correct handling of the conventions governing footnotes and bibliography. The difficulty of the research problem is to receive recognition. You are the final judge. Select the winner and explain your reasons in a written judgment.

I

King James: American Monarch[4]

At the northern end of Lake Michigan, about fifty miles south of the Straits of Mackinac, lie a group of twelve islands known as the Beaver Islands.

[4] Barbara Long, "King James: American Monarch." Reprinted with permission from *The Green Caldron*, a magazine of freshman writing (University of Illinois), December, 1946, pp. 14-19.

Although small -- the largest, Big Beaver, being only twelve miles by six -- they have great natural beauty, with heavily wooded slopes rising to over forty feet above the blue-green waters of the lake. There, almost a hundred years ago, lived and ruled the only crowned king in America, James Jesse Strang.[1] Strang was a strange and fascinating character: loved and revered by his followers as "apostle, prophet, seer, revelator, and translator";[2] likened by his enemies to Judas, Cain, and Lucifer;[3] but acknowledged by all who knew him to be a man of great talent, fearless and capable in debate, and equal to any man in general knowledge.[4]

As a child in New York State, Jesse, who later changed his name to James, was small, frail, and sickly. His teachers thought him stupid and snubbed him unmercifully. He made no friends among the children, lacking the strength to join in their rough and tumble games. Left to himself, he read all the books he could find, memorizing whole chapters of the Bible and becoming "such a master of geography that one might fancy that he had traversed the length and breadth of the earth, and his knowledge of universal history was regarded as unlimited."[5]

A term at the Fredonia Male Academy provided him with his first opportunity to excel. "He became aware of the fact that he thought faster and straighter, had a greater store of knowledge, more self-control, more eloquence, and more passion than any boy in school. . . . On the debating platform he became invincible, ruthless, superb."[6] Slowly there grew in his mind the conviction that he was destined for some high and unusual calling. He longed passionately for fame: " 'Fame, fame alone of all the production of man's folly may survive.' "[7]

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[1] Walter Havighurst, The Long Ships Passing, p. 147.

[2] Charles Backus, "An American King," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 44 (Sept., 1882), 557.

[3] Henry Legler, "A Moses of the Mormons," Parkman Club Publications, 2 (1897), 126.

[4] O. W. Riegel, Crown of Glory: The Life of James Jesse Strang, p. 218.

[5] Ibid., p. 9.

[6] Ibid., p. 11.

[7] Ibid., p. 17.

During his young manhood, Strang was energetic and active. He taught school, dabbled in politics, debated, trained with the militia, lectured on temperance, and participated in the social life of the community. At the age of nineteen he began an intensive study of law, which gained him admittance to the Michigan bar in 1836. Shortly afterward he married Mary Perce, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman, and it seemed for a time that he would settle down to a conventional family life. However, his restlessness returned, and he sought a new outlet for his talents in Burlington, Wisconsin.

Strang was introduced to Mormonism in January, 1844, by a group of itinerant missionaries, who persuaded him to visit Nauvoo, Illinois, where Joseph Smith was then at the zenith of his power. Conversion came promptly, for the religion offered full play to his peculiar talents. Smith soon recognized the force within the new convert and rapidly promoted him.[8] Within a week after baptism he received an appointment as elder, and three months later he was vested with authority to establish a branch of the church in Wisconsin. He entered into his missionary work with zeal, winning several hundred converts. When Joseph Smith was murdered at Carthage, Illinois, on June 27, Strang felt ready, although a member of the church for only five months, to assume the mantle of the dead prophet. Although he pushed his claim vigorously, basing his alleged appointment on a letter from Smith, he was immediately denounced by the leaders at Nauvoo as a forger and imposter and was excommunicated; but for a time he was one of the chief contenders in the struggle for leadership, which ended in the triumph of Brigham Young.[9]

Strang was not discouraged or undone by his excommunication. His followers in Wisconsin still maintained his right to leadership, and with them he started a colony at Voree. His plans called for "a strong benevolent theocracy, which would give him unlimited power and at the same time bestow upon his subjects the blessings of Strang-enlightened govern-

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[8] Charles Strang, "A Michigan Monarchy," Historical Collections, 18 (1892), 629.

[9] "An American Kingdom of Mormons," Magazine of Western History, 3(April, 1886), 645.

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[7] Ibid., p. 17.

During his young manhood, Strang was energetic and active. He taught school, dabbled in politics, debated, trained with the militia, lectured on temperance, and participated in the social life of the community. At the age of nineteen he began an intensive study of law, which gained him admittance to the Michigan bar in 1836. Shortly afterward he married Mary Perce, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman, and it seemed for a time that he would settle down to a conventional family life. However, his restlessness returned, and he sought a new outlet for his talents in Burlington, Wisconsin.

Strang was introduced to Mormonism in January, 1844, by a group of itinerant missionaries, who persuaded him to visit Nauvoo, Illinois, where Joseph Smith was then at the zenith of his power. Conversion came promptly, for the religion offered full play to his peculiar talents. Smith soon recognized the force within the new convert and rapidly promoted him.[8] Within a week after baptism he received an appointment as elder, and three months later he was vested with authority to establish a branch of the church in Wisconsin. He entered into his missionary work with zeal, winning several hundred converts. When Joseph Smith was murdered at Carthage, Illinois, on June 27, Strang felt ready, although a member of the church for only five months, to assume the mantle of the dead prophet. Although he pushed his claim vigorously, basing his alleged appointment on a letter from Smith, he was immediately denounced by the leaders at Nauvoo as a forger and imposter and was excommunicated; but for a time he was one of the chief contenders in the struggle for leadership, which ended in the triumph of Brigham Young.[9]

Strang was not discouraged or undone by his excommunication. His followers in Wisconsin still maintained his right to leadership, and with them he started a colony at Voree. His plans called for "a strong benevolent theocracy, which would give him unlimited power and at the same time bestow upon his subjects the blessings of Strang-enlightened govern-

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[8] Charles Strang, "A Michigan Monarchy," Historical Collections, 18 (1892), 629.

[9] "An American Kingdom of Mormons," Magazine of Western History, 3(April, 1886), 645.

ment. . . . In Strang, social altruism and the lust for personal power could not be separated. . . . He inevitably became a reformer-dictator, noble in social vision and thoroughly unscrupulous in the practical task of establishing and maintaining his power."[10] Anyone who could possibly be made useful in building the colony was welcomed. His converts included all types of humanity. On one extreme were the simple-minded religionists, superstitious and hysterical; on the other were shrewd, selfish adventurers. In between lay all kinds of good and bad. Many of his highest officers were chosen from the rowdiest elements. He hoped to give his followers a communistic economy, but for a time he had to deal with the capitalistic world and borrow money where he could. Since he believed that the colony must be totally cut off from Gentile interference in order to absorb his doctrines unmolested, he preached disloyalty to the government; and, as he gained more converts, he grew more and more hostile toward civil authorities.[11] It was during this early period that he voiced many revelations and announced that he had uncovered a number of sacred plates similar to those found by Joseph Smith. As translated by Strang, these plates gave instructions that the Saints found a communistic order, build a temple, and erect a home for their leader.[12]

After a couple of years Strang realized that Voree would never be the ideal colony for which he had planned. He fought dissension within and outside his organization. The different interests of his people had led inevitably to controversy and revolt, and their misunderstandings were heightened by outside interference. It became apparent that the conditions which had driven the Mormons from Nauvoo were threatening Voree and that it would be just a question of time before Gentile influence would annihilate it. Therefore, remembering a beautiful Michigan archipelago which he had seen during his earlier travels, Strang announced that he had received a revelation to rebuild Zion on Beaver Island. He believed the island to be an ideal choice for a seat of power --

[10] Riegel, op. cit., p. 63.

[11] Ibid., p. 65 ff.

[12] Kimball Young, "Strang, James Jesse," Dictionary of American Biography.

far away from civil officers whose views might differ from his own, yet close to a profitable line of traffic. There were excellent fish in its waters, abundant forests for lumber, and its soil "needed but to be scratched to yield in multiplied plenty."[13]

Early in May a party of five men, led by Strang, landed on Big Beaver. The white inhabitants at the trading post met them coldly and refused to give the group either food or shelter, for they feared that if one Mormon entered, many more would certainly follow. For weeks Strang and his men lived on wild leeks and beechnuts, with the few scraps that could be picked up from the traders' kitchens. Finally, two or three of the men having been given work at the post, they were able to lay in supplies and build a cabin. The first wedge had been entered. And Strang now felt that it was safe to leave them while he journeyed east to obtain more converts.

Slowly at first, but with ever increasing momentum, his followers moved to the island. The first two years were filled with hardships and suffering. The traders' attitude had become definitely hostile. Seeing their fishing grounds invaded and their commercial supremacy threatened, they refused to sell the Mormons provisions and carried out a general program of terrorism. But the building of the kingdom continued. Acres were cleared and planted, a road was cut through the forest, a cabin was erected to house the printing press, and the saw mill ran night and day to supply lumber for houses. By July, 1850, Strang had finished the Book of the Law of the Lord, his translation of the plates which he had found in Wisconsin and which served as final authority on all social and theological matters. On its authority, he announced that God had commanded that he be crowned King, and he fixed July 8 as the day of his coronation.[14]

Strang assumed his royal powers in the tabernacle, a building eighty feet long and only partially completed at that time. He entered the building dressed in a robe of bright red and accompanied by his council, the twelve elders, and the minor orders of the ministry. The ceremony was performed by George J. Adams,

[13] Legler, op. cit., p. 130.

[14] Riegel, op. cit., p. 160.

president of the council, a former actor, who succeeded in making it a colorful affair. Its climax was reached when Adams placed the crown, a metal circlet with a projecting cluster of stars, upon Strang's bowed head.[15]

Thus began the reign of King James. His word was supreme, and his followers asserted that his was the only valid government on earth. Discipline was strict. The use of coffee, tea, tobacco, and liquor was prohibited; and prostitution and lewdness were discountenanced. The women were commanded to dress in blouses and bloomers. Saturday was decreed to be the Sabbath, and attendance at church was compulsory for all who were physically able. Any who might violate the royal commands were punished with lashes given at a public whipping post.[16]

Bowing to expediency, Strang discarded the communistic ideal which he had advocated at Voree. The Saints were allowed to hold title to their lands, but they were required to pay one-tenth of all that they raised or earned into a public fund which was used for improvements and the care of the poor. No other taxes were levied. Schools flourished, and the printing office from which Strang published the Northern Islander became a source of strength for the colony.[17]

Although at Voree Strang had been outspoken against polygamy, his attitude changed rapidly after he had met and fallen in love with Elvira Field, a dark-eyed school teacher. After another revelation, he assured the Saints that it was God's will for them to have more than one wife; but the practice was not especially favored by the majority of his subjects. None took more than three wives except the King, himself, who finally had five. This limitation was partially due to economic conditions, it being necessary for a man to have the means and ability to give his wives adequate care if he wished to have more than one.

Strang also made a complete turnabout in his former policy of nonresistance and pacifism. "The gospel of turning the other cheek. . . . had been tried and

[15] Legler, op. cit., p. 138.

[16] Havighurst, op. cit., p. 150.

[17] Strang, op. cit., p. 633.

found wanting. . . . whosoever persecuted a Saint on Beaver Island did so at his peril. . . ."[18] As the Mormons continued to gain in number and cover more territory, stories of their violence and cupidity were told in distant parts of the lakes. They were hated and feared, and vessels nearing the island doubled their lookout in distrust of the Mormon "pirates."[19]

Complaints were made to the United States government, and Strang was arrested on charges of piracy, counterfeiting, and robbing the United States mail. He was tried and acquitted at Detroit, after pleading his own case as one " 'persecuted for righteousness' sake.' "[20]

While believing that he was a law unto himself, Strang was shrewd in making use of the machinery of the civil law to advance his aims. Twice he was elected to the Michigan legislature; and, through his efforts, the counties of northern Michigan were reorganized so that the Mormons were able to control all of the offices of the county in which Beaver Island was located.[21]

Externally, Strang's power was at its zenith by 1856; internally, he faced conflict. Jealousy sprang up between him and the more intelligent of his disciples. Polygamy was a source of discord and was used as an excuse for revolt against his rigid discipline. The women rebelled at having to wear the bloomer costume. Two of his subjects, Thomas Bedford and Alexander Wentworth, who had received public discipline, determined to do themselves what the courts had failed to do. They decided to kill Strang as soon as it could be done with safety. The opportunity came when the U. S. S. Michigan returned to the island with a warrant for Strang's arrest. As he accompanied the master of the gunboat to the pier, the two disgruntled subjects sprang from behind a woodpile and fired at him. The King fell, mortally wounded. He died on July 9 at Voree, where he had been taken after his assassination. His assailants surrendered at once to the gunboat and were taken to Mackinac Island, where they were greeted with en-

[18] Riegel, op. cit., p. 141.

[19] Havighurst, op. cit., p. 151.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Young, op. cit., p. 124.

thusiastic cheers by the people, who treated them as heroes. They were never brought to trial.

The Saints on Beaver Island were left to feel the full fury of an angry Gentile mob, which burned the tabernacle, sacked the "Royal Press," and drove the subjects from the island, confiscating for themselves the property left behind.

Strang's death meant the end of his kingdom and his church. He had failed to name a successor, although he knew that he was dying. His followers scattered, making no attempt to continue his work. Soon his name was forgotten, except on the shores of Lake Michigan, where stories concerning "King Strang and his pirates" were told and retold for many years.

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II

An Analysis of Living Costs Before and After O.P.A.

There is much difficulty in making surveys in the cost of living, for the changes in the past have been very rapid. The Statistical Abstract of the United States, however, lists prices as accurately as possible. One need not refer to a survey of a record of prices to know that they have been rising. Families who were living comfortably in 1939 soon began to feel increases in the cost of clothes and food -- in fact, increases in the prices of all items. The following figures show the gradual rise that began in the latter part of 1939: (all items)

1939	99.4	1940	100.2
March 15 . . .	99.1	March 15 . . .	99.8
June 15 . . .	98.6	June 15 . . .	100.5
September 15 .	100.6	September 15 .	100.4
December 15 .	99.6	December 15 .	100.7
1941			
March 15 . . .	101.2	1942	116.5
June 15 . . .	104.6		

From these figures there was a rise from 99.4 in 1939 to 116.5 in 1942.[1] Of these items food increased from 95.2 to 105.9 in 1941, and to 123.9 in 1942; as examples, butter, which was 35.9, ham, which was 25.3, and eggs, which were 34.2 cents in 1939, rose as follows:[2]

	1940	1941	1942
ham, whole	25.0 . .	30.5 . .	37.4
butter	41.8 . .	42.0 . .	47.3
eggs	39.8 . .	36.9 . .	48.4

Rent rose from 104.3 in 1939 to 105.8 in 1941 to 108.5 in 1942; clothing from 100.5 in 1939 to 103.3 in 1941 to 124.2 in 1942; fuel, electricity and ice rose from 99.0 in 1939 to 101.4 in 1941 to 105.4 in 1942; house furnishings from 101.3 in 1939 to 105.3

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[1] Statistical Abstract of the United States 1946, sixty-third number, (Washington, 1946), p. 361.

[2] Information Please Almanac 1948, (New York, 1948), p. 295.

in 1941 to 122.2 in 1942. Miscellaneous items increased from 100.7 in 1939 to 103.3 in 1941 to 110.9 in 1942. Most household items such as irons rose from $3.60 in 1939 to $4.34 in 1942 and electric clothes washers rose from $69 to $91.[3] To further illustrate the gradual rise in living costs during this period before price control we also might examine the over-all amounts of consumer spending:[4] (in millions of dollars)

	1939	1941	1942
food and tobacco	20,607	25,296	31,459
household operations	9,808	12.336	13,311
housing	8,833	9,644	10,127
clothing	8,311	10,341	12,547
transportation	3,492	4,326	4,703
personal business	2,677	3,041	2,960
personal care	994	1,274	1,529
educational fees	980	1,170	1,279
recreational fees	449	509	578

From most of these items can be seen the gradual rise. It must be remembered that these columns show the years and not the months; otherwise a clearer picture of how prices rose during this period could be seen.

The consumer was faced with rising prices on all his basic living items; but in this period O.P.A. began the control of prices. Ceilings were placed on all goods except such things that the consumer would not so frequently buy: precious stones, sculptures, paintings and all objects of art, auction, and fair. Books and stamps were also on this list. Neither complete control nor a stoppage of rising prices was accomplished, but in viewing the figures from 1943 to 1945 prices were checked remarkably. It is true from the foregoing figures that the cost of living reached its highest peak in 1942 but the highest rise in prices actually took place before O.P.A. went into effect. The problem of stopping the rise in prices was a big one, but in noting the prices of that time on the basic living items we can readily see what happened:

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[3] Information Please Almanac 1948, (New York, 1948), p. 343.

[4] Ibid., p. 286.

	all items	food	cloth-ing	rent	ice, fuel elec.	Misc.
1943 . . .	123.6	138.0	129.7	108.0	107.0	115.8
1944 . . .	125.5	136.1	138.8	108.2	109.8	121.3
1945 . . .	128.4	139.1	145.9	108.3	110.3	124.1

(Prices -- period during O.P.A.)[5]

Since food is the largest item of expenditure let us examine a few articles. Although eggs increased from 58¢ to 68¢, ham decreased from 37.7¢ in 1943 to 35.2¢ in 1944; by 1945 it was only 35¢. From 52¢ in 1943 butter went down to 50¢ in 1944, but up again to 54¢ in 1945. Some items, although low-priced, were scarce. Rationing was a device which helped the situation of shortages somewhat. All in all, ceiling prices were observed fairly well and according to the figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics the cost of living showed an increase of less than two per cent.[6]

Prices remained in check until the middle of 1946; O.P.A. was supposed to end then. It was guessed what might happen if all of a sudden ceilings were taken off all commodities. As a matter of experiment coconut was put on the market without a price ceiling and within a week its price quadrupled; the same thing happened with citrus fruits. These prices slowly came down, but it was anybody's guess what would happen after complete price control was off. From June to July a bigger "experiment" was made. Price control was let up on certain food commodities and prices soared. In stores all over the country housewives were dismayed at the prices of meat. Ham in some cases was as high as $1.69 a pound. In Boston housewives refused to buy and hamburger dropped from 60¢ to 45¢ a pound. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, some determined women began a telephone campaign, passing the word not to buy. Butter dropped to 79¢ and had been selling close to a dollar a pound. In Cleveland, Ohio, butter was priced at from 76 to 95¢ a pound. When everyone started to use margarine at 28¢ a pound there was a scarcity of it. Stores were warring about prices among themselves. In St. Petersburg, Florida, two stores competing over the price of but-

[5] Ibid., p. 148.

[6] "O.P.A. Nightmare," Newsweek, (June 7, 1943), p. 31.

ter caused it to be 77¢ and 19¢ in the same day.[7] In some places housewives actually picketed butcher shops. In one city women picketed some 25 neighborhood shops causing some of them to close down.

By the time O.P.A. resumed control, prices had taken a big leap as compared with the year before:

	all items	food	cloth-ing	rent	ice, fuel elec.	Misc.[8]
1946 . . .	139.3	159.6	160.2	108.6	112.5	128.9
1945 . . .	128.4	139.1	145.9	108.3	110.3	124.1

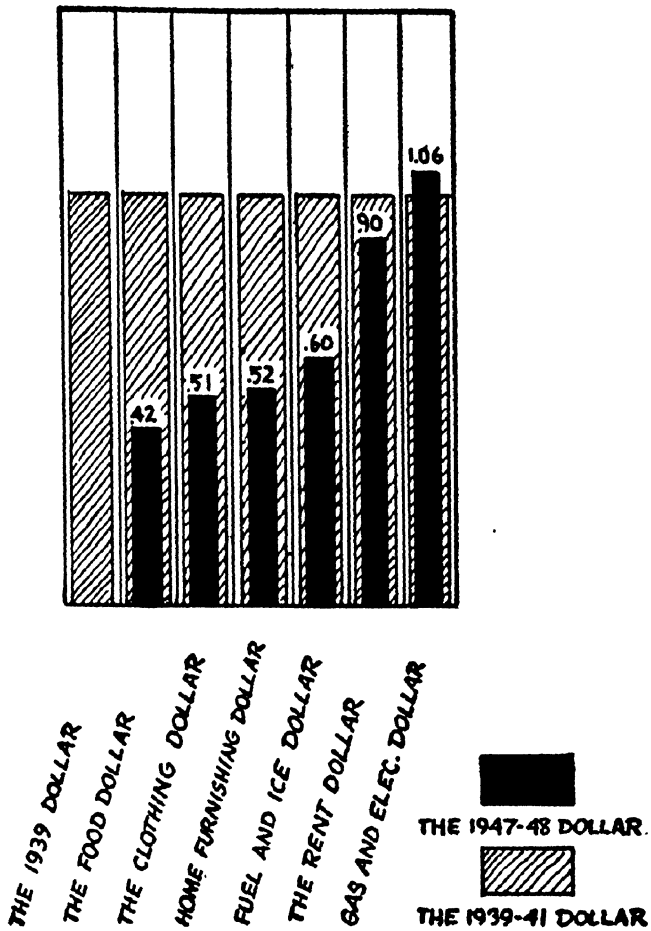
The cost of living from 1939 to June 1946 had increased 34 per cent.[9]

The question of how economy would adjust itself to freedom from price control was answered by a sharp rise in prices; and the rise continued from the last quarter of 1946 to the first quarter of 1947. Consumers' prices rose at about an annual rate of 30% during this period. For a while the President's "hold the line policy" seemed to have had a little effect on prices; but in the early summer of 1947 price increases began again in meats, dairy products, eggs and poultry. Led by these increases, there developed during the third quarter a general upward movement of prices which continued through the rest of the year. Since June, 1947, consumers' prices have risen at an annual rate of 12%. The following table shows the percentage changes in consumers' prices from June, 1946, to November, 1947:[10]

Item	June to Decem-ber 1946	Dec. 1946 to Mar. 1947	Mar. to June 1947	June to Nov. 1947	June 1946 to Nov. 1947
All items	15.0	2.0	0.5	5.0	23.7
Foods	27.7	1.9	.5	6.4	39.2
Apparel	12.3	4.4	.8	2.4	21.0
Rent	.3	.2	.2	5.5	6.2
Fuel, elec., ice. .	4.5	1.8	.1	7.8	14.8
House furnishings .	13.5	2.9	.2	3.5	21.0
Miscellaneous . . .	6.4	1.5	.7	2.8	11.8

[7] "Robomb over America," Scholastic, (April 16, 1945), p. 14.

[8] Information Please Almanac 1948, (New York, 1948), p. 148.



The above graph illustrates the 1939-41 dollar of the consumer as compared with the deflated dollar of 1947 and 1948.[11] By reading this graph one can see that the most drastic decrease in value is in the food dollar, which is today worth $.42. One can see that the rent dollar has only decreased $.10 in value.

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[9] Ibid., p. 366.

[10] The Economic Report of the President, (Washington, 1948), p. 37.

[11] "Shrinking Value of the Dollar," U. S. News, (April 9, 1948), p. 24.

O.P.A. has been lifted entirely on food, but only modified on rents. A fact hard to believe is the increase of $.06 in the gas and electricity dollar.

The following table illustrates how a $5,000.00 annual income of 1941 compares with the same income, under the same living conditions, in 1947. This is for a family of four people.[12]

1941	Items	1947
$ 43.00	taxes	$ 480.00
1,152.00	food	2,050.00
753.00	shelter	825.00
572.00	clothing	992.00
208.00	medical care	353.00
$2,728.00	total	$4,700.00

Subtracting $2,728.00 (amount spent for necessities) from $5,000.00 we find that the consumer has $2,272.00 left over in 1941 for the following items:

1. transportation
2. personal care
3. contributions
4. recreation
5. furnishings
6. tobacco
7. automobile upkeep
8. savings
9. insurance
10. miscellaneous

Although the items mentioned above are not the absolute necessities to life, a family can hardly live without them.

This brings us back to the 1947 expenditures and earnings. Subtracting $4,700.00 from $5,000.000, we find that the consumer has $300.00 left over. This $300.00 is to be spent on the ten items named above.

From June, 1946, on, prices increased 31% in 10 months.[13] Before the war a $5,000.00 income was considered good. A family of four was said to be well off, for they expected to eat well, have a house on the better side of town, and be able to save for education and retirement. Now they barely have the chance to eat and dress as well as they did then. An

[12] "Meaning of a $5,000 Income," U. S. News, (Aug. 22, 1947), p. 11.

[13] Bowles, C., "Price Problem," New York Times Magazine, (April 20, 1947), p. 7.

income of $5,000.00 today means no more than a $3,200 income in 1941 or a $2,900 income in 1939. As far as the family's food is concerned, meat rose from 10 to 30 cents a pound and butter from 41 to 60 and 80 cents a pound. Milk was 13 cents but rose to 19 cents a quart. Eggs rose from 40 to 65 cents. In order to meet the income, the average housewife must spend less on food and the family can not eat so well as they did in 1941. In 1947 housing costs went up 10%. $753 in 1941 would pay for rent, gas, light and other household operations. Rent and fuel are higher as well as shingles and paint, making it impossible to include repairs on the $5,000 income of this period. In view of this, rent would be $1,825 at the minimum and more in 1948 if rent rises in the least. Clothing for both men and women is more expensive. Not only have house dresses and fur coats gone up but the change in style means replacing some of the wardrobe. In order to get the same quality of clothes that was gotten for $572 in 1941 the cost for this same family would be $992. Medical care, too, during this period would cost the average family $353 as compared to $208 in 1941. An office visit to a doctor cost $2.00 then, $3.00 to $6.00 now; dental costs have also gone up in the same way.[14]

From 1939 to 1947 the cost of living has risen 157%.[15] The result of the high cost of living is that it succeeds in somewhat lowering the standard of living. The housewife in order to keep the food bill down must buy less butter and steaks and such expensive foods wherever and whenever possible. Also the rate of saving for the average family is reduced. It has been going steadily lower each year since 1945 when it was up to 38.9%. The 1946 figure is 18.9% and has been continuing to go down since then.[16] Taxes cannot be cut at all and some of the most difficult items to cut are medical costs and the keeping-up of the family car. Today a choice can be made between a new car and education and these things require future savings if the family is able only to make ends meet.

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[14] "Meaning of a $5,000 Income," U. S. News, (Aug. 22, 1947.)

[15] Information Please Almanac 1948, p. 366.

[16] Ibid., p. 285.

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24

ARGUMENT

ARGUMENT, whether spoken or written, is the presentation of evidence or reasons, or both, to support a thesis. The difference between argument and exposition is essentially one of purpose. The purpose of exposition is to explain; the purpose of argument is to convince. Thus, when a writer seeks only to make clear how a law operates, he is writing exposition; when he explains its operation to convince others that the law is desirable or undesirable, he is writing argument. The two kinds of writing often overlap and are most easily distinguished at their extremes.

Since argument is the development of a thesis, all that has been said about the outlining and composition of an analytical paper in Part One applies to the argumentative paper. But, in addition, argument has its special problems, which can be summarized as follows: *What is the question? What are the issues? What is the evidence? How sound is the reasoning?* The study of these four questions constitutes the subject matter of formal argument; therefore, it is with these questions that this chapter is concerned.

WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

Before we can argue effectively, we must understand precisely what we are arguing about. Unless we do, we are likely to discover, late in the argument, that we have not been arguing to the point, or that our disagreements with our opponent could have been resolved earlier had we agreed with him on the meaning of certain key words. Thus people can argue for an hour about whether men are stronger than women, only to discover that the whole argument depends on what they mean by *stronger.*

The first step in an argument, then, is a consideration of the question. A satisfactory question has four characteristics: First, it must

be *debatable;* that is, it must be the kind of question about which conclusions may be reached, and it must not be so one-sided that opposition is impossible. For example, the thesis that the pen is mightier than the sword is not debatable, since all that could be done in such an argument would be to draw up competing lists of the uses or successes of both instruments. There is no way of proving that either is "better" than the other. Also, the thesis that drunkenness is undesirable is not debatable, since there could be no reasonable opposition to it, except possibly a facetious one.

Since phrasing the topic so as to give unfair advantage to either side tends to make the question less debatable, the wording must not be "loaded." For example, the question, "Is excessive study injurious to the health?" is loaded in favor of the affirmative, since any attempt to show that study was not injurious would also show that it was not excessive, and the attempt would be discredited on the ground that it was irrelevant to the question as worded. This kind of loaded question rules out the opposing position altogether.

The remaining characteristics of a satisfactory question are those of a good thesis (see pages 27-29). The question must be unified; it cannot present two separate questions in the form of one. For example, "Were the German people responsible for Hitler and should we contribute to the economic recovery of Germany?" is a double-barreled question which could be dealt with adequately only if broken into two separate questions. Again, the question must be restricted. It is not feasible to argue such a question as "Are depressions caused by ignorance?" within the limits of a single paper or a single debate, since the question is far too comprehensive. Finally, the question should be free from vague ambiguous terms. If the words are not completely clear to both sides, the meanings to be accepted should be agreed upon before the argument begins.

Closely related to the wording of the question is its history, since this frequently affects the argument. For example, compulsory military training in peacetime has been proposed several times during our history. Since the negative is sure to avail itself of all the arguments by which these proposals were defeated, both sides must know the historical background of the question.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The issues are those parts of the argument at which differences of opinion become crucial. In any argument there may be points on

which both sides agree; there may be others on which they disagree but which are not important; finally, there are a few points of disagreement so fundamental that the whole argument hinges upon them. In the following paragraph Stephen A. Douglas points out the basic issues between himself and Lincoln in their senatorial contest in 1858:

> I take great pleasure in saying that I have known personally and intimately, for about a quarter of a century, the worthy gentleman who has been nominated for my place; and I will say that I regard him as a kind, amiable, and intelligent gentleman, a good citizen and an honorable opponent; and whatever issues I have with him will be of principles and not involving personalities. Mr. Lincoln made a speech before that Republican Convention which unanimously nominated him for the Senate — a speech evidently well prepared and carefully written — in which he states the basis upon which he proposes to carry on the campaign during the summer. In it he lays down two distinct propositions which I shall notice, and upon which I shall take bold and direct issue with him. Mr. Lincoln asserts, as a fundamental principle of the Government, that there must be uniformity in the local laws and domestic institutions in each and all of the States of the Union. Now, my friends, I must say to you, frankly, that I take bold, unqualified issue with him upon that principle. I assert that it is neither desirable nor possible that there should be uniformity in the local institutions and domestic regulations of the different States of this Union. The other principle discussed by Mr. Lincoln in his speech consists in a crusade against the Supreme Court of the United States on account of the Dred Scott Decision. On this question, also, I take direct and distinct issue with him. Thus, you see, my fellow citizens, that the issues between Mr. Lincoln and myself, as respective candidates for the United States Senate, as made up, are direct, unequivocal, and irreconcilable.

Just as in war it is more important to win the decisive battles than the skirmishes, so in argument victory goes to the side which wins the main issues. For this reason experienced debaters tend to hurry over trivial disagreements and to concentrate on the important issues. Failure to stick to the issues is usually a sign either of confusion or of deliberate intent to misrepresent the argument. Against a capable opponent this failure will always be exposed; therefore, it is imperative that the author of an argument should clearly understand the main issues at the outset.

To illustrate the difference between trivial and fundamental disagreements, let us analyze a question which is perennially popular —

the question of compulsory military training. The analysis that follows is not concerned with taking either side on this question. It is concerned only with pointing out the issues.

Generally, those who support the proposal affirm – and those who oppose it deny – that compulsory military training will produce the following results:

1. It will help preserve peace by discouraging potential aggressors.
2. In the event of war, it will significantly increase our chances of victory.
3. It will improve national health by a program of physical education, medical care, and scientific diet.
4. It will provide educational opportunities for many who could not otherwise obtain them.
5. It will develop the characters of the trainees by teaching them discipline and responsibility.
6. It will train them for technical positions in industry.
7. It will make them better citizens.

On each of these assertions the affirmative and the negative disagree. It is therefore easy to assume that all seven points are important issues. But a little reflection shows us that if the affirmative could prove its first two assertions, it would win the argument no matter how badly it was defeated on the others, and that if it failed to prove the first two assertions, it would lose the argument no matter how successful it was with the other five. Since compulsory military training is really proposed as a means of preserving peace and securing national defense, the argument will be won or lost on these two points. These are the basic issues. Whether compulsory training does or does not improve health, character, citizenship, educational and employment opportunities is not decisive. If these questions distract attention from the main issues, they are positively harmful.

The ability to pick out the main issues and concentrate upon them is essential to effective argument. There are several ways in which the main issues may be discovered. The best way – the method already illustrated – is to analyze the question, discover its purpose, and then select those issues which are fundamental. An easier way for many students is to set up a contrasted list of affirmative and negative assertions and from these derive the main issues, thus:

QUESTION: Should Congress enact legislation requiring labor-management disputes to be settled by court decision?

Affirmative	*Negative*
1. There is need for such legislation.	1. There is no need for such legislation.
2. Lack of such a law is costly to both labor and management.	2. The present system already provides for voluntary arbitration.
3. The public is the real sufferer in labor-management disputes.	3. Losses due to strikes are exaggerated by sensational publicity.
4. Something must be done to curb the growing power of labor.	4. The proposed law would be un-American.
5. The introduction of such a law would make strikes impossible.	5. The proposed law would be unconstitutional.
6. The present system makes both management and labor irresponsible.	6. Such a law has failed when it was tried.
7. Strikes can interfere with national security.	7. The right of appeal would draw out disputes endlessly.
8. The proposed law would make for a speedy solution of labor disputes.	8. No law could force a man to work.

Two of these contrasted assertions may be eliminated at first glance. Since the proposal is designed to provide a way of settling disputes, not to curb labor, number 4 on the affirmative list may be dropped. Number 5 on the negative list may also be eliminated, because the constitutionality of a law is decided by the courts. Both sides might disagree on whether they *thought* the proposal unconstitutional, but such disagreement would result in unprofitable wrangling and no decision could be reached in the argument.

A second look would reveal that several of the assertions on each side were so closely related that they might be combined. Thus, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 on the affirmative all deal with the evils of the present system. Numbers 1, 2, and 3 on the negative deny that the present system is unsatisfactory. All these assertions might be grouped as subheadings under the general question, so that the first main issue could be set up as follows:

I. Are the weaknesses of the present system sufficient to require a change?
   A. Is the present system detrimental to the interests of both labor and management?
   B. Is the present system detrimental to public welfare?

This reorganization leaves us assertions 5 and 8 on the affirmative and 4, 6, 7, and 8 on the negative. Of these, all but number 4 on the negative deal with the effectiveness of the proposal in achieving its aims. We could reorganize these assertions as follows:

II. Would the proposal accomplish its aims if adopted?
  A. Has it been tried elsewhere and, if so, has it worked?
  B. Would it work here?

We are left now with only the fourth negative assertion, that the proposed law would be un-American. This may be either a name-calling device or a serious objection that the proposal is inconsistent with the American philosophy. If the latter, the negative could force the affirmative to accept it as an issue, since any unanswered argument that the American people would oppose such a solution in principle would weaken the affirmative's position. The assertion that the proposed law would be un-American is less clearly a main issue than the other two, but since it could become an issue, we will include it, thus giving us three main issues:

I. Are the weaknesses of the present system sufficient to require a change?
II. Is the proposal consistent with the American philosophy?
III. Would the proposal accomplish its aims, if adopted?

As already indicated, these main issues could be subdivided into subordinate and more specific questions.

The issues established above are essentially *stock issues*, those likely to arise in almost any question. The stock issues are usually expressed in some such form as

I. Do present conditions require a change?
II. Is the proposed change the best possible one?
  A. Is it theoretically sound?
  B. Would it be sound in operation?
  C. Would its advantages offset its disadvantages?

One way, then, to find the issues in a question is to take the stock issues and see how they apply to the question being considered. This method is often useful as a preliminary step in discovering specific issues.

We can illustrate by applying the stock issues to the question of compulsory military training.

I. Do existing conditions require a departure from our present system of national defense?
   A. Is there a serious threat to world peace?
   B. Are our present measures inadequate to meet that threat?
II. If a change is necessary, is compulsory military training the most desirable one?
   A. Is it consistent with American traditions?
   B. Would it significantly increase our national security?
      1. Would it lessen the danger of war?
      2. If war became inevitable, would it offer the best assurance of victory?
   C. Would its advantages justify its cost and the difficulties it would create?

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE?

The most important single thing to learn about argument is that *mere assertion is not argument.* Things are not necessarily so because someone says they are. No intelligent reader is willing to accept unsupported assertions on an important problem. Always he will ask, "What is the evidence?" If that evidence is not presented, he will lose confidence in the writer and will soon dismiss the argument as worthless.

This is a point that every freshman writer should understand clearly, for overindulgence in unsupported assertion is the most serious weakness of student arguments. It is a weakness which has two unhappy results. First, it usually produces an undeveloped argument. Evidence is to argument what details are to exposition; and just as a lack of explanatory detail leaves the exposition abstract and vague, so a lack of evidence leaves the argument general and unconvincing. Second, unsupported assertions usually sound presumptuous. Readers are naturally suspicious of a writer who seems to know all the answers without knowing any of the facts. For these reasons every student who sits down to read or write a serious argument should keep in the forefront of his mind the question: "What is the evidence?"

Testimonial Evidence

In general there are two types of evidence: the evidence of authority and the evidence of facts. Evidence from authority is testimonial evidence. The expert testifies and his testimony may be used to support or attack a thesis. Thus, if we are arguing that there is no adequate

defense against atomic warfare, we may support our position by quoting some well-known nuclear physicist who has worked with the atomic bomb.

Testimonial evidence is indispensable in many questions, but it must be used with caution. It is indispensable because on many questions non-experts are not in a position to know the facts. For example, ordinary citizens cannot decide for themselves whether a particular death resulted directly from an accident or from accompanying heart failure. Such questions can be answered only by expert medical opinion. In effect, we accept the expert's judgment as a substitute for facts which are difficult to obtain or to interpret.

Testimonial evidence should be used with caution because it is subject to serious abuses. It may – and often must – result in our accepting the opinion of the expert without careful examination. This is justifiable only when three conditions have been met: (1) that authoritative evidence is necessary, since we cannot appeal to the facts themselves; (2) that the qualifications of the expert are undisputed on the particular point on which he is testifying; (3) that there is no reasonable probability that the expert is prejudiced.

The first of these conditions means that we should avoid argument by authority when facts are available. Quoting an authority to support an argument already established is persuasive, but in college argument there is an undesirable tendency to settle too many arguments by an appeal to authority. This often results in what is called a "parade of authorities," the kind of debate which is nothing more than two lists of quotations, each contradicting the other.

The second condition requires us to consider carefully the merits of the authority. Some advertisers encourage us to believe that any prominent person is an authority on any question, and while most of us realize the absurdity of such an assumption, we are likely to believe that a man who is qualified in a general field must therefore be an expert in any phase of that field. A little reflection will persuade us that a general practitioner in medicine is not necessarily an authority on brain tumors, that a professor of physics may have only a general knowledge of nuclear fission, and that a specialist in one division of chemistry may be relatively uninformed in another. A satisfactory authority must be an expert *on the particular point on which he is testifying.*

The third condition reminds us that even expert testimony may be biased. For example, the Chief of Staff is an expert on military mat-

ters, but his concern with the needs and aims of the army may keep him from being a completely impartial authority on a question concerning congressional appropriations for military expenses. The secretary of the American Medical Association would not be generally acceptable as an unprejudiced expert on socialized medicine. The president of the National Association of Manufacturers or of the CIO would not be entirely free from suspicion of self-interest in testifying on proposed labor legislation. In law courts and congressional committee hearings, biased experts cancel each other's testimony. In argument the only safe authority is one who is qualified to testify on the point at issue and is unbiased in his attitude on that point.

Factual Evidence

Facts are the best ammunition in an argument. Among intelligent people controversies tend to dissolve when they are reduced to questions of fact. There may still remain a reasonable disagreement about how the data should be interpreted, but neither side is likely to indulge in a self-assured use of abstractions once both have agreed to look at the facts. Therefore, a few well-chosen facts can often dispel a cloud of words. The testimony of a hundred character witnesses that Mr. X would be incapable of murdering a man counts for little when confronted with the evidence that the man was killed by a bullet from Mr. X's gun, that Mr. X was in possession of the gun at the time of the murder, and that a paraffin test showed that he had fired a gun. Indeed, the most convincing argument is often a straight presentation of the facts. Notice how the author of the following selection piles one fact upon another to build his argument that the abuse of our forests and farms has robbed us of irreplaceable natural resources.

The Land Runs to the Sea[1]

The most obvious result of deforestation, overgrazing, and bad farming methods is soil erosion. American civilization, founded on nine inches of topsoil, has now lost one-third of this soil. Dr. Hugh H. Bennett, testifying before a Congressional committee in 1939 said, "In the short life of this country we have essentially destroyed 282,000,000 acres of land, crop and rangeland. Erosion is destructively active on 775,000,000 additional acres. About 100,000,000 acres of cropland, much of it repre-

[1] From William Vogt's *Road to Survival.* Reprinted by permission of William Sloane Associates, Inc., publishers.

senting the best cropland we have is finished in this country. We cannot restore it.

"It takes nature from 300 to 1000 years or more to bring back a single inch of topsoil and we sometimes lose that much topsoil as the result of a single rain, if it is an especially heavy torrential type of rain. . . .

"We have some land left that has not been used; but it is scattered. We have no large aggregates of land to which we may turn. We are losing every day as the result of erosion the equivalent of two hundred forty-acre farms. We have lost that much since we were here yesterday. It is gone, gone, forever. . . .

"The evil effects of erosion do not stop with the removal of topsoil and the further gouging of the land by the gulleying process, but the products of such processes of land impoverishment and outright destruction travel on downslope to fill reservoirs, streams, channels, drain ditches, and irrigation ditches. . . . In the southeastern part of the United States, thirteen costly, major reservoirs have been filled to the top of the dam with the products of erosion over an average period of less than thirty years. . . . Engineers have not found an economical method for cleaning a reservoir once it is filled with sand and mud." The Sweetwater Reservoir in California lost 48 per cent of its storage capacity in less than seven years. Near Stillwater, Oklahoma, a flood-control reservoir covered a thousand acres in 1937, and in 1944 nearly three thousand acres; silt had backed up the waters, and of course cut down the flood-control usefulness by that amount.

During the past hundred years the Potomac River has carried more than half a billion tons of soil past Washington, or about seventy-five tons of soil from each of the 7,400,000 acres that make up the drainage basin above Washington. Some of the land is in woods and some is so steep and stony that it has never been cultivated. Accordingly, the actual per acre loss on the cultivated land is much greater than indicated.

Since early colonial days, erosion has removed from one-fourth to three-fourths of the best part of the crop-producing topsoil from more than five million acres of the complete Potomac River drainage basin. In addition, from three-fourths to all of the topsoil has been eroded from another 221,000 acres. Small wonder that the deep harbor into which came oceangoing ships from the seven seas has filled with silt and is now the site of the Lincoln Memorial.

It was estimated by the Soil Conservation Service that approximately 5,500,000 tons of sediment would flow by Washington in 1947. This, in spite of the fact that twenty soil conservation districts have been organized on the Potomac watershed. These districts embrace almost 87 per cent of the basin's land. With the help of Soil Conservation Service technicians, supervisors, and farmers, there have already been worked out

almost 55,000 complete conservation farm plans, which provide for the acre-by-acre treatment of almost 1,000,000 acres. Yet five and a half million tons of earth a year go down the river. And this is merely one rather small stream.

At the head of Chesapeake Bay, 85,000,000 cubic yards of sediment were deposited between 1846 and 1938; the average depth of water over an area of 32 square miles was reduced 2½ feet! At the site of two Maryland ports, once open to overseas trade, the mooring posts are more than two miles from navigable water. In the seventeenth century ocean-going vessels sailed up the creek to Piscataway, Maryland; the depth of the water at the creek's entrance is now about two feet. The decadence of the countryside about Port Tobacco, reported by Craven's traveler, also contributed to the silting and abandonment of many ports on Chesapeake Bay. Port Tobacco is, itself, now a mile from tidewater.

Though during the past hundred years the federal government has spent about $17,000,000 digging out the port of Baltimore, the depth of water under its Hanover Street Bridge fell from seventeen feet to six inches by 1924.

Such an accumulation of pertinent facts makes a formidable argument. The evidence demands an answer if the opposition argument is to stay alive, and usually the only possible answer is to show either that the facts are distorted or that they do not prove what they are intended to prove. And, of course, any attempt to show either of these things will be met with the question – What is *your* evidence?

Facts may be drawn from many sources – personal experience, case histories, statistical studies, experiments, books, magazines, and newspapers. In college arguments most of the evidence comes from library research, (see Chapters 21 and 23). The evidence used must meet two general and self-evident requirements: it must be pertinent, and it must be verifiable. In practice the second requirement means that the writer should be able to refer his reader to his sources or to demonstrate how the factual statements may be checked.

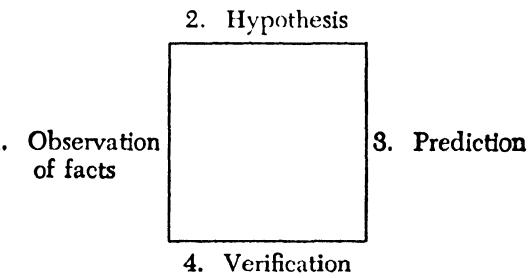
HOW SOUND IS THE REASONING?

The function of reasoning is to relate facts into a meaningful sequence. We observe fact *A* (that the lights in our house have gone out) and fact *B* (that all the other houses on the street are dark) and we relate these two facts with previous experience and say that the power is off. The conclusion may seem simple, even automatic, but behind it is a complex relationship between facts *A* and *B* and a num-

ber of facts which preceded them. The process of making these relationships is called reasoning.

If our reasoning is sound, it should explain the facts already known and guide us to related ones still to be learned. For example, if the power has been cut off, we can predict (*a*) that we must wait until it comes on again – that is, there is nothing we can do about it; (*b*) that the refrigerator, the radio, and other electrically-driven machines will not work; and (*c*) that our neighbors are in the same fix. If these predictions prove untrue, there is something wrong with our reasoning. Thus, if a light comes on across the street but not at our house, we change our opinion and say, "The power is on; a fuse must have blown out." The conclusion eliminates prediction (*a*) and creates a new prediction, that if we insert a new fuse the power will be available again.

This illustration shows the basic pattern of reasoning: we observe the facts: we create a hypothesis to explain them; we predict consequences which will follow from the hypothesis; and we test the predictions to see if they occur. The process may be diagramed as follows:



If the reasoning is sound, all four sides of the square are completed. If the prediction fails, there is a flaw in one side: we may have misobserved the acts, drawn an erroneous hypothesis, predicted something that does not logically follow from the hypothesis, or tested the prediction inaccurately. Since there are many opportunities for error, we cannot assume that our reasoning is sound until we have tested it to the best of our ability.

Types of Reasoning

It is customary to divide reasoning into two major types: deductive and inductive. Deductive reasoning moves from the general to the particular. It starts with a generalization about a class of facts and then applies that generalization to a particular fact within the class – *Since all girls like flowers, I'll send Jane some.* Inductive reasoning

is usually defined as starting with particular facts and then drawing a conclusion about all similar facts – *The burglar got five years; crime does not pay.* However, although all inductions begin with particular examples, they do not all end in general statements. Therefore, the name **Reasoning from examples** is sometimes a better description of the process.

Deduction. Deductive reasoning allows us to see that what is true of all members of a class will be true of every member of the class, and, therefore, of any particular member. If, for example, it is true that all girls like flowers, then it must be true that Jane likes flowers. This kind of reasoning may seem so obvious as hardly to justify the dignity of such a big name, but a reasoning process is not the less useful because it is obvious. By the use of deduction, mathematicians and scientists have been able to draw some very significant conclusions.

Deductive reasoning is usually expressed in one of the following variant forms:

1. All teachers are optimists.
   He is a teacher.
   Therefore he is an optimist.
2. Since all teachers are optimists, he is an optimist.
3. He is a teacher; therefore he is an optimist.
4. He is an optimist, because he is a teacher.

The first form is called a **syllogism**; the others are called **enthymemes**, which are merely shortened forms of the syllogism, and may be converted into syllogistic form by using the conclusion (in this case, "he is an optimist") as the third line of the syllogism and expanding the rest into the first two lines (the premises).

There are many kinds of syllogisms and an imposing number of rules governing their construction. But for our purposes all we need to know about them is that:

1. The major premise (the generalization in the first line) must be self-evidently true. It is not self-evident that all teachers are optimists; therefore, our syllogism fails the first test. If we could prove that all teachers are optimists, we could proceed with the syllogism. But without such proof, the syllogism has to be ruled invalid at the start.

2. The subject of the conclusion (in our example "He") must be

clearly a member of the class referred to in the major premise. If our major premise had read "All men teachers are optimists" we could not have continued, "She is a teacher; she is an optimist," because "She" is not a member of the class cited in the major premise.

3. The conclusion must logically follow from the premises. We could not, for example, have concluded "He is rich" or "He is wise" from the premises of our syllogism. Such an illogical conclusion would be called a *non-sequitur* – that is, "it does not follow" from the premises.

Deductive and inductive reasoning are generally used together. For example, the first two sides of the square on page 504 represent inductive reasoning, the third side represents deductive. Whenever we predict the particular implications of a generalization we are using deduction. Therefore, a knowledge of the tests of deductive reasoning allows us to test predictions logically before we test them factually. If the prediction does not meet the test of logical analysis, it will not meet the test of factual verification.

Generalization. We shall recognize three types of inductive reasoning – **generalization, causal relation,** and **analogy.** A generalization is a conclusion about a whole class based on a study of individual members of that class. Perhaps the most familiar examples are bull-session generalizations in which college students assert that *all* men (or women) are thus and so as a result of their experience with *some* men (or women). Another well-known example is the public opinion poll which, on the evidence of interviews with individual voters, predicts what voters as a whole will do on election day.

From our previous discussion of the basic pattern of reasoning, it will be recognized that the inductive reasoning on the first two sides of the square on page 504 constitutes a generalization. It will also be observed that a generalization is prerequisite to deduction, since the major premise of a syllogism is a generalized observation. The process of drawing general conclusions from specific instances has given us some of our most valuable scientific laws and some of our most harmful social prejudices. The difference between these two results comes from the difference between scientific and primitive habits of thinking. The former tests the generalization against the facts and rejects it when it does not fit them; the latter either refuses to test the generalization or ignores the facts when they prove it

wrong. The conventional procedure for maintaining an unsound generalization is to say that "the exception proves the rule." But this statement means only that the exception *tests* the rule, as a proving ground tests new automobiles. Any other meaning would be nonsense.

It is obvious that a generalization based on a few samples, all things else being equal, is riskier than one based on many. But the number of samples is not by itself a trustworthy test of a generalization. If we measured a single circle and found that its circumference was Π times its diameter, we could correctly generalize that the circumference of any circle (that is, of all circles) is Π times its diameter. But if we examined 199 pages of a 200-page book and found no misprints, we could not generalize that all pages were free of misprints. The significant difference between these illustrations is not the number but the nature of the samples. A circle being what it is, its circumference must be Π times its diameter; otherwise it would not be a circle. The circle we measured, then, was *typical* of all circles in this respect. But the pages we examined were individual pages. They were probably typical of all pages in the book with respect to size (because all pages cut on the same machine at the same time will be the same size) but we cannot say they are typical with regard to misprints until we have examined every page. If one page contains a misprint and the others do not, there are no typical pages.

It is important to understand this distinction, because the unwarranted assumption that samples are typical is the sole cause of unsound generalization. It is often extremely difficult – sometimes impossible – to be sure that a particular sample is typical, and much useful reasoning is done from samples which can only be presumed to be typical. But whenever a serious generalization is being made, all possible care should be taken to see that the samples are probably typical. The mere assertion that they are typical has no value. Especially should we avoid generalizing about samples which could not possibly be typical, like the pages in the book. It would, for example, be absurd to conclude that, because sample red-heads were pugnacious, all red-heads were pugnacious. In order to prove the samples typical, it would be necessary to prove, apart from the generalization, a relationship between pigmentation and pugnacity. That would be hard to do, since all that red-heads have in common is red hair. When we are tempted to generalize further about them, we should remember what we learned in Chapter 10 – that red-head$_1$ is not red-head$_2$.

. **Causal Relation.** Probably the most common kind of reasoning is that which relates two facts and concludes that one is the cause of the other. This conclusion is a reflection of an underlying philosophical assumption called the **principle of causation.** According to this principle, every event has a cause, so that whenever we discover that fact *B* always and must follow fact *A*, we may describe the relationship of these two facts by saying that *A* is the cause of *B* and *B* the effect of *A*.

Causal reasoning may go from cause to effect, or from effect to cause. Either way, we reason from what we know to what we are trying to determine. The names merely describe the direction of the reasoning. If what you know is a cause, the reasoning is cause to effect. If what you know is an effect, the reasoning is effect to cause.

Sometimes the reasoning will proceed from an effect to a cause and then on to another effect. Thus, if we reason that because the lights have gone out the refrigerator won't work, we first relate the effect (lights out) to the cause (power off) and then relate that cause to another effect (refrigerator not working). This kind of reasoning is called, for short, effect to effect. It is quite common to reason through an extensive chain of causal relations. For example, if when the lights go out we take the milk out of the refrigerator, we reason in the following causal chain: lights out – power off – refrigerator not working – temperature will rise – milk will sour. In other words, we diagnose a succession of effects from the power failure, each becoming the cause of the effect that follows it.

The following examples illustrate various causal relationships:

Example	*Type*
A doctor hears a patient's symptoms and diagnoses the trouble as appendicitis.	Effects to cause (All the symptoms are the result of appendicitis.)
A doctor vaccinates a child with smallpox serum.	Cause to effect (The serum is used to cause the effect of smallpox immunity.)
A checker-player forces his opponent to take a man.	Cause to effect (The move is made to gain a later advantage.)
Canaries are taken into mines to warn miners of the presence of gas.	Effect to cause (If the more sensitive canary is asphyxiated, its death will reveal the cause (gas) to the miner.)

Example	*Type*
A housewife notices that the custard she is preparing turns blue when she adds what she thinks is vanilla extract. She throws out the custard.	Effect to effect (Since iodine turns a starch solution blue, this effect warns the housewife that she has mistaken the iodine bottle (cause) for the vanilla. Since iodine is poisonous she discards the custard (effect).)

We have already seen that an effect *regularly* and *necessarily* follows its cause. Regularity and necessity are therefore the tests of a causal relation. If we can show that fact *A* does not always produce fact *B*, or that *B* may appear when *A* is absent, we have shown that there is no regular connection between facts *A* and *B*. Regularity alone, however, is not proof of causation. For example, the 8:30 train regularly follows the 8:15 train without in any sense being an effect of it. We can show that there is no causal connection between these trains by showing that the 8:15 could be cancelled without affecting the schedule of the later train.

Causal reasoning is most useful when we are dealing with a small number of facts. When we are dealing with a complex of facts, it is both difficult and dangerous to assume that any one is the cause of the others. It is possible to diagnose a disease to find its cause, but how can we with any confidence show "the" cause of a war or a depression? Such events are an accumulation of effects brought about by an accumulation of causes, and we merely oversimplify our reasoning unwisely when we attempt to trace them to a single cause. Such simplification is closely allied to superstition. The savage who explains his lack of success in hunting by asserting that a woman has touched his bow, and therefore hexed it, finds a single, but not very useful, cause for a complex of events. The easy assertion that wars are caused by the greed of munition-makers, or that depressions are caused by stock speculators, reflects a similar primitive oversimplification. Such thinking should be understood as an attempt to find a scapegoat rather than a cause for our troubles.

Analogy. Analogy is the type of reasoning in which we conclude that if two events are known to be alike in certain respects, their similarity in other respects may be inferred. We say that the two events or things are analogous and that what is true of one will be true also of the other. Thus, if we have discovered that the best protection against one virus disease is to isolate the virus and prepare an im-

munizing serum from it, we reason that the same method will work for another virus disease. The following famous Shakespearian analogy illustrates this type of reasoning:

> I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we shall resemble you in that.
>
> —Shylock, in *The Merchant of Venice.*

We have already seen the use of analogy in exposition to illustrate difficult ideas. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to make the abstract concrete or to make the difficult easy by relating what we do not know to what we do know. These same characteristics of analogy make it both a convincing and a treacherous device in argument. It is convincing because it reduces the argument to common, understandable terms. It is treacherous because the validity of its reasoning depends on the assumption that the things being compared are analogous, not only superficially but essentially. If this assumption is unsound, the whole analogy is false. For example, domesticated skunks reared as pets are like their wild brethren in every respect but one – the fact that the domesticated animal has been deactivated. But it would be a serious mistake to assume that because one can fondle a pet skunk with impunity, one can take similar liberties with a wild one.

The test, then, of an analogy is the question, *Are the two things analogous for the purpose for which the analogy is being used?* They need not show perfect correspondence; they may have many differences which are unimportant as far as the conclusion of the analogy is concerned; but they must not be different in any detail which is essential to that conclusion. Thus, the analogy that a motherless baby ape could be reared by feeding it as if it were a human baby would be sound because, despite many differences, young apes and human babies have similar digestive systems. But to reason that because mushrooms and toadstools are much alike, toadstools will be good to eat is to indulge in a false analogy, since the fact that toadstools are poisonous is a crucial difference – in this case a fatal one.

Because of the treacherous nature of reasoning by analogy, it is wise to be suspicious of any argument that depends largely or wholly

on analogy. There is no objection to the use of analogy to illustrate a point already made or to introduce an argument which will finally be proved by other means. Both for the writer and the reader such expository analogies are helpful. But any analogy which is used to carry the brunt of the argument should be examined most carefully to see if there are any essential differences between the things being compared.

Fallacies

A fallacy is an error, whether deliberate or not, in the reasoning process; occasionally it may be the mistake of not reasoning at all. Since the following fallacies are those which occur most frequently, each of them should be studied so as to recognize and refute it.

Ignoring the Question. The fallacy of ignoring the question is a digression into an irrelevant argument. The digression may be a result of inability to keep the issues clearly in mind and to distinguish what is and is not pertinent, or it may be a deliberate attempt to distract attention from the real issues by drawing a red-herring across the trail. The best rebuttal of such a fallacy is to show clearly that it is a digression, to refuse to follow it, and to insist that the discussion return to the main issues. The following examples illustrate various means of ignoring the question:

Examples	*Analysis*
My opponent asks me to tell him what is wrong with this proposal of compulsory medical insurance. I'll tell him what is wrong with it. It is a half-baked plan cooked up by him and other Fellow-Travelers who are more interested in socializing a great profession than they are in providing better medical care. These men will sacrifice everything to their bigoted faith in a system of regimentation that is abhorrent to the American people. They want to begin by socializing medicine; they will not rest until they have made over the whole American economy into the image of the dictatorship to which their secret allegiance is pledged.	*This argument attempts to refute a plan by making an attack on the character of the people who support it. It is an argument against the man, not against the plan, and is usually called* argumentum ad hominem. *The character of the proponents of compulsory medical insurance is not an issue in this question. The speaker is ignoring the question to indulge in personal abuse. This fallacy is not uncommon in political oratory in which argument by abuse is a colorful and traditional way of confusing the voters.*

Examples	*Analysis*
The professor says that two negatives do not make an affirmative in English. Well, professors, like other people, are entitled to their opinions, no matter how eccentric they may be. But in this case the facts are against the professor. Any high school freshman could tell him that two negatives do make an affirmative. When you multiply minus *a* by minus *b*, the result is a plus or positive quantity. That is not just the freshman's opinion, or my opinion, or the opinion of educated people everywhere. It is a mathematical law. And it holds true whether it is written in English, Latin, Greek, or Hindustani.	*This is an example of ignoring the question by shifting to another question. The point at issue is whether two negatives make an affirmative* in English usage. *There is no dispute about what happens in mathematics. This fallacy is sometimes called "the device of the straw man." Instead of tackling one's real opponent, one sets up an easy substitute and puts on an effective demonstration of tearing it to pieces.*
On this question of whether the husband should be the boss in the household, there are only two alternatives: either the man will be the boss or the woman will. Any man who lets himself be dictated to by a woman is a sorry specimen and probably deserves what he will get. But most of us will not make that mistake. We will make it known at the start, gently but firmly, that we intend to be masters in our own homes. The sooner the little lady gets that idea through her head, the better for everybody.	*This is an example of ignoring the question by ignoring a significant part of it. There are three positions in this question: the husband should be boss; the wife should be boss; nobody should be boss. This argument overlooks the third possibility; therefore it is not true that if the husband does not dominate, the wife will. Essentially the example oversimplifies the question by unnecessarily limiting the alternatives.*
What was good enough for the Founding Fathers is good enough for us. If God had meant women to have red toenails He would have made them red in the first place. Now, son, when I was a boy . . . Mother knows best! Why, whoever heard of such a thing!	*Statements like these are often used to ignore the question by appealing to the customs of the past* — the appeal to antiquity — *or by an uncritical appeal to authority. Although tradition and authority must receive serious consideration in our reasoning, since they represent the accumulated wisdom of the past, new practices and proposals should be judged on their own merits. Tradition should be a supplementary, not a sole, consideration; otherwise all new proposals would be automatically rejected.*

Begging the Question. A question is said to be "begged" when all or a significant part of it is assumed to be true without proof. The classic example is the story of the juror who had no doubts about the evidence against a woman but refused to convict her because she was a mother. "I have such a respect for motherhood," he said, "that I cannot conceive of any mother committing this crime." In other words, the woman must be innocent since she belonged to a class which could not be guilty. The best way to refute the fallacy of begging the question is to show clearly how the begging takes place. The following examples illustrate several question-begging arguments:

Examples	*Analysis*
Dad, you don't need to worry about lending me the money for this business. Just as soon as the profits come in I can pay you back with interest.	*This argument begs the question of the advisability of the loan by assuming that the profits will be sufficient to pay off the debt. That, however, is a major part of dad's doubt, and cannot be assumed to be true.*
Of course you should vote the straight Democratic ticket. You believe in democratic government, don't you?	*The word* democratic *begs the question. It assumes that two things with the same name have the same characteristics. An opponent could reply that since this country was founded on republican principles, everybody ought to vote Republican.*
Much of this talk about spending millions for slum clearance is based on the essential fallacy that if we provide fine homes for people who live in the slums they will suddenly become responsible and productive citizens. This argument puts the cart before the horse. The basic trouble is with the people who live in the slums. These people are thoroughly shiftless and irresponsible. The conditions under which they live prove this. If they had any initiative or industry they would not be living under slum conditions.	*This is an example of* argument in a circle. *The speaker's thesis is that slum-dwellers are responsible for slum conditions. He attempts to prove this by asserting that if they were not responsible they would not be living under slum conditions. In other words he begs the question by assuming that what he has to prove is true, and his argument goes round in the following circle: Slums are caused by shiftless tenants; this is true because shiftless tenants cause slums.*
Resolved: That the farce of the Honor System be abolished.	*This begs the question by assuming the truth of the affirmative position in the resolution. The major responsibility of the affirmative is to prove that the Honor System is a farce*

Faulty Deduction. As was pointed out earlier, a sound deduction must meet three conditions: the generalization from which the deduction begins must be universally accepted as true; the subject of the final deduction must be a member of the class mentioned in the opening generalization; the conclusion about the particular subject must be logically derived from the original generalization. A deduction which fails to meet all three conditions is fallacious.

Examples	*Analysis*
Of course she's selfish, she's a woman, isn't she?	*This deduction proceeds from the generalization that all women are selfish to the conclusion that this particular woman is selfish. But the generalization is not self-evidently true. Therefore the deduction is not valid.*
All lemons are yellow. Her brother is a lemon. Therefore her brother is yellow.	*Even if her brother is a lemon, he is not the same kind of lemon as those mentioned in the generalization; therefore, since he is not a member of the class about which the generalization is made, the generalization cannot be applied to him. Actually the terms are ambiguous: lemon* $_1$ *is not lemon;* $_2$ *yellow* $_1$ *is not yellow.*$_2$
Both major parties are indifferent to the will of the people. The Socialist party is not a major party. Therefore the Socialist Party is not indifferent to the will of the people.	*Apart from the fact that the generalization is not self-evidently true and the further fact that the Socialist Party is not a member of the class covered in the generalization, the conclusion does not follow logically from the first two statements. It is a* non-sequitur.

Hasty (or Loose) Generalization. A hasty generalization is one based on insufficient evidence. In the absence of a probability that the samples are typical, a small number of samples may prove nothing. For example, the fact that three students cheated on a final examination would not justify the generalization that college students are dishonest. In this example, the generalization would be both hasty and loose (invalid). The best way to refute such a generalization is to question

whether the samples are typical. Hasty generalizations are so numerous and so easy to analyze that no additional illustrations are needed here.

Mistaken Causal Relation. Any assumption of a causal relation which can be shown to be improbable is a mistaken causal relation. The test of such an assumption has already been discussed. It is to ask whether the relationship regularly and necessarily exists. If both conditions cannot be answered affirmatively, the assumption of a causal relation is discredited.

Example	*Analysis*
In giving a blood transfusion, doctors must be sure that the donor and the recipient are of the same race; otherwise, the recipient may acquire the racial characteristics of the donor. This is why the Red Cross used both white and colored blood banks during the war.	*This assumes that an effect (racial characteristics) will be produced by the cause (transfusion of blood from a member of a different race). In this reasoning the cause is mistaken. Racial characteristics are transmitted by the genes, not by blood. The differences in blood types have nothing to do with race, since members of different races may have the same type, and members of the same race may have different types.*
The reason I was failed in the course was that the instructor had a prejudice against me.	*Even if we assume that the prejudice existed, that prejudice must be the effect of some cause. This reasoning therefore mistakes an alleged effect for a cause. A more probable reason is that the student's conduct caused both the alleged prejudice and the failure.*
Careful research shows that the most successful men have the largest vocabularies. This proves that the development of an extensive vocabulary is a cause of success.	*Since success and large vocabularies may both be results of native intelligence, the evidence that the two effects regularly appear together is not proof that one is the cause of the other*

False Analogy. As already indicated, an analogy is false when the two things alleged to be analogous may be shown to be different in some respect essential to the purpose of the analogy.

Example	*Analysis*
The argument that football is a dangerous sport is disproved very simply by showing that the death rate among high school, college, and professional players combined is much less than the death rate of the total population.	*Football may not be dangerous, but this analogy does not prove it. The total population includes old people, invalids, and men engaged in hazardous occupations. Active football players are selected for youth and health as well as ability. The essential difference of selectivity keeps the two groups from being analogous.*

Statistical Fallacies. Statistics often contain fallacies which are difficult to detect without an expert knowledge of the data on which the statistics were based and of the statistical procedures used. Usually, therefore, the reliability of statistical evidence must be determined by the tests already given for the evidence from authority. But, as the following examples show, there are certain common misuses of statistics which an alert student can detect.

Examples	*Analysis*
Statistics show that the average age of college students at the time of graduation is 21. They also show that superior students graduate before the average age and less capable students graduate after the average age. Now, since Jones was almost 30 when he graduated, we must assume that he is not very bright.	*Statistical averages are misused when applied to individuals. No conclusion about Jones' scholastic ability may be drawn from these data. For a dozen possible reasons — including military service — his graduation may have been delayed.*
The grades of the ten students who took the test were 94, 66, 64, 62, 61, 60, 59, 58, 56, 56. An analysis of these figures shows that the average score is 63.6 and that 70% of the students made less than average scores. This is a discouraging result.	*This is the fallacy of overrating the significance of an average. In this test the score of 94 distorted the average so that it was not descriptive of the results. Had that score been ignored, the average would have been 60 and the lowest score would have come within 4 points of this average — not nearly so discouraging a result. In such figures the median grade (the grade which has as many scores above it as below it) is a more significant figure.*

Examples	*Analysis*
When the average percentage score of each group was determined it was found to be as follows: Group A, 80%; Group B, 70%; Group C, 60%. From these figures it can be seen that the average of all three groups was 70%.	*This is the fallacy of averaging percentages without considering the numbers involved in each percentage. The conclusion stated will be true only if each group contains the same number of people. If, for example, the three groups contain 20, 30, and 50 people respectively, the average for all groups will be* $\frac{(20\text{x}80) + (30\text{x}70) + (50\text{x}60)}{100} = 67\%$
In 1932 a young instructor, with a Ph.D. but no teaching experience, could expect a salary of about $1500. In 1949 an instructor with the same qualifications could expect a salary of $3000. This increase of 100% is encouraging evidence of the improved economic position of college teachers.	*This is the fallacy of comparing units which are not comparable. The purchasing power of a dollar in the depression year of 1932 was much greater than in the boom year of 1949. In order to determine whether the teacher's economic position had improved, salaries for both years would have to be translated into "real wages" and compared on that basis.*

SUMMARY

In the light of the preceding discussion it will be seen that effective argument evolves through three stages: the recognition of the issues, the presentation of the facts, and the development of logical conclusions. No one stage is more important than the others. Without a careful analysis of the question to find the significant issues, the argument is likely to be irrelevant or trivial. Without evidence, the discussion may degenerate into unsupported assertion, like the "'Tis" and "'Taint" of childish quarrels. Without a conscientious testing of the reasoning, both the analysis and the evidence may be rendered valueless. Only when all three disciplines are successfully combined does argument become a technique for constructive thinking.

The writing of a sound argument is not an easy assignment. Quite apart from its demands on the intellect, an argumentative paper requires more careful attention to purpose, organization, elaboration, and the meanings of words than is usually needed in an expository

essay. It is, moreover, an assignment with which most freshmen have previously had little experience, since their pre-college writing has been confined largely to exposition, narration, and description. Because of the widespread but mistaken notion that argument is merely the reiteration of opinion, it is probably the easiest kind of writing to do badly.

Yet if well done, no composition assignment is socially more useful, because the disciplines which it develops are those which will be required of us whenever we have to make a choice between alternatives. This choice is ever-present. In any society, but especially in a democracy, we are required to decide which policies, procedures, or persons we shall follow. Whether we decide wisely or unwisely will generally depend on how well we have learned to examine the evidence and draw logical conclusions from it. The study of formal argument is not the only way to obtain that experience. Careful work in mathematics, in the natural and social sciences, and in philosophy will encourage disciplined methods of thinking, but the techniques of straight thinking are the same in all subjects, and argument is usually the freshman student's clearest introduction to these techniques.

EXERCISES

A. For each of the following types of reasoning, (1) write your own definition, (2) give your own example, (3) state the test this type must meet to be valid, and (4) show that your example meets this test: *deduction, generalization, causal relation, analogy.*

B. For each of the following passages, explain any fallacies you encounter. If the passage contains no fallacy, comment briefly on its effectiveness.

1. A careful study at thirty widely scattered colleges shows that the heights and weights of entering freshmen are greater than they were thirty years ago. This indicates that young men and women today are both taller and heavier than their parents.

2. This boy will some day be a great football player, for his father was an all-American fullback.

3. The succes of the 40-hour week in industry suggests that it ought to be used on farms.

4. I know my spelling is terrible; all the members of my family are poor spellers.

5. A survey of college presidents shows that they smoke Coffin Nail cigarettes twice as frequently as the next most popular brand. Among men who know what's what, it's Coffin Nails two to one.

6. Norman Thomas, who has been a Presidential candidate oftener than any man in our country, is an authority on the evils of the capitalistic system.

7. At the end of an address on the evils of alcohol the lecturer said, "Now, I am going to demonstrate that actions speak louder than words. I am going to show you what happens to a living organism when it is exposed to alcohol, and I am going to let you be the judges of the experiment." He then dropped a live worm into a glass of water. When it had wriggled vigorously for a minute he took it out and dropped it into a glass of whiskey. The worm curled up and died. The town drunk, sitting in the front row, watched as though fascinated. Noticing his obvious interest, the lecturer turned to him and asked, "Well, sir, what does this prove?"

"Why," said the drunk, "it proves that them as has worms ought to drink whiskey."

8. They ought to be ideally suited to each other. He has a narrow forehead and close-set eyes – sure signs of limited intelligence. And she is too beautiful to have any brains.

9. A study of the characteristics of great historical figures shows that they were predominantly right-handed. This indicates that a right-handed person is more likely to become famous than one who is left-handed.

10. There are only two kinds of men: those who care for nothing but themselves, and those who care for nothing. Your young man certainly doesn't seem to be conceited; so he must be shiftless.

11. Her father says that the reason nobody understands him is that he is a great man. He keeps this quotation from Emerson over his desk: "Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise soul that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood."

12. Any young man who plays pool as well as he does must be lacking in ambition.

13. Habitual drunkards lack will power; that is why they are habitual drunkards.

14. The senator said that the testimony of so many prominent educators that trained intelligence was the country's greatest natural resource had convinced him that college students should be exempted from the draft.

15. Dad, I think you will be making a mistake if you take out a big insurance policy now. The mortality tables show that you have a life-expectancy of 69 and you are only 44 now. That means that you have a reasonable expectation of living 25 more years. In four years both Joe and I will be through college and will be self-supporting. If you postpone the insurance until then we won't have to skimp to pay the premiums.

16. Add together two facts – that there are as many men as there are women, and that the movie queens get married as often as they please –

and you see that the only reason that some girls don't get married is that they don't make themselves attractive to men.

17. It stands to reason that students brought up in a home where both English and a foreign language are spoken will have an inferior command of English. The effective use of English is largely a matter of experience, and these students have less experience with English because half of the time their parents are speaking a foreign language.

18. A Scottish king once performed an interesting linguistic experiment. In order to discover which language a child would naturally speak if taught no other language by his elders, he arranged for a baby to be reared without ever having experience with human speech. It is reported that at the conclusion of the experiment the king was satisfied that under these conditions a child will speak only Hebrew.

19. When a certain Colonel Johnson, a distinguished citizen of Salem, New Jersey, announced in 1830 that he would eat a tomato on the Court House steps, the townspeople thought that either he had lost his reason or he was engaging in a sensational publicity stunt. Everybody knew that the tomato, or love apple, was poisonous. It had always been regarded as poisonous; it was known to be related to the deadly nightshade; and the highest medical authorities were agreed that it contained enough oxalic acid to kill a man.

20. In a recent experiment several feeble-minded babies were fed, bathed, and tended exclusively by a group of feeble-minded teen-age girls Subsequent tests showed that the intelligence of both the girls and the babies improved significantly. This proves (*a*) that all feeble-minded girls ought to get married, and (*b*) that feeble-minded girls make good mothers.

21. These figures which my opponent has used to show that there is an increase in unemployment certainly do not fit the facts in our town. I have checked the payrolls of the ten largest industries in town. Only four of them show any reduction in the number of employees over the same period last year and the average decrease of these four is about 6 per cent. Two of the ten show increases of 10 per cent, and 14 per cent respectively, or an average increase of 12 per cent. I don't know how my opponent arrives at his fancy figures, but elementary arithmetic shows that employment in this town is increasing, not decreasing.

22. If we consider the number of marriages per thousand of girls who did not continue their education beyond high school and of girls who, after completing college, continued with graduate or professional studies, we find that statistically the girl with less education has a better chance of marriage. This is something that every girl who thinks a college education will get her a husband should stop to consider.

23. The position that my opponent is taking is a slippery one, and I want you to watch it closely. He knows better than to come right out in the open and denounce democracy before an intelligent and informed American audience; so what he does is to argue that it is not *necessarily*

the best. To support that position he asserts that certain of the South American democracies are controlled by dictatorial governments which do not represent the will of the people. That is almost his whole case Let us look closely at the logic of it.

The word *democracy* comes from the Greek word *demos*, meaning "the people." A democratic government, therefore, is a government formed by and acting in behalf of the will of the people. Now, either the South American republics of which he talks are democracies or they are not democracies. If they are democracies, their governments – whether we like them or not – represent the political preferences of their people as a whole. Not necessarily all of the people, but a plurality of them. If these countries are not democracies, then the alleged weaknesses of their governments cannot be charged against the democratic system. You see the dilemma our friend is in? He must either admit that his charges against these South American republics are untrue, or he must admit that they are irrelevant. Either admission knocks the bottom out of his argument.

24. "A college professor rises to defend 'ain't' and 'it is me' as good English. The reed upon which he leans is majority usage. . . . 'Ain't,' as a legitimate contraction of 'am not,' would not require defense or apology if it were not for widespread misuse. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of 'it is me.' This solecism could not be given the odor of good English by a plurality as great as Warren G. Harding rolled up in 1920. . . . A vast amount of wretched English is heard in this country. The remedy does not lie in the repeal of the rules of grammar; but rather in a stricter and more intelligent enforcement of those rules in our schools. . . . This protest against traditional usage and the rules of grammar is merely another manifestation of the unfortunate trend of the times to lawlessness in every direction."[2]

25. A Debate Between a King and a Soldier on the Eve of Battle.

Soldier. But if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in battle, shall join together at the latter day. . . . I am afraid that there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of anything, when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it; whom to disobey were against all proportion of subjection.

King. So, if a son that is by his father sent about merchandise do sinfully miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wickedness, by your rule, should be imposed upon the father that sent him: or if a servant, under his master's command transporting a sum of money, be assailed by robbers and die in many irreconciled iniquities, you may call the business of the master the author of the servant's damnation. but this is not so; the king is not bound to answer for the particular endings of his

[2] Reprinted by permission from an editorial in *The Detroit Free Press* of December 9, 1928.

soldiers, the father of his son, nor the master of his servant; for they purpose not their death, when they propose their services. . . . Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own.

—Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, Act IV, Scene i.

C. The following controversy consists of a condensation of an article written by a psychiatrist for the *Saturday Review of Literature* and a reply by a fourteen-year-old boy. According to the editor, sections of the boy's letter "have been omitted for considerations of space, but his copy has not been edited." Read both selections, then write a review in which you evaluate the controversy, with special attention to (*a*) the evidence and (*b*) the reasoning used by both sides.

· The Comics . . . Very Funny [3]

An anxious mother consulted me some time ago. Her four-year-old daughter is the only little girl in the apartment house where they live. The boys in the building, from about three to nine years old, hit her, beat her with guns, tie her up with rope whenever they get a chance. They hit her with whips which they buy at the circus. They push her off her bicycle and take her toys away. They handcuff her with handcuffs bought with coupons from comic books. They take her to a vacant lot and use her as a target for bow and arrow. They make a spearhead and scare her. Once, surrounding her in this way, they pulled off her panties to torture her (as they put it). Now her mother has fastened the child's panties with a string around her neck so the boys can't pull them down.

What is the common denominator of all this? Is this the "natural aggression" of little boys? Is it the manifestations of the sex instinct? Is it the release of natural tendencies or the imitation of unnatural ones? The common denominator is comic books.

I examine in the clinic a boy of eleven, referred because he fights in school and is inattentive. He says:

> I buy comic books every week. They kill animals, sometimes they kill people. One of the girls is the best fighter. Sometimes they tie her up and sometimes they put her in a snake cave so that the snakes would kill her.

I examine a boy of fourteen referred to the clinic for stealing. I ask him: "Do you think your stealing had anything to do with the comic books? He answers: "Oh, no. In the comic books it is mostly murder."

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[3] Condensed from Frederic Wertham, M.D.: "The Comics . . . Very Funny," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, May 29, 1948. Reprinted by permission of *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

This is like the arguments used by the experts under subsidy from the comic-book industry.

A boy of seventeen is referred to me by the Juvenile Aid Bureau because in an argument he stabbed a boy of thirteen in the right arm "with full intent." He says: "I don't read many comic books – only about ten a week. I like crime comics. Sometimes they kill the girl. In one of the books the girl wanted more money so they stabbed her in the back." Was it "full intent," or was it perhaps imitation that motivated him in his own actions? . . .

A boy of fifteen took a boy of twelve up a fire escape and threatened to push him down if he didn't give him a quarter. He says: "I read two comic books a day." A thirteen-year-old boy is referred to me by the State Charities Aid Association. He was caught stealing five dollars. When asked why he took it he confided to me that the older boys in school got up a gang and threatened him. If he did not get them the money they would beat him up. So he stole the money and gave it to them. (I verified this later.)

The experts of the comic-book industry tell us that what the children read in comic books is pure fantasy. But when I examine these many children and adolescents who tell me what they read in comic books, I ask myself with Bernardo in *Hamlet:* "Is not this something more than fantasy?"

Think of the many recent violent crimes committed by young boys and girls. A twelve-year-old boy who kills his younger sister; a twelve-year-old boy who kills his older sister; a thirteen-year-old burglar who operates with a shotgun, a seventeen-year-old boy who kills a thirteen-year-old boy and leaves a note signed "The Devil"; a public school in New York City where two police officers circulate on the grounds and in the corridors to prevent violence; a mathematics teacher who has to give examinations with a policeman present in the classroom; a thirteen-year-old who shot a nurse and was sent to a reformatory (where, incidentally, he will read more comic books); a gang of adolescent bandits led by a fifteen-year-old girl; two twelve-year-old boys and one of eleven stopping a man on the street and shooting him with a semi-automatic; a fifteen-year-old boy third-degreed as a suspect in a murder case; three sixteen-year-old boys killing a fourteen-year-old "for revenge"; a New York City school where the older pupils threaten the younger ones with violence and with maiming them, robbing them of their money, watches, and fountain pens. The young victims don't dare tell the names of their tormentors. When two of them were asked by a teacher, they refused to answer: "We don't want our eyes cut out." Actually one sixteen-year-old boy in this school was beaten with a broken bottle from behind and cut so severely that seven stitches had to be taken around his eyes. Adults are

horrified at this attack. They don't know that this is old stuff for comic-book readers. In one of the "good" comic books (*Classics Illustrated*) in a rendering of the novel by Eugene Sue, *The Mysteries of Paris,* there is a picture of a man tied down in a chair – a man whose eyes have been gouged out and whose blood runs down from beneath the bandage.

A twenty-year-old youth in New York City has just killed a policeman. Is that so astonishing when he can see anywhere a typical comic-book cover showing a man and a woman shooting it out with the police to the accompaniment of these words: "We'll give those flatfeet a bellyful of lead"? A nineteen-year-old youth has just been sentenced to the electric chair for the murder of a girl of fifteen, despite the jury's recommendation of clemency, by a judge who had previously disregarded a recommendation of mercy in the case of a sixteen-year-old participant in a holdup with a fatal shooting. There are recent cases where young men branded girls' breasts with burning cigarettes and carved initials into their flesh with a knife. A thirteen-year-old boy in Chicago has just murdered a young playmate. He told his lawyer, Samuel J. Andalman, that he reads all the crime comic books he can get hold of. He has evidently not kept up with the theories that comic-book readers never imitate what they read. He has just been sentenced to twenty-two years in jail; while the comic-book publishers who killed his mind with thoughts and methods of murder, and their experts who say his reading was good for him, continue as before.

All these manifestations of brutality, cruelty, and violence and the manner in which they are committed – that is the folklore of the comic books.

Comic books are the greatest book publishing success in history and the greatest mass influence on children. If I make the most conservative estimate from my own researches, one billion times a year a child sits down and reads a comic book. Crime does not pay, but crime comics do.

Recently I walked in one of the crowded sections of New York City and saw a sign: "Saturday Morning (which is the Saturday matinee for children) Comic Books Will Be Given Out Free to the First 500 Attending." I looked to see what was playing in that movie that morning. There were two horror films: *The Son of Frankenstein* and *The Bride of Frankenstein.* The posters calling attention to the movies showed girls in various stages of being overpowered. The movie was called the Ritz. As I stood there I was reminded of the story of the little boy who was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up and replied enthusiastically: "I want to be a sex maniac!" . . .

It is pretty well established that seventy-five per cent of parents are against comic books. (The other twenty-five per cent are either indifferent or misled by propaganda and "research.") Since the comic-book industry enjoys second-class mailing privileges, the parents, as taxpayers, are paying for what they do not want. The apologists of comic books, who function under the auspices of the comic-book business (although the public is not let in on that secret), are sociologists, educators, psychia-

trists, lawyers, and psychologists. They all agree that this enormous over-stimulation of fantasy with scenes of sex and violence is completely harmless. They all rely on arguments derived from misunderstood Freud and bandy around such words as "aggression," "release," "vicarious," "fantasy world." They use free associations to bolster up free enterprise.

My own clinical studies and those of my associates of the Lafargue Clinic, the first carried out independently from the comic-book industry, and the first leading to their condemnation, have convinced me that comic books represent systematic poisoning of the well of childhood spontaneity. Many children themselves feel guilty about reading them.

The worst sector of comic books is increasing and the best, if there is a best, is getting smaller. The comic-book publishers seduce the children and mislead the parents. Their mass production is a serious danger to the production of good inexpensive children's books. The publishers of these good children's books, instead of fighting the experts of the comic-book industry and decoding their "codes," lie on psychoanalytic couches themselves, and delve into their own dreams instead of providing decent fare for the dreams of childhood.

When I recently conducted a symposium on the psychopathology of comic books I was blamed for not allotting more time to a representative of the comic-book business who was there. I am even more guilty than that: I once conducted a symposium on alcoholism and didn't invite a single distiller.

Cain Before Comics[4]

Sir: *And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

The brothers Cain and Abel lived in a world of ideal tranquility, a world that had never before known violence or crime, a world completely devoid of comic books. How then does Dr. Frederic Wertham account for this brutal fratricide told within the pages of the Bible, the only book in the history of man more widely read and more widely attacked than American comic books?

Or, if Cain's slaying of Abel seems far-off and far-fetched, let us take the Leopold-Loeb case, which took place in early 1924, just five years before publication of the first independently produced comic book. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, eighteen and seventeen years old respectively, were accused of brutally murdering fourteen-year-old Robert Franks, thereby committing what has been acknowledged by some as the most brutal crime in United States history. Both boys were of well-to-do and cultured families and were readers of "good' books. How then could Dr. Wertham possibly account for even the remotest thought of murder or violence entering the minds of either?

[4] From David Pace Wigransky's "Cain Before Comics," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, July 24, 1948. Reprinted by permission of *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

Dr. Wertham cites some two dozen gruesome and horrible cases of juvenile delinquency from his files. These crimes were committed recently by weak-minded children and adolescents, who, Dr. Wertham implies, would never have considered crime had not they been comic-book readers. In none of these cases was it proved that reading comic books was the cause of the delinquency. A good many of the delinquents mentioned happened to be readers of comic magazines just as are 69,999,975 perfectly healthy, happy, normal American boys and girls, men and women, who also read the comics. It is just as ridiculous to suppose that 69,999,975 people are law-abiding citizens just because they are comic-book readers as it is to suppose that twenty-five others are depraved criminals due to the same reading habits.

Capable as Dr. Wertham may be in the psychoanalyzation of adults, I certainly do not believe him able to deal equally as well with children, due to his fanatic hatred and prejudice toward comic books. From reading his article I get the impression that this feeling colors all of his investigations and reports. It appears that his $64 question to a child being psychoanalyzed is, "Do you read COMIC BOOKS, my little man?" Of course the juvenile delinquent being a normal child in at least that way, will answer, "Yes."

"Ah ha," says Dr. Wertham. "This child is a juvenile delinquent. This child reads comic books. Therefore it is because he reads comic books that he is a juvenile delinquent." This is enough for Dr. Wertham.

I seriously doubt if the children and adolescents interviewed by Dr. Wertham would even bring up the subject of comic books at all if he did not first bring it up himself. Being a psychiatrist, he must be able to do an expert job of leading them on, mixing them up, getting them excited, and generally unnerving them. He stirs them up over the subject of comic books just as he has the ability to do on any subject, and then records their nervously blurted-out remarks to use in his attacks on comic books.

This crusade against comics is nothing new. It all began back in 1896 with the conception of "The Yellow Kid," after whom was named "yellow journalism," so christened by preachers and clergy who preached entire sermons against the little Chinese boy who had leaped from the pen of Richard Felton Outcault. This criticism grew and grew until it seemed that it could grow no more. Then came the comic book, the newer and greater offspring of the comic strip. This opened up a new field to the critics. They began ignoring the quieter newspaper strip to transfer their opposition to the magazines. This unwarranted and vicious attack is now at its height, led by such fanatics as Dr. Wertham and John Mason Brown. The defenders of comic books occasionally write a good-natured article in answer to the deadly serious and bitter articles written against them. It is high time that we who are on the defensive become as serious as are our attackers. We didn't ask for this fight, but we are in it to the finish. The fate of millions of children hangs in the balance. We owe it to them to continue to give them the reading matter which they have come to know and love.

Dr. Wertham seems to believe that adults should have the perfect right to read anything they please, no matter how vulgar, how vicious, or how depraving, simply because they are adults. Children, on the other hand, should be kept in utter and complete ignorance of anything and everything except the innocuous and sterile world that the Dr. Werthams of the world prefer to keep them prisoner within from birth to maturity. The net result of all this, however, is that when they have to someday grow up, they will be thrust into an entirely different kind of world, a world of violence and cruelty, a world of force and competition, an impersonal world in which they will have to fight their own battles, afraid, insecure, helpless.

The whole argument over comic magazines is very silly and needless. The kids know what they want. They are individuals with minds of their own, and very definite tastes in everything. Just because they happen to disagree with him, Dr. Wertham says that they do not know how to discriminate. It is time that society woke up to the fact that children are human beings with opinions of their own, instead of brainless robots to be ordered hither and yon without even so much as asking them their ideas about anything. To be a child psychiatrist, one should be able to look at things through the eyes of a child. If a child is told not to read a comic book, he will break his neck to do it. This is not wilful stubbornness, but a perfectly normal revolt against a world of giants who seem to be doing nothing but what they please. He wants to be like them, and at the same time he hates and resents them for their high-handed superiority.

The comic-book publishers know what the kids want and try to give it to them. This is not only democratic policy but good business sense. A child looks upon crime and violence as ideal adventure and excitement. He has no desire to experience these things in actual form, and knows them only as fun, and not in their true ugliness. The adult, on the other hand, has had actual experiences along this line, and looks upon fighting and violent action as loathsome and horrid. A typical example of all this is the soldier who longs for home and his kid brother who would give his right arm to be out there fighting alongside him.

The child, having never been an adult, cannot be expected to understand the adult point of view. The adult, on the other hand, was once a child, and should therefore realize that this craving for horror is not for actual physical violence, but for imaginary violence in the form of comics, radio, movies, or a good game of "Cops 'n' Robbers," the last of which I am sure was enjoyed many years before the other three had even been thought of. If all the Dr. Werthams in the world would realize this, the greatest barrier between parent-child mutual understanding would be automatically removed.

If let alone by the Dr. Werthams and John Mason Browns, I think the comic-reading kids will turn out all right, as did the present generation, the first brought up on comic books. Let any who starts to raise his voice in protest to this generation, first compare it with any preceding one. I am

certain that he will discover the cards are stacked in favor of the comic-book readers of the present age.

D. The following article is provocative and effective but not impervious to attack. Study it carefully and write a reply.

IT'S SMART TO BE STUPID [5]

Science has discovered that in many ways it's better to be stupid than to have plenty of stuff on the ball. In fact it would appear, in the light of the most recent findings, that a high I. Q. is a definite liability, and a sluggish brain is as much of an asset as two guardian angels and cash in the bank.

If you're slightly weak in the brain box, you're likely to be happier and live longer. You'll recover from illness quicker, be able to get along with a lot less sleep, be less subject to boredom and insomnia – and you'll even be able to drive an automobile better.

The guy who moves his lips when he reads is better able to adjust to the stresses and strains of modern living than his brainier brother, psychologists have discovered. Since happiness has been found to be largely a matter of adjustment, this in itself is no small consideration.

The man without much gray matter to spare is as subject to ills as the more intelligent citizen, but he recovers a whole lot faster. And with him a disease is much less likely to become chronic.

Drs. Jurgen Ruesch and Karl M. Bowman of the University of California Medical School studied a cross section of the 25,000,000 persons in the U. S. suffering from chronic diseases. They found that the more intelligent persons tend to have difficulties with recovery from an ailment and in adjusting to a disability.

They also learned that most patients with chronic symptoms have an above-average intelligence; that they lack "adaptive behavior," and cannot adjust satisfactorily to social changes, and that many find in semi-invalidism a refuge from a world to which they have failed to adjust themselves.

To make a living, the mental flyweight performs work that taxes his brawn rather than his brains. Consequently, he has more endurance and is less subject to fatigue. University studies show that the man who works with his brains actually accumulates far more fatigue at the end of a day than the physical worker does. Furthermore, when fatigue is caused by mental activity, a much longer time is required for recuperation. That's why the person who uses his hands instead of his head to bring home the bacon doesn't require as much sleep as those who work with their brains.

Tests at Colgate University have proved that while manual workers can

[5] From John E. Gibson's "It's Smart to be Stupid," *Collier's*, February 5, 1949. Reprinted by permission of the author and *Collier's*.

get along satisfactorily with as little as four or five hours' sleep, brain workers need a full eight hours to function at top efficiency. Laboratory tests have shown that while four hours' sleep can replenish physical energies to a large extent, four additional hours are required to effect complete recuperation of the mental faculties.

The guy with the sluggish brain has another advantage over his more brainy friends. He's seldom troubled with insomnia. Research has shown that there's only one secret to sound and restful slumber – relaxation. The victim of insomnia is cursed with an overactive brain that won't let him settle down when he hits his pillow. It keeps right on turning over, and as long as it does – the victim keeps right on counting sheep.

Science has also found that people in the lesser I.Q. brackets are much less subject to boredom than are their higher-domed brethren. And this is no small consideration. For sociological studies show that simple boredom is responsible for most anti-social behavior and is a strong contributing factor in marital infidelities, excessive drinking, mental depression, major and minor crimes, and assorted delinquencies.

Persons of higher intelligence suffer more acutely from boredom, despite the fact that they possess greater mental and imaginative resources. Why? Well, our daily lives are made up, for the most part, of repetitive actions – things that we do over and over again, week in and week out. Psychological tests have proved that while persons of lesser intelligence do not find repetition monotonous, those of higher mentality very definitely do. Tests also show that if you possess greater intelligence than your job requires, you'll be bored by it. And the more your mental capacity exceeds the requirements of the job, the more acutely you'll be bored by it.

The guy with the low I.Q., therefore, is much less likely to be bored by his work. His only concern is finding a job that won't overtax his gray matter.

The guy who's stupid is likely to have fewer accidents because he keeps his mind – such as it is – on what he's doing. Take driving a car, for instance. James Stannard Baker, research director of the Northwestern University Traffic Institute, says: "A high-grade moron makes the best automobile driver."

People of higher intelligence, Baker's studies show, "take driving too easy" and don't keep their minds on it.

And the citizens in the highest I.Q. brackets, he finds, let their minds wander to an even greater extent – and are the poorest drivers of all. But the man who is "not too bright" he reports, "if he has the proper training, good eyesight, and is alert and fairly mature, is the safest and most careful of all drivers. His mind is not highly stimulated, he is less subject to daydreams and less likely to become bored with the mechanics of driving than the man with the superior mind."

The research director gives the "man of intellectual mediocrity" another pat on the back. "He plays an extremely important part in our society," he says, "and is every bit as necessary and desirable as the highly intellectual person."

A high intelligence may be handy, but it's also a handicap — in more ways than we've mentioned. The man with the high I.Q. is apt to be much more lonely and have fewer friends than folks with low-caliber craniums. This is because the lad with the high-powered brain, by the very virtue of his scintillating intellect, has less in common with the people around him. He has fewer friends who understand him, because he's harder to understand. Consequently he has a much harder time finding a compatible wife or girl friend. The higher you go on the intelligence scale, the more this is evident. Geniuses, at the top of the high I.Q. heap, are traditionally lonely and misunderstood.

Scientists have been looking into the life of the moron and they have found that he has been doing surprisingly well for himself in American society. Anyhow he makes pretty fair money.

Dr. R. J. Reeves Kennedy, professor of sociology at Connecticut College made a survey of hundreds of typical morons from various walks of life. Their I.Q.s ranged from 50 to 75. (One hundred is par — the mark of the person of just average intelligence.) Dr. Kennedy found that the morons were making just as much money, and adjusted themselves just as well to society as did nonmorons. And she found that the typical female moron was actually making more money than the normal women workers.

As active in organized social activities as the brainier citizens, most morons are, says Dr. Kennedy, "worthy individuals who bear their full share of the social burden and do nothing to threaten the welfare of society." The survey showed that the typical moron has a congenial job, a good home and family; has a radio and telephone, reads the newspapers and magazines, and lists the movies as his favorite form of entertainment. The typical male moron is a semiskilled worker, and frequently earns more than slightly over $50 a week — the national average for industrial workers.

So there! If it took you ten years to get past the fifth grade, don't feel so bad about it. You cut just as much ice as the guys who know so much they can't keep their minds on not hitting a pedestrian. And look at the breaks you get that they don't: You get well quicker when you're sick, you're seldom bothered by bogies like boredom and insomnia, you feel better. And you're happier and more contented. Maybe, after toting up these assets, you wouldn't want to trade places with the bright boys. In fact, maybe some of them would like to make a deal with you. That is, they would, if they are really smart.

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THE ESSAY-TYPE EXAMINATION

THE ESSAY-TYPE EXAMINATION is one of the most practical of all composition assignments. By requiring a student to compose in one or more paragraphs an answer to a specific problem, it calls forth most of the skills which the composition course tries to develop. It tests the student's ability to read accurately and to write purposefully within a rigid time limit. It is thus as much a test of thinking and writing ability as of knowledge.

Failure to recognize this fact usually leads to unsatisfactory answers and poor grades. Instructors frequently complain that the worst student writing is done on essay-type examinations. Of course the pressure under which examinations are written is not conducive to stylistic excellence. But the chief weaknesses of examination answers is not that they are ungrammatical or awkward but that they are not *composed* at all. The student does not first plan what he wants to say and then develop his intention into an adequate answer; too often he begins to write without any clear purpose and assumes that as long as he is writing he is answering the question. The result is frequently an answer which is irrelevant, inadequate, unclear, and even self-contradictory.

The purpose of this chapter is to help students get better grades on essay-type examinations by sketching the procedure of taking such a test and by analyzing good and bad answers. This chapter, of course, cannot teach the content of examination answers. A student who does not know his subject will not learn here how to conceal his ignorance. But many of the serious errors in examination papers are caused by careless composition rather than by ignorance. It is with these errors that this chapter is concerned.

Recommended Procedure

Listed below are ten recommendations for the procedure of taking an essay-type examination. There is one other recommendation that may be considered a prerequisite for these ten: that is, that a satisfactory answer must first of all be legible. Anything that seriously interferes with ease of reading – careless or crowded handwriting, excessive scoring-out, failure to indicate which question is being answered, or penciled writing which is too faint to read – is bound to affect an instructor's evaluation of the answer. College instructors do not grade on neatness. An occasional erasure or interlinear revision is not objectionable. But an instructor who has difficulty deciphering your answer certainly cannot have a high opinion of it. Therefore, you owe it to yourself and your instructor to see that the physical appearance of your paper is reasonably satisfactory. Failure to observe this elementary precaution may nullify all the advantages of the following procedure.

1. **Come Prepared.** The best preparation for an essay-type examination is conscientious attention to the daily assignments followed by a general review before the examination. This review should be concerned chiefly with the major emphases in the course. An essay-type examination is not suited to testing knowledge of a large number of details. Essentially it tests the student's ability to generalize from the facts and to select and relate details to develop the generalization. For this reason a grasp of the major points is more useful than memorizing a host of isolated facts. Indeed, a student who attempts to prepare himself by cramming his memory with detailed information is likely to find himself in the condition traditionally described as being unable to see the forest for the trees.

2. **Come Relaxed.** The essay-type examination requires more sustained concentration than does an objective test. A three-hour essay examination is an exhausting intellectual exercise. All things being equal, a student who is fresh and relaxed will do better work than one who is tired and tense; yet the practice of going short on sleep the night before a final examination in order to save the time for a final review is still a traditional means of preparation. Such a practice is worse than useless. A student who finds himself still unprepared on the night before the examination would be wise to recognize that for him, more than for better-prepared students, a good night's sleep is necessary.

3. **Before Beginning to Answer Any Part of the Examination, Read the Whole of It, Paying Special Attention to the Directions.** If it serves no other purpose, this act will at least encourage a more deliberate attitude toward the examination. In their eagerness to get started writing, some students ignore important directions or confuse the number of questions they are to answer. It is usually a wise discipline to survey any task before beginning it, and this habit is especially useful when some questions are advertised as having greater weight (and therefore more marks toward the total grade) than others.

4. **If You Are Given a Choice of Questions, Make Your Choice Carefully but Quickly, and Then Stick To It.** Procrastination steals confidence as well as time. A student who shifts from one choice to another as soon as he encounters difficulty is likely to meet as great a difficulty in his second choice. If any one of a choice of questions is definitely easier, that advantage should be obvious on first inspection.

5. **Determine How Much Time Is Available for Each Question.** This advice is often more necessary for good students than for poor ones. The student who knows the subject well and is eager to demonstrate his knowledge sometimes cannot resist the temptation to let himself go on the first questions and to write four pages where only one was expected. Such a student should remember that examination questions are not opportunities to write all that can be said on the topic; they are invitations to write the best answer possible within the time limit. Usually each question receives a prescribed number of points and not more than the maximum can be given, no matter how thorough or brilliant the answer. Therefore, it is not possible to pile up on some questions extra credit to be used on others. The safest procedure, then, is not to exceed the time quota for any question. If you feel that you want to say more on a question than time permits, leave a space at the end of your answer. Then, if you have time to spare after finishing all questions, you can make additional comment.

6. **Begin with the Easiest Questions First.** A good start begets confidence. You are usually at liberty to answer the questions in whatever order you please, so long as you label each answer clearly in relation to its question.

7. **Read Each Question Carefully Before Starting to Answer It.** Unwillingness to heed this advice is probably the greatest single cause of failure. We shall see later in this chapter examples of answers that failed because their authors began to write before they had learned what the question required. You should recognize that if you misinterpret the question your whole answer may go astray. For that reason it is wise to ask before you begin to write: "What does this question require me to do?" Notice, especially, whether the question asks you to *explain, summarize, evaluate,* or *compare.* These are often key words in an essay-type question and each of them requires a different approach to the answer. Failure to recognize the implications of such key words could cause you to misinterpret the question.

8. **Think Out Your General Answer Before You Begin to Develop It.** Since there is almost no opportunity for re-writing in an essay examination, your answer must be satisfactory as it is put on paper. A student who has the purpose or topic sentence of his answer clearly in mind will find the explanatory and illustrative details suggesting themselves as he writes. But a student who has not determined what he wants to say before he begins may fall into either of two errors: he may unconsciously veer away from the question or he may write a series of unrelated sentences which do not add up to any unified answer. On some questions it may be advisable to jot down on scrap paper the information you want to work into your answer; on others framing the topic sentence will be preparation enough.

9. **Remember that Nothing so Annoys a Grader as a Series of Unsupported, Unexplained Generalizations.** Next to irrelevance, vagueness is the chief sin of examination answers, and an answer which is too general is sure to be vague. So far as is possible within the time at your disposal, provide the details which make your generalizations meaningful and, if possible, cite or suggest the textual sources which support your observations. You will see this procedure repeatedly illustrated in the examination answers presented below.

10. **When You Have Finished Your Answer Read It Over Critically to See if You Have Done What You Intended to Do.** Even though extensive revision is impracticable, this rereading may suggest the advisability of specific changes or of an interlinear

comment or illustration. It will also give you a chance to correct any obvious errors in grammar or spelling.

Basic Errors

Given below are contrasted answers to a question on selected poems of Wordsworth and Byron in a sophomore examination in English literature. The students had one hour in which to develop a paragraph for each of the five parts of the question. The answers given on the left are those which the instructor hoped to receive; those on the right are unsatisfactory ones, taken from actual papers. Here is the question:

How do Wordsworth and Byron compare with respect to

A. Their choice of subjects

B. Their attitudes toward their subjects

C. Their appreciation of nature

D. Their attitudes toward the culture of their times

E. Their attitudes toward the French Revolution and Napoleon?

Here are the answers:

A

Choice of subjects. Wordsworth chose as the subjects of his poetry incidents and experiences drawn from rustic life, whether they occurred to himself (*Prelude*) or to others (*Michael*). In general these incidents are undramatic but owe their interest to the poet's treatment of them. Byron preferred dramatic events – legends of ill-fated lovers (*Bride of Abydos*), the exploits of amorous adventurers (*Don Juan*), or accounts of the travels and reflections of his autobiographical hero, Childe Harold.

Wordsworth chose incidents and situations from common, rustic life. Byron wrote descriptions of nature, and of his ridicule of sham and his keen insight into the hearts of men. He often wrote of one man and of his many escapades and trials.

COMMENT: The answer is general and lacks specific illustration. It fails to identify a single poem by either poet, and the contrast is too abstract to provide a clear answer to the question. As a result, the student seems to have only a hazy knowledge of the poetry; yet on an objective quiz over the poems mentioned at the left he showed that he was familiar with them. He has failed to develop his answer adequately.

B

Attitudes toward their subjects. In general Wordsworth adopted a serious, sympathetic, and dignified attitude toward his subjects. He tended to idealize his rustic heroes (*Michael, The Leechgatherer, The Solitary Reaper*) and to see poetic and universal implications in common incidents and people (*My Heart Leaps Up, The Ode*). Byron's attitude varies with his subject. He is sympathetic with the victims of oppression (*The Prisoner of Chillon*), satirical with contemporary writers (*English Bards*) and with social mores (*Don Juan*), and in *Don Juan* he is serious, indignant, satirical, and flippant in different parts of the poem.

Wordsworth generally dealt with humble rustic people because he felt that the character and language of such people were suited to poetry. Byron seldom wrote of humble people. He usually dealt with romantic episodes in the life of one individual. A great deal of his poetry is about himself.

COMMENT: This answer was written by the same student who answered A above. Clearly, he is still answering the previous question. His failure to distinguish between related but separate questions causes him to repeat. He simply has not read the question intelligently.

C

Their appreciation of nature. Both men appreciated nature, but Wordsworth's reactions were more intense. Byron was interested chiefly in impressive or dramatic scenery – the ocean and the mountains. For him the beauty of such scenes was an antidote for world weariness (*Childe Harold*) or a contrast between the insignificance of man and the power of nature ("Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean"). For Wordsworth, nature is the embodiment of the mystic power which pervades all living things. It not only pleases and refreshes him; it dominates him and becomes his intellectual and moral guide (*Tintern Abbey, The Tables Turned*). His reactions are essentially religious rather than esthetic.

Wordsworth says that you will learn more from nature than from all the teachers and books. This was stated in *The Tables Turned.* In *Lines Written in Early Spring* he states that nature has made everything beautiful and in the *Prelude* he tells of his love of nature. Byron's appreciation was less sensitive. He presented nature as he saw it, usually with pictorial realism.

COMMENT: The answer on Wordsworth is not general enough. It cites two pieces of evidence but draws no conclusion. The answer on Byron is too general and vague. The examiner will have to guess at what the last sentence means. The whole answer is an example of a paragraph being written one sentence at a time without concern for the relation between the sentences. The student has not thought out his answer before beginning to write. So he fails to present a clear-cut contrast.

D

Their attitudes toward the culture of their times. Both condemn their culture, but for different reasons. Wordsworth condemns the materialism and lack of mystery (*The World Is Too Much With Us*); he regrets the indifference to cultural values (Cambridge in the *Prelude*); and he misses the free, dignified, and disciplined spirit which he thought existed in Milton's time. Byron condemns the hypocrisy of social life, the smug and dull standard of virtue represented by Southey, polite education (as represented by the education of Don Juan), and the political autocracy which he found dominant in Britain, France, and Greece (*Childe Harold*).

Wordsworth regarded the culture of his time as superficial. His attitude was that the literature of his time placed too much emphasis on sensational incidents and situations and thus encouraged an artificial culture. Byron regarded the other literary products of his time as being far below the level of his own works. He illustrates this by his denunciation of the work of contemporary poets.

COMMENT: This student has interpreted the question too narrowly. His answer would be much more satisfactory if the question had been confined to literature, but it was not. His answer is incomplete.

E

Their attitudes toward the French Revolution and Napoleon. Both men at first welcomed the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon; both later turned against them. Wordsworth changed first. He was ready at one time to throw in his lot with the revolutionists (*Prelude*) but their excesses and a conservative inclination made him increasingly unsympathetic. Byron seems to have been less shocked by the terror of the revolution and more shocked by the apostasy of Napoleon. His attack on Napoleon in *Childe Harold* is bitter, all the more bitter because of Byron's appreciation of what Napoleon might have done for Europe.

Wordsworth was opposed to the French Revolution and to Napoleon's tyranny; Byron first admired Napoleon but later denounced him.

COMMENT: While this answer is correct, it is inadequate because the student fails to develop it. It is merely the topic sentence of a satisfactory answer. What the examiner still wants to know is why Wordsworth was opposed, and where he recorded his opposition; and why Byron admired Napoleon and where he denounced him. Since the student had more than ten minutes in which to develop his answer, a single sentence is not enough.

Now here is an important point to notice about all the answers at the right. The students who wrote them were not ignorant of the subject. Most of them, under questioning, could show in class discussion that they knew the poems. They did poor work on the examination because their procedures were bad. Two of the five answers were

unsatisfactory because their authors failed to read the question carefully to see what it required. The other three answers were so general that they failed to develop clearly or convincingly the contrast which the question required. In other words, the answers were poor because they were badly composed.

By contrast, the answers at the left are pertinent, adequate, and well illustrated. They do the job required and avoid digressions or irrelevant details. They develop the general answer in sufficient detail to point the contrast so that it will be clear to a reader. And they illustrate their points by naming particular poems.

EXERCISES

A. Read the following imaginary case history and write an analysis of John's errors.

John Doe wanted to do a good job in his examination on English literature. He just had to get a C in the course or he would be ineligible for initiation into his fraternity. True, his grade at midsemester had been D, and most of the semester he had known that he had been slighting his work. But he had really studied hard the last two weeks. When he went to bed at two o'clock on the morning of the examination, he was, as he told his roommate, all set for anything old Jonesy could throw at him. But, just to be safe, he set the alarm an hour early and got in a good hour's cramming before examination time. Indeed, he studied longer than he meant to, and though he ran all the way to class, he arrived, out of breath, after the test had begun. He sat down, puffing, sticky, and a little embarrassed.

As soon as he received his copy of the examination he read the first question hastily and began to write. After a few minutes he had an uncomfortable feeling that his answer was getting off the track; so he crossed it out and began over again. His new answer started out confidently, but after three sentences he felt he had said all he had to say on the question. But this was an essay-type test. The directions said "Write at least a paragraph." John restated in different words what he had already said and was relieved to find that his answer now looked like a normal paragraph.

The second question was a pure gift. It dealt with the one part of the course that John knew thoroughly. He had been hoping this question would be asked, and here it was. What a break! He wrote with unusual intensity. From the very first sentence he knew he was writing well. No need to worry about stretching this answer into a paragraph. Of its own accord it grew into a page, then two pages. Midway on the third page John finished, tired but glowing. He re-read his answer with scarcely-decreased enthusiasm. He changed a couple of words and added a clinching sentence which suddenly occurred to him. That made it just about perfect.

He began the third question with a new sense of confidence, but his pen ran dry. There was an inkwell on the instructor's desk for such emergencies. John went to the front of the room and filled his pen. When he returned to his seat his confident mood had disappeared. In an attempt to recapture it he re-read the last page of his second answer, but that did not help, except to catch a couple of misspellings. Mechanically he ground out an answer to question three, hoping the instructor would see what he had in mind.

The fourth question was a difficult one. John started a tentative answer and stopped. The directions said he was to write on six of the eight questions. He would skip four and do five. Unfortunately, the fifth question was as bad as the fourth. After a few preliminary passes at it, John scored out his answer and moved to number six. As he did so, the instructor announced that only ten minutes remained.

For a moment the announcement threw John into a panic. Ten minutes in which to do three questions! He read the remaining questions hurriedly, looking for an easy one; then he went back to question four and wrote whatever came into his head. There was no time now to worry whether the answer was completely satisfactory. The thing to do was to get an answer of any kind. He was perspiring when he moved to question six, but his resolution to put down some kind of answer helped him through. He wrote a fair-sized paragraph before the bell rang. Then, while the papers were being collected, he managed to make a one-sentence stab at question seven.

John left the examination room somewhat shaken in his assurance of getting a C. But the memory of his answer to the second question revived him. And, after all, he had answered all six questions. Even if his last answer was short he would get partial credit for it. On the way to the fraternity house he was enjoying the probability of a B.

B. Presented below are questions taken from a final examination in Hygiene, and selected student answers. Write a short evaluation of each answer.

Question 1. If someone were now to ask you, "What is good mental hygiene and why is it important?" what answer would you give to help him understand?

Answer A: I would say that good mental hygiene is the study wherein we come to know ourselves, our attitudes, the reasons why we react to conditions as we do, and the patterns of our conduct in general. Mental hygiene is important because, if we can recognize the things wrong with our attitudes and personalities, we can work to improve ourselves and thus make ourselves better citizens and better people to live with. Upon recognizing our faults we come to see that everyone has peculiarities, and we can better accept people as they are without criticizing them. It is essential for people to know how to get along with each other. The best way to understand others is to begin understanding yourself.

Answer B: Good mental hygiene is the ability to live with people in a clean and happy way. A sufficient knowledge of body care as well as mental care. Knowledge to use one's mind (control it) for the betterment of oneself and those surrounding him.

Question 2. In the film, *Learning and Growth,* the narrator states that "Experience is a good teacher only when you are ready for it." In what way does the film illustrate that statement?

Answer A: The film illustrated experience as a good teacher in the case of the baby. When they first gave the baby a toy, he did not know what to do with it. But as he played with it for a while he began to get familiar with it and see the different things he could do with it. As time went on he knew just what to do with it and how to go about it.

Answer B: The narrator in the film explained that the child, though repeatedly shown how to do various little tasks, did not possess nerves and a brain sufficiently developed to comprehend his teacher's actions and instructions. Likewise, though the child was put on his feet and helped to stand, his bones and muscles were not strong enough to make use of the help he was given. He was not ready for the experience of standing or walking.

Question 3. Jane is a sophomore pre-medical student. She has flunked Chemistry and is to be dropped from her pre-med status. She may react in one of these ways:

a. She may spend the next few weeks complaining that "the instructor was no good; how could I pass?"

b. She may tell everyone that she didn't really want to be a doctor anyway.

c. She may quit school and return home.

d. She may say that she just didn't study hard enough and re-register for the course.

Select one of these adjustments, explain what type of adjustment it is, and point out what alternative method she might better have used to solve her problem.

Answer A: She may spend the next few weeks blaming the instructor. Such an adjustment will be one of defense. Jane, faced with a situation which exposes her own inefficiency, will defend herself by transferring the blame to someone else. Unfortunately for her, the defense will not prove satisfactory. Jane and others will recognize that under the same conditions other students passed the course. This recognition will force Jane to be more emphatic about the instructor's shortcomings, and the more emphatic she becomes the more obvious it will be to everyone, including herself, that she is creating a scapegoat for her own failure.

A more mature adjustment would be to analyze the failure to find what she had done that was wrong. If she simply has not done enough work

in the course, if her methods of studying are poor, if she has little aptitude for chemistry, any one of these factors could explain her failure, and it would be useful for her to know and admit the real cause. Only when she has identified the cause can she know what to do next. If she has no aptitude for medical studies she should change her program. If she has not applied herself or has not worked efficiently she should reform her habits and retake the course.

Answer B: She may spend the next few weeks complaining that "the instructor was no good; how could I pass?" Adjustment by defense — alternative might have been (d). She may say that she just didn't study hard enough and re-register for the course.

C. Write an analysis of your own procedure in preparing for and taking an essay-type examination. Be as objective as possible. If you have recently taken an essay examination study the answers you submitted and include your judgments about them in the analysis.

D. Assume that the following set of questions constitutes a one-hour examination. Answer the questions under examination conditions.

1. The distance between *what we know* about taking care of ourselves and *how we do* take care of ourselves is wide. Why? What are some of the factors which prevent us from transforming what we *know* into what we *do*.

2. How important do you think your past family life has been in determining your present attitudes about religion, politics, and marriage?

3. Your younger sister, age 16, a senior in high school, has fallen madly in love with a classmate. She sees no reason why they should not run off and get married in spite of your parents' disapproval. She has confidence in you and asks:

"How can anybody tell before marriage whether their marriage will turn out all right. We love each other. Why should we wait?"

What would you say?

26

THE CRITICAL REVIEW

A CRITICAL REVIEW is an appraisal. The subject of the appraisal may be almost anything – a historical movement, an election, a philosophy, a work of literature, a movie, a radio program, a football game, or a date. In composition classes, however, the subject is usually a book, an essay, or a poem; and it is with reviews of such subjects that this chapter is concerned.

The Requirements of the Review

A good critical review communicates to a reader the critic's evaluation of a book or essay in such a way that the reader can then make his own estimate of the work. To do this the critic must meet three requirements: he must report what the book does: he must judge how well it does it; and he must provide enough evidence from the book itself to support or illustrate his judgment.

Each of these obligations is important. To the extent that the reviewer slights any of them, the usefulness of his review decreases. If his report of what the book does is inadequate for a reader who does not know the book, that reader will have difficulty following the critic's analysis. If, on the other hand, the reviewer tells only what the book does, and not how well it does it, he is writing a synopsis, not a critical review. Finally, if he fails to support or illustrate his judgments from the book itself, he gives the reader no opportunity of forming his own judgment. No reviewer has the right to assume that his unsupported opinions will be accepted as facts. If he says that the book is badly organized, that its style is turgid, or that it is full of inaccuracies, he should present his evidence for these assertions.

A fourth obligation is taken for granted, that the reviewer will be fair to the work he is judging. He must not allow his prejudices on a subject to influence his appraisal unduly. He has no right, for instance, to condemn a history of capitalism or trade-unionism simply because

he dislikes capital or labor. He must not allow his own preferences to blind him to the merits or demerits of the work he is reviewing.

Observe how the following student review meets these requirements.

AGE OF THUNDER [1]

Frederic Prokosch's *Age of Thunder* is ample evidence that beautiful writing is not enough. Few living writers can handle the English language with more distinction than this poet turned novelist. Even Thomas Mann has paid tribute to the Prokosch prose. But, I think Prokosch's isolated talent of turning exquisite sentences or fashioning fabulously beautiful passages (sometimes several pages in length) actually destroys his chances of achieving greatness. His character development, plot construction, and even intellectual honesty tend to disappear in a purple mist of liquid syllables.

Prokosch's novel pictures the life and death struggles of the maquis in the Haute-Savoie during the years of French underground resistance. Jean-Nicolas, a loyal parachutist spy, dropped for vague reasons of collecting information, dreams his way toward the Swiss border on a magic carpet of Prokosch philosophizing. Later, Jean-Nicolas is betrayed to a German officer by a shadowy caricature named Robinson. That this Robinson or the German commandant would entertain and edify this obvious spy with long and rather juvenile philosophical essays sounded unreal to me.

I do not believe that three mountain gangsters who waylay Allied sympathizers would talk like three versions of Prokosch while planning the murder of Jean-Nicolas. And I do not believe that Susanna, the convenient virgin who tosses the conventions aside like the "winter garment of repentance" upon meeting Jean-Nicolas, would talk or act as she did. In fact, the whole novel is Prokosch any way you cut it.

Incidentally, logical readers who have an eye for detail will want to know why the Swiss border was always a line of hills as these poetic escapists approached it, and how it suddenly became a river when they reached it. But Prokosch, in his illogically slap-happy approach to the problem, undoubtedly thinks such matters are beneath his attention. Personally, I think Prokosch had better stick to poetry.

The only good points I can see about the whole book are the beautifully written passages and the romantic backdrops. However, the reader wants to know how the maquis operated, how the Germans and the collaborationists countered their efforts, and what men would do, think, and say under such circumstances. It is here that Prokosch evades the issue and covers it up with his philosophizing.

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[1] Miriam Graham, "Age of Thunder." Reprinted with permission from *The Green Caldron*, a magazine of freshman writing (University of Illinois), November, 1945, p. 38.

This is an unfavorable review. A little more restraint on its author's part might have made it even more convincing, for such expressions as "even intellectual honesty tend to disappear" and "illogically slap-happy approach" suggest that the reviewer is overstating her objection to the book. And a reader may wonder if, in condemning Prokosch's work for its lack of realism and its failure to explain how the resistance movement actually operated, the reviewer has not missed the author's real purpose. But within the limits of a 400-word assignment the reviewer has done ably what was required of her. She has described the book, passed a clean judgment upon it, and given us samples of the evidence which dictated that judgment.

Special conditions governing a particular assignment will often modify the requirements of a review. For example, students are often asked to write a critical review of an essay which the whole class is reading. In this situation the readers of the review are as familiar with the subject as the reviewer is. There is no need, then, for him to devote any considerable space to what the essay says. What is required of him is his critical estimate of its content and style. This point is made because instructors are often, and with reason, annoyed to find that an assignment intended to test students' ability to appraise the value of a piece of writing turns out to be largely a report of the essay's contents. Too much attention to a report of content is always a weakness in a critical review. That weakness is increased when the readers are thoroughly familiar with the work under discussion.

Reading for the Review

The preparation of a good review requires careful reading as well as careful writing. Lazy or uncritical reading will nearly always result in a poor review; therefore, you should begin to read the book *with the intention of reviewing it.* An awareness of this intention will help to point your reading, just as the intention of outlining or summarizing an essay helps you to read it more purposefully. This does not mean that one should make up his mind about a book in the first thirty pages and then skim the rest merely to find additional evidence to support a hasty judgment. Except in rare cases, an honest reviewer will not make a final judgment until he has read the whole book. But if he reads alertly, he will begin to formulate tentative judgments as he goes along.

In beginning to read, always pay special attention to the introductory or prefatory material. The opening paragraphs of an essay usually

reveal the purpose and may even summarize the organization. The preface of a book is often the clearest statement of what its author proposes to do. It may also contain explanations which will affect your review. For example, if the author of a biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt states in his preface that he has limited himself to a study of Roosevelt's political life, it would be embarrassing to miss that statement and condemn the book on the ground that it failed to present an adequate picture of Roosevelt's personal life. A reviewer has a right to point out, even regret, the limitations the author has imposed on himself. But he does not have the right to condemn a writer for not doing what he never intended to do.

For most books it will be wise to take notes as you read. These notes should contain at least a clear statement of the purpose of the book, some hints about its organization, and references to pages and passages which illustrate the author's style or which deserve special mention in the review. These notes will serve a double purpose: they will help to keep your reading alert and so give you a keener insight into the success or failure of the work, and they will reduce or eliminate the time required to go back and find what you remember as good evidence to support your observations.

Writing the Review

The writing of a critical review presents no special problems of composition. As long as you satisfy the three requirements discussed earlier, you are free to organize and present your material in whatever way best suits your purpose. The writing of a critical review, therefore, is merely the application to a particular assignment of the principles of composition which were discussed in Part One of this book.

As always, the first step is a concern with purpose. Before you begin to write, you must be clear about two things: your obligations to your readers and your over-all judgment of the book. If you are sure of these things, the organization of your paper should present no unusual difficulty. But if you begin without understanding what is expected of you or what you want to do, your review may be hard to write and even harder to read. Therefore, if you have no clear opinion of the work when you finish reading it, you should review your notes and analyze your impressions in order to form a judgment.

For most students the most difficult part of the review is the opening paragraph. It is quite reasonable, of course, to plunge at once into your final judgment of the book and then devote succeeding para-

graphs to the reasons for that judgment. But if you feel that this is too abrupt – and it often is – there are various other ways of beginning, such as:

1. With an introduction of the author, telling the reader who he is, what other books he has written, or how he came to write this one.

2. With a summary of the problem which the author is discussing. Thus, a review of a book on juvenile delinquency might begin with a brief report on the growth of juvenile delinquency and the attempts being made to curb it.

3. With an anecdote or an illustration, either to suggest the mood of the review or to introduce the author's attitude toward his subject.

4. With a quotation that sums up the purpose of the book.

5. With a description of the book in general terms in order to give the reader a brief, comprehensive picture of it.

6. With a classification of the book to show how it resembles or differs from others of the same kind.

7. With a combination of two or more of these openings.

Study the organization of the following student review, paying particular attention to the function of the first paragraph.

I, Claudius [2]

In the history of the Roman Empire, Emperor Claudius holds a rather obscure place. It is a historical fact that he once wrote an autobiography which was lost centuries ago. In *I, Claudius,* Robert Graves attempts to rewrite that story as the Emperor himself might have dictated it. The result is an elaborate canvas of the history of Rome from the reign of Augustus in the first century B.C. through the elevation of Claudius himself to the throne in A.D. 41.

I, Claudius is not a formal history, but resembles a family chronicle written in a conversational style. By writing the story in the first person, the author succeeds in maintaining a certain pleasing informality throughout the book. Graves assembles his work with careful reference to two of the principal Roman authorities, Suetonius and Tacitus. He includes interesting minor touches such as the pretense of writing in Greek, the amusing soldier's jests, and the frequent use of colloquial verse.

[2] Eleanor Sifferd, "I, Claudius." Reprinted with permission from *The Green Caldron,* a magazine of freshman writing (University of Illinois), December, 1948, p. 11.

In this book, Claudius, a rather decent fellow, unfolds the story of the corruption and degeneracy of the Roman Empire during the period when Rome was a place of extravagance, violence, and evil. He tells of the growing impotence of the upper class as the group tried to preserve the illusion of power. That society is subtly portrayed in the fascinating character of Livia, whom Claudius calls "both admirable and abominable." Obsessed with an uncanny lust for power, she encouraged the poisoning of a potential candidate for the throne so that her husband, Augustus, might ascend as the emperor. During his reign, Livia, the grandmother of Claudius, gained such a hold over her husband that she literally ruled Rome for more than sixty years.

Although the story deals essentially with the collapse of the Roman Empire, in effect it has a much deeper significance. The reader finds himself comparing the Roman times with our own troubled era. Certainly Livia can be compared with recent and contemporary world leaders who have shown that they value power and material wealth above common decency and respect for the individual. *I, Claudius* is filled with such parallels, both subtle and obvious.

Even an attempt to write about a time of such historical dispute is an act of courage. Robert Graves nobly succeeds in painting a vivid portrait of Rome in its glory and in its eventual downfall. Especially remarkable is his ability to combine fascinating history with an interesting narrative, into which are injected deep and significant questions to challenge the reader. *I, Claudius* is a book which is well worth reading.

In her first paragraph the author of this review does three things: she introduces the subject (Claudius), she states in general terms the author's purpose, and she gives an introductory description of the book. Thereafter, in successive paragraphs, she analyzes the way the book is developed, summarizes its basic plot, points out the significance of the work to modern readers, and gives her final judgment of its success. To do that in less than five hundred words is a respectable accomplishment. The reviewer has to sacrifice illustrative details which might have made the paper still more convincing, but enough evidence is given in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 to keep the review from being a presentation of unsupported judgments.

As you develop your review be on guard against these most common weaknesses:

1. Taking up a disproportionate space to explain the action or content of the book so that the review is essentially a digest instead of a criticism.

2. Picking out parts for review instead of reviewing the book as a whole. It is justifiable to criticize particular parts in relation to the whole, but a student who concentrates on particular sections is likely to produce a distorted picture of the whole book.

3. Drifting into digressions which better illustrate the reviewer's philosophy than the merits or demerits of the book.

4. Allowing the style of the review to dominate the reviewer's purpose, thus creating an exaggerated or biased treatment.

5. Keeping the review at too general a level by failing to provide concrete illustration of abstract statements.

The first four of these weaknesses result from failing to keep the purpose of the review clearly in mind. The last comes from a failure to remember that the reader cannot see into the reviewer's mind and hence can never be quite clear about what these general judgments mean unless he is shown. In the critical review, as in all writing except summaries, the writer must elaborate his general observations in order to make them convincing.

EXERCISES

A. The three reviews of *Language in Action* that follow were written in a class in which everyone was required to read the book. The reviews illustrate varying degrees of success and failure. First read the three reviews, then write a paper in which you rate them in order of merit and explain the good or bad points on which you base your rating.

(1)

"Much of this book may have sounded like warnings against words. Such has not been its purpose. Words are, as has been said from the beginning, the essential instruments of man's humanity. This book only asks the reader to treat them as such."

In the author's own words, this is the thought that is emphasized in *Language in Action*. Mr. Hayakawa attempts to establish his idea by breaking down and analyzing different aspects of the words of the English language. Many of his observations he has presented in a philosophical way which may be cause for discussion on the part of some readers. In several cases the reader was given new definitions for some of the qualities of words which probably emphasized something that he already knew. This is best illustrated in the section on the habit of confusing what is inside of us and what is outside in respect to the meaning of words. The words "Jew" and "criminal" were used as examples in the illustration.

The highlight of the book was Chapter 8 which was titled "How We Know What We Know." This chapter deals with the relation of words

with what they stand for or, in other words, definition. People often complain about words meaning different things to different people, but meanings of words are not within the words, but within us.

When defining "Two-valued Orientation," Mr. Hayakawa says that there is a tendency to see things in terms of two values only, affirmative and negative, good or bad, and hot and cold. In many of his suppositions, he goes against himself in that he uses extremities when analyzing some of the qualities of words. Perhaps this should be over-looked, however, in view of the fact that the author may have used this device for emphasis.

In the concluding chapter of the book, the author stresses that some of his ideas may have sounded like warnings against words and this was not the purpose. However, I believe it would be hard for any reader to finish the book and not be a little skeptical of the world of words around him. Maybe if the reader does have this feeling after finishing the book, in reality, the author has been successful in getting his thought across to the reader.

(2)

When I first began to read *Language in Action* I was quite surprised to find that I liked the book. Since we are to use it as a supplementary textbook, I expected to find it dull and uninteresting, a book which would be difficult to read and comprehend. Instead, I found most parts of the book easy to read and understand.

The purpose of the book is to give the reader a general system for clearing the mind of harmful obstructions to thought. Professor Hayakawa attempts through 15 short chapters to apply his scientific study of meaning (semantics) to the thinking, speaking, reading, and writing done in every day life. Some of the points he makes are common knowledge. Others are vaguely understood but seldom practised. Most of them open up to us an entirely new view of language and of the use and abuse we make of it.

The stories which the professor has used to illustrate his meaning throughout the book are rather peculiar. Usually, a writer who wishes to convert readers to his way of thinking stays away from controversial topics because of the difficulty of handling these topics without antagonizing some readers. Mr. Hayakawa, however, repeatedly deals with the three most controversial topics in the world today: religion, race, and politics. In the opinion of some people this would obviously class him as a radical. I believe, however, that he is actually interested in the disagreements between people which result from a discussion of these subjects. These disagreements so often produce "loaded words," "intensional orientation," "slanting," and other semantic errors that they offer exceptionally striking examples of the misuse of language.

Throughout his book the author uses a vocabulary of terms which are common to studies of semantics. I suppose these terms are necessary, but they are often very difficult to understand, and many times I had difficulty seeing the distinction between some of them. The terms "extensional and intensional orientation" were clear, but the "affective," "directive," and

"presymbolic" uses of language seemed to overlap so much that Mr. Hayakawa can sometimes use a single word or expression to illustrate all three. It would have been helpful if he had provided a dictionary of technical terms at the end of the book so that a student could turn to it and clear up his confusion.

On the whole, though, I think the author has succeeded in doing what he set out to do, and he has done it in an interesting and lively fashion. I am sure that my whole attitude toward language has changed as a result of reading this book.

(3)

A story with a moral is told in the beginning. It is a story about how differently two people consider an act when one of them calls it "insurance" and the other calls it "relief." The sum total of the story shows the misconceptions and various viewpoints which arise from the words we use in our everyday language.

The importance of language is stressed as an aid to cooperation with our fellow humans. It is also stressed as a factor in permitting facts and observations to be handed down from generation to generation, thus eliminating the necessity of rediscovering or observing the same things again. The point is made of warning the reader against planning life by imaginary maps or false ideas.

The fact that words have no meaning in themselves, but are merely symbols of meanings is a point worth considering. The people of the world live by symbols. Good clothes, ornaments, comfortable homes are symbols of wealth. Rags and shacks symbolize poverty. Many people who misunderstand language try to explain things in terms of themselves or on the same levels of abstraction. Since education is largely a matter of learning facility in the manipulation of words, it is necessary to filter them correctly. The term linguistic naivete means that many people show ignorance in interpreting things they hear or read.

In writing reports a person must guard against the addition of judgments or implications of judgments or opinions. The use of inferences should be excluded in writing reports, while the process of slanting one's judgments in one direction should be replaced by judgments both for and against.

The definition of a word is arrived at by the use given it by writers in the past. We learn the definition by repeated association with its use in language. In addition much of the meanings of words are conveyed in the tone with which they are spoken or used. The context of what is said is often sufficient to convey the intended meaning even if what is actually said is entirely different.

Symbolic language is both informative and affective upon the hearer. Most advertising is symbolically written for the purpose of affecting the reader. These symbolic writings are called affective connotations and are used extensively by politicians. In directive language these connotations may contain implied promises, as in the speeches of politicians or the claims of advertisers.

The process of abstracting is illustrated by cows, it being that one cow is not another cow although they possess things in common. They cannot be explained in terms of one another on the same levels of abstraction, but must be explained on a higher level of abstraction using characteristics common to both. The main point stressed is that COW_1 is not COW_2.

B. The following condensation of a much longer review is confined chiefly to the climax of *Henry V* – the Battle of Agincourt. Study the review and decide how well it meets the three requirements discussed earlier. Then write a 300-word paper in which you explain and illustrate your judgment.

MASTERPIECE [3]

The movies have produced one of their rare great works of art. . . . At last there has been brought to the screen, with such sweetness, vigor, insight and beauty that it seems to have been written yesterday, a play by the greatest dramatic poet who ever lived. It had never been done before. For Laurence Olivier, 38 (who plays Henry and directed and produced the picture), the event meant new stature. For Shakespeare, it meant a new splendor in a new, vital medium.

As Shakespeare wrote it, *The Cronicle History of Henry the fifth* is an intensely masculine, simple, sanguine drama of kinghood and war. Its more eloquent theme is a young king's coming of age. Once an endearingly wild Prince of Wales, Henry V (at 28) had to prove his worthiness for the scepter by leading his army in war. He invaded France, England's longtime enemy. He captured Harfleur, then tried to withdraw his exhausted and vastly outnumbered army to Calais. The French confronted him at Agincourt. In one of Shakespeare's most stirring verbal sonnets, Henry urged his soldiers on to incredible victory. English mobility (unarmored archers) and English firepower (the quick-shooting longbow) proved too much for the heavily armored French. Casualties (killed): English, 29; French, 10,000. . . .

The Battle of Agincourt is not realistic. Olivier took great care not to make it so. To find the "kind of poetic country" he wanted, and to avoid such chance anachronisms as air raids (the picture was made in Britain during the war), Olivier shot the battle sequence in Ireland.

Making no attempt to overresearch the actual fight, he reduced it to its salients – the proud cumbrousness of the armored French chevaliers, and Henry's outnumbered archers, cloth-clad in the humble colors of rural England. A wonderful epitomizing shot – three French noblemen drinking a battle-health in their saddles – is like the crest of the medieval wave. The mastering action of the battle, however, begins with a prodigious truck-shot of the bannered, advancing French chivalry shifting from a walk to a full gallop, intercut with King Henry's sword, poised for signal, and his archers, bows drawn, waiting for it. The release – an

[3] Courtesy of *Time*. Copyright, Time, Inc., 1946.

arc of hundreds of arrows speeding with the twang of a gigantic guitar on their victorious way – is one of the most gratifying payoffs of suspense yet contrived.

But the most inspired part of Shakespeare's play deals with the night before the Battle of Agincourt. It is also the most inspired sequence in the film. Olivier opens it with a crepuscular shot of the doomed and exhausted English as they withdraw along a sunset stream to encamp for the night. . . .

The invisible Chorus begins the grandly evocative description of the night camps:

> *Now entertain conjecture of a time*
> *When creeping murmur and the poring dark*
> *Fills the wide vessel of the universe.*

The screen sustains this mood with a generalized shot of the opposed camps, their fires like humiliated starlight. There are no creeping murmurs, neighing steeds, crowing cocks, clanking armorers. Instead, William Walton's score, one of the few outstanding scores in movie history, furnishes subdued, musical metaphors. Midway through the Chorus, the film boldly breaks off to interpolate, to better effect, a scene in the French camp which in Shakespeare's version precedes it.

This scene itself also improves on Shakespeare. His Frenchmen, the night before their expected triumph, were shallow, frivolous and arrogant. By editing out a good deal of their foolishness, by flawless casting, directing and playing, and by a wonderfully paced appreciation of the dead hours of rural night, Olivier transforms the French into sleepy, overconfident, highly intelligent, highly sophisticated noblemen, subtly disunified, casually contemptuous of their Dauphin – an all but definitive embodiment of a civilization a little too ripe to survive.

The hypnotic Chorus resumes; the camera pans to the English camp and strolls, as if it were the wandering King himself, among the firelit tents.

And here poem and film link the great past to the great present. It is unlikely that anything on the subject has been written to excel Shakespeare's short study, in *Henry V*, of men stranded on the verge of death and disaster. The man who made this movie made it midway in England's most terrible war, within the shadows of Dunkirk. In appearance and in most of what they say, the three soldiers with whom Henry talks on the eve of Agincourt might just as well be soldiers of World War II. No film of that war has yet said what they say so honestly or so well.

Here again Olivier helped out Shakespeare. Shakespeare gave to a cynical soldier the great speech: *But if the cause be not good,* etc. Olivier puts it in the mouth of a slow-minded country boy (Brian Nissen). The boy's complete lack of cynicism, his youth, his eyes bright with sleepless danger, the peasant patience of his delivery, and his Devon repetition of the tolled word *die* as *doy,* lift this wonderful expression of common humanity caught in human war level with the greatness of the King.

Henry V is one of the great experiences in the history of motion pic-

tures. It is not, to be sure, the greatest: the creation of new dramatic poetry is more important than the recreation of the old. For such new poetry movies offer the richest opportunity since Shakespeare's time, and some of them have made inspired use of the chance. But *Henry V* is a major achievement – this perfect marriage of a great dramatic poetry with the greatest contemporary medium for expressing it.

C. Write a 300-word critical review of the following review.

THE LONG SHIPS PASSING[4]

In the three centuries that the white man has been sailing them, the Great Lakes have recapitulated the whole long history of maritime commerce. They have seen the exploitation of their waters increase from the primitive but adventurous navigation of Indian warriors and trappers to the busy traffic of one of the great trade routes of the world, and in that short time they have witnessed almost the entire evolution of transport by water. They have seen the paddle give way to sail, and sail to steam. They have seen the craft propelled by those forces grow from birch canoes to steel freighters over 600 feet in length and over 14,000 in net tonnage. They have watched arduous and sometimes prohibitive portages circumvented by canals so that the once inaccessible ports of Lake Superior have been opened to the commerce of the seven seas. And they have seen those canals, in turn, fitted with ever-expanding locks, until over the passage between Huron and Superior (a passage which less than a hundred years ago was a decisive barrier to navigation unless, like the 50-ton schooner *Algonquin*, ships were placed on rollers and inched along by land at a speed of five lengths a day) more than three quarters of a million tons of freight have passed in a single day.

The story of Great Lakes navigation, then, is a story of man's persistent and ingenious efforts to exploit the greatest inland waterway in the world for his own needs and ambitions. Call it the romance of the lakes or the romance of those men who have made the lakes a highway to empire, it is a dramatic story, and considering the variety of its appeal, one that has received less than its share of attention in the literature of our expanding frontiers.

In *The Long Ships Passing* Mr. Havighurst has dealt with that story, sketching the development of the lakes from the explorations of the earliest voyageurs to the controversy over the present Seaway proposal. His book is not a history, if we are to understand by history the organization and synthesis of all the evidence that is relevant to an understanding of the development of the Great Lakes. Rather it is a collection of stories and legends, each complete in itself, the whole forming a series of episodes

[4] From "The Long Ships Passing," *Quarterly Bulletin*, Historical Society of Northwestern Ohio, January, 1943. Reprinted by permission of the Society.

that reflects the changes the lakes have seen and accentuates the romance that has attended these changes.

Such a controlling purpose, of course, limits the appeal of the book, and probably Mr. Havighurst's work will have a greater attraction for the layman than for the professional historian. Moreover, it always runs the risk of producing a book which, because of its lack of any unifying theme, is merely another book *about* the subject with which it deals. There are, indeed, moments when one feels that Mr. Havighurst has not sufficiently resisted the temptation to add another story merely because it is a good story, without concerning himself too much about the relationship of the story to the theme that he is developing. Thus the chapter dealing with Strang's kingdom on Beaver Island hardly escapes being an eight-page digression, since it has no other claim to being an integral part of the story of the development of the Great Lakes than the fact that Beaver Island happened to be located in Lake Michigan. The story, of course, is interesting, but, like a cuckoo in a sea-gull's nest, it would be more at home in other quarters.

Such intercalations, however, are rare in *The Long Ships Passing*, for Mr. Havighurst is dealing with the vicissitudes of life on and about the Great Lakes, and he has no trouble in selecting episodes to illustrate those vicissitudes. Thus all sorts of stories are grist to his mill, whether they be tales of shipwrecks from fire or storm, reports of conflagrations that destroyed whole areas of lumber towns, glimpses of immigrants embarking at Buffalo to find new homes in a new country, exposition of the steps leading up to the building of the Soo Canal and of the difficulties that beset its builders, or the story of Charlie Mott's squaw, Angelique, who escaped the starvation that killed her husband on Isle Royal by weaving rabbit snares from the hair of her head.

The material from which the author selected his illustrations is abundant. That material – for example, the freezing to death of the *Mataafa's* crew on the rocky beach at Duluth while 40,000 people stood on the pier impotent to help them – is dramatic in itself. The author has seen to it that none of the drama is lost in the telling. His accounts of the burning of Menominee and of the relief of Marquette from starvation – to cite two episodes out of hundreds – are little masterpieces of dramatic narrative. His style – if style and story can be separated – is the style of the novelist, with careful attention to the details that give his picture reality. Adequate quotation is impossible, but two small excerpts will perhaps help the reader to form his own judgments. The first is from the account of the *Independence's* first voyage on Lake Superior:

> In her main cabin people listened grimly to the smashing seas and the wind's high whistle. Then the stove broke loose from its foundation and went skidding across the cabin. Sparks streamed out of the broken smokepipe and burning embers strewed the deck. While they fought fire in that cabin all the faces were grim and set, but a few were haunted. A few of them had seen the fifty kegs of blasting powder stored beneath the hatches.

The second excerpt is from a chapter entitled "Smoke Clouds Blowing":

> Frontier towns burned like tinder. The board streets and sidewalks, the open frame buildings, the lack of water pressure and of fire-fighting apparatus made them terribly vulnerable. . . . The very ground they rested on, built up of sawdust, slabs and refuse from the mills, was inflammable. The drying yards, with lumber stacked and open to the air, could quickly roar into acres of flame. . . . Sawdust towns lived violently, with the rumble of logging, the snarl and scream of the buzz saw, and the tumult of the loading wharfs. And mostly they died violently.

If stories of sinking ships and burning towns, of killing cold and wind-lashed waves, of reckless men engaged in dangerous pursuits make up the warp of *The Long Ships Passing*, the woof is formed by the pressure of an expanding economy in an era becoming increasingly mechanized. Throughout the book there is constant illustration of the economic forces that opened and developed the great inland waterway. The need for the grain and lumber and minerals of the Great Lakes regions, the stream of immigrants from the Old World, providing the man power to harvest those resources, and the mechanical improvements that facilitated the transporting of the products – markets, men, money, and machines, all these are pictured as coming together to keep the long ships passing.

D. Select any volume of fiction or non-fiction that you have recently read and write a 500-word critical review of it.

27

THE BUSINESS LETTER

THE WRITING of a business letter as a college assignment serves a double purpose: it makes students familiar with the conventional forms of business correspondence and it provides a practical application of the principles of effective composition. Of the two purposes, the latter is the more important. The conventions of business correspondence should be understood and followed, but it should also be understood that a good business letter is primarily a good composition. Indeed, the writing of a convincing letter of application is often a more exacting test of a student's ability to select, organize, and present pertinent information than many of the more usual composition assignments.

The Form of a Business Letter

All business letters follow a relatively standardized form which is illustrated by the example given below. For convenience, the various parts of the letter have been numbered.

115 Ohio Street 1
Galesburg, Illinois
December 28, 1949 2

Fisher Paint Company
3 212 West Madison Street
Chicago 7, Illinois

4 Gentlemen:

In your advertisement of Colopake in recent issues of Time you say that the superiority of Colopake over other paint products is achieved by reducing the size of the pigment
5 particles. Since I am making a comparative study of various paints I should like to have more information on this point. Would it be pos-

sible for me to obtain a copy of the comparative data which were the basis of your advertising statement?

Yours truly, 6

John A. Doe

John A. Doe 7

As our illustration shows, a business letter consists of at least seven parts:

1. **The Return Address.** This part will be omitted, of course, if stationery containing a printed letterhead is used, since the letterhead itself is the return address. The form used in our example is called a block heading with open punctuation. In a block heading the lines are not indented; each line begins flush with the one preceding. In open punctuation no marks are used at the ends of lines, but elements within the lines are separated in accordance with the usual conventions. Alternative forms – indented headings and closed punctuation – are common and accepted but not preferred. In indented headings each line is indented a few spaces to the right of the line preceding it. In closed punctuation a comma is used after the street and the state. Addresses should be written in full, though figures are generally used for numbered streets, and *North, South, East* and *West* are often abbreviated – *42nd Street, 15th Avenue, 212 W. Madison Street;* but *300 Fifth Avenue.*

2. **The Date Line.** The date line is written as part of the first heading and takes the same form as the return address – flush or indented, with open or closed punctuation, depending on the style used in the return address.

3. **The Inside Address.** This heading consists of three or more lines and follows the form established in the first heading. Abbreviations such as *Co.* and *Inc.* are used only if these terms are abbreviated in the letterheads of the companies being addressed. When the title of the addressee is given, it is usually placed after his name on the first line; but if this practice would result in an awkwardly long line, the title may be given as a separate line.

Dr. George D. Stoddard, President
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

Dr. Robert B. Downs
Director of the Library School
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

Names which would be awkward or impossible in a single line are written in two lines:

North Carolina State College
of Agriculture and Engineering
University of North Carolina
Raleigh, North Carolina

4. The Salutation. When an individual is being addressed, the salutation usually takes one of the following forms: *Dear Mr.* (or *Mrs.*) *Blank, Dear Sir* (or *Madam*). Such an informal salutation as *Dear Bob* is acceptable only in writing to a personal friend. The form, *My dear Mr.* (or *Mrs.*) Blank may be used in distinctly formal letters. When the letter is addressed to a company, rather than to an individual, the accepted salutation is *Gentlemen;* the form *Dear Sirs* is seldom used in modern business letters. If the company is known to consist of women, the salutation may be either *Mesdames* or *Ladies.* A colon follows the salutation.

5. The Body. The body of the letter usually consists of one or more paragraphs of single-spaced text, with double spacing between paragraphs. There is a growing preference for starting all paragraphs at the left margin so that no indention is used to mark the opening of a paragraph. However, the older style of starting the first paragraph under the colon of the salutation and thereafter indenting the first line of each paragraph seven spaces from the margin is still common. The opening lines of paragraphs may be indented even when no indention is used in the headings.

6. The Complimentary Close. The most common endings are *Yours truly, Yours very truly, Very truly yours, Yours sincerely,* or *Sincerely yours.* Such closes as *Cordially,* or *Cordially yours,* are used only when the writer is on familiar terms with his addressee. *Respectfully* is a formal close used chiefly in submitting a formal report to a superior. A comma is used at the end of the complimentary close.

7. The Signature. The signature consists of two parts: the written signature, and below this the writer's name and official position, if any, typed in. Both parts are necessary. The written signature is the legal identification of the writer; the typed name is a safeguard against

misreading of the signature. Since it is conventional in business to address a woman as *Miss* unless she signifies that she is married, married women enclose *Mrs.* in parentheses before their typed signatures.

Helen White

(Mrs.) Helen White
or (Mrs. John White)

When an individual writes a letter in the name of his company, he places the company name before his written signature, thus:

Very truly yours,

Main Motor Sales Company

W. R. Smith

Webster R. Smith, Secretary

When a letter is typed by someone other than the author, the typist puts first the author's initials, then her own (with a colon between them) flush with the left margin and below the author's signature:

WRS:HW.

The Appearance of the Letter

The appearance of a business letter is extremely important. As much as possible the letter must be centered on the page and framed by adequate margins. The various parts of the letter should be separated from each other by extra spacing – usually at least two spaces between the first and second headings, between the inside address and the salutation, between the salutation and the body, and between the body and the complimentary close. Single-spacing is used within the headings. Within reasonable limits, the margins may be adjusted to get a long letter on a single page or to keep a short letter in the center of a page. A letter, of course, may consist of more than one page, but the spacing should be so contrived that the second page does not consist of only two or three lines. It goes without saying that the typing must be neat and accurate.

The Letter of Application

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to the letter applying for a position. This is the kind of business letter which students are most

likely to write, and of all business letters it probably presents the problem of composition at its most difficult level. A student who can write an effective letter of application has had a useful introduction to the art of business correspondence.

Although some variation is possible, letters of application generally follow a standardized organization. The letter usually consists of five parts: the lead, the record of education and experience, the references, the request for further communication (usually an interview), and the data sheet. These parts are illustrated by the following letter.

2223 Edgewood Avenue
New York, New York
April 22, 19--

Robertson and Rand, Inc.
Public Accountants
410 North Lexington Avenue
New York, New York

Gentlemen:

Lead

Because I am deeply interested in Public Accounting, I want to secure a position with an organization carrying on this kind of work. Professor F. H. Higbee, in charge of the Accounting Department of the Manchester Business Institute, speaks highly of your firm. At his suggeston I wish to apply for a position with you.

Education

I completed my high school course in 19-- and entered the Manchester Business Institute. I am now a senior and will be graduated from the four-year course in June.

In my work I have specialized in accounting, taking every course offered. Among the courses I have taken are Auditing, C.P.A. Problems, Income Tax Accounting, Cost Accounting, Accounting Systems, and Governmental Accounting. In addition I have studied courses allied to accounting and have read extensively from books and periodicals devoted to the

subject. I have detailed these readings and other personal information on the attached sheet.

Experience

During the past two years I have been doing accounting work for three small firms. With them I have had complete charge of the books and income tax returns. I feel that this experience has been valuable to me in broadening my point of view.

References

Mr. F. H. Higbee, who is, as you no doubt know, the senior partner of a local firm of public accountants, has kindly allowed me to use his name as a reference in regard to my character and capacity. I am also permitted to use the names, on the attached sheet, of men who have known me as a student or employee.

If you will communicate with me at 2223 Edgewood Avenue, I shall be glad to furnish you with further particulars of my experience or any personal information you may wish.

Sincerely yours,

George N. White

George Neilson White

(*Separate Enclosure*)

PERSONAL DATA

PERSONAL
Name -- George Neilson White
Present Address -- 2223 Edgewood Avenue, New York
Permanent Address --3213 Riverside Avenue, Springfield, Mass.

Height -- 5' 11" Weight -- 170
Age -- 24 Place of Birth -- Springfield, Mass.

Nationality -- Scotch
Not married and have no dependents

Religion -- Member Presbyterian Church
Physical Condition -- No defects of any kind

EDUCATION
High School -- Springfield, Massachusetts
Manchester Business Institute
Accounting Courses Studied
- Elementary Accounting
- Applied Accounting
- Cost Accounting
- Advanced C.P.A. Problems
- Income Tax Accounting
- Accounting Systems
- Auditing
- Governmental Accounting

Courses Allied to Accounting Studied
- Mathematics of Investments
- Theory of Economics
- Corporation Finance
- Investments
- Money and Banking
- Commercial Law
- Corporation Law
- Credits and Collections
- Factory Administration
- Commercial Correspondence
- Marketing Methods
- Sales Administration

Books Read on Accounting and Allied Subjects
- Kester, Theory and Practice of Accounting
- Nicholson and Rohrbach, Cost Accounting
- Regulations 45 and 19 -- Income Tax Law
- Montgomery, Auditing Theory and Practice
- Oakey, Principles of Governmental Accounting
- Cole, Accounts -- Their Construction and Interpretation
- Copeland, Business Statistics
- The Duties of a Junior Accountant

EXPERIENCE
Two years bookkeeping, The Central Pharmacy

Accounting work, 1947 to 1949, with three Bronx stores

REFERENCES
Prof. F. H. Higbee, Manchester Business Institute, New York
Prof. Jas. H. Mundt, Manchester Business Institute, New York
Theo. Rau, The Central Pharmacy, New York
V. C. Brown, Vice-Pres., Commonwealth Bank, Springfield, Mass.[1]

Each of these five parts has its own special role in developing the total purpose of the letter. These functions my be stated briefly.

1. The Lead. The lead is an introductory statement in which the applicant establishes contact with the potential employer and declares himself a candidate for a position. The source of the lead is usually an advertisement or, as in our sample, the recommendation of a friend or an employee of the company. If the writer is applying for a specific job, he usually indicates in the lead his knowledge of the requirements of that position – for example:

> Mr. Bruce Benedict, Senior Accountant in your office, tells me that you intend to hire an additional secretary at the beginning of the year. I understand that the position requires someone who has had both bookkeeping and secretarial experience. Since I am qualified in both fields I should like to be considered as a candidate.

When the applicant is writing an unsolicited letter the lead might take such form as this:

> I wonder if, within the next few weeks, you intend to add an additional typist to your staff. I find that in order to finance my college education it will be necessary for me to seek a full-time position and, since I live on the campus, I should particularly like to work for the University.

2. Education and Experience. This section is the main part of the letter, since candidates are selected for interviews chiefly on the strength

[1] From Aurner, Robert Ray: *Effective English in Business.* Reprinted by permission of Professor Aurner and the South-Western Publishing Company.

of their education and experience. If either of these is slight, the other should compensate for it. The writer of our sample letter has had only limited experience, so he wisely detailed the nature of his training. A man with considerable experience would give a much briefer account of his education, but he would not pass hurriedly over *both* his education and his experience. As we shall see in the next section, one of the most serious weaknesses of student letters is that they do not adequately develop this important part of the application.

3. References. The references are the names and addresses of people who can do for the applicant what he cannot, with any modesty, do for himself – testify to his abilities, accomplishments, and desirable characteristics. It is both wise and courteous to obtain permission to use names as references before writing the letter.

4. Request for Further Communication. The conventional ending of a letter of application is a request for an interview. This request should be neither obsequious nor demanding but should be stated something like this:

> I should appreciate a personal interview at our mutual convenience. I am free after five o'clock every day and all day Saturdays. My home telephone number is Fairfield 0172.

Of course the best way to obtain an interview is to write the kind of letter that will make the employer eager to arrange a personal meeting. But even in the best of letters it is wise to ask for an interview unless distance makes one impracticable.

5. The Data Sheet. Many applications are written without a data sheet, in which event the most significant data is worked into the body of the letter. The advantages of the data sheet, however, are obvious, since it presents in the shortest possible space a complete outline of the candidate's qualifications and permits convenient reference if the employer wishes to re-check particular items.

Analysis of Failing Letters

The sample letter on page 560 is a most effective application. It is attractively arranged, logically organized, detailed in its treatment of education and experience, free from immodest judgments about the writer's qualifications, and clearly and correctly written. Such a letter is sure to make a good impression. Indeed, this particular letter was referred to the president of the company who personally wrote to the applicant with a view of offering him a position.

The letters that follow are examples of unsuccessful letters. To save space, the headings have been omitted:

Dear Personal Manager:

It was my ambition to be associate with a progressive firm like yours where my talents are appreciated.

I am graduating from college in June. The major pursued here is industrial management.

I would like a job as soon as possible.

Yours Respectively;

The natural response of an employer receiving such a letter would be to forward it to the college from which the writer claims to be graduating with a note asking if this boy was a typical product of the college. The letter is not only stylistically impossible; it fails completely to present any information (other than the questionable statement that the writer is about to graduate with a major in industrial management) which would be useful to a prospective employer. The only picture it presents is that of a person with no qualifications whatsoever, not even a sense of tact.

The next letter is only slightly better:

Dear Sir:

You have a vacancy in your accounting department according to my adviser, Mr. O. R. Strabe of Branch College. I am prepared to fill it. My qualifications are of the best.

Your prompt reply will gratify me. I am so anxious to work for you.

Yours sincerely,

If this writer really wants serious consideration he should present the evidence which makes him feel that he is well qualified. Judgments about one's own qualifications are always open to question, but unsupported judgments are flatly objectionable. The chief purpose of an application letter is to show why the applicant merits serious consideration. The way to do that is to present the *facts* of education and

experience. This applicant has done Mr. Strabe and himself a disservice by his naïve assumption that he need not take the time to present a detailed picture of his qualifications. The letter says almost nothing.

The following paragraph illustrates an error that was discussed in pages 154-158 — the error of overreaching oneself in an attempt to achieve a dignified literary style:

> It is understandable that your highly respected firm is exceedingly anxious to secure the valuable services of competent young men who have undergone specialized and detailed training in the outstanding educational institutions of our day -- and let me say in a patriotic aside, our noteworthy institutions are indeed comparable in prowess and achievement and dignity to the most heralded universities and colleges of any nation, bar none! -- and thus it is my earnest conviction that, when you go far afield in search of promising prospects for your dominant organization, you will proceed eventually to the hallowed college from which I send forth this missive.

This kind of writing is more likely to be amusing than annoying, but the purpose of an application is not to amuse; it is to get a job. An applicant cannot afford to make himself ridiculous; yet that is what this applicant does. What he has to say need not be said at all. Certainly it should not be said in such a wordy and preposterous way.

The next letter deserves special attention, since it is more representative than any already given of the kind of inadequate letter which competent college students are inclined to write:

> Gentlemen:
>
> Will one of your research laboratories need an assistant next year?
>
> Education: I am a graduate of Nelson High School and will graduate from Midwest College this June with a B. S. degree and a major in chemistry.
>
> Experience: During my summer vacations I have worked in the labora-

tories of A. N. Weir and Company. During the fall of 1949 I worked in the plating department of the Maddox Hardware Company where I had some experience with metallurgy.

References: The following people have kindly allowed me to use their names as references:

Professor William Linbeck
Department of Chemistry
Midwest College

Mr. Thomas Norton
Weir Laboratories
Dunsan, Iowa

I should appreciate the opportunity of an interview any Saturday that is convenient to you.

Yours sincerely,

At first glance this may seem a satisfactory letter. But if it is compared with the sample letter given earlier, its inadequacies will be obvious. Assuming that most of the candidates for this position are college graduates with majors in chemistry, what has this letter to recommend it? It is little more than an outline. The applicant should at least have shown what kind of work he did in the Weir laboratories and what kind of metallurgical experience he has had. By failing to give details, he keeps his letter from offering a convincing picture of his qualifications. None of the other qualified applicants could do less than he has done, and the chances are that most of them will do more.

We can sum up this analysis of unsatisfactory letters by saying that the errors to avoid in a letter of application are:

1. Stylistic and grammatical imperfections
2. Inadequate development of one's qualifications
3. Unsupported judgments of one's abilities
4. Statements which are arrogant, naïve, or in bad taste
5. Unattractive appearance of the letter

For the kind of position which requires a good letter of application, the employer is probably going to require an interview. If there are thirty or forty candidates for the position, probably only four or five

will be invited for interviews. The immediate purpose of the letter, then, is to get an interview. The best way to do that is to present the facts of one's qualifications clearly and fully. This can best be done in a well-organized data sheet and an accompanying letter which is clear, concise, and in good taste. The importance that will be attached to the application justifies the time and effort required to make it a good one.

EXERCISES

A. Study each of the following student letters carefully. Then write a report in the form of a business letter to your instructor telling him how you would grade these letters and why. Since your report will itself be graded, be sure to detail the evidence for your judgments. To save space all headings have been omitted.

(1)

Dear Sir:

Your newspaper ad about wanting an ex-, perienced, capable man to fill position of office manager in your company interests me. Provided the job pays enough, of course.

Rest assured I can handle your office staff. Write me at once so an interview can be arranged.

Confidently yours,

(2)

Dear Sir:

In two weeks I will receive my Bachelors Degree in Architectural Engineering, and I am very anxious to enter the Construction field. I believe I am amply qualified to begin my career in your field, and I am look- ing forward to working for your concern.

During my four years at the University of Illinois, I have maintained a numerical average of 3.86. I have been subjected to Construction business all my life, and dur-

ing semester breaks I have built up my experience with actual field estimating. I have taken every University estimating course available. In view of this, I believe I am capable of fulfilling an estimators position. I consider $250.00 per month an ample salary for this position.

During the period from June 23 to June 30, I will be at the Mammoth Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. I can be contacted at any hour of the day, and I would appreciate an interview at your convenience. I will have my letters of recommendation and I will provide you with any information I may have neglected in the enclosed data sheet.

(3)

Dear Sir:

HONESTY	EFFICIENCY
RESOURCEFULNESS	ADAPTABILITY
LEADERSHIP	COURAGE
RESPONSIBILITY	INITIATIVE
NEATNESS AND CLEANLINESS	INTELLIGENCE

Would you employ a person if he possessed the above qualities? You would, no doubt.

But unfortunately, the perfect is seldom obtained. Then the next best thing is the object of your search. I can offer you the services of a person who is, altho far from perfect, far above average in all of the above fields and excels in many.

I will promise you one thing-----that you will realize that you selected the right man for the job. I will serve you faithfully and efficiently.

I can come to Chicago any week-end you may desire for an interview. I will be glad to serve you.

(4)

Dear Sir:

This is an application for a position.

For months I have been investigating different firms interested in hiring college graduates that have majored in foreign economics and export trade. In the course of my investigation I have found there is a place in your organization for a man of my talents and education.

Your firm is interested in men who have majored in economics, with particular stress on foreign trade. I have studied every phase of economics and am well prepared.

I have not yet had any job -- I'm still young -- but I am confident I can meet your requirements.

The college officials will recommend me, if you will write them.

I shall be glad to have an interview with you. Any time will do.

(5)

Dear Mr. Jones:

In Tuesday's Sun I noticed your advertisement for a private secretary and correspondent. May I be considered an applicant for this position?

It is my understanding that you want a young man with a working knowledge of office methods. He must also be able to take dictation rapidly and accurately, and he must have a background of general business training.

I am a graduate of Larchmont High School, Springfield, Illinois, class of 1942.

Here I took the four-year commercial course. During the past four years since graduation I have been private secretary to Mr. James A. Parker, executive director of the Illinois State Commerce Commission.

My work with Mr. Parker has been widely varied. I have taken much dictation, both by transcription from notes, and also direct to the typewriter. I have handled on my own responsibility much of the routine correspondence and have found this experience highly valuable in broadening my general business and secretarial ability. I have become thoroughly familiar with commercial and legal forms.

I believe I have developed the ability to handle your position. My training and experience have been of the type necessary to the consistent handling of the duties you require. I enjoy this kind of work. My reason for making a change is to improve my position. Mr. Parker now tells me I have reached the maximum salary permitted by the commission, and he fully understands and approves my wishes for further advancement.

Mr. Parker has kindly permitted me to use his name as a reference. On the enclosed data sheet you will find further references and data in regard to my general qualifications.

May I have a personal interview? My telephone is Grandview 4177, Springfield, if you wish to make an appointment. My mailing address is 36 North Avenue, Springfield, Illinois.

B. Assume that you are about to graduate from college and have had no more experience than you might reasonably obtain during your summer vacations. Clip from a newspaper or magazine an advertisement of a position for which you might reasonably expect to compete. Write your letter of application and hand it in to your instructor with the advertisement attached.

PART FIVE

A GLOSSARY OF USAGE AND GRAMMATICAL TERMS

GLOSSARY

This is a reference section. Its main purpose is to list those words and constructions which frequently cause trouble in composition and to advise you whether particular usages are acceptable in college writing and, if they are, under what conditions. A secondary purpose is to explain grammatical terms which are likely to be used in the course.

The judgments recorded here about usage are based primarily on *The American College Dictionary* (referred to throughout as the *ACD*) and the Merriam-Webster dictionaries (referred to as *Webster's*). These sources have been supplemented by other dictionaries and by individual studies of modern usage,[1] but the emphasis given to the two dictionaries cited above necessarily makes the judgments conservative. Both dictionaries record as colloquial, or fail to record at all, usages which other reputable studies accept as literary English, and which one's experience suggests are common in the careful writings of educated authors. It was shown in Chapter 8 that the conservative bias of a good dictionary is often unavoidable. That bias, however, should be kept in mind while consulting this glossary.

Since the dictionaries do not distinguish between formal and informal usage – other than colloquial – it has seemed wise to indicate whether particular usages would be more appropriate to a formal than to an informal style, and whether certain colloquialisms would be generally acceptable in informal writing. In careful writing the choice of diction is often subtle, and the really significant choices are not between standard and nonstandard expressions; they are choices within the standard vocabulary. The final answer in such questions depends less on the dictionary than on the style of the paper being written. Whether a

1. Chiefly Fries's *American English Grammar*, Horwill's *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*, Kennedy's *Current English*, Marckwardt and Walcott's *Facts About Current English Usage*, Perrin's *Index to English*, and Pooley's *Teaching English Usage*, all of which are fully identified in the Bibliography following the Preface of this book.

particular colloquialism is desirable in a particular paper is a decision for the student and his instructor to make. All that a glossary can do is to provide general advice about the status of the usage in question.

Absolute A construction grammatically independent of the rest of the sentence. See page 307.

Abstract noun A noun naming a quality rather than a person or thing [Cleanliness is next to godliness].

Abstract and concrete words See page 259.

Abstraction The process of combining selected characteristics from a number of objects into a new class. See page 204.

Accept — except Words frequently confused because of similar sound. *Accept* is roughly synonymous with *take* [I will accept your thanks, but not your money]. *Except*, as a verb, means roughly *to leave out* or *exempt* [Present company is excepted].

Accusative case In modern English, a synonym for objective case. See page 292.

Active voice One of two "voices" of a verb, the other being the passive. A verb is said to be in the active voice when its subject performs the action indicated by the verb [John hurt me; Fred bought it]. See page 301.

Ad Clipped form of *advertisement*. Classified as colloquial. Appropriate in college writing only when style is colloquial. Generally inappropriate in business correspondence – especially in letters applying for a position – in which the word should be written in full.

Adjective See page 294.

Adverb See page 294.

A. D. Abbreviation for Latin *Anno Domini* (in the year of our Lord). Opposite of B. C. (before Christ). Used to distinguish dates before and after the beginning of the Christian era [He lived from 31 B. C. to A. D. 12; from 100 B. C. to A. D. 100 is 200 years].

Adapt — adept — adopt *Adapt* means "adjust to meet requirements" [The play was adapted for the movies; the human body can adapt itself to all sorts of environments]. *Adept* means "skilled" or "proficient" [He is adept at various sports]. *Adopt* means "to take as one's own" [We are going to adopt a child; he immediately adopted the idea] or – in parliamentary procedure – "to accept as a law" [The motion was adopted].

Adaptation — adoption *Adaptation* is the act of adapting. See **Adapt** [This play is an adaptation of a popular novel]. *Adoption* is the act of adopting [The adoption will not be legal until all the papers have been signed].

Affect — effect Words often confused because of similarity of sound. When used as a noun, *effect*, meaning "result," is the word wanted [His speech had an unfortunate effect; the treatments had no effect on me]. Both words may be used as verbs, though *affect* is the more common. As a verb, *affect* means "impress," "influence," or "disturb" [His advice affected my decision; does music affect you that way?]. As a verb, *effect* is rarely required in student writing, but may be used to mean "carry out" or "accomplish" [The aviator effected his mission; the lawyer effected a settlement]. For students who have chronic difficulty with these words, a useful rule is to use *affect* only as a verb, and *effect* only as a noun.

Affective — effective *See* **Affect — effect.** The common adjective is *effective* [an effective argument], meaning "having an effect." The use of *affective* is largely confined to technical discussions of psychology and semantics, in which it is roughly equivalent to "emotional."

Aggravate The word has two levels of meaning. In formal English it means to "make worse" or "intensify" [His shoe aggravated the sore; his attitude aggravated the hostility of the audience]. Colloquially it is used to mean "irritate" or "annoy" [Her silly remarks aggravated me beyond endurance]. This usage is accepted as colloquial by the *Oxford* and the *ACD*, though *Webster's* still considers it dialectal – that is, nonstandard.

Agreement That phase of grammar which deals with the harmony of inflectional endings in related parts of speech. See page 342.

Ain't Nonstandard contraction for "is not" and "are not." Some grammarians would accept it as colloquial in the form of "ain't I" on the grounds that it is historically and logically a suitable contraction of "am I not." But unless a student is attempting to record nonstandard speech, the use of *ain't* is not acceptable in college writing.

Alibi In formal English the word is a legal term used to indicate that a defendant was *elsewhere* when the crime was committed. Colloquially *alibi* is used to mean excuse [I'm not worried about being late, I have a good alibi]. This usage is becoming increasingly common in informal writing.

All the farther, further, quicker Nonstandard usage for "as far as," "as quick as." Write: "That is as far as I have read;" "this is as quickly as I can do it."

All together — altogether Distinguish between the phrase [They were all together at last] and the adverb [He is altogether – i. e. entirely – to blame]. *All together* means "all in one place;" *altogether* means "entirely" or "wholly."

Allow When used to mean "permit" [No smoking allowed on the premises] *allow* is acceptable. Its use to mean "think" [He allowed it could be done] is nonstandard usage and is not acceptable in college writing.

Allusion — illusion Words sometimes confused because of similarity of sound. An *allusion* is a reference [The poem contains several allusions to Greek mythology]. See page 269. An *illusion* is an erroneous mental image [Rouge on pallid skin gives an illusion of health].

Alright Usually regarded by college instructors as a misspelling of *all right,* but *ACD* and the latest edition of *Webster's Collegiate* accept it with reservations.

Altho Now accepted as variant spelling of *although.*

A. M., P. M.; a.m., p.m. Abbreviations for the Latin phrases *ante meridiem* (before noon), *post meridiem* (after noon). *A. M.* is used to indicate the period from midnight to noon; P. M., from noon to midnight. These abbreviations are used only when a specific hour is named [The first watch on a ship is from 12 P. M. to 4 A.M.]. The use of these abbreviations to stand for *morning* and *afternoon* when no hour is named [He gets up late in the a. m. and goes back to bed early in the p. m.] is a slang use not acceptable in college writing. Notice that either capital or small letters may be used in these abbreviations.

Among *see* **Between**

Amount — number The occasional confusion of these words in college writing creates awkwardness. *Amount* is roughly synonymous with "deal" or "quantity" [He has a great amount of money; we collected a considerable amount of scrap iron]. *Number* is used for groups, the individual members of which may be counted [He has a large number of friends; there is a number of letters to be answered].

Ampersand The sign *&,* an abbreviation for *and,* is used in some company names [Harper & Brothers] and in various types of notations.

Except in statistical tabulation it is not acceptable in college writing.

An Variant of indefinite article, *a*. Used instead of *a* when the following word begins with a vowel sound or a silent *h*. [an apple, an easy victory, an honest opinion, an hour; but a yell, a unit, a history]. Such constructions a *a apple, a hour* are nonstandard usage.

Analogy A comparison of two things alleged to be similar. See page 56. For the use of analogy in argument, see page 509.

And etc. *Etc.* is an abbreviation of the Latin phrase *et cetera* (and so forth). *And etc.* is therefore redundant. Use either *and so forth* or *etc.* in an informal style but only *and so forth* in a formal style.

Angle The use of *angle* to mean "point of view" [Let's look at it from a new angle] is acceptable, but the word is so over-used in college writing – and so often used inaccurately – that many instructors object to it. Use it sparingly.

Antecedent In grammar, the noun or pronoun to which a later pronoun refers [Mary passed her exam].

Antonym A word opposite in meaning to a given word [Love is the antonym for hate].

Any = every Many people object to this use of *any* [Any high school student knows that; as any fool can plainly see]. This usage, however, is accepted by the *ACD*, the *Oxford*, and *Webster's*.

Anybody's else An old form of *anybody elses*. It is no longer conventional.

Anyway — anyways *Anyway* is used at formal and informal levels to mean "in any way" or "in any manner" [Anyway you view it, the evidence is disturbing]. It is used at a colloquial level to mean "in any case" or "at any rate" [Anyway, I'm through with her]. *Anyways* – with a final *s* – may be used as a variant of *anyway* in the first meaning, but not in the second, and even in the first usage is considered colloquial by the *ACD*. Students would be wise to avoid *anyways* completely.

Anywheres A nonstandard variant of *anywhere*.

Apposition In grammar, two words are in apposition when the second follows and identifies the first, as in "Mr. Botts, *the chemistry instructor*, has resigned." See page 360.

Apt *see* **Liable.**

Arabic numerals The numbers 1, 2, 3, etc. as contrasted with Roman numerals [i, ii, iii].

Around The uses of *around* to mean "about" [He arrived around four o'clock], "near" [That is how they pronounce it around Brooklyn] and "throughout" [We traveled around the country] are acceptable colloquial uses. They would be inappropriate however in a formal style.

As . . . as The use of *as . . . as* in a negative statement [I am not as old as she is] is sometimes censured on the assumption that this construction should be used only for affirmative statements and that the correct negative form is "not *so* old as." This assumption is not supported by the facts. In a very formal style the "not so . . . as" form would be preferable; but both forms are educated usage, and either would be appropriate in college writing. In an affirmative statement, use *as . . . as.*

As = because While accepted standard English, *as* is weaker than *because* to show causal relation between main and subordinate clauses. Since *as* has other, and commoner, meanings, it may be confusing [As I was going home, I decided to telephone]. Here *as* may mean that the decision was made *during* the going home or *because* of it. It is often wiser to use *because* or *while* – whichever is appropriate to the meaning.

As if = as though Synonymous constructions. The first is slightly less formal, but either is appropriate in college writing.

As = that The use of *as* to introduce a noun clause [I don't know as I would agree to that] is classified as colloquial by the *ACD.* This usage would be hopelessly inappropriate at a formal level and would be rejected by most college instructors at an informal level. Unless you are deliberately aiming at a colloquial style, the appropriate form is *that.*

As to = with respect to Although *as to* is unquestionably standard usage, many instructors object to it on the ground that it is jargon. Certainly its overuse should be avoided, and in an informal style *about* would be more appropriate than either *as to* or *with respect to.* For example, "I am not concerned as to your father's reaction" sounds stilted. It would be more natural to say "I am not concerned [or I do not care] about your father's reaction."

Assonance The similarity of vowel sounds in words which do not rhyme [we-weep, fine-white]. Assonance is often considered a defect in prose.

Asterisk The sign *. A single asterisk is sometimes used as a footnote

marker or to indicate items in a list which deserve special attention. A series of asterisks is used to indicate that the action of a story has been broken off or to suggest an interval of time.

At Avoid the use of the redundant *at* in such sentences as: "Where were you at?" "Where do you live at?"

At about The use of *at about* is a confusion of *at* and *about* in such sentences as "The accident occurred at about five-thirty." Decide during revision which of the two words you want and delete the other:

> The accident occurred at [precisely at] five-thirty.
> The accident occurred about [close to] five-thirty.

Auto A clipped form of *automobile.* Inappropriate in formal writing, but appropriate in an informal or colloquial style.

Auxiliary Verb A verb which combines with another to form a verb phrase [I *am* going; he *has been* talking]. The most common auxiliaries are *be, can, do, may, must, ought, shall, will.*

Awful, awfully The real objection to *awful* is not that it is colloquial but that it is worked to death in student writing. It is inappropriate in a formal style unless used to mean "awe-inspiring." As a utility word it has become almost indispensable in informal speech, but the more deliberate nature of writing and the opportunities it allows for revision make the overuse of this word objectionable.

Back of = behind Classified as colloquial. Inappropriate in a formal style, but acceptable in any writing which is trying to capture the tone of informal American idiom.

Bad The ordinary uses of *bad* as an adjective cause no difficulty. Its use as a predicate adjective [An hour after dinner I began to feel bad] is sometimes confused with the adverb *badly.* After the verbs *look, feel, seem,* you will almost never have occasion to use the adverb. Say, "It looks bad for our team;" "I feel bad about that quarrel;" "She seemed bad this morning."

Badly = very much *Badly* is used in informal and colloquial writing as an intensifying word [I wanted badly to be asked. He was badly in need of a shave]. When it is used in this way care should be taken to avoid misleading word order. In "I wanted to play very badly" the adverb may be interpreted as a modifier of *to play,* which the writer did not intend. In a formal style it

would be safer to avoid this use of *badly* and to use one or various possible synonyms. For example:

I was extremely anxious to be invited.
He was obviously in need of a shave.
I was eager to play.

Balance = rest of, remainder This usage was formerly considered colloquial and is still so classified by *Webster's,* but the *ACD* accepts it without qualification.

Bank on A colloquial synonym for "rely on."

Colloquial: I wouldn't bank on him. He has let me down too many times.
Formal: I would not rely on him. He has too frequently disappointed me.

Because *see* **Reason is because.**

Being as The use of *being as* for "because" or "since" in such sentences as "Being as I am an American, I believe in democracy," is nonstandard usage and is not acceptable in college speech or writing. Say, "Because I am an American, I believe in democracy."

Berth — birth Do not confuse the spelling of *berth* [The man in the lower berth was ill. The tugs pushed the liner into its berth] and that of *birth* [The birth of the prince was celebrated for days].

Between, among In general, *between* is used of two people or objects and *among* for more than two [We had less than a dollar between the two of us] but [We had only a dollar among the three of us].

The general distinction, however, should be modified when insistence on it would produce an unidiomatic sentence. For example, *between* is the accepted form in the following examples:

He is in the difficult position of having to choose between three equally attractive girls.
A settlement was arranged between the four partners.
He decided to build the house between the trees, at a spot roughly equidistant from all of them.

Bible When used to refer to the Scriptures, "Bible" is always capitalized, but not italicized. When used metaphorically [*Das Kapital* is the bible of the Communists], the word is not capitalized.

Bibliography A list of books or printed sources. See page 415.

Blame on This usage [He blamed it on his brother] is no longer considered colloquial (See *ACD*) but more formal usage would be "He blamed his brother for it."

Born — borne Although both words come from the verb *to bear,* the form without the *e* (*born*) is restricted to the bearing of children or other young [He was born lame]. The form with the final *e*

(*borne*) has the more general meaning of being supported or carried [The ship was borne on the waves; the troops were airborne].

Broke When used as an adjective, *broke* is a slang synonym for "bankrupt" or "out of funds." This usage is common in informal, educated speech, but in college writing it should be restricted to papers clearly colloquial in style. The use of such circumlocutions as "financially embarrassed" is generally more objectionable than the slang itself. Simply say, "I had no money."

When used as a verb, *broke* is the simple past tense of *break* (past participle, *broken*). Do not confuse the past tense with the past participle. Say "He has broken his leg," not "He has broke his leg."

Bunch Avoid the overuse of *bunch* as a general utility word. In formal English it is used to refer to a cluster of objects [bunch of grapes, a bunch of carrots]. Colloquially, it is used as a synonym for *group*, as in "A fine bunch of friends you have." This colloquial use is overworked in college writing. The following contrasted synonyms illustrate more discriminating choices:

A bunch of material	A collection of material
A bunch of money	A quantity of money
A bunch of enemies	A host of enemies
A bunch of examples	Several examples
A bunch of Radicals	A clique of Radicals
A bunch of lumber	A supply of lumber
A bunch of errors	A number of errors

Bunk A slang synonym for *nonsense*. Seldom appropriate in college writing.

Bust At a formal level *bust* is used as a synonym for *bosom* and to represent the sculptured head and shoulders of a person. The use of *bust* to mean "failure" [The party was a complete bust] is colloquial. The use of *bust* to mean "burst" [The pipes have bust again] is nonstandard usage, not acceptable in college writing.

But that, but what *But what* [I can't doubt but what he said it] is nonstandard usage, inappropriate in college writing. *But that* [I don't doubt but that he is married] is accepted educated usage, but redundant. It is perfectly clear to write:

I can't doubt that he said it.
I don't doubt that he is married.

Can = may The distinction that *can* is used to indicate ability and *may* is used to indicate permission [If I can do the work, may I have the job?] is not a necessary distinction in educated usage. Both the *ACD* and *Webster's* accept *can* to mean *may,* though the former labels it colloquial and the latter "loose."

Can but A formal English variant of *can only* [I can but hope you are mistaken].

Cannot but A formal English variant of *can't help* [We cannot but accept the verdict]. The objection that this construction is illogical because it contains a double negative is an illustration of the unsound assumption that the rules of mathematics are applicable to language.

Cannot (Can't) help but While this construction is accepted in informal usage, it represents a confusion between the formal *cannot but* and the informal *can't help.* In college writing, either of the latter constructions would be preferable.

Can't hardly A confusion between *cannot* and *can hardly.* The construction is unacceptable in college writing. Use *cannot* (*can't*) or *can hardly.*

Can't seem A colloquial shortcut for "I seem to be unable." Acceptable at informal levels only.

Canvas — canvass The form with one *s* is a heavy cloth [a canvas tent, a canvas bag]; the form with two *s's* means generally *to solicit* [I am canvassing for the Red Cross; he canvassed every voter in the precinct].

Capital — capitol The form *Capitol,* used only to designate the building which houses the seat of government, takes a capital letter when it refers to the building in which the U. S. Congress meets. When it refers to the building in which a state legislature meets it is sometimes spelled with a small letter [The Capitol and the White House are the most famous buildings in Washington, D. C.; our state capitols are not always models of the best architecture; he has an office in the Capitol in Columbus].

The form *capital* has a variety of meanings, the nucleus of which is "chief" or "first-rate" [The capital city, capital punishment, a capital letter, a capital idea]. Unless you are referring to a building, the form you want is *capital.*

Capital letters See page 389.

Case The grammatical system by which inflectional endings show the function of a noun or a pronoun in a sentence. See page 292.

Censor — censure Both words come from a Latin verb meaning to "set a value on" or "tax." *Censor* is used to mean "appraise" in the sense of appraising a book or a letter to see if it may be made public [All outgoing mail had to be censored] and is often used as a synonym for "delete" or "cut out" [That part of the message was censored].

Censure means "to evaluate adversely," "to find fault with" or "rebuke" [The editorial writers censured the speech; such an attitude will invoke public censure].

Circumlocution Literally, "round-about speech." An attempt to avoid a direct statement by a circuitous reference. See page 157.

Cite — sight — site *Cite* means "to refer to" [He cited chapter and verse]. *Site* means "location" [This is the site of the new plant]. *Sight* means spectacle or view [The garden was a beautiful sight].

Claim = assert *or* **say** The *ACD* accepts this usage [I claim that the assignment was never announced] as established. There would seem to be no valid objection to the construction in informal college writing.

Clause A group of words containing a subject and predicate and acting as a unit. A main or independent clause expresses a complete thought and may constitute a simple sentence. A subordinate or dependent clause acts as a subject, complement, or modifier in a sentence. See page 308.

Cliché An overused or threadbare expression. Trite or hackneyed diction. See page 267.

Clipped words Shortened forms [auto, exam, gym, plane] which are considered whole words rather than abbreviations of the longer form. Clipped words do not require a period to mark abbreviation and are more appropriate to informal than to formal styles.

Coarse — course The central meaning of *coarse* is "rough" [a coarse skin, coarse talk, coarse cloth]. The word *course* originally came from a French word for *run* and then became the area or path in which the running was to take place. This is the core of its meaning in such uses as "a golf course," "a course in mathematics," "the ship's course," "the course of time." It is easiest to remember that unless the word means *rough* it is spelled *course.*

Coherence See page 124.

Collective noun A singular noun which names a group of persons, objects, or events [army, couple, jury, team]. For the conventions

covering the agreement of such nouns with their verbs, see page 346.

Colloquial Characteristic of informal spoken usage or a conversational style. Not synonymous with vulgar or incorrect speech. See page 233.

Combine = combination This use of *combine* [Several fraternities have formed a combine which will present its own slate of candidates] is colloquial. It is acceptable at informal levels of college writing. The more formal statement would be "Several fraternities have combined to present a common slate of candidates." *Combine* is also the accepted term for a machine used in harvesting.

Comparison The system of inflection by which adjectives and adverbs show degree [slow, slower, slowest; difficult, more difficult, most difficult]. See page 294.

Complected Nonstandard form of *complexioned.* Not acceptable in college writing.

Complement A completing construction, usually an object, predicate adjective, or noun completing the action of the verb [Please set *the table;* she is *angry*]. See page 306.

Complement — compliment The confusion of these two words lies entirely in the middle vowel. If you remember that *complement* means "to complete" you may associate the *e* of *complement* with the *e* of *complete* [a complement of troops, complementary angles].

A *compliment* is a word or gesture of praise [My compliments to the cook; the line between compliment and flattery is often a faint one].

Complex sentence A sentence containing one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. See page 310.

Compounds The combination of two or more words into a single noun [manservant, brothers-in-law]. For the hyphenation of compounds, see page 391; for their plurals, see page 291.

Compound sentence A sentence containing two or more main clauses and no subordinate clauses. See page 310.

Conjugation The inflection of a verb to show mood, number, person, tense, and voice. See page 296.

Conjunctions A part of speech connecting two or more sentence elements. See page 304. The following types are recognizable:

Coördinating – joining elements of the same rank [and, but, or, nor].

Correlative – coördinating conjunctions used in pairs [either–or, neither–nor, etc.].

Subordinating – used to connect a subordinate clause to the main clause [who, which, when, since, etc.]. The subordinating connective may act as the subject of the subordinate clause.

Transitional – used to provide a transition between two sentences [however, moreover, etc.]. See page 127.

Conjunctive adverb An adverb used as a transitional conjunction. See **Conjunctions.**

Connectives Words or phrases which join other sentence elements. See page 306.

Connotation See page 213.

Conscience — conscious *Conscience* is a noun indicating a sense of right conduct [Let your conscience be your guide]. *Conscious* is an adjective meaning "to be capable of sensations" or "to be aware of" [It will be some time before he is conscious; I am conscious of having done wrong].

Considerable The use of *considerable* as a noun [I have spent considerable on this enterprise] is acceptable at a colloquial level. In a formal style, the preferred usage would require a noun after *considerable* [I have spent considerable money on this enterprise].

Context The environment in which a word is spoken or written. See page 191.

Contractions The use of contractions [I'll, can't, couldn't, didn't, he's, shouldn't] is appropriate in informal and colloquial styles but not in a formal style. See page 245.

Copula Literally, a "linking construction." The verb *to be* is called a copula when it links its subject and complement in such sentences as "John is the winner," "Detroit is his home town."

Could of = could have Although these two constructions have almost the same sound in informal speech, *of* for *have* is not acceptable in college writing. At the written level, *could of, should of, would of* are nonstandard.

Council — counsel A *council* is an advisory group [He was elected to the council]. *Counsel* means "advice." In law, a *counsel* is one who gives legal advice [My friend counseled me to take this course; he refuses to testify without advice of counsel].

Couple The use of couple to mean "two" [The tickets will cost a

couple of dollars] is informal or colloquial but should be avoided in formal writing.

Informal: Joe, I'd like you to meet a couple of my friends.
Formal: Mr. Smith, may I present two of my friends?

Cute A utility word used at a colloquial level to indicate the general notion of "attractive" or "pleasing." Its overuse in writing shows haste or lack of discrimination. A more specific term will generally improve communication.

His girl is cute [lovely? petite? of a pleasant disposition?]
That is a cute trick [clever? surprising?]
The baby is cute [charming? endearing?]
She has a cute accent [pleasant? refreshingly unusual?]
She is a little too cute for me [affected? juvenile? demonstrative? clever?]

Dairy — diary Pronunciation offers the best clue to the spelling of these words. The *a* comes first in the *ay*-sound, as in *maid. Diary* comes from the same root as *dial* and means a record of daily activities.

Dangling modifiers See page 151.

Data Since *data* is the Latin plural of *datum* (given or admitted as a fact) it has long taken a plural verb or pronoun [These data have been double-checked]. This requirement is beginning to be ignored so that in informal English "This data has been double-checked" is acceptable. Data is thus losing its foreign characteristics and being made to fit the general pattern of English nouns. The requirement of a plural verb is still observed, however, in a formal style. For alternative pronunciations, see dictionary.

Dative case In Old English, generally the case of the indirect object. See page 292.

Deadwood A form of wordiness. See page 157.

Decent — Descent Most students who misspell *descent* (downslope) have no trouble with the verb *descend.* Associate the *s* in descend with that in *descent.*

Decent—without the *s*—means "fitting" or "proper" [the decent thing to do].

Declension The inflection of nouns and pronouns to show their function in a sentence. See page 292.

Demonstrative *This, that, these, those* are called demonstratives when they are used as pointing words [This is the man. This coat is mine].

Denotation See page 215.

Desert — dessert The word used for the final course of a meal has two *s's*. The word with one *s* designates a wasteland [The Sahara Desert] or the action or running away from something [He deserted his wife; they deserted from the Army].

Diagramming sentences See page 307.

Dialect A pattern of speech habits shared by members of the same geographic area or social level. See page 229.

Didn't ought Nonstandard for *ought not* [You didn't ought to have told her] and not acceptable in college writing or speech. Say, "You ought not to have told her" or "You should not have told her."

Different than The preferred construction is *different from* [He is different from his brother], though both *Webster's* and the *ACD* accept *different than* as established usage. *Different to* is essentially a British usage.

Dining — dinning In general, a double consonant shortens the vowel preceding it. That is why the *i* in *dine* is long and the *i* in *dinner* short.

Long *i* [pronounced *eye*]	Short *i*
dining	dinning
mining	pinning
whining	winning
writing	written

Direct discourse The exact words of a speaker; contrasted with indirect discourse, a report of what the speaker said. [He is reputed to have said, "If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will no serve."] For the punctuation of direct discourse, see page 361 See also *Indirect Discourse.*

Direct object A noun or pronoun receiving the action of a transitive verb [I have found the *money;* they are calling *her*]. As the second example shows, a pronoun object is in the objective case.

Don't As a contraction for "do not" it is appropriate in informal and colloquial styles. But not acceptable in college speech or writing as a contraction for "does not."

Acceptable: They don't want to go; we don't need help.

Not acceptable: It don't make sense; he don't like you.

Double comparison See page 295.

Double negative See note, page 228.

Dove = dived At a colloquial level *dove* is acceptable in college speech or writing. It is inappropriate in a formal style.

Drunk A respectable word for an unrespectable condition. *Intoxicated* might sometimes be preferred in a formal style, but attempts to avoid the use of *drunk* by such circumlocutions as "under the influence" or "in an inebriated condition" are usually silly. Simply say, "The man was drunk."

Due to The use of *due to* to mean "because of" or "owing to" in an introductory adverbial phrase [Due to the icy roads, we were unable to proceed] is a disputed usage. Neither *Webster's* nor the *ACD* accepts it, though Fries, Kenyon, and other linguists do. It should not be used in a formal style. Say, "Because of the icy roads, we were unable to continue."

Dying — Dyeing When dye is used to color clothes the process is called *dyeing*. Normally the *e* would be dropped before *ing*, but it has been retained in *dyeing* to avoid confusion with the common *dying* – about to die.

The girls are dyeing their hair.
The noise is dying away.

Economic — economical *Economic* refers to the science of economics or to business in general [This is an economic law; economic conditions are improving]. *Economical* means "inexpensive" or "thrifty" [That is the economical thing to do; he is economical to the point of miserliness].

Effect *see* **Affect.**

Either Used to designate one of two things [Both hats are lovely; I would be perfectly contented with either]. The use of *either* when more than two things are involved [There are three ways of working the problem; either way will give the right answer] is not generally accepted. When more than two things are involved, use *any* or *any one* instead of *either* [There are three ways of working the problem; any of these ways will give the right answer].

Elliptical constructions A construction which is literally incomplete but in which the missing terms are understood [I *am taller than he* (is tall); Who told him? (It was) *Not I* (who told him)].

Emigrant — immigrant An emigrant is a person who moves *out* of a country; an immigrant one who moves *into* a country. Thus, refugees from Europe who settled in the United States were emigrants from their native countries and immigrants here. A similar distinction holds for the verbs *emigrate* and *immigrate.*

Enthuse Colloquial for "to be (become) enthusiastic." Unless the style is colloquial, the more formal phrase is preferred in college writing. Say, "He was enthusiastic about the plan."

Equally as In such sentences as "He was equally as good as his brother," the *equally as* is a confusion of *equal* and *as good as.* Say, "He was his brother's equal," "He was as good as his brother," or "Both brothers were equally good."

Etc. An abbreviation for *et cetera* (and so forth). Should be used only when the style justifies abbreviations. Avoid the redundant *and* before *etc.* See *And etc.*

Etymology The study of the derivations of words. See pages 181 and 187.

Euphemism — euphuism A *euphemism* is a word or phrase used as a substitute for an expression which is felt to be crude, improper, or vulgar. Examples are "retire" for "go to bed," "a lady dog" for "a bitch," "pass away" for "die." *Euphuism* is a name given to an ornate and affected literary style which was popular in England at the end of the 16th century and to any modern style which shows the characteristics of such writing.

Exam A clipped form of *examination.* Although classified as colloquial by the dictionaries, it is acceptable at all but the most formal levels of college writing.

Except *see* **Accept.**

Expect = suppose or suspect This is a colloquial usage. In college writing, use *suppose* or *suspect* [I suppose you have written to him? I suspect that we have made a mistake].

Expletive In such sentences as "There are two answers to the question" and "It seems to me that you are mistaken," the words *There* and *It* are called *expletives.* In such sentences the order is expletive, verb, and real subject, the expletive occupying the normal position of the subject. In written usage an expletive has no influence on the number of the verb. See page 345.

Extra The use of *extra* to mean "unusually" [It was an extra fine performance] is often condemned, though accepted by the *ACD.* It would be wise to avoid this usage in formal writing.

Famous, notorious *Famous* is a complimentary and *notorious* an uncomplimentary adjective. Well-known people of good repute are famous; those of bad repute are notorious (or infamous).

Fare — fair *Fare* comes from the O. E. verb *faran* (to travel) and is related to the expression *fare you well.* It is most commonly used today to indicate the cost of transportation [The fare to Chicago is $10.40]. *Fair* has a variety of meanings [a fair decision, a fair copy, a fair skin, just fair, fair weather, a fair profit].

Farther, further The distinction that *farther* indicates distance and *further* degree is now less widely observed than it used to be. *Webster's* and the *ACD* both recognize the two words as interchangeable. But to mean "in addition," only *further* is used [Further assistance will be required; we need further information on that point].

Feature (vb.) The use of *feature* to mean "give prominence to" [This issue of the magazine features an article on juvenile delinquency] is accepted without comment by the *ACD* and classified as colloquial by *Webster's.* It may be considered appropriate in informal college writing. But this acceptance does not justify the slang use of *feature* in such expressions as "Can you feature that?" "Feature me in a dress suit;" "I can't feature her as a nurse."

Fellow As a noun, *fellow* is colloquial for "man" or "person." It is appropriate only in colloquial and informal styles. As an adjective [Fellow students, a fellow traveler] *fellow* is acceptable at all levels.

Figures of speech Metaphors, similes, personifications, allusions, and similar devices are grouped under the general name, *figures of speech.* See page 220.

Figurative diction See page 264.

Fine writing An uncomplimentary term for writing which, because of its attempts to be "literary," is artificial, pretentious, or wordy. See page 155.

Fix As a noun, *fix* is colloquial for "predicament" [Now we *are* in a fix!]. As a verb, it is colloquial for "repair" or "adjust" [My pen is broken and I can't fix it; will you help me fix this desk?]. Neither of these uses is appropriate in a formal style, although the latter is common in informal writing. The verb *fix,* meaning "to make fast," is acceptable at all levels.

Folks Colloquial for *people,* especially relatives.

Footnotes See page 458.

Formal usage See page 235.

Formally — formerly *Formally* means "in a formal manner" [They dressed formally]. *Formerly* means "previously" [He was formerly with A. C. Smitt and Company].

Forth — fourth The common word is *fourth* [I was *fourth* in line]. Associate *fourth* with *four* to remember the *ou*. *Forth* roughly means "forward" [They went forth to battle].

Funny The use of *funny* as a utility word [She gave me a funny look; it was a funny observation to make] is greatly overused in college writing. Although appropriate at informal and colloquial levels, its constant use makes for vague diction. Select a more exact synonym:

She gave me a funny look [hostile? alarmed? annoyed? scathing? perplexed? baffled?]

It was a funny observation to make [comical? humorous? astounding? puzzling? unusual?]

Gender The inflection of nouns and pronouns to indicate sex. See page 289.

Genitive case In modern English also called the *Possessive case*. Characterized by *-'s* in the singular and *-s'* in the plural [*John's* hat, the *ladies'* choice]. See page 292.

Gentleman, lady Avoid the use of *gentleman* and *lady* as synonyms for "man" and "woman" or "male" and "female" in such expressions as: "A gentleman servant," "a lady clerk," "a gentleman [or lady] friend"; or to designate the sex of animals — "a gentleman cat," "a lady dog."

Gerund A present participle used as a noun [*Sailing* is my favorite sport; he's good at *talking*]. See page 336.

Get The use of *get*, either as a single verb or in combination with infinitives, adjectives, or adverbs, is extremely popular and varied in colloquial and informal styles. It should be used discreetly in a formal style, but this fact should not lead the student always to seek a more formal or pretentious synonym, such as *acquire* or *obtain*.

Good and Used colloquially as an intensive in such expressions as: "good and late," "good and sleepy," "good and ready," "good and tired." The more formal the style, the less appropriate these intensives are.

Good The use of *good* as an adverb [He talks good; he played pretty good] is not acceptable in college writing. Even though it is classified as colloquial by the *ACD*, this usage is discouraged in college speech. In both writing and speaking, the accepted adverbial form is *well*.

This discussion does not apply to the use of *good* as an adjective

after verbs of hearing, feeling, seeing, smelling, tasting, etc. See **Bad.**

Got *see* **Get.**

Gotten Both *Webster's* and the *ACD* accept *gotten* without comment as one of two past participles of *get.* The other one is *got.*

Guess The use of *guess* to mean "believe," "suppose," "think" [I guess I can be there on time] is accepted by both *Webster's* and the *ACD.* There is still considerable objection to its use in formal college writing, but it should be acceptable in an informal style.

Hackneyed diction See **Cliché.**

Had have, had of Neither form is appropriate in college writing. Use *had.*

Unacceptable. If he had have (of) come . . .
Acceptable. If he had come, or had he come . . .

Had (hadn't) ought Nonstandard for *ought* (*ought not*). Not acceptable in college writing or speech.

Hanged, hung Except when referred to death caused by hanging, the principal parts of *hang* are *hang, hung, hung.* Thus pictures are hung, but murderers are hanged.

Hardly *see* **Can't hardly.**

Healthful — healthy The distinction between the uses of these words is that *healthful* means "conducive to health" [A healthful diet, a healthful exercise], while *healthy* means "possessing" or "characteristic of" health [a healthy child, a healthy complexion, a healthy attitude]. In informal usage this distinction is not always observed. *Webster's* now records "conducive to health" as an established meaning of *healthy.*

Heap In formal usage the noun *heap* means a "pile" or "accumulation" of things [a heap of stones, a heap of junk]. Colloquially, the noun is used to mean "a great deal," "a considerable amount" [He made a heap of money. It takes a heap of living to make a house a home]. This colloquial usage is usually acceptable in an informal style, but is not appropriate in a formal style.

Hear — here Associate *hear* with *ear* as a means of remembering the *-ea* combination of vowels in the verb [I hear a noise; he heard, but did not answer]. The adverb *here* (in this place) has no *a.*

Height — heighth The form *heighth* is nonstandard usage, probably caused by confusion with the final *th* in *breadth* and *width.*

Help but See **Cannot help but.**

High school Do not capitalize unless you use it with the name of a particular high school [He attended high school for three years; he graduated from Lincoln High School].

Historical present Also called *dramatic present.* The use of the present tense in narrative style to record action in the past [His friends try to persuade him to escape but Socrates reasons with them and shows them he must die].

Holy — wholly *Holy* means "sacred" [The Holy Bible, the holy city of Jerusalem]. *Wholly* comes from the same root as *whole* and means "completely" [He is wholly well again; it is wholly my fault].

Home Used colloquially and informally for "at home" [We have been home all afternoon; if you arrive too late, we will not be home]. In a formal style say "at home."

Homonyms Words which are pronounced alike [air, heir; blew, blue; plain, plane; sail, sale].

Human The use of *human* as a noun [He is a congenial human; they are the most sordid humans I have ever encountered] is becoming more popular. *Webster's* records this usage as established; the *ACD* calls it colloquial. The phrase *human being(s)* is still preferred and should be used in a formal style.

Informal: Humans are a queer lot.
Formal: Human beings have an inherent capacity for self-delusion.

Ibid. Abbreviation for *ibidem* (the same). Used in footnotes to refer to the same source cited in the immediately preceding footnote. See page 462.

Idiom An expression characteristic of the way natives use their language. [The French idiom "Comment vous portez-vous?" sounds silly when translated literally as "How do you carry yourself?" But the English "How do you do?" must sound just as silly to a Frenchman].

If = though, whether The admonition that *if* is not acceptable as a synonym for "though" or "whether" [We will go, even if you stay home; I do not know if I should go or not] is not supported by the dictionaries. The *ACD* accepts both these uses. *Webster's* records *if = whether.* These uses, however, are likely to be more appropriate in a colloquial or an informal than in a formal style.

Informal: We will go, even if you stay home.
I don't know if I should go or not.
Formal: We will go, even though you stay at home.
I do not know whether or not I should go.

Illusion *see* **Allusion.**

Idea In addition to its formal meaning of "conception," *idea* has acquired so many supplementary meanings that it must be recognized as a utility word. Some of its meanings are illustrated below:

The idea [thesis] of the book is simple.
The idea [proposal] he suggested is a radical one.
I got the idea [impression] that she is unhappy.
It is my idea [belief, opinion] that they are both wrong.
My idea [intention] is to leave early.

The overuse of *idea,* like the overuse of any utility word (see page 262), makes for vague communication. Whenever possible, prefer a more precise synonym.

Imperative mood The mood of a verb used to command or exhort. See page 300.

In back of *see* **Back of.**

Incomplete comparison In such a sentence as "He is as good if not better than his brother," a formally complete statement would be "He is as good *as* if not better than his brother." The omission of the second *as* is said to make the comparison incomplete. Because the complete version sounds awkward, we usually prefer to say "He is as good as his brother, if not better," thus keeping the comparison complete without getting a stilted construction.

Such incomplete comparisons are fairly common in colloquial usage but should be avoided as much as possible in college writing:

Incomplete comparison	*Complete comparison*
The quality differs as much if not more than the price.	The quality differs as much as the price, if not more.
He is as big a fool if not bigger than his partner.	He is as big a fool as his partner, if not a bigger one. or He is at least as big a fool as his partner.
It is as bad if not worse than last year.	It is as bad as last year, if not worse.

Indicative mood The mood of a verb expressing an assertion; therefore the most common mood. See page 300.

Indirect discourse The content, without the exact wording, of a speaker's remark [He said he would think about it; the minister said he was opposed to violent solutions]. The exact words of the speakers in these examples were "I will think about it." "I am opposed to violent solutions." *See also* **Direct discourse.**

Indirect object A noun or a pronoun indicating to whom or what the action of a transitive verb in the active voice occurs [She gave *me* the book; I bought *John* a tie]. A pronoun as indirect object takes the objective case. Normally the indirect object precedes the direct object.

Individual Although the use of *individual* to mean *person* [He is a fascinating individual] is accepted by the *ACD*, college instructors generally disapprove of this use, probably because it is overdone in college writing. In its formal uses *individual* signifies "single" or "separate" [We are all Americans but we are also individuals; the instructor tries to give us individual attention].

Inferior than Possibly a confusion between *inferior to* and *worse than.* Say "inferior to" [Today's workmanship is inferior to that of a few years ago].

Infinitive A verbal or verb form which usually serves as a subject, complement, or modifier in a sentence but does not act as a verb. The present infinitive is usually indicated by the marker *to* [to be, to do, to go]. For the tenses of infinitives, see page 329.

Informal usage See page 244.

In regards to The only acceptable form is *in regard to.* The *-s* ending is not uncommon in speech but it is not acceptable in college writing.

Inside of The use of *inside of* to mean "within" [I'll be there inside of an hour] is accepted as established usage by both *Webster's* and the *ACD.* In a formal style *within* would still be preferred.

Instance — instants An *instance* is an example, illustration, or case in point [That is just one instance of his attitude; for instance?]. *Instants* is the plural of instant, meaning "moment."

Intensives Such modifiers as *much, so, too, very* merely add emphasis to the words they modify [much obliged, so tired, too bad, very good]. The pronouns *myself, yourself, himself, herself* and their plurals may also be used as intensives [I will do it myself]. The overuse of intensives, especially *very,* is more likely to result in wordiness than in emphasis.

Intransitive verb A verb capable of making a complete predication without a complement [She *smokes;* they *sing* beautifully]. See page 306.

Inversion Any variation of normal word order. See page 159.

Irregardless The *ir-* prefix is a common error. The only acceptable form is *regardless* [Regardless of the risk, I will make the attempt].

Irrelevant — irreverent *Irrelevant* means "having no relation to" or "lacking pertinence" [That may be true, but it is quite irrelevant]. *Irreverent* means "without reverence" [Such conduct in a church is irreverent].

Italics See page 393.

Its, it's The confusion of these two forms causes frequent misspelling in college writing. *It's* always means "it is" or "it has." The apostrophe is a sign of contraction, not of possession [The dog wagged its tail; it's (it is) too difficult a problem; it's (it has) been raining all night].

It's me This construction is essentially a spoken one. Except in dialogue, it rarely occurs in writing. Its use in educated speech is so thoroughly established that the still current objection to it seems incredible. The formal expression is *It's I.* See page 340.

Jargon A name applied to diction which is wordy and unnecessarily abstract. The name is also applied to the technical vocabulary and usages of special groups – the jargon of the medical profession, legal jargon.

Kind of, sort of Unless the style is colloquial, use a singular modifier and a singular verb with these phrases [That kind of people is always troublesome; this sort of attitude will get us nowhere]. However, in a colloquial style, *kind of* or *sort of* followed by a plural noun is felt to be plural in idea, even if singular in form, and is often given a plural verb and modifier [Those kind of mushrooms are poisonous].

Kind (sort) of = somewhat This usage [I feel kind of tired; he looked sort of foolish] is classified as colloquial by the *ACD.* It would be inappropriate in a formal style and should be used sparingly in an informal style.

Knew — new The misspelling arising out of a confusion of these two common words is usually a result of carelessness. *Knew* comes from O. E. *cunnan* and is related to *ken* and *cunning;* hence the *k,* which remains in the written form although it is not pronounced. *New* [a new hat, a new leaf] has historically no reason for being spelled with a *k.*

Know — no The confusion of these words is usually a result of carelessness. *See* **Knew** above.

Lady *see* **Gentleman.**

Later — latter The confusion of these two words in college writing is probably a spelling error. *Later* is the comparative of *late* [It is later than you think]. *Latter* is the opposite of *former* and is used either as a synonym for second [The latter choice seemed the better] or as a reference to the second of two things previously mentioned [World War I and World War II were both global wars, but the latter involved civilians to a much greater extent than the former].

Lay — lie See page 326.

Lead — led The principal parts of *lead* are *lead, led, led.* Do not confuse the spelling of the past tense, *led,* with the spelling of the name of the metal, *lead.*

Learn = teach The use of *learn* to mean "teach" [He learned us arithmetic] is nonstandard usage and is not acceptable in college speech or writing. Say, "He taught us arithmetic."

Leave = let The use of *leave* for *let* [Leave us face it] is never acceptable in college speech or writing. Say, "Let us face it," "Let (not leave) us be friends."

Let's A contraction of *let us.* The expression *let's us* is redundant and not acceptable in college writing.

Levels of usage Formal, informal, colloquial or slang terms represent different levels of usage. See page 230.

Liable, likely, apt *Liable* to mean "likely" or "apt" [It is liable to rain; he is liable to hit you] is disputed usage, accepted by the *Oxford* and many linguists, but not by *Webster's* or the *ACD. Liable* means "subject to" or "exposed to" or "answerable for" [He is liable to arrest; you will be liable for damages]. In formal usage *apt* means "has an aptitude for" [He is an apt pupil; she is apt at that kind of thing]. The use of *apt* to mean "likely" is accepted colloquially [She is apt to leave you; he is apt to resent it].

Likely *see* **Liable.**

Like = as, as though The use of *like* as a conjunction [He talks like you do; it looks like it will be my turn next] is colloquial. It is not appropriate in a formal style.

Line The use of *line* to indicate a type of activity or business [What's your line? His line is drygoods] is accepted as established usage by both *Webster's* and the *ACD;* its use to indicate a course of action or thought [He follows the party line] is accepted by the *ACD.* However, the overuse of *line* in college writing often pro-

vokes objection to the word when used with these meanings, since it is often a lazy substitute for a simpler and more straightforward expression.

Linking verb *see* **Copula.**

Loan, lend Both forms of the verb are accepted in educated American usage.

Loath — loathe The form without the *–e* is an adjective meaning "reluctant," "unwilling" [I am loath to do that; he is loath to risk so great an investment]. The form with the *–e* is a verb meaning "dislike strongly" [I loathe teas; she loathes an unkempt man].

Locate = find This usage [I cannot locate that quotation] is established, but its extension to mean *remember* [Your name sounds familiar, but I cannot locate your face] is not acceptable in college writing.

Locate = settle This usage [He and his family have located in San Francisco] is colloquial. In college writing *settled* would be preferred.

Loose, lose The confusion of these words causes frequent misspelling in college writing. *Loose* is most frequently used as an adjective [a loose button, a loose nut, a dog that has broken loose]. *Lose* is always used as a verb [You are going to lose your money; don't lose your head].

Loose sentence The term used to describe a sentence in which the main thought is completed before the end. The opposite of a *periodic sentence.* See page 160.

Lot(s) of The use of *lot(s)* to mean a considerable amount or number [I have lots of friends; they gave us a lot of excuses] is colloquial. This usage is common in informal writing, but is not appropriate in a formal style.

Lower case (l. c.) Printer's terminology for small letters as contrasted with capitals. Frequently used as a proofreading symbol by college instructors. See correction chart.

Luxuriant — luxurious Although these words come from the same root they have quite different connotations. *Luxuriant* means "abundant" and is used principally of growing things [luxuriant vegetation, a luxuriant head of hair]. *Luxurious* means "luxury-loving" or "catering to luxury" [He finds it difficult to support so luxurious a wife on so modest an income; the appointments of the clubhouse were luxurious].

Mad = angry or annoyed This is a colloquial usage [My girl is mad at me; his insinuations make me mad]. In formal and informal styles, use *angry, annoyed, irritated, provoked,* or *vexed.*

Main clause A clause capable of expressing a grammatically complete thought, as contrasted with a subordinate clause. See page 309.

Malapropism A humorous, though unintentional, confusion of words similar in form and sound [Henry VIII died of an *abbess* on his knee; one of the most momentous events in early English history was the invasion of the *Dames*]. The error is named for a character in Sheridan's play *The Rivals,* Mrs. Malaprop, who was much addicted to this sort of thing.

Math A clipped form of *mathematics.* Appropriate in a colloquial or informal style, not appropriate in formal writing.

May *see* **Can.**

Maybe = perhaps Both usages are established; *perhaps* is the more formal.

Mean = petty, nasty, vicious These uses of *mean* [It was mean of me to do that; please don't be mean to me; that dog looks mean] are colloquial. They would be appropriate in college writing only at informal and colloquial levels.

Metaphor See page 264.

Might of *see* **Could of.**

Mighty = very This usage [I'm mighty fond of her; that's a mighty big house] is colloquial. It could be used discreetly in informal college writing, but would be inappropriate in a formal style.

Modifiers See page 304.

Mood Verbs are conjugated to show indicative, imperative, and subjunctive moods. See page 300.

Moral — morale Roughly, *moral* refers to conduct and *morale* refers to state of mind. A *moral* man is one who conducts himself according to the conventions of society or religion. People are said to have good *morale* when they are cheerful, cooperative, and not too much concerned with their own worries.

Moral	*Morale*
Socrates said that a wise man was a moral man.	A pat on the back now and then is good for any man's morale.

Most = almost This usage [I am most always hungry an hour before mealtime] is colloquial. In formal writing use *almost.*

Movie Colloquial for "motion picture." Acceptable at informal levels.

Muchly There is no such word. Say *much* [I am much pleased by the news.]

Must of *see* **Could of.**

Mutual = common This usage [Jean and I have a mutual friend in Chicago] is established.

Myself = I This usage [John and myself will go] is not generally acceptable. Say, "John and I will go." Myself is acceptably used:

(1) as an intensifier [I saw it myself; I myself will go with you];

(2) as a reflexive object [I hate myself; I can't convince myself that he is right].

Myself = me This usage [He divided it between John and myself] is not recognized by the dictionaries, though Professor Marckwardt considers it "fully established in literature and current English" (*Scribner Handbook*, p. 241). The preferred usage would be "He divided it between John and me."

Must (adj. and noun) The use of *must* as an adjective [This book is must reading for anyone who wants to understand Russia] and as a noun [It is reported that the President will classify this proposal as a must] is accepted as established usage by the *ACD*.

Naive, naïve Both spellings are now accepted.

Neither *see* **Either.**

Nickel Unlike *fickle, sickle, trickle,* and most words ending with the syllable pronounced *ul, nickel* ends in *el.* This exception often causes misspelling.

Nice A utility word much overused in college writing. Avoid excessive use of it and, whenever possible, choose a more precise synonym.

It was a nice dance [enjoyable? exciting? genteel? popular? successful? well-organized?]

That's a nice dress [attractive? becoming? fashionable? well-tailored?]

She's a nice girl [agreeable? beautiful? charming? virtuous? friendly? well-mannered?]

Nice and *see* **Good and.**

Nominative absolute An introductory participial phrase which is grammatically independent of the rest of the sentence [*All things being considered,* the decision is a fair one; *the interview having been ended,* the reporters rushed to the phones]. This construction is common in Latin but should be used sparingly in English, partly because it is sometimes unidiomatic, and partly because it

may result in a dangling modifier. The first example given above is idiomatic English; the second would normally be written, "When the interview was ended, the reporters rushed to the phones."

Nominative case Also called the *subjective case.* The case of a noun or pronoun acting as, or in apposition with, a subject or predicate complement. See page 335.

None *None* may be followed by either a singular or a plural verb. See page 345.

Non restrictive modifier *see* **Restrictive modifier.**

Nonstandard usage Roughly, the speech habits of the uneducated class or any expression characteristic of such speech. See page 228.

Not . . . as, not . . . so *see* **As . . . as**

Notes For the form of note-cards and the recommended method of taking notes, see page 454.

Nowhere near = not nearly *Webster's International* calls this usage archaic and dialectal, hence nonstandard. The *ACD* does not record it. The *Oxford* records it as accepted. It must therefore be considered a disputed usage, though one common in the speech of educated people. Unless the style is colloquial it would be wise to avoid it in college writing.

Nowheres Nonstandard variant of *nowhere.* Not acceptable in college speech or writing.

Number The inflection of nouns, pronouns, and verbs to indicate whether they are singular or plural.

Object *see* **Direct object** and **Indirect object.**

Objective case The case of a noun or pronoun which is (*a*) a direct object of a verb, (*b*) the indirect object of a verb, (*c*) in apposition with an object, (*d*) the subject of an infinitive, or (*e*) the object of a preposition.

Of = have *see* **Could of.**

Off of In such sentences as "Keep off of the grass;" "He took it off of the table," the *of* is unnecessary and undesirable. Omit it in college speech and writing.

One . . . he, his The feeling that the repetition of *one . . . one's* [One must do what one can to ensure one's family a decent standard of living] makes for a stilted style has led to the permissible shift from *one, one's* to *he, his* [One must do what he can to ensure his family a decent standard of living]. In general a shift in the

number or nature of pronouns is undesirable, but this particular shift is established usage. See page 153.

Only The position of *only* in such sentences as "I only need three dollars" and "If only mother would write!" is sometimes condemned on the grounds of possible ambiguity. In practice, no one to whom English is a native language interprets "I only need three dollars" to mean "Only I need three dollars." The objection therefore is usually theoretical, but should it arise from an actual ambiguity the position of *only* should be revised.

Ought *see* **Had ought.**

Outside of = aside from, except This usage [Outside of his family, no one respects him; outside of that, I have no objection] is colloquial. It would be inappropriate in a formal style, but not objectionable in an informal one.

Out loud = aloud This usage is colloquial. In a formal style, prefer *aloud.*

Over with = completed, ended This usage [Let's get this job over with; she is all over with that romance] is colloquial. It should be avoided in a formal style, but could be used in informal writing.

Parallelism A sentence structure in which elements with the same function take the same (or parallel) form [Look sharp, feel sharp, be sharp; To die, to sleep; to sleep, perchance to dream]. See page 148.

Part, on the part of Although this usage [There will be some objection on the part of the students; on the part of business men, there will be some concern about taxes] is established, it makes for a wordy and flabby style. Simply say, "The students will object;" "Business men will be concerned about taxes."

Participle A verb form or verbal which does not act as a verb by itself but may serve as part of a verb phrase [He is *talking;* She has *decided*], a gerund [*Crying* won't help; He's fond of *teasing*], or a modifier [A *rolling* stone, a *thrilling* experience]. The present participle ends in *-ing.* The past participle is the third principal part of a verb (See page 323) and usually ends in *-ed, -t,* or *-en.* See page 296.

Participial phrase A phrase beginning with a participle [*Throwing* discretion to the wind, he asked her to marry him; We caught them *breaking* into the store].

Parts of speech The conventional eight classes of words which form the basis for an analysis of grammar. For the separate parts and their natures, see page 288.

Party = person This usage [He is the party I was telling you about; I know a party who may be interested] is classified as colloquial by the *ACD* and as slang by *Webster's*. It would not be acceptable at formal or informal levels of writing. In telephone usage, however, this use of party is established [Your party does not answer].

Passive voice Opposite of active voice. A verb is in the passive voice when the subject is not the actor but the recipient of the action [The car *was sold* at a profit; the man *was warned* to move on].

Past — passed Although both forms may be used as past participles of the verb *to pass*, *past* is primarily used as an adjective or a noun [In days past, the past tense, she is a woman with a past]. *Passed* is a past tense or past participial form [They have passed the half-way mark; he passed all his examinations].

Peace — piece The meanings of these words are well-known, even to students who confuse the spelling of the words. Associate *peace* with *calm* as a reminder that *peace* is spelled with an *a* [a peaceful sleep, an hour of peace]. Associate *piece* with *bit* as a reminder that *piece* is spelled with an *i* [A piece of chalk, a piece of news, in small pieces].

Peeve While the use of *peeve* as a noun [That is one of his peeves] is recorded without a qualifying label by the *ACD*, it is unsuited to a formal style. *Annoyance* or *irritation* would be preferred. In an informal style *peeve* would be appropriate.

The use of *peeve* as a verb [Are you peeved about it? I suppose I was peeved by his answer] is colloquial.

Per = a This usage [You will be remunerated at the rate of five dollars per diem; this material costs $1.50 per yard] is established. As the second illustration shows, the *per* need not be followed by a Latin noun. This use of *per* is most common in legal and business phraseology. For most purposes, "five dollars a day" and "$1.50 a yard" would be more natural expressions.

Per = according to, concerning This usage [The order will be delivered as per your instructions; per your inquiry of the 17th, we wish to report] is business slang which is unacceptable in college and in business. Say "according to" or "concerning."

Per cent, percent Originally an abbreviation of the Latin *per centum,* this term has been Anglicized and is no longer considered a foreign word. It may be written as one or two words and no longer requires a period to indicate abbreviation. [There is a ten percent markup; interest is at three per cent].

Periodic sentence A sentence in which the main thought is not completed until the end. The opposite of a *loose* sentence. See page 150.

Person The inflection of a verb or a pronoun to show first, second, or third person. See page 293.

Personification A figure of speech in which animals, inanimate objects, and qualities are given human characteristics [Death cometh like a thief in the night; the breeze caressed her hair]. See page 270.

Phone Clipped form of *telephone.* Appropriate at informal and colloquial levels. In a formal style use the full form.

Phonetics The science dealing with the sounds of language. These sounds are represented by phonetic symbols which ignore the appearance of a word and record only its pronunciation [Phonetically, *schism* is transcribed *sizəm*]. When words are spelled as they are pronounced the spelling is said to be phonetic. See page 376.

Photo Colloquial clipped form of *photograph.* In a formal style, use the full form.

Phrase A group of words acting as a single element in a sentence but not containing a subject and verb [*The old man* said he *was having* trouble *with his teeth*]. See page 308.

Plagiarism The offense of representing as one's own writing the work of an other. The use of unacknowledged quotations.

Plain — plane *Plain* means "simple," "unadorned," "easily seen" [a plain dress, the plain truth, as plain as the nose on your face]. *Plane* means "level" [a plane surface, all on the same plane, he planed the board]. The short form of *airplane* is *plane.*

Plan on When *plan* is used in the sense of "arrange" [I plan to be in Columbus on the seventh], the accepted idiom is *plan to.* When, however, *plan* means "intend" or "hope" [I plan to see that picture whenever it comes to town; they are planning on saving enough money to buy a new car], either *plan to* or *plan on* is acceptable. The safer usage is *plan to.*

Plenty The use of *plenty* as a noun [There is plenty of room] is acceptable at all levels. Its use as an adverb [It was plenty good] is colloquial and would be inappropriate in a formal style.

Possessive case The case of a noun or a pronoun when it acts as a modifier [The Ladies' Aid, Smith's car, his wages, their children]. See page 335.

Precede — proceed The basic distinction in the use of these words is that *precede* means to "go before" and *proceed* means to "go forward." Thus ladies precede gentlemen in entering a vehicle or leaving a sinking ship. But a car proceeds along a road and one proceeds with one's plans.

Précis A summary which exactly preserves the organization and principal content of the original.

Predicate The second part of the subject-predicate relation. That part of a sentence which states the action performed by or upon the subject. The predicate may consist of an intransitive verb, with or without modifiers, or of a transitive verb and its complement, with or without modifiers. See page 305.

Predicate adjective An adjective which completes a linking verb and modifies the subject [He is *lazy;* they seem *honest.*]

Predicate noun A noun which completes and is therefore the complement of a linking verb [Bill is the *boss;* he was *mayor* for three years].

Prefix A word or syllable placed before the root of another word to form a new word [*anti*bodies, *mono*syllabic, *un*natural].

Presence — presents *Presence* is the opposite of *absence* and ends in *-ce* [Your presence is requested; his presence at the meeting is essential]. *Presents,* when used as a noun, is the plural of *present,* meaning "gift." Associate the *t* in *gift* with the *t* in *presents* [He bought presents for everyone]. *Present* (accent on the second syllable) may also be used as a verb [Present arms; present your credentials].

Principal — principle The confusion of these words is a common source of misspelling. For the purpose of college writing it might be useful to oversimplify the distinction between their uses and say that *principal* is always an adjective unless it means "the principal (officer) of a school" and that *principle* is always a noun.

Principal: The principal point is this . . .
He is one of the principal offenders.
He is a principal stockholder.
One school has a new principal.

Principle: He is a man without principles.
I object to the principle of the thing.
Principles are nice; but profits are necessary.

Principal parts The parts of a verb from which the tenses are derived [break, broke, broken]. The three generally-used principal parts are the present stem, the simple past tense, and the past participle, all illustrated in the above example. The present participle (breaking) is sometimes given as a fourth part. See page 296.

Prof An abbreviation of *professor.* Often used, but not preferred, in addressing a letter to a professor. In college writing use it only at a colloquial level.

Pronouns See page 293.

Prophecy — prophesy *Prophecy* is always used as a noun [The prophecy came true; the prophecies of the Bible]. *Prophesy* is always a verb [He prophesied another war; don't be too eager to prophesy].

Proper noun The names of particular people and places [John Smith; George VI; Mrs. Bertram Jones; Maumee, Ohio] as contrasted with common nouns (class names).

Proposition The use of *proposition* as a verb [They propositioned us to buy the car] is slang and is not acceptable at any level of college writing. Its use as a noun, meaning "proposal" [I have a proposition I'd like to make to you] is a colloquialism much overused in college writing. Say, "They proposed that we buy the car;" "I have a proposal I'd like to make to you."

Proven The *ACD* accepts *proven* as an alternative past participle of *prove. Webster's* classifies it as archaic and dialectal. The preferred form is *proved,* but *proven* is permissible.

Providing = provided This usage [I will go providing you accompany me] is established. Either form is acceptable in college writing, though *provided* is more common and still more widely accepted.

Quiet — quite Although pronunciation is often a doubtful guide to English spelling, the careful pronunciation of *qui-et* as a two-syllabled word would help eliminate the confusion of the spelling of these two words [The orchestra played quietly; quiet please! I am quite tired; that is quite proper].

Quite In formal English *quite* is used to mean "entirely," or "wholly," [The statement is quite in accordance with the facts]. The use of *quite* to indicate "considerable extent" [The news was quite a shock to us] is colloquial. It would be acceptable in an informal style.

Raise — rise See page 326.

Raise — rear The distinction that animals are *raised* but children are *reared* is not a required one. The use of *raise* meaning to *bring up* [She raised a large family] is recognized by the *ACD*, though *rear* would be preferred in a formal style.

Real = really (very) This usage [It was a real difficult assignment; she can be real annoying when she talks that way] has not yet achieved dictionary recognition, but several reputable studies of usage classify it as colloquial. At formal and informal levels of college writing use *really* [It was a really difficult assignment; she can be really annoying when she talks that way].

Reason is because This is a colloquial idiom [The reason I did it was because I was angry]. Although some authorities classify it as established literary usage (See *Facts About Current English Usage*, p. 30) there is considerable objection to it in college writing. In general, a better sentence may be obtained by omitting "The reason" and simply saying "I did it because I was angry."

Redundancy Unnecessary, repetitious, or superfluous wording. See next entry.

Refer back A confusion between *look back* and *refer*. This usage is objected to in college writing on the ground that since the *re* of refer means "back", *refer back* is redundant. *Refer back* is acceptable when it means "refer again" [The bill was referred back to committee]; otherwise, say *refer* [Let me refer you to page 17; from time to time he referred to his notes].

Referent The *thing* as contrasted with the symbol which refers to it. The person, object, or event to which a word refers. See page 198.

Respectfully — respectively *Respectfully* means "with respect" [He spoke respectfully; Respectfully submitted]. *Respectively* means roughly "each in turn" [These three papers were graded respectively A, C, and B].

Restrictive modifier A modifier which limits a class name to particular individuals, as in "The men *who did that* should be jailed." *Nonrestrictive* modifiers describe but do not limit [Men, *who are physically stronger*, can usually beat women at competitive sports]. See page 361.

Reverend *Reverend* is used before the name of a clergyman and in formal usage is preceded by *the* [I met the Reverend Alexander White]. It is not used immediately preceding the surname [the

Reverend White], but must be followed by Dr., Mr., or a Christian name or initials [Rev. Dr. White, Rev. Mr. White, Rev. A. L. White]. In informal usage, the *the* is often omitted and the word *Reverend* abbreviated.

Formal	Informal
The Reverend Alexander L. White	Rev. A. L. White
2472 Bancroft Street	2472 Bancroft Street
Toledo, Ohio	Toledo, Ohio

Right — rite A rite is a ceremony or ritual. This word should not be confused with the various uses of *right.*

Right (adv.) The use of *right* as an adverb is established in such sentences as: "He went right home;" "It served him right;" "Please try to act right;" "I will go right away." Its use to mean *very* [I was right glad to meet him; that's a right pretty girl] is colloquial and should be used in college writing only when the style is colloquial.

Role, rôle The preferred spelling is now *role,* without the circumflex.

Run-on sentence Independent sentences separated by a comma instead of a semicolon, period, or other end mark of punctuation. Also called *Comma Splice.* See page 316.

Said (adj.) The use of *said* as an adjective [said documents, said offense] is restricted to legal phraseology. Do not use it in college writing.

Same as = just as The preferred idiom is *just as* [He acted just as (not the same as) I thought he would].

Same, such Avoid the use of *same* or *such* as a substitute for *it, this, that, them* [I am returning the book, since I do not care for same; most people are fond of athletics of all sorts, but I have no use for such]. Say "I am returning the book because I do not care for it;" "Unlike most people, I am not fond of athletics."

Scarcely In such sentences as: "There wasn't scarcely enough;" "We haven't scarcely time," the use of *scarcely* plus a negative creates an unacceptable double negative. Say, "There was scarcely enough;" "We scarcely have time."

Scarcely than The use of *scarcely than* [I had scarcely met her than she began to denounce her husband] is a confusion between *no sooner . . . than* and *scarcely . . . when.* Say "I had no sooner met her than she began to denounce her husband," or "I had scarcely met her when she began to denounce her husband."

Seem *see* **Can't seem.**

Seldom ever The *ever* is redundant. Instead of saying, "He is seldom ever late;" "She is seldom ever angry," say, "He is seldom late;" "She is seldom angry."

Self, selves The plural of *self* is *selves.* Such usages as "They hurt themselfs;" "They hate theirselfs," are nonstandard and are not acceptable in college speech or writing. See **Myself.**

Semantics The science of the meanings of words as contrasted with phonetics (pronunciation) and morphology (form).

Sensual — sensuous Avoid confusion of these words. *Sensual* has unfavorable connotations and means "catering to the gratification of the senses" [He leads a sensual existence]. *Sensuous* has generally favorable connotations and refers to pleasures experienced through the senses [The sensuous peace of a warm bath; the sensuous imagery of the poem].

Series Three or more parallel constructions arranged in succession [He was *tall, tanned,* and *terrible*]. The elements of a series may be single words, phrases, subordinate clauses, or main clauses, but all elements must be similar.

Set — sit See page 326.

Shall — will See note, page 299.

Shape = condition This usage [Both fighters are in good shape; the house has been neglected for years and is now in wretched shape] is classified as colloquial in *Webster's* but accepted without comment by the *ACD.* It would be appropriate in an informal style, but *condition* would be more appropriate in a formal style. The use of *shape* for the female figure [What a shape she had!] is slang, but *shapely,* meaning *well-formed,* is accepted usage.

Shifting construction Any construction which violates the accepted patterns of sentence structure by beginning one pattern and shifting to another. See page 148.

Shone — shown *Shone* is the past tense and the past participle of *shine* [The sun shone; her eyes shone with happiness]. *Shown* is the past participle of *show* [You have shown it to me before; that rookie hasn't shown a thing all season]. The form *showed* is an alternative past participle for *shown.*

Should of *see* **Could of.**

Should — would See page 331.

Show = chance This usage [Give him a fair show] would be appropriate only in a colloquial style. In formal and informal style use *chance* or *opportunity.*

Show = play, motion picture Colloquial. Acceptable in an informal or colloquial style.

Show up The uses of *show up* to mean "expose" or "appear" [This test will show up any weaknesses in the machine; I waited for an hour, but he didn't show up] are classified as colloquial by *Webster's International* but are accepted without comment by the *ACD*. There should be no objection to them in college writing except in a formal style, in which "expose" and "appear" would be preferable.

Sic The Latin word *sic*, pronounced *sick*, is used in brackets to indicate that an error in a quotation appeared in the original source and was not made by the person copying the quotation. Example: "The significant words in the paragraph are these: 'No person will be allowed on the premises unless he is duely [sic] authorized.'"

Sick = disgusted This usage [All these pious platitudes make me sick] is slang. Its occasional use in a colloquial style might be acceptable, but it should be avoided in an informal or a formal style.

Simple sentence A sentence consisting of a single main clause and no subordinate clauses [The train was nearly an hour late].

Sit *see* **Set — sit.**

Slang See page 234.

Sleight — slight *Sleight* comes from the same root as *sly* and is usually associated with a clever trick [sleight of hand]. The more common word *slight* means "slender," "flimsy" [a slight girl, slight hope, a slight protection]. It is also used as a verb to mean "treat disdainfully" [They consistently slighted their opponents; he was quite obviously slighting his wife].

So (conj.) The use of *so* as a connective [She refused to exchange the merchandise; so we went to the manager] is thoroughly respectable, but its overuse in college writing is objectionable. There are other good transitional connectives — *accordingly, for that reason, on that account, therefore,* for example —which could be used to relieve the monotony of a series of *so's.* Occasional use of subordination [When she refused to exchange the merchandise we went to the manager] would lend variety to the style.

So . . . as *see* **As . . . as.**

Some The use of *some* as an adjective of indeterminate number [Some friends of yours were here; there are some questions I'd like to

ask] is acceptable in all levels of writing. Its use as an intensive [That was some meal] or as an adverb [She cried some after you left] is slang and should be avoided in college writing.

Somebody's else Say, "somebody else's." See **Anybody's else.**

Somewheres Nonstandard variation of *somewhere.* Not acceptable in college speech or writing.

Sort *see* **Kind.**

Sort of *see* **Kind of.**

Speak — speech The difference in vowels between the verb *speak* and the noun or adjective *speech* causes frequent misspellings. The only solution is to memorize the difference in the spelling and uses of these words [a long speech, a speech impediment; speak honestly; the ability to speak effectively].

Staid — stayed *Staid* means "sedate" or "decorous" [a staid old woman]. The more common word *stayed* is the past tense form and the past participle of *stay* [We stayed a week; he stayed where he was].

Standard English *see* **Standard usage.**

Standard usage The speech habits of those occupying the economically and socially favored positions in our society. Roughly, the conventions of usage generally followed by the educated classes. See page 229.

Stationary — stationery *Stationary* means "fixed", "unchanging" [The front was stationary; his opinions are so stationary they have taken root]. *Stationery* mean "writing materials" [A box of stationery; stationery and other supplies].

Straight — strait The more frequent word is *straight* [a straight line, straight talk, straight from the heart]. *Strait* is a common name for a narrow water passage [The Strait of Gibraltar] and is extended to mean any difficult condition [in financial straits, straitened circumstances, in desperate straits].

Strong verb A verb which uses a change in the vowel rather than inflectional endings to distinguish between present and past tenses [sing, sang, sung]. *Weak verbs* [walk, walked, walked] are regular, strong verbs irregular. See page 296.

Subjective case The case of a noun or a pronoun which is a subject or a subjective complement or is in apposition to a word in one of these constructions. Also called the *nominative* case.

Subjunctive mood As contrasted with the indicative and imperative moods, the inflection of the verb in certain clauses expressing wish, condition, or hypothesis [if I *were* you; if this *be* true], or in parliamentary usage [I move that the words *be revised* as follows . . .], and in certain stock phrases [If need *be; suffice* it to say]. See page 300.

Subordinate clause A group of words containing a subject and verb and acting as a subject, complement, or modifier. See page 308.

Subordinating connective A conjunction joining a subordinate clause to its main clause. See **Conjunctions.**

Suit — suite The common word is *suit* [a suit of clothes, follow suit (in cards), suit yourself, this doesn't suit me]. *Suite* means "retinue" [The President and his suite arrived late], "set" or "collection" [a dining room suite, a suite of rooms].

Sure = certainly This usage [I sure am annoyed; sure, I will go with you] is colloquial. Unless the style justifies colloquial usage, say *certainly* or *surely.*

Sure and *see* **Good and.**

Swell = good, fine This usage [It was a swell show; we had a swell time] is slang. It is generally unacceptable in college writing above the colloquial level.

Symbol A word, signal, or sign. The word as contrasted with what it stands for. *See* **Referent.**

Synonym A word having the same meaning as a given word [When used as a noun, *cab* is often a synonym for *taxi*]. See page 181.

Syntax The relationships of words within a sentence. The chief units of syntax are the subject, verb, complement, and modifiers. See page 304.

Take and This usage [In a fit of anger he took and smashed the bowl] is slang. Simply say *smashed* [In a fit of anger he smashed the bowl].

Take sick *Webster's* calls this usage [He took sick and died] dialectal, but the *ACD* accepts it as established. It would be appropriate in an informal style, but in a formal style *became ill* would be preferred.

Taxi Used either as a noun [We took a taxi to the station] or as a verb [The big plane taxied to a stop] the word is now acceptable at all levels of style.

Tense See page 298.

Terrible, terribly An overused colloquialism for *very* [She was terribly nice about it]. Its occasional use in informal papers is not objectionable, but use it with restraint.

Terrific Used at a formal level to mean "terrifying" and at a colloquial level to mean "very great." The overuse of the colloquial meaning has rendered the word almost useless in formal writing. For most students the best thing to do with this word is to forget it.

That there, this here This usage [That there Hitler caused a lot of trouble; this here nut won't fit] is nonstandard and is not acceptable in college speech or writing. If the *there* or *here* is omitted, the sentences become acceptable.

Theme Used in two ways in college composition courses:

1. The dominant idea of an essay [The theme of this essay is that self-deception is the commonest of vices].
2. A general name for composition assignments [Write a 500-word theme for Monday].

The first meaning is synonymous with *thesis* as it is used in this book.

There — their The confusion of these words causes one of the commonest errors in spelling. *Their* is the possessive form of the pronoun *they* [They have their money; where are their things?]. *There* is the adverbial form contrasted with *here* [Put it there; it fell over there]. *There* is also used as an expletive to begin a sentence [There used to be a man . . . ; there were once three bears . . .].

These kind *see* **Kind.**

Thesis As used in this book, the dominant idea or purpose of an essay. The most restricted form of the purpose statement. See page 27.

Tho The spelling *tho* is now accepted by the *ACD* as a variant of *though*. The longer form is preferred in formal usage.

Threw — through Distinguish between the verb *threw* [He threw quickly to first base; he threw away his money] and the preposition *through* [Through the woods, through the window, down through the years.]

Through = finished This usage [Aren't you through with that story yet?] is classified as colloquial by *Webster's* but accepted without comment by the *ACD*. It would be appropriate in an informal style. In a formal style *finished* would be preferred.

To — too — two Distinguish the preposition *to* [Give it to me] from

the adverb *too* [That is too bad] and the number *two* [Two chickens in every pot].

Topic sentence The sentence containing the basic idea of a paragraph, usually found at or near the beginning of the paragraph. See page 113.

Tough The uses of *tough* to mean "difficult" [a tough assignment], "hard fought" [It was a tough game], "hard to bear" (It was a tough blow for all of us] are accepted without qualification by both *Webster's* and the *ACD*.

Toward, towards Both forms are acceptable. *Toward* is more common in America, *towards* in Britain.

Transition The links or connections between units in a piece of writing, especially between sentences or paragraphs. See page 125.

Transitional connectives Connectives which provide a transition between two sentences or paragraphs. See **Conjunctions.**

Transitive verb A verb which requires a complement to complete it [John *has* it]. Also called a verb of incomplete predication. See page 306.

Transpire = happen Despite the puristic objection against this usage, it is established at all levels of style. The *ACD* records it as the most common use of *transpire.*

Trite Diction which has lost most of its effectiveness because of overuse. Also called *hackneyed diction* and *clichés.* See **Cliché.**

Troop — troupe Both words come from the same root and share the original meaning, "herd." In modern usage *troop* is used of soldiers and *troupe* of actors [a troop of cavalry, a troop of scouts; a troupe of circus performers, a troupe of entertainers].

Try and *Try to* is the preferred idiom. *Try and* would generally be acceptable in informal and colloquial styles.

Understatement The opposite of exaggeration. The device of deliberately saying less than one means, as in Winston Churchill's comment, "My life so far has not been entirely uneventful." Understatement is often used for ironic or humorous effect.

Unique The formal meaning of *unique* is "sole" or "only" [Adam had the unique distinction of being the only man who never had a mother]. The use of unique to mean "rare" or "unusual" [Spinal anesthetics allow the patient the unique experience of being a witness to his own appendectomy] has long been popular and is now accepted by the *ACD.* But unique in the loose sense of

uncommon [a very unique sweater] is generally frowned upon, especially when modified by an intensive adverb.

Up The adverb *up* is idiomatically used in many verb-adverb combinations which act as a single verb [break up, clean up, fill up, get up, tear up]. Often *up* adds a note of thoroughness to the action of the verb. Compare "They ate everything on their plates" with "They ate up everything on their plates." Avoid, however any unnecessary or awkward separation of *up* from the verb with which it is combined, since this will have the effect of making *up* seem to be a single adverb modifying the verb rather than combining with it. For example, "They held the cashier up" is subject to misinterpretation; "She made her face up" is simply awkward. Say "They held up the cashier;" "She made up her face;" "They filled up the front rows first."

Used to Notice the final *d* in *used.* We do not pronounce it in informal speech because it is elided before the *t* of *to.* But the phrase is written *used to,* not *use to.*

Used to could Nonstandard for *used to be able.* Not acceptable in college speech or writing.

Vain — vane — vein *Vain* means "useless" [a vain hope] or conceited [a vain woman]; *vane* is a marker which is moved by wind or water [a weather vane]; *vein* is a bloodvessel [the jugular vein] or a seam of ore [a rich vein of gold].

Verbals Parts of verbs – participles and infinitives – used as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, or as parts of verb phrases, but not as complete verbs. See page 305.

Very A common and useful intensive, but avoid its overuse in any one paper.

Vice — vise Distinguish between the meanings of these words. *Vice* (compare *vicious*) is an evil [Virtues when carried to excess may become vices]. *Vise* is a tool [I put the board in a vise and sawed it].

Voice The form of the verb to indicate whether the subject performs or is the recipient of the action of the verb. See page 301.

Vulgate Synonymous with *nonstandard.* Any usage characteristic of uneducated speech.

Wait on *Wait on* means "serve" [A clerk will be here in a moment to wait on you]. The use of *wait on* to mean "wait for" [I'll wait

on you if you won't be long] is a colloquialism usually not acceptable in college writing. Say *wait for* [I'll wait for you if you won't be long].

Want (for) The use of *for* or *should* after *want* in such sentences as: "I want for you to come;" "I want you should come," is not acceptable in college speech or writing. After *want* in this sense use the objective case plus an infinitive [I want you to come; I want them to go at once]. When the sentence does not require an object, the infinitive is used immediately after *want* [I want to go home; he wants to return next week].

Want (in, out) This usage [The dog wants in; I want out of here] is classified as dialectal (nonstandard) by the *International* and is not recognized by the *ACD*. Although the *Oxford* calls it colloquial, it has not yet received dictionary recognition in America. Write, "The dog wants to come in;" "I want to get out of here."

Want = ought This usage [You want to save something every month; they want to be careful or they will be in trouble] although not recorded by *Webster's* or the *ACD* is generally considered colloquial. *Ought* is the preferred idiom and *want* would be inappropriate in a formal style.

Ways Colloquial for *way* in such sentences as: "You must have come a long ways from home;" "They walked a long ways this morning." Except in a colloquial style the accepted form in college writing is *way* [You must have come a long way; they walked a long way].

Weak — week Distinguish between the adjective *weak* (without strength) and the noun *week* [the days of the week].

Weather — whether The word referring to the condition of the atmosphere is spelled *weather* [good weather, stormy weather]. *Whether* usually introduces alternatives [She doesn't know whether to marry Bill or Fred].

Well *see* **Good.**

When In college writing avoid the use of a *when*-clause in defining a term [A comma splice is when you put a comma between two separate sentences]. Instead of *when* use a noun phrase or clause [A comma splice is the use of a comma between two separate sentences].

Where (in definitions) See **When.**

Where . . . at, to The use of *at* or *to* after *where* [Where was he at?

Where are you going to?] is redundant. Simply say, "Where was he?" "Where are you going?"

Where = that The use of *where* in such sentences as: "I heard on the radio where there was a violent storm in Chicago;" "I see in the paper where that bandit was caught," is generally unacceptable in college writing. It may be occasionally acceptable in a colloquial style, but it is inappropriate in formal or informal writing. Use *that* [I heard on the radio that there was a violent storm in Chicago; I see in the paper that the bandit was caught].

Which *Which* is not used to refer to individuals. It is used to refer to objects and to groups of people [The house which he built, the fraternity which he joined]. When referring to persons, use *who, whom,* or *that* [The man who is talking, the girl whom I love, the doctor that I called].

Who — whom In informal and colloquial writing *who* is often used instead of *whom* when the pronoun is in subject territory – that is, when it comes near the beginning of the sentence [Who is she marrying? Who are you looking for?]. This is the colloquial and informal usage of educated people, but in a formal style *whom* would be required [Whom is she marrying? For whom are you looking?]. For additional discussion, see page 337.

Who's — whose *Who's* is a colloquial and informal contraction for *who is* [Who's there? See who's at the door]. *Whose* is the possessive case of *who* [The man whose car he took; whose is this?].

Whose In informal and colloquial writing *whose* is a popular substitute for the formal and awkward *of which* [The nation whose army is occupying the territory will exert the greatest influence]. No good writer would be so concerned about the demands of formal grammar as to revise this sentence to read "The nation the army of which is occupying the territory . . ." Instead he would dodge the *of which* construction by saying "The nation which occupies the territory . . ." or "The army which occupies the territory will exert the greatest influence."

Will — shall See page 299n.

Wire The use of *wire* as a noun to mean "telegram" [Your wire arrived this morning] and as a verb to mean "telegraph" [Wire me when you arrive] is colloquial. It is appropriate in informal writing but *telegram* and *telegraph* would be preferred in a formal style.

Wood, woods The use of the plural form *woods* in the sense of "forest" [He went for a walk in the woods] is accepted by the *ACD*. The metaphorical use of *woods* [Paying off that debt has been a tough struggle, but we are out of the woods at last] is colloquial and not suited to a formal style. The slang use [The woods are full of people like him] should be avoided in any college writing above the colloquial level.

Would have The use of *would have* for "had" [If he would have told me I would have helped him] is generally unacceptable in college writing. Say, "Had he told me . . ." or "If he had told me . . ."

Would of *see* **Could of.**

You = one The use of *you* as an indefinite pronoun instead of the formal *one* is characteristic of an informal style, but be sure that this impersonal use will be recognized by the reader; otherwise he is likely to interpret a general statement as a personal remark addressed to him.

Do not use this impersonal *you* in a formal style, and avoid any arbitrary shifts from *one* to *you* [One must learn these things from your own experience]. Say either "One must learn these things from one's own experience" or "You must learn these things from your own experience."

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