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Free Downloads

Please see the blue sheet at the front of this volume for information on how to download the following:

- *Grading Sheets & Checklists* While checklists have been copied from each of the individual chapters and reproduced in this download, grading sheets are new and give you information on how each of your exercises and assignments will be graded.
 - *Graphic Organizers* For use with Chapter 14 Arrangement

Introduction & Overview

Writing a research paper is a big production because it involves so many different steps. Some are the same as for regular essays, such as those you might write to analyze literature, to relate the story of a significant event in your life, to inform people about a complex topic, or to persuade them to agree with you on a particular issue. Other tasks are completely different.

This book assumes you know how to write a general informative or persuasive essay. It assumes you know what a thesis statement is and how to design one. It assumes you know how to write a tightly crafted paragraph with a topic sentence, evidence, and commentary (or discussion of the evidence), and a closing or clincher sentence. It assumes you know several ways to introduce or conclude your essay and that you can do all of your writing with a bit of style and flair. If you have never written a basic essay before, you might want to call a timeout, review or learn the skills you need, and then come back to research papers. My book *The Elegant Essay*, which introduces students to all of the above, might help you with the process.

So, what are the differences? What new skills do you need to learn to write a research paper? What are the differences between basic essays, which you already know how to write, and research essays? Let's see.

Basic Essay Relationships

One difference is the relationship between the writer, reader, and topic. All essays are relationships, a means of communicating information. Years and years ago, Aristotle came up with a diagram called the Speaker's Triangle to explain the relationship between these three components. It looks like this:



Speaker's Triangle for a basic essay

In a basic essay, all three parts are relatively equal, and the essayist needs to give attention to each, so let's take a look at each part.



Audience

Essay writers need to be aware of the audience's demographics and viewpoint. That means they need to take into account items such as the following:

- > Age (teens, young adults, retired adults)
- Experience (poets or physicists)
- Familiarity with subject (novice to expert)
- Background (religious, political, cultural)
- Receptiveness (open, hostile, neutral)

The relationship with the audience will also affect how the essay is organized. A person writing to an unreceptive or hostile audience, a National Rifle Association (NRA) representative speaking to gun control advocates, for example, would spend some time developing common ground, perhaps admitting that guns in the hands of untrained people are dangerous, talking a bit about the need for safety training, and then sharing stories of how guns have saved people's lives or statistics on gun safety. The thesis statement in this type of essay (or speech) would come near the conclusion, after the speaker and audience have developed some kind of bond and the audience is more open to the speaker's message, this type of development would not be necessary, and the speaker could come directly to the point and present the thesis. Other assumptions about the audience will also affect how the essay (or speech) is presented, including how much information to provide or what shared values can be assumed. An essay written with one audience in mind might be completely inappropriate for another.

Speaker

The speaker/writer in an essay has two important jobs. First, he or she must exhibit credibility, that is, make the audience feel he knows something about the subject. This can be through inherent expertise if the speaker is knowledgeable or considered an expert in the field. It can also be borrowed, with the speaker quoting and/or paraphrasing the findings of others. Second, the speaker must present information about his subject in an engaging way through what English teachers call *voice*. Depending on the topic, this might include humor, passion, compassion, mockery, or even whimsy. A person lamenting the increase in violence on college campuses might exhibit a mournful or compassionate tone, while a person protesting college tuition increases might demonstrate a sardonic or passionate tone. A person tackling a very controversial issue might bring in some humor to lighten the mood. In all cases, the speaker needs to choose words, images, and details that match the purpose of the essay. At the same time, he needs to bring credibility—actual or borrowed—to make the audience comfortable with his level of expertise and confidence that what the speaker says is correct.

Subject

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The way a speaker approaches a subject depends on his or her purpose—first of all on whether to inform or persuade, and then on what he wants the audience to do with the information, such as perform a specific action, raise awareness, or change minds. The speaker presents the

information in an engaging way, perhaps beginning with a startling or humorous story or statistic, and making sure the audience can follow the thread of the argument. Additionally, he has to acknowledge the complexity of the issue, and especially in persuasive arguments, discuss the counterargument(s). For example, if an essay were touting the benefits of the latest and greatest life-extending drug, when acknowledging the complexity of the issue it would also need to discuss the drug's downside, perhaps traumatic side effects or how long life is extended—one month versus ten years for example. Depending on the audience and topic, the speaker might appeal to a particular emotion, present an overwhelming set of facts or statistics, or just tell a story and let the audience come to its own conclusions (sometimes called *showing* versus *telling*).

Essay Relationships

In most essays, the relationship between the speaker/writer, audience, and subject are fairly equal, with all having equal importance to communicate the essay's purpose. An approach to a subject, a voice, and assumptions about the audience might be completely appropriate in one situation and irresponsible or offensive in another. It's important to understand how these relationships work in normal or basic essays—those that appear in newspapers, magazines, classrooms, books, or speeches—because the relationship is different in a research paper.

Research Paper Relationships

Consider your textbook, any textbook. Do you feel or hear a person behind the words? Do you learn anything about him or her, including whether the speaker is a *him* or *her*? What do you know about the speaker's life experiences, background, or viewpoint? In most cases, precious little. In most cases, the speaker stays in the background—far, far in the background.

Additionally, what assumptions does the speaker make about the audience? There are some for sure, but these are few. Your textbook author will make some assumptions about your age and level of experience with the subject—beginning, intermediate, and advanced for example—and may assume you have taken a prerequisite course but will be oblivious to your gender, ethnicity, or economic status. There are some exceptions, of course. Some textbooks written for Christian audiences may include Bible verses and discussions about ethical issues, which may not be present in a textbook for a secular audience, but even here, the audience will be considered homogenous, a general Christian audience rather than Presbyterians, Lutherans, or Baptists.

In many ways, the relationships between the speaker, audience, and subject in a research paper are similar to those in a textbook. A modified Speaker's Triangle for a research paper might look like the diagram at the top of the next page.

Audience

To visualize the audience for most research papers you will write in an academic setting, consider your teacher and imagine a dozen or a hundred or a thousand just like him or her. Alternatively, imagine your audience as clones of all the teachers and administrators in your discipline's department—history, science, English, or other. If this doesn't work for you,

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Speaker's Triangle for a research paper

imagine the audience as junior experts in the field. (Experts are too intimidating.) Do whatever you need to create a homogenous image of the people who would be likely to read your paper.

For example, since I wrote my thesis for my Masters in Education at a Christian university, I could make certain assumptions about my audience. I knew they were knowledgeable about the Bible, so I could slip in a Biblical reference now and again that my audience was sure to recognize. If I identified the verse, I could do so like this: Jn. 3:16. If my audience were secular, I would need to provide more information, perhaps like this: in the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of the book of John in the New Testament of the Bible. When I wrote essays in my undergraduate classes at a secular university, my professors tended to be liberal, anti-war, and anti-religion. I took all of this into account when I wrote my essays without compromising my own values.

Speaker

In a research paper, the speaker is nearly invisible. This means that you need to rein in many of the ways you've learned to incorporate style in your essays—to a point. The tone of research papers is usually objective, neutral, and impartial. If you are writing about the latest developments in climate change research, you would focus more on the facts and evidence than on your ability to paint vivid and graphic word images of the devastation or benefits of potential climate change. (Yes, people have written about the benefits of climate change.) Personal experience and narration are other examples of the types of approaches you should minimize when speaking about a subject. Of course, there are exceptions, but unless you know your audience well, you are taking a risk. We'll talk more about this in the section on Style, Chapter 16, when we get to intermediate essays.

Subject

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Research papers are all about the subject. You need to organize your topics clearly so that your audience can follow you from one point to another, share research or opinions of experts in the field, recognize the complexity of the issue and address counterarguments, and include any pertinent details. And that is the subject of the rest of this book.

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Content

In addition to elevating the subject, while making yourself as the writer almost invisible and assuming a homogeneous audience, the research paper depends almost entirely on, well, research. In basic essays, the writer has several tools at his or her disposal for the content of the essay, the proof and/or evidence, including the following:

- Personal Experiences—something that has actually happened to you that sheds light on the topic
- Examples—a specific instance that you have heard about or that someone close to you has experienced
- > **Descriptions**—word pictures that bring your ideas to life
- Anecdotes—stories that relate to or exemplify the point you are making
- > Analogies—comparisons of one thing to something else to clarify your reasoning

In basic narrative, persuasive, and informational essays, many of the ideas about your subject will come from your head, from what you already know. Of course, you may produce a hybrid essay by adding some research, some statistics, or some expert testimony. But in most basic essays, you can also use the tools above. You probably won't in a research essay. Almost all of these means of support will be limited. Unless it is particularly germane, you won't support your points with personal experience; in fact, you won't even use personal pronouns (*I*, *me*, *my*) in research papers. Many teachers disallow stories, inviting descriptions, and unsupported examples. So what is left? Research—information that you obtain from another source and the observations you draw from it:

- > Statistics—numbers, percentages, and data
- Research/Testimony—a quotation or summary of an authority or specialist's views or research results
- > **Observations**—judgments or inferences; logical reasoning; universal truths

Of course, since the topic is English composition, there are always exceptions, and sometimes you *will* be able to use a combination of techniques, but your choices need to be made carefully and with consideration. Will they be appropriate for your audience? Will they add or detract from your message? And most importantly in an academic setting, will your teachers like them? We will talk about these decisions more throughout this book.

Tasks

A final major difference between basic essays and research papers are the tasks involved to complete them. A basic essay includes five steps:

Brainstorming—understanding the prompt and considering the essay's contents

Introduction & Overview

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- > **Outlining**—organizing the information in a way that makes sense
- > **Drafting**—creating a preliminary version or rough draft of the paper
- > Editing—correcting, adding to the rough draft, and mending its deficiencies
- > **Publishing**—creating a final version of the paper

Research papers include these five steps as well, but they also contain several more, such as the following:

- Pre-Research—becoming familiar with the topic and understanding its scope and breadth
- Brainstorming—considering the prompt, understanding the task that is required, and developing a specific, narrow thesis statement
- Research—learning where to find sources including the library, databases, online, and print sources; finding and using search engines; checking the credibility of a source
- > Note-Taking—developing a system to keep track of your findings
- Outlining—organizing your research in an understandable way; considering various patterns of organization
- Plagiarism—learning how to avoid it while quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing
- Incorporating Research—learning how to blend information from sources with your own words; learning how to include block and inline quotations
- Citing—developing expertise with one or more citation formats; learning to format a Works Cited or Annotated Bibliography page
- Formatting—learning the correct way to format the paper, including margins, headings, and contents
- > **Drafting**—creating a preliminary version of the paper
- > **Publishing**—writing the final version of the paper

Yes, there is a lot involved in a research paper. There's a lot to learn. But because there are so many tasks involved, I'm going to simplify the process for you. I'm going to break this large process into smaller steps. We're going to write two or three research papers together. In the first, either your teacher or I will supply your sources so that you can concentrate on learning some basic skills. In the second, you will find your own sources and learn more skills. Finally, I'll give you some pointers and ideas for the really long research essays, the ones longer than fifteen pages like those you might be asked to write for a master's thesis. Step by step, we'll conquer the research paper together.

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Notes

Use this page to take notes as your teacher directs.

Basic Essay Components

- > Audience
- > Speaker
- > Subject

Differences for Research Papers

- > Audience
- > Speaker
- > Subject

Task Differences

Part One Beginning Research Papers

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The Counterargument

Have you wondered why I insisted that you take notes and gather evidence on both sides of your argument, that I made you take notes on a position that you knew you weren't going to support? If you are writing about social networking, perhaps early in your research you had already made up your mind to write about how social networking is a benefit or detriment to our society. Still, I insisted that you continue to look at both sides of the argument, and you did even though you might have considered it a waste of time. It wasn't, and now I'll tell you why.

First, you might have changed your mind. After looking at the entire question in all of its complexity, you might have decided to switch sides. And that is just fine always allowed. I've done this before, several times on issues that are value neutral, that is, those that do not violate my core moral principles. There is no moral issue at stake in the topic of social networking, and either supporting it or opposing it does not contradict anything I believe in, so I am free to determine my own position and even change it if that is where my research leads me.

Second, and I almost hate to admit this, sometimes you have no choice. You are under a severe time crunch, and you just can't find the resources you need to support the position you truly believe on a value-neutral topic. The deadline for your research essay is looming, your teacher is not open to an extension, and you have a ton of other work for other classes to complete besides. You have plenty of notes, but most of them support the position you do not. What should you do? Sometimes you have no choice other than to write on the opposite side and complete your assignment. Please note that I am not recommending that you support the opposite position to what you believe on a moral topic. That would just be plain wrong.

Third, and this one is always important, you need to sound smart. You need to understand what the opposition says, what are the arguments that counter the ones you hold, the counterarguments, and address them in your essay. Too often I read student essays, and even published essays, that take no notice of the counterargument. They list and discuss all of the arguments in favor of their position but completely ignore the other side. As I read these essays and articles, I'm silently thinking to myself, "That's all well and good, but what about this or that issue?" The writer who anticipates and addresses the readers' potential objections, who tries to enter their minds to think the way they do and confronts any doubts they might have will always be more convincing than the one who does not.

Think of it this way: You and a friend (or even better, your parents or teacher) are sitting across from each other holding a friendly conversation. You believe one way about a particular topic, and you know he holds the opposite opinion. You are trying to change his mind, so you either answer objections he has raised or try to anticipate them and address them before he voices them. You are presenting a counterargument.

All persuasive essays should address the counterargument, even if it is only briefly, and this chapter will show you how to do that. Since informative essays provide information on all sides of an issue, they automatically include the counterargument.

Identifying the Counter

You've been so busy learning skills, such as note-taking systems, how to cite, how not to plagiarize, how to paraphrase, how to integrate source material, and how to create a Works Cited page that you may have lost sight of your objective, which is to answer the prompt: Is social networking beneficial or detrimental to our society? It's time to take stock.

Pull out and review all of your note cards and note pages. Separate them into piles, pro and con. What evidence have you collected that shows social networking (or the topic your teacher has assigned) is beneficial, and what evidence shows it is detrimental? We did this exercise earlier in this book when you activated your personal schema or background knowledge; that is, you considered what you already knew about the topic. We're going to do something similar, except now I want you to consider *only* the evidence that you have gathered from the articles. Take a few minutes to write some brief thoughts about what your evidence says on both sides of this issue.



Determine which side you will support in your essay, and then consider the opposite side. If you think social networking is beneficial, look at the detriments side of the above chart. Which do you feel is the most important position, the one that most people will hold? Put a star (\bigstar) next to this one. Next consider which are the second most important positions, and put a check (\checkmark) next to them. Finally, draw a line (—) through the positions that you think are least important and won't bother most people. In your essay, you will need to address the most important counterargument, the one you starred. If you have time, and you probably won't in this essay, you might address the ones you checked. The ones you drew lines through, indicating they are very minor, you can safely ignore.

Where to Address the Counter

In an essay, there are two positions that writers generally use to answer objections to their thesis: the first body paragraph and the last body paragraph. A less frequent option is to address them in the introduction or conclusion. All of these have their advantages, depending on the essay's organization.

First Body Paragraph Position

There are several reasons why you might want to address your thesis's counterargument at the beginning of your paper. First, it establishes common ground between you and the audience. You may not know who is reading your paper, and you may want to ease into your position gradually. If you address your audience's thoughts at the beginning of your essay, the reader might think something like this: "Yes, that's what I always thought. But if the writer has a better idea, I'm willing to listen." Not only do you and your audience arrive at the same starting point (common ground), your reader feels respected since you acknowledged his or her thoughts and opinions.

Another reason to address the counterargument at the beginning of your paper is to build your credibility. If you are a student, you don't have credibility, a "name" for yourself. That is, you aren't known in the professional community—you are an unknown. By facing objections and then explaining why they are invalid, your audience can feel more comfortable with you. They understand that you have done your homework, your research, and are in a position to share some worthwhile thoughts on the topic.

Finally, placing the counterargument at the beginning of your paper gets it out of the way. You've established common ground and built your credibility. In the rest of your paper, you can develop your argument, stacking one argument on top of another and convincing your audience that your position is valid.

Other Positions

If you have a convincing reason, you may move your counterargument to other points in your essay. One way to do this is intermittently, where you address more than one counterargument and sprinkle comments throughout your essay. The key to this method is to keep the comments brief, like this:

- Yes, social networking can swallow up time, but setting a timer could help people develop self-discipline. That would still give them opportunities to reap the benefits such as
- Every school has its bully, and students throughout the centuries have learned to deal with him. However, cyberbullying is a different story. When a person becomes a victim of cyberbullying,

The other place to recognize objections to your argument is at the end of your essay, in the conclusion or the paragraph that precedes it, your penultimate essay paragraph. Since the techniques for that are the same as for the first body paragraph, I won't repeat them.

How to Address the Counter

Many times when I read essays by my beginning students, I get confused. Students state their position in their thesis statement, and then they immediately begin offering reasons for why their thesis is invalid. I read the first paragraph thinking I've missed something and infer a thesis that is opposite to the one stated in the introduction. Then I come to the second paragraph where the original thesis is argued, and I get confused again. I get whiplash from the sudden turns in my students' writing.

Simple Signal Phrases

All persuasive essays need to address the counterargument, but they need to do it in a thoughtful and clear way. You need a way to let your audience know that you are addressing objections they might have and considering the complexity of the issue, not changing your mind or not paying attention to your structure. Your counterargument needs to be clearly identified, so your reader does not confuse it with your actual argument. The easiest way to do this is with the signal phrase, "Some people say" or its cousin, "Some object to."

- Some people say that requiring restaurants to print fat and calorie information on their menus puts too great a burden on them. Certainly this objection has merit and no one would want to force their favorite restaurant to do something that would create a hardship.
- Some restaurants object to printing caloric information on their menus because they fear patrons will stop ordering foods with mammoth calorie counts. This objection could be true.

These two phrases set your audience up with the expectation that although some people say or object, you are not among them.

Your paper also needs to include a signal phrase to bring your audience back to your actual argument. Think of these phrases as detour signs on a road: The first sets you off on your slight detour, and the second brings you back to the main road. The easiest way to signal a return to your argument is with phrases such as "On the other hand" or "However."

- Some people say that requiring restaurants to print fat and calorie information on their menus puts too great a burden on them. Certainly this objection has merit, and no one would want to force their favorite restaurant to do something that would create a financial hardship. <u>On the other hand</u>, restaurants frequently change their menus as they include new entrées, adapt to their patrons' changing tastes, and adjust to seasonal variations. If they were allowed to incorporate the new information the next time they printed updated menus, perhaps within a one year time limit, the requirement should lessen their financial burden.
- Some restaurants object to printing caloric information on their menus because they fear patrons will stop ordering foods with mammoth calorie counts. This objection could be true. <u>However</u>, patrons are entitled to this information. A few

weeks ago, I had a delicious dinner, an entrée and dessert, at a local restaurant. When I got home, I looked up the nutritional information online and found I had ingested 3,000 calories. Had I known my choice was so caloric intense, I would have chosen something else. Everyone is responsible for his or her own health, and withholding critical nutritional information from patrons is just plain wrong.

If the concept of a counterargument and signal phrases is new to you, stick with these simple phrases until you develop a comfort level. After that, you can experiment with some advanced signal phrases.

Advanced Signal Phrases

When ready, use these advanced phrases, or ones like them, to signal that you are about to discuss a counterargument:

- > Yet some may [challenge, disagree, raise a concern, object, some other verb]
- > Yet [identify who is making the objection] believe that
- > Certainly it is true that, [state the objection or counterargument]
- > While it is true [valid, legitimate] that [state the objection]
- ➤ To be sure, [objection]
- > Is this position justifiable? Might not someone [say, object, raise a concern]

Uses phrases like these to signal a return to your own argument:

- ➢ Still, [return to argument]
- > As persuasive as this sounds, the claim has some flaws. [continue with argument]
- > On the other hand, [return to argument]
- > However, these concerns are baseless. [continue with argument]
- But isn't there a better way of thinking about this? [present argument]

If you want to raise a counterargument and dismiss it in the same sentence, try some signal phrases like these:

- Although [objection/counterargument], still [argument].
- > While it is true that [objection], it does not follow that [argument].
- ➢ To be sure [objection], but [argument]
- > Many people argue that [objection], but they may not consider [argument].

Of course, these are just suggestions to get you started. As you continue to write persuasive essays, you will come up with your own creative arguments.

Creating Counterargument Phrases

Possible signal phrases to introduce the counterargument and then return to your argument include the following:

Introduce Counterargument	Return to Your Argument
While some may worry that,	they forget to consider
is an important concern.	However, it is overshadowed by
Although,	this should not be the main concern when
Like Source A says, is an important consideration in	On the other hand, even more important is
Source A implies that	However, it completely overlooks the fact that
The advances the idea that	Nevertheless, is wrong.

Like the signal phrases in the previous chapter, these are just ideas to get you started. With practice, you will be able to create your own unique combinations. When you think of or come across a counterargument phrase that you really like and want to remember, record it in one of the blanks above.

Counterargument Structure Checklist

Although this is not the only way to write a counterargument, follow this structure until you become more comfortable with addressing an audience's potential objections.

- □ Counterargument signal phrase ("Some people say")
- □ Counterargument claim (the argument that an audience member might make)
- □ Counterargument proof (the evidence an audience member might cite to support the claim)
- □ Explanation of how this evidence might prove the counterargument claim ("This shows that")
- □ Your argument's signal phrase ("However")
- □ Your argument's claim (the argument you provide to rebut your audience's claim)
- □ Your argument's proof (evidence for your claim)
- Explanation of how your evidence proves the claim ("This shows that")
- □ Clincher or wrap up sentence

The Counterargument

Notes

Use this page to take notes as your teacher directs.

Why include a counterargument?

Indentifying the Counterargument

Where to Address the Counterargument

How to Address the Counterargument

- Simple Signal Phrases
- Advanced Signal Phrases

Counterargument Structure

	The Counterargument	
		$ \cdot $
Name:	Date:	\smile
Class:	Exercise 13: Counterargument	

Counterargument

Directions: Look again at the two excerpts on pages 53 and 61 concerning menu labeling laws. Pick a position, and then write a counterargument paragraph. Be sure to use some of the counterargument signal phrases discussed in this chapter.

- 1. Your position:
- 2. Counterargument paragraph

Counterargument signal phrase, evidence, and explanation:

Your argument signal phrase, evidence, and explanation:

6	The Counterargument	
	Name:	Date:
	Class:	Exercise 14 Counterargument

Counterargument

Directions: Look back at page 68 of this chapter where you identified the most important objection you will need to address in your essay. Write a paragraph that addresses this counterargument.

- 1. Your position:
- 2. Counterargument paragraph

Counterargument signal phrase, evidence, and explanation: _

Your argument signal phrase, evidence, and explanation: ____

Writing Research Papers

Part Two Intermediate Research Papers

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The Prompt

Now that you understand the basic skills necessary to create a research paper from Part One, it's time to move on to how to actually conduct research. In this second section focusing on intermediate papers, you will learn how to conduct your own research, both online and offline (print), as well as some advanced methods of arrangement and outlining. As with the beginning essay, the natural urge is to start writing, but I hope I have convinced you that spending some time with the prompt or task, or even creating the prompt or task, will save you time in the long run. For this paper, either your teacher will assign you a topic or you will choose one yourself, sometimes from within a larger category of ideas that your teacher supplies. Let's look at both options.

Understanding the Prompt

If your teacher assigns your essay prompt, you can examine it, think about it, and then ask him or her questions for clarification. But what if the prompt comes from somewhere else, and you can't get any additional explanation? That is the situation my students face every year as they participate in the Lions International Student Speaker Contest. Each year we receive a different prompt, and each year all of our high school students write an essay and deliver an in-class speech on the topic.

One example, which you may be familiar with if you studied *The Elegant Essay*, my book on how to write basic essays, is the prompt

Internet: Hero or villain?

Since you may already be familiar with this topic and may have even written an essay on it, let's begin here. If you haven't seen this prompt before, that's OK; you still have some personal background knowledge because you use the Internet all the time.

Definitions

The first step is to look at the individual words and define them. Do this even if the words are already familiar, as these no doubt are, because this process may spark ideas that you can use later. Of course you are familiar with the dictionary in book form and may even have a couple in your home or classroom. This is a good place to start. But don't stop there. Try some of these ideas:

Google Definition: Type the words "Define:Internet" (without the quotation marks) into Google's search engine. Notice that there are no spaces between "Define," the colon, and the word "Internet." Google taps into several online dictionaries, glossaries and compendiums to reveal definitions like this one from Princeton. (You may need to click on the "More info" link under the top entry to expand the selections.): "a computer network consisting of a worldwide network of computer networks that use the TCP/IP network protocols to facilitate data transmission and exchange."

Right, it's not very helpful, although we do learn that the Internet is a network. But scrolling down, you find lots and lots of other definitions such as this one from the University of Chicago's IT page:

Often confused with the World Wide Web, the term Internet actually refers to the combined collection of academic, commercial, and government networks connected over international telecommunication backbones and routed using IP addressing."

This is a better definition and seems more related to the prompt. From here, you might search for "define: World Wide Web" (without the quotation marks), which would bring you to two more helpful resources:

- A Wiki page that informs you that the word *Internet* is a proper noun, which means it should be capitalized and preceded with a definite article: "the Internet."
- A Wikipedia page that contains this helpful quotation: "The World-Wide Web (W3) was developed to be a pool of human knowledge, and human culture, which would allow collaborators in remote sites to share their ideas and all aspects of a common project." The page continues with a history of the World Wide Web, which may or may not give you insight into the prompt and how to approach it.
- Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary: Another good resource to use to learn and understand the definitions of the words in your prompt is Noah Webster's 1828 version of the *American Dictionary of the English Language*, which is available as a book or online. Webster's 1828 has its drawbacks, especially with a word like *Internet*, which didn't exist in 1828. But it is terrific for words like *hero* and *villain*, and will not point you to definitions about sandwiches and rock groups. Here are the definitions of *hero* and *villain* from Webster's 1828:
 - Hero: 1. A man of distinguished valor, intrepidity or enterprise in danger; as a hero in arms. 2. A great, illustrious or extraordinary person; as a hero in learning. [Little used.] 3. In a poem, or romance, the principal personage, or the person who has the principal share in the transactions related; as Achilles in the *lliad*, Ulysses in the *Odyssey*, and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. 4. In pagan mythology, a hero was an illustrious person, mortal indeed, but supposed by the populace to partake of immortality, and after his death to be placed among the gods.

- Villain: 1. Base; very vile. 2. Wicked; extremely depraved; as a villainous person or wretch. 3. Proceeding from extreme depravity; as a villainous action. 4. Sorry; vile; mischievous; in a familiar sense; as a villainous trick of the eye.
- Other Online Dictionaries: There are way too many online dictionaries, some of them good, and some of them not. My students and I have found the following most helpful:
 - ♦ http://dictionary.com
 - ♦ http://www.thefreedictionary.com
 - ◊ http://dictionary.cambridge.org

Once you have looked up all the words in the prompt, a process that will take just a few minutes with all the tools you have at your disposal, sit back and reflect about what you have learned. For example, first I noticed that the words *hero* and *villain* are not only polar opposites, they also hint at a moral aspect, similar to the words *good* and *evil*. The prompt seems to be calling for a judgment rooted in morality. Second, I was drawn to the quotation on the Wikipedia page about how the Internet is designed to be a repository of all human knowledge that can be shared with others, and this reminded me of the Tower of Babel and made me wonder if all human knowledge, especially unsavory topics, *should* be shared. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of this sharing? Third, I noticed the broad concept of the Internet contains the categories of *academic, commercial,* and *government*. Instead of arguing about all of the Internet, I might focus on one of these categories as I answer the prompt.

Understanding the Task

Informative or Argumentative

After seeking a clearer understanding of the prompt, look at it again to determine what it asks. This is so important, and I can't tell you how many of my students have earned poor scores on their essays because they didn't answer the question that the prompt asked, or they didn't stay on topic. For example, instead of discussing whether the Internet is a hero or a villain, I've read essays where students have discussed the history of the Internet and how it came to be. I've also read summaries about what the Internet does, how it operates, and what services it offers. While all of these topics are interesting and require research, they are not what the prompt asks. An off-topic essay, no matter how well it is written, will typically earn no more than a D grade.

Additionally, make sure you understand what the prompt asks you to do and what type of response it requires. The two basic genres for research papers are *persuasive* (also called *argumentative*) and *informative* (also called *expository*). The goal of a persuasive essay is to persuade the reader to take a side. Many options may be presented and briefly discussed or dismissed, but one gets more attention with the objective of persuading the reader to adopt that position or move him to take some course of action. On the other hand, the goal of an

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informative essay is to inform, to enlighten the reader about some topic as well as alternative ways of approaching it. Many options may be presented, but none are given prominence above another.

For example, let's say your topic is illegal immigration, and you are asked about ways to prevent it. You might research several options such as heightening border security with fences, technology, and border guards; sanctioning employers who knowingly hire illegals; requiring tighter enforcement by ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement); or creating a database of social security numbers and comparing employees' numbers against it to look for invalid or forged documents; or even to abolish the idea of *illegal* immigration and to open our borders to all who want to enter the country. In an informative essay, you would present these several options and discuss the pros and cons of each. In a persuasive essay, you would give more attention to at least one solution and try to persuade your audience that it is the best.

Persuasive Prompts

Let's examine some of the other prompts from the Lions International Student Speaker Contest that my students have had to grapple with over the years:

- Energy—What is the future?
- Is democracy the key to success?
- Global Warming: Fact or fiction?
- Immigration: Your solution?
- Water: Will California be left high and dry?
- > Universal Health Care: How will it affect us?
- > Enforcing Our Borders: State vs. Federal Rights

Immediately we notice that most of these prompts are questions, which is not always the case but more about that later. Second, we notice that we can organize these prompts into two categories: *yes/no/maybe* and *options/solutions*. Four of the questions ask for a yes, no, or maybe answer, including the topics of democracy, global warming, water, and border enforcement. Two ask for options or solutions, including immigration and universal health care. The topic on energy could fall into either category: The future could be one of two scenarios, such as bleak or rosy, or it could be option one, option two, or option three.

Agree, Disagree, or Qualify

Prompts in the *yes/no/maybe* category ask the researcher to either agree or disagree with the prompt's premise or to choose one of the two offered answers, such as fact *or* fiction. Debate prompts usually fall within this category as well, such as these from the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association:

- Resolved: That medical malpractice law should be significantly reformed in the United States.
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- > Resolved: When in conflict, idealism ought to be valued above pragmatism.
- Resolved: That competition is superior to cooperation as a means of achieving excellence.
- Resolved: That the United States Federal Government should significantly reform its environmental policy.

Although these resolutions are not questions, they ask the debater to agree with the resolution's premise, disagree with it, or qualify it. Agreeing or disagreeing is easy; just choose one of the options, or agree or disagree with the resolution, such as: "Idealism should be valued over pragmatism" or "Pragmatism should be valued over idealism"; "Competition achieves excellence" or "Competition fosters mediocrity." Sometimes the prompt asks you to *defend* or to *challenge* a statement. Although the words are a bit fancier, the task is essentially the same as agree or disagree.

Sometimes your answer won't be so clear cut as to simply agree or disagree. Sometimes you want to *qualify* your response, which can get a bit tricky. To *qualify* an argument means to set conditions or to modify your argument, to agree or disagree only in specific circumstances, or to set boundaries on your position. If you qualified some of the above prompts, they might look like this, with the qualification in italics:

- The Internet enhances students' education when it is used under the supervision of caring parents.
- > Idealism, *when the ideals are based on Biblical precepts*, should always be pursued, even when the pragmatic path is easier.
- The Federal Government's environmental policy is unsound and should be reformed, unless the costs of the reformation are prohibitive and would severely and adversely affect the economy.

The problem with a qualifying argument, especially for beginning writers, is that it is tempting to summarize the two positions rather than take a specific position, to frame the argument rather than argue; that is, to write an informative essay rather than a persuasive one. For example, the following statements summarize rather than argue:

- > The Internet both enhances and impairs education.
- > Both idealism and pragmatism should be valued.
- Parts of the Federal Government's environmental policy are sound, while others are unsound.

This summary is a good exercise when thinking about how to approach the discussion or when writing an informative essay (note the qualification), but it will result in an off-topic persuasive essay that doesn't answer the prompt and will consequently earn a low grade. Because of the potential problems with students writing off-topic summaries rather than arguments, I impose some constraints on my students who are just beginning to write persuasive research papers: I don't allow them to qualify. They must either agree or disagree, defend or challenge. In fact, none of the college prep middle-school or ninth-grade students in my school are allowed to write qualifying arguments without teacher approval (again, note the qualification). Although this

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is like putting training wheels on their bicycles, in other words, it's restraining their creativity, it also keeps them from crashing and missing the prompt. If you are new to writing research papers, and if your teacher does not allow you to qualify your arguments, go along with him or her. It's a good exercise that will result in future benefits.

Options

Look back at the Lions speech and essay prompts, especially these two:

- Immigration: Your solution?
- Universal Health Care: How will it affect us?

Since most students begin writing research papers that ask them to defend or challenge a position, the ones that ask for something different seem confusing at first. Some of my students were confused by these two prompts and wanted to argue that immigration provided benefits or detriments to America or that universal health care should or should not be passed by Congress. That would have been a mistake.

The immigration prompt asks for a solution. That assumes there is a problem you first need to identify. Note that the prompt does not specify what kind of immigration problem it wants to solve, and you might discover some of the different ones while looking up the definition of the word *immigration*. The problem could be illegal entry, low quotas and waiting lists, amnesty, criminal activity, or lack of workers. Your essay might include a brief explanation of the problem and then propose one or more solutions. An essay that identified several problems but offered no solutions would not answer the prompt, *unless it was designed to be an informative essay*. (Are you catching on to the idea of qualification?)

The health care prompt is a little different and falls into the category of "what if?" *If* universal health were to become the law of the land, and at the time the prompt was written, it wasn't, what would be the consequences to Americans (or the people living in the U.S. depending on the definition of *us*)? Some possibilities include higher taxes, more access to medical insurance, longer waits for treatments, or humanitarian treatment for lower income citizens. Although this prompt could be summarized into two categories—beneficial effects and adverse effects—my students needed to be very careful to stay on topic and talk about *effects* rather than slip off topic and talk about whether the legislation should be passed or not.

Informative Prompts

All of the above prompts could be changed slightly into informative questions. In that case, you would explore the different alternatives, but would not recommend one over the other. For instance, with the global warming prompt, an informative essay would ask you to give equal consideration to both sides of the argument: fact or fiction. You would need to research why experts think global warming is a fact, such as the increase in temperatures in recent years, the melting of the polar ice caps, and the changes in solar activity. But you would also need to look at the opposite perspective and give equal attention to why global warming is fiction. You would discuss the fact that in viewing a long time period, temperatures have

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remained stable. You might also discuss Climategate, the scandal that asserts scientists, especially in England, manipulated climate data. The important idea to remember when writing an informative essay is that your job as the writer is simply to inform your readers and not to persuade them to take a specific side. You present the options and allow the readers to come to their own conclusions.

Before we leave the category of *options*, let me throw in one more type of prompt that also calls for an informative response. This is the "what would they have to consider" prompt. For example:

- What would Congress need to consider before making the decision to switch to a flat tax?
- What is the most important area churches would have to think about when contemplating changes to their style of worship service?
- In making the decision to abandon (or pursue) space exploration, what should be considered?

This prompt is closely related to the problems and effects prompts. It asks the writer to consider one or more set of problems or effects that might be encountered and what might be done about them.

Understanding what the prompt asks you to do is crucial to success. Too often I see my students rush past this step, thinking they understand, but they don't. They waste precious time researching topics that don't apply to the task or answering a question that wasn't asked. They work hard, but they don't get rewarded. Don't let this happen to you. Spend some time making sure you understand what you are supposed to do.

What if the prompt is not a question?

So far we've discussed prompts that are questions or closely related to questions. What if you aren't asked a question? How do you get a handle on the prompt and what you need to do? Frequently this happens with prompts assigned in history classes.

History Day Prompts

Another contest that our school participates in is National History Day. Each year, the NHD committee selects a topic for students to research, and the topic for 2010 was "Innovation in History: Impact and Change." Although the topic is not a question, the history day people give students lots and lots of ideas and directions to approach the topic. (For an example, go here: http://www.nhd.org/images/uploads/library/397037_ThemePage2010_R5.pdf or search for NHD annual theme sheet.) While the English teachers only get a prompt, history teachers get a prompt plus a lengthy discussion on how to approach it, as well as suggestions on narrower topics—I'm so jealous. The NHD theme page for the topic first defines the words, such as *innovation* and *in history*, explains how to root the discussion in history, and then gives sample topics such as the polio vaccine breakthrough or the impact of the mechanical clock.

Let's say you chose to research the mechanical clock. It might be tempting to write an informational essay on the time period, the discoverer, how the clock worked, what innovations followed, or how the clocks were improved. None of this, however, answers the prompt. To make sure you don't go off-topic and waste too much time with research that

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The Prompt

won't be rewarding, it's helpful to turn the prompt into a question. For example, you might ask yourself, "How did the mechanical clock impact history?" That's OK, but you might do better. Try, "What historical changes did the mechanical clock bring?" Better, but not quite there. Try, "How did society change when the mechanical clock was introduced?" That's a pretty good question, and it falls under the *options* category: It changed in these ways: option one, option two, . . . option twenty. For example, the ability to be precise afforded more business opportunities, such as meetings at 9:00, 10:00, and noon instead of once "in the morning."

Open Topics

Although the National History Day project offers a lot of help for students to come to an understanding of the prompt and some possible ways to answer it, oftentimes you won't get this much direction. In fact, sometimes you will be asked to come up with your own topic.

Many years ago, my family was privileged to visit the lovely Big Island of Hawaii. We attended services near the original church on the island (the first burned down), and for the first time, heard about the missionaries who sacrificed their lives to bring the gospel to the Hawaiians. The church gave us a little booklet outlining the history of the original missionaries to the Big Island's Kona Coast, and that started a lifelong love for Hawaii's history. If I had to write a history research paper on an open topic, I would pick Hawaii. But that's a pretty broad topic and needs to be narrowed, so I would pick Hawaiian missionaries. That's better, but still not enough focus. I would need to turn the topic into a question that would provide focus:

- How did the missionaries come to Hawaii? A fair question for an informative essay, but not a good one for a persuasive essay because it doesn't produce an argument. The research would consist of a historical summary.
- > What did the missionaries do in Hawaii? Better, but still not an argument.
- How did the missionaries impact Hawaiian culture? Pretty good. I could discuss categories: impacted in this way, and that way, and so on.
- Did the missionaries destroy Hawaiian culture? Great question. Not only is it tightly focused, it demands a persuasive answer. It would serve well to drive the research about the Hawaiian missionaries.

Wide Open Topics

A final category of prompts works something like this: "Choose an area that interests you, and write a research-based persuasive essay about it." The advantage of a prompt like this is that you can write about something you care about. The disadvantage is you have too many choices. I found a great list online with the prompts worded as questions, which will save you a step. It's called 50 Argument Essay Topics. You should find it via a search engine. I used Google.

To firm up your prompt and give yourself focus and direction for your essay, follow the steps on the Developing a Prompt Checklist.

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Understanding a Prompt Checklist

To better understand a prompt to drive a research paper, follow these steps:

- \Box Receive a topic.
- Decide whether the topic calls for an informative or persuasive response.
- □ If the topic is argumentative and not already a question, turn it into one. Make sure the answer to the question will produce a tightly focused response.
- Activate your schema—think about what you already know about the topic.
- □ Look up all the words and phrases in the prompt/question. Use multiple sources. If necessary, look up additional words that occur in the definitions.
- □ Think about the type of response the prompt/question calls for. What does it ask you to do? Inform? Defend, challenge, qualify? Solve a problem or provide a solution? Examine possible effects or impacts? Something else?
- □ Reflect on what you discovered, especially about how this information might help you answer the prompt. Take notes so that you don't lose your insights.

Don't rush this step. If you take your time, you may end up saving countless hours of wasted or misdirected effort.

Developing a Prompt Checklist

If your teacher allows you to choose your own topic, follow these steps to develop a prompt:

- □ Think about areas that you already know about or have strong opinions about.
- □ Think about arguments you have had with parents, teachers, or friends.
- □ Examine newspapers, magazines, or other media to see what controversial topics are being discussed in the news. Think about one that interests you.
- □ Also by looking at newspapers, magazines, or other media, think about agreeable or disturbing cultural trends.
- □ Explore policy decisions that are being made or discussed in today's domestic or international political spheres.
- □ For a history topic, think about a particular event that intrigues you. What were the ramifications of this event either for good or not?
- □ Consider something that you have wondered about but have never had the opportunity to learn more about it.

The Prompt

Notes

Use this page to take notes as your teacher directs.

Understanding the Prompt

> Definitions

Understanding the Task

> Informative versus Argumentative

Persuasive Prompts

- > Agree/Disagree
- > Qualify

Informative Prompts

- Questions
- > Qualify

Open Prompts

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\bigcirc	Name:		Date:
	Class:	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Exercise 18: Understanding Prompt

Understanding the Prompt

Directions: In this exercise, you will consider the following topic: Athletes as role models. Answer the following questions:

- 1. Does the prompt call for an informative or persuasive response? Give reasons for your answer.
- 2. Does the prompt need to be turned into a question? If so, craft a tight question.

3. What do you already know about the topic? Activate your schema.

4. Using multiple sources, look up all the important words in the prompt.

5. Reflect on your discoveries. How might this information help you to answer the prompt? Possible thesis statements?

Name: _				
Class [.]				

Exercise 19: Understanding Prompt

Date:

Understanding the Prompt

Directions: In this exercise, you will consider the following topic: **The role of reality TV shows**. Answer the following questions:

- 1. Does the prompt call for an informative or persuasive response? Give reasons for your answer.
- 2. Does the prompt need to be turned into a question? If so, craft a tight question.

3. What do you already know about the topic? Activate your schema.

4. Using multiple sources, look up all the important words in the prompt.

5. Reflect on your discoveries. How might this information help you to answer the prompt? Possible thesis statements?

	The Prompt	
\bigcirc	Name:	Date:
	Class:	 Exercise 20: Choosing a Topic

Choosing a Topic

Directions: In this exercise, you will investigate a topic you might be interested in writing about. Answer as many of the following questions as apply, using the guidelines that your teacher provides:

- 1. Do you have a strong opinion about a particular topic, or is there an area that you already know about? Try to list several.
- 2. Have you argued with someone recently about a particular subject, such as your parents, teachers, or friends?
- 3. What are some controversial topics that are in the news now? Is there something you would like to learn more about?
- 4. What are some cultural trends that worry or please you?
- 5. What are some policy decisions that are being made or discussed in today's domestic or international political spheres?
- 6. What historical event intrigues you? What were the ramifications of this event either for good or evil?
- 7. What is something that you have wondered about but have never had the opportunity to learn more about?
- 8. Choose at least two topics from the above brainstorm, and follow the steps on Developing a Prompt Checklist to create prompts you might like to address in a research paper.

Part Three Advanced Research Papers

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Possible Schedule for Advanced Papers

Steps	Allotted Time	Date Day	Date Completed
Begin pre-research.	2 days		
Select a preliminary topic.	1 day		
Look for sources. (Consult with a librarian.)	2 days		
Submit finalized topic.		Day Five	
Locate sources (library or book store).	4 days		
Read sources and take notes.	4 days		
Submit Annotated Bibliography.		Day Thirteen	
Propose a thesis.	1 day		
Create an outline.	2 days		
Create preliminary Works Cited.	1 day		
Submit outline and Works Cited.		Day Seventeen	
Write the rough draft.	5 days		
Submit rough draft.		Day Twenty-Two	
Do additional research, as needed.	3 days		
Revise the draft and Works Cited.	5 days		
Submit final paper.		Day Thirty	



Advanced Approaches

If you haven't already, you need to celebrate because by this point, you have learned more than many students who are taking their first college-level English course. Not only have you learned how to find credible and applicable information through your research, you have also learned how to present this in a way that is accessible to and persuasive for others. Once you have conquered the skills presented in this book, you will be prepared to enter the many conversations that are taking place in the public realm and present your considered and thoughtful opinions. That is a huge accomplishment.

There's one more area we need to discuss with respect to research papers, and that is how to approach the very long paper, something you might write as a senior paper, a history assignment, a survey of the literature in some science or social science field, a Master's thesis, or some other project. We're not going to follow the format I used in the previous sections, where you learned a skill, practiced it, and then applied it to your own paper. Since you already know the skills, I will model how to harness them for the lengthy research paper. This also gives me a chance to share my love of Hawaii's history with you, and present some research that contradicts so many people's opinion of the missionaries who shared Christianity with the islands in the early 19th century. I'll guide you through all the necessary steps to produce the paper, reviewing and enhancing the skills you learned in Parts One and Two.

Finding Your Focus

When writing a lengthy research paper, you need to choose a topic that will hold your interest for a long period of time, from a month to a year or more depending on your assignment. Earlier in Chapter 10, I said that if I were to choose an open topic, I would pick the Hawaiian missionaries, which I've done in this section. As I said, I became interested in the missionaries after a visit to the islands some years ago, and I knew that I could conduct some fairly in-depth research on the missionaries without losing my interest and making the research project frustrating and painful.

Pre-Research

Remember that preliminary research, sometimes I've called it pre-research, helps you to determine the boundaries of your topic and to narrow it. You might perform some Internet searches, consult Wikipedia or other dictionaries, read some books in the children's section of the library, or peruse general news articles on the subject. Your purpose in all of this pre-research is to come up with a tightly focused research question that will help you to manage your time as you continue to find useful sources.

To begin, I typed "Hawaiian missionaries" into a search engine just to see what would come up. I wasn't necessarily looking for sources I could use in my paper, but I was looking for a general understanding of my topic and a way to narrow my focus.

Advanced Approaches

I was not surprised when the Wikipedia site came up first, but I was surprised that it was about the two-cent stamp issued in 1851 rather than people who went to Hawaii in 1820. Thankfully, the site included a link to a list of Hawaiian missionaries, so I clicked on that and immediately found an error: The list of original missionaries did not include Sybil Bingham, Dr. Thomas Holman and his wife Lucia, Daniel Chamberlain along with his wife and children, and Maria Loomis. There were fourteen Americans and four Hawaiians who journeyed to the islands in 1819, and yet Wikipedia mentioned only seven of the Americans. This was a good reminder that Wikipedia is not a credible source, and any information found on the site needs to be verified against more credible sources. However, in the Notes section of the Wikipedia page, I found links to some great primary sources, some of which I used in my paper. When I clicked on some of these links, I was referred to the Google Books site, and especially for those with expired copyrights, I gained access to the entire books. Additionally, the Google Books site included a list of related books, and some of those recommendations also ended up in my paper.

The second site after Wikipedia that came up in my Internet search (http:// www.hawaii-inns.com/history/index.htm) was a brief history of the islands written by Ken Smith, who lives on the Big Island. I corresponded with Mr. Smith, and he told me about the Mission Houses Museum Library on O'ahu, which led to additional conversations with Carol White, the librarian, and more resources. I also learned about the Bishop Museum, which led me to their online gift shop and reviews of the books they sold at the museum.

Another way that I conducted my pre-research was to check the bibliography of books that I found helpful but did not intend to use. One book that I found is Daniel Kikawa's *Perpetuated In Righteousness*. Although this is a great book and helped me immensely with my pre-research and understanding of Hawaii's religious system and roots, it is a little too far removed from the primary sources because Kikawa did not write for a scholarly audience; he wrote for the general public. However, Kikawa kept scholars in mind as he copiously footnoted every source and idea and provided a comprehensive bibliography. I tracked down several of his sources to use in my research.

I also visited libraries to gather resources, some of which were old and/or rare—the resources, not the libraries. Generally, I could check out books that were common or secondary sources, but I also wanted to use primary sources, and libraries generally prefer patrons to use these on site. For previous projects, if I wanted to obtain copies of several pages, libraries used to provide this service because the resources needed to be treated with careful hands. Unfortunately, the cost of these copies could quickly escalate and become prohibitive. Today, many libraries encourage patrons to take pictures of the pages with their digital cameras, which is what I did, including the title pages to keep track of citation information. When I got home, I printed the pages I needed.

The goal of the pre-research stage is to gain an understanding of your topic. Most of this can be done through what I've called "following your nose" and learning how one source can lead you to another and another, as I've demonstrated above. You also want to narrow your topic, develop a good research question, and find some credible primary and secondary documents. To gather resources, you might have to visit libraries or order books from online bookstores, either new or used. You also might download to and possibly print resources from your computer or reading device. Finally, by the end of the pre-research stage, you should have a working thesis statement.

Research Question

As I discussed in Chapter 10, this is the process I went through to create a question that provided focus to my research:

- How did the missionaries come to Hawaii? A fair question for an informative essay, but not a good one for a persuasive essay because it doesn't produce an argument. The research would consist of a historical summary.
- > What did the missionaries do in Hawaii? Better, but still not an argument.
- How did the missionaries impact Hawaiian culture? Pretty good. I could discuss categories—impacted in this way, and that way, and so on. This would be a good question for an informative paper.
- Did the missionaries destroy Hawaiian culture? Great question for a persuasive paper. Not only is it tightly focused, it demands a persuasive answer. It would serve well to drive the research about the Hawaiian missionaries.

Working Thesis Statement

The working thesis statement does not need to be elegant, but it does need to answer your research question. This was my original working thesis statement:

Rather than destroy Hawaii's culture, the missionaries improved and perpetuated it.

This statement would definitely not appear in my research paper, but it did give focus to my research.

Research

Gathering my research materials took some time because I like to mark up (annotate) physical books rather than work with their online cousins. I ordered several print sources from book sites that specialize in new or used books. One of my favorites for used books is www.bookfinder.com, which compiles offerings from a variety of sites into one index. Plus, it includes shipping in the cost of each book so that I can compare accurate prices across sites. I also ordered some facsimiles of primary sources. Although I could have read these sources online, I don't like to do that (just my personal preference), so I ordered hardcopies. I visited libraries, took pictures of the pages I needed, and then printed those as well. When all of my materials arrived, it was time to actively begin the research stage.

Over the years, I have developed my own personal style of note-taking, and it consists of reading with a highlighter and pencil in my hand for books that I own, and a pile of Post-It Notes and pencil for resources that I do not. I read on my couch (or in bed) rather than at a desk, and I look for passages that will answer my research question. If I own the book, I highlight the sentences or paragraphs I will use and make notes in the book's margin or at the top of the page. If I don't own the book, I cut Post-It Notes into smaller pieces, label the item I want to remember, and place the note near the sentences or paragraphs with a bit hanging over the edge. I demonstrate each of these methods above.

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visited these Liknds, some have made disparaging statements respecting the missionaries; and a good deal of imperfect information is carried house by persons who have visited adu the half-Europeanical ports, where the worst view of the collision of the natives is presented. I visited among all ing all es - the foreign merchants, traders, and shi and native officials, and with the natives, from the freign and native officials, and with the natives, from the lag and several of the chiefs to the humblest program, whom 1 are without constraint in a tour I made alone over Hawail, about the several provides the several several several angle information from all, foreign and native, friendly and unifriedly; and the corolasion to which I came is, that the box men, and hows who are best requainted with the history of things here, hold in high esteem the labors and conduct of the missionaries. The more sevelers of pleasure, power, or gain, do not like their influence; and those persons who pathized with that officer of the American navy sympathies with that officer of the American navy who semplied the sub-thrites to allow women to go off to his ship by opening his ports and threatening to bombard the two, naturally are hostile to the missions. I do not mean, of curse, that there is always unamity among the bear people, or perhaps among the missionaries themselves, on all questions; i.e. y_{in} , so to the toleration of Catholies, and on mut minus prime do mich and the toleration of Catholies, and on and questions; i.e.g., as so the toleration of Catholics, and on some minor points of social and police regulation. But as the great question of their moral influence, the truth is that there has always been, and must ever be, in these Islands, a pendiar struggle between the influences for good and the influence for evil. They are places of visit for the ships of all naises, and for the temporary residence of mostly unmar-ried traders; and at the height of the whaling season the number of transient seames in the port of Honolulu equals <page-header><page-header> REGARDED AS CHRISTIANIZED. me or on journeys, is as common as in New England a century ago.

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NEW RELIGION AND NEW LEAR turing a third of a century. As Moris HAPTER VII EW RELIGION AND NEW LEARNING consists arrived in the side of time partially to offset the and by Boston traders and Nantucket whaters,"-S. E. a Station of Cushches, and a Member of the Persons and in the Person Person Person of the second of teners of them Blances.

Examples of my personal note-taking system-highlighting and annotating books that I own (top) or labeling with Post-It Notes those that I don't (bottom)

For online sources, mostly Web sites and articles, my system is a little different. If the article is long, I print it out and annotate it as above. If I just want to collect a few excerpts from various online sources, I cut the sections and paste them into a document, being careful to keep track of source information so I can create citations. I also change the font color to red for direct quotations and write my own personal notes in black font so that I don't inadvertently plagiarize.

As you can see, I like to work with printed sources. I like physical, hardcopies of my resources, and I like to mark them up with an actual pen, pencil, or highlighter. The reason for this is because this is how I was trained. During most of the time I learned to research, I didn't have access to the online tools that you have. My students are divided in their methods. Some like to use printed sources, while others prefer to work entirely online. Still others like