

Using the Five Traditional Canons of Rhetoric

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TEACHING RHETORIC

The canons introduced in this chapter are the five arts of rhetoric used by classical philosophers and rhetors. Although twentieth-century rhetoric often discounts memory as a useful heuristic device (because of the advancements in technology that make memorization unnecessary) and students will spend very little time actually memorizing anything for the requirements of the advanced placement classroom, memory—or the absence of memory—is still an admirable and essential pillar of rhetoric. For instance, as the students write in response to AP-style prompts, they will try to subordinate everything they know (that is, remember) about language in order to achieve some kind of specific effect. This idea of subordinating memory comes from the contemporary poet James Wright, who, when asked how he wrote, replied, “When I write a poem, I try to subordinate everything I know to a single effect, every time.” Wright also liked to memorize poems and took great pride in his ability to commit verses to memory. He felt that memorization

One clear message in the first chapter is that rhetoric is something you do every day. When you decide to read something challenging—one of your lessons for school, an editorial column in a magazine you subscribe to, or an informative site on the Internet—you don’t say to yourself, “Okay, now I have to be a rhetorician.” You simply say, “Okay, now I’m going to read,” and then you *use* skills and strategies to guide and assist your reading. Similarly, when you begin to write something—a paper for one of your classes, a letter applying for an award, or an e-mail to a friend—you don’t say, “Now, I must be a rhetorician.” You simply write (knowing what a complex process that is!), and you employ the skills and strategies that have worked for you in the past.

The goal of this chapter is to raise your awareness of *how* you do these things. In this chapter, we explain a set of traditional rhetorical concepts and examine strategies for using those concepts as you read and write. These concepts include what classical rhetoricians called the **canons**—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery—all the elements involved in written or spoken communication. As you learn about each of the five canons, you will understand how valuable they are for shaping your thoughts as a rhetorically sensitive reader and for guiding your actions as a rhetorically effective writer. You will also see how helpful they are as **heuristic** devices, points of reference that you can return to regularly and systematically as you analyze what you read with a rhetorician’s eye and as you plan writing that will be rhetorically effective.

Like the angles on the rhetorical triangle, the canons are useful perspectives from which to see rhetoric at work in everyday life. We’ll review quickly two concepts that come from Chapter 1 to show how they’re related to the canons: context and appeals.

Rhetoric at Work: Context and the Three Appeals

Chapter 1 explains two truths about every piece of writing. First, a piece of writing always exists in context. A situation prompts the writer to write about a certain subject, members of an audience read the piece, and a purpose determines how the writer approaches both the situation and the audience. Second, a piece of writing works in three closely related ways to convey information to readers, to influence their thinking, and perhaps even to change their actions.

- Writing appeals to readers by making a clear, coherent statement of ideas and a central argument. Teachers of rhetoric refer to this appeal as *logos*, a Greek term that is best translated into English as “embodied thought.”
- Writing appeals to readers by offering evidence that the writer is a trustworthy, well-educated, believable person who has done his or her homework and has the best interests of the readers in mind. Teachers of

rhetoric refer to this appeal as ethos, which translates roughly as “good-willed credibility.”

- And writing appeals to readers by relating to, and sometimes even speaking directly to, their emotions and interests. Teachers of rhetoric refer to this appeal as pathos, which translates roughly as “feeling.” The English cognate words *sympathy* and *empathy* are directly related to this appeal. A good writer wants his or her readers to empathize with—or, literally, to feel—his or her ideas and arguments.

While there is some value in examining how a piece of writing accomplishes each of these appeals separately, it’s important to remember that the appeals are closely related. In other words, when you are analyzing the rhetorical effectiveness of a piece of writing, you need to examine how its statement and development of central ideas and larger claims both establish the credibility of its writer and tap into the emotions and interests of the reader. When you are planning your own writing, you need to analyze the same intertwined appeals in your own work.

Each of the five canons of rhetoric described below suggests strategies you can use to make a text appeal to your readers.

- Invention strategies help you to generate material that is clear, forceful, convincing, and emotionally appealing.
- Techniques of **arrangement**, **style**, and **delivery** help you to put your material in structures, patterns, and formats that will be understandable to your readers and help them to see you as a credible, sympathetic, even impressive person.
- Methods of tapping into your readers’ **memories** and cultural associations will assist your efforts to clarify your ideas and arguments for readers and will help them to see you as a person who is on their side, who is one of them.

Activity

Picture the following magazine ad. The advertisement is for *Stone Soup: The Magazine for Young Writers and Artists*. The ad lists two quotations: “The *New Yorker* of the 8 to 13 set,” from *Ms. magazine*, and “Blessings on the adult advisers of this enterprise,” from the *New Yorker*. The copy then reads: “Christmas, Hanukkah, birthdays—*Stone Soup* is a gift that brings hours of enjoyment, not just on the day it is received but throughout the year. *Stone Soup*’s stories, poems, and illustrations are all by children. It’s the perfect gift for creative 8- to 13-year-olds.”

In a small group, discuss the central argument of this ad and decide its primary appeal—to logos, pathos, or ethos. Rewrite the ad with another primary appeal.

was an important aspect of poetry. Although memory is often discounted, something important can still be gained from memorization—that is to say, from knowing something “by heart.”

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The original advertisement’s primary appeal is to ethos. The ad quotes reputable magazines (*Ms. magazine* and the *New Yorker*) to bring credibility to the product.

New ad appealing to pathos:

Are you a creative person between the ages of 8 and 13?

Do you like to read, draw, or write?

Would you like to see poems, stories, and drawings made by children just as creative as you?

Are you thinking of having any of your own works published?

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions above, *Stone Soup* is the magazine for you! Order now by phone or online.

Invention

Most people think of invention as the act of creating something new—a new product, process, device, or formula. This is not exactly the meaning of invention that rhetoricians use. The term *invention* in rhetoric comes from the Latin verb *invenire*, meaning “to find.” Inventing as a rhetorician is like conducting an inventory. Stores have to close every now and then to take an inventory—they need to *find* what products they have on their shelves and analyze their stock so that they can plan sales better. Similarly, rhetorically skilled readers need to take inventories, finding and analyzing what a writer did to state and develop the main ideas in a work. Rhetorically skilled writers, likewise, take inventories of what they have in their storehouses of experiences, ideas, reading background, and observations that they can effectively pull together in a composition. Invention, then, is the art of finding and developing material.

Just as some writers like to make a definite plan before they begin a writing project and others simply begin writing and see what emerges, some people find it helpful to invent using a clearly defined strategy, while others like to invent more spontaneously. We’ll call the clearly defined invention strategies *systematic* and the more open and spontaneous ones *intuitive*. In this chapter, we’ll describe the systematic strategies in some detail and then show you intuitive strategies at work in scenarios in Chapter 3.

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Students should be aware that they use both systematic and intuitive forms of invention but that individual students use the two to different degrees. For some students, systematic planning is essential. These are the students who like to be told how to formulate a paragraph. Others, whose invention is more intuitive, will be more comfortable brainstorming with less direction.

Students who have difficulty with intuitive invention strategies may feel blocked when asked to write sophisticated prose in timed situations. So proctor brainstorming sessions or stream-of-consciousness discovery sessions to give these students opportunities to write intuitively.

Systematic Invention Strategy I: The Journalist’s Questions

Perhaps the most widely known systematic invention strategy is the journalist’s questions. When journalists write news stories, they ask six questions:

- Who was involved?
- What took place?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- How did it happen?

A skilled journalist can write a lead that answers all six of those questions, and then write the remainder of the news story simply by unpacking, or describing point by point, the details about each of those six points.

The journalist’s questions are a useful device for comprehending clearly what you read. Consider, for example, the section of “Civil Disobedience” in which Thoreau discusses spending a night in jail. Using the journalist’s questions as a guide, the reader can say that Thoreau was arrested and put in jail for one night sometime prior to 1849 when he composed “Civil Disobedience.”

The jail was in Concord, Massachusetts. Thoreau was jailed for refusing to pay his poll tax. The arrest apparently happened without resistance from Thoreau himself. That's the simple who-what-when-where-why-and-how of the case.

This bare outline, of course, does little to explore the rich substance of Thoreau's piece. Let's work through the journalist's questions a second time and see what taking a thorough inventory with the six questions reveals about how Thoreau appeals to his audience and achieves his purpose.

- **Who was involved?** Certainly Thoreau himself, but what about the other jailed person we learn about, Thoreau's cellmate, the person whom the jailer introduced as "a first-rate fellow and a clever man"? Why do you suppose Thoreau describes him in such detail? Here is a man who is allegedly a criminal, yet he gets several months of free room and board in a neatly decorated cell and goes out every day to work at harvesting hay. Do you think Thoreau is making any comment about the American system of justice and incarceration with such a description?
- **What took place?** Clearly, on one level, the event was just a night in jail for Thoreau. But take a closer look at the paragraph that begins, "It was like traveling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night." Thoreau clearly did more than simply sleep in the cell. What ideas do you think Thoreau is trying to suggest by seeing his "native place in the light of the Middle Ages"?
- **When did it happen?** The timing is vital, and you need to know a bit more background information to understand fully this passage from "Civil Disobedience." In 1848, the United States was involved in a war with Mexico, a war that many intellectuals, including Thoreau, thought was unwarranted and unethical. Knowing this, how do you think Thoreau capitalizes on the times he's living in?
- **Where did it happen?** The location is very important, but its significance emerges only when you know that Concord, Massachusetts, where Thoreau was jailed, was not simply some small New England town. Concord was a site of one of the major battles in the American War for Independence, fought some 70 years before Thoreau wrote "Civil Disobedience," and was during his lifetime a center for intellectual ferment in the young United States.
- **Why did it happen?** The arrest happened because Thoreau failed to pay his poll tax, but that fact as well warrants more examination. A poll tax was a tax levied against all citizens of voting age to support the activities of the government. Since Thoreau disagreed with the government's actions, particularly its waging war against Mexico, he refused to pay the required tax.
- **How did it happen?** Thoreau was arrested with little fanfare, but the quiet uneventfulness of Thoreau's arrest underscores a major point he makes in "Civil Disobedience." If a person is morally justified in objecting to the laws under which he or she lives, that person has a right—Thoreau might even

MEDIA CONNECTION

To expand the discussion of journalists' questions, students can bring in news articles from the *New York Times* (or other newspapers with a national reputation) to verify that the leads answer the six questions. If neither the lead nor the rest of the article answers all six questions, ask students what has been emphasized instead, then ask how the article might be different had that question been addressed.

say a duty—to refuse to obey those laws. But the refusal must be civil—no big protests, no violence, just refusal.

A conscientious and comprehensive application of the journalist’s questions, as you can see, produces an ample inventory of the ideas introduced and developed in a text.

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY

The news story must answer the following questions.

WHO

- is former President Jimmy Carter?
- is responsible for a lack of stability in the Middle East?
- if anyone was President Carter influenced by?
- else may have helped him?

WHAT

- is the Nobel Peace Prize?
- was entailed in his effort?
- was the situation before he helped?
- is it now?

WHEN

- did he make all of these efforts?
- had he been aiding this cause?

WHERE

- was he awarded this prize?
- exactly was the area he tried to improve?

HOW

- did he promote stability in the Middle East?

WHY

- did he promote stability in the Middle East?
- did he receive the award and not someone else?

Activity

Consider the following lead paragraph: “For his efforts in promoting stability in the Middle East, former President Jimmy Carter yesterday was awarded the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize.” Given this lead, what details is this news story obligated to unpack for readers?

Activity

Just as the journalist’s questions can be used systematically to take an inventory of what a writer does to achieve a purpose, so you can use them when you are planning to write. Think about a paper you are working on right now or will begin soon, and use the journalist’s questions to come up with as much material as possible. You may have relatively little to say about some of the questions and a lot to say about others, and you may not eventually *use* everything you generate, but writers almost always have more material than actually gets into final drafts.

- In the situation you are writing about, who was involved? Who was the central person? What people were around this person in the situation, interacting with him or her? How were the central person and the other person(s) in the situation connected or related?
- What took place? What were the obvious main actions and events? What are some other actions and events that might be related to the main ones?
- When did it happen? Why was the timing important? Was there a feeling of crisis or immediacy in the situation? If so, what caused it? If not, did its absence make any difference in the situation?
- Where did it happen? Why was the location important? What persons, actions, and events surrounded the main one you are writing about?
- Why did it happen? What were the main obvious causes? Were more subtle, difficult-to-detect causes present?
- How did it happen? What means were used to achieve a result in the situation?

Systematic Invention Strategy II: Kenneth Burke's Pentad

In his influential book *A Grammar of Motives*, the twentieth-century critic and philosopher Kenneth Burke sets out a systematic invention strategy called the **dramatistic pentad**, which on the surface looks like the journalist's questions. (*Pentad* is a Greek word meaning "group of five.") But there is a difference between the two strategies, and this difference makes the **pentad** a good device for analyzing the substance of a text you read and for taking an inventory of what you might write.

Burke proposes the five points of the pentad as things a person could say not only about a written text but also, more broadly, about any purposeful or intentional act that communicates meaning. Here are the five points:

- **Act:** What happened?
- **Scene:** When and where did it happen?
- **Agent:** Who did it?
- **Agency:** How was it done?
- **Purpose:** Why was it done?

Instead of the who-what-when-where-why-and-how of the journalist's questions, Burke's pentad offers a what-when-where-who-how-and-why series. It also offers a way to see these questions as potentially related to one another, with some relationships potentially more significant than others. Because it provides a way to understand relationships, it is particularly useful as a strategy for analyzing human behavior, in real life or in literature.

Burke's pentad becomes most useful for both analysis of a situation and invention of one as you consider those elements in relationships, which Burke called **ratios**. Burke makes clear that constructing these ratios can be playful. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers about them. Instead, they may be what he calls **casuistries**, little mental games a rhetorical analyst or writer can play to examine a particular communicative act or to plan a piece of writing.

Here's an example of a casuistry, the mental exercise of creating ratios from a situation by using the elements of the pentad.

George Washington chopped down the cherry tree.

Scene-act: The act follows from the circumstances.

In the eighteenth century, boys chopped down trees.

Agent-act: The act follows from the character of the person.

George was a practical action-oriented fellow even as a child.

Agency-act: The act follows from the available means.

The axe was sharper than George thought and sliced through the trunk.

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Burke's pentad is complex. He is interested not just in language but also in philosophy. However, the students can use his nomenclature to look more deeply into any act in order to discover motives and points of view. Burke believes that all acts lack innocence, and not to recognize the guilt, or point of view, of all acts is naïve.

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Here is a whole different set of statements and ratios for the Washington sentence:

Scene-act: Cherry trees are more exceptional than oak trees; their exceptionality made the act invigorating for a boy.

Agent-act: George was ambitious.

Agency-act: The axe was there, and George never remained idle for long.

Purpose-act: George was restless and knew how to use the axe.

Act-act: George had always done physical work each day.

Purpose-act: Something needs to be done to accomplish the act.

George was given the axe so that he could learn to chop.

Act-act: The act follows from other acts.

George had chopped down many other trees before without notice.

You can see how creating ratios from situations allows you to consider possible motives or reasons for behavior. Consciously or unconsciously, writers formulate ratios as they decide which elements of stories they will highlight and which they will omit or play down. You could create other statements, and other ratios, from the sentence “George Washington chopped down the cherry tree,” and each would reveal something potentially interesting about the situation.

To see how the pentad can help you both analyze the substance of a text and take an inventory of what you might do in a successful one yourself, let’s return to an issue introduced in Chapter 1, the proposal by the Downers Grove village council to build a water amusement park on Belmont Road in that suburb. As you recall, it was the village’s persistence in planning this theme park that led residents to put signs in their yards that read, defiantly, NO MEANS NO. The protest came in response to the village’s proposal. Here are some possibilities that might explain the situation:

Scene-act: The residents put up the sign because a theme park is not appropriate in their neighborhood.

Agent-act: Residents, feeling betrayed by their elected officials, demonstrated their frustration with the village council.

Agency-act: The signs were unambiguous and demonstrated the solidarity of the residents in their protest.

Purpose-act: Signs along the major street in the village would make officials and the media take notice.

Act-act: Other businesses that had negatively affected the neighborhood had been allowed to encroach upon property.

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY

Act: Mike Cameron wears Pepsi shirt to school.

Scene-act: He wears his shirt to Greenbrier High School during Coke Day.

Agent-act: Mike and his friends were announcing their favored brand of cola.

Agency-act: They wore shirts with the Pepsi logo instead of the Coke logo.

Activity

Work with the five points of Burke’s pentad and several ratios to analyze the following editorial, which was posted on “The Scrivener,” a Web site that welcomes submissions from high school writers. First of all, consider the *act* as Mike Cameron’s wearing the Pepsi shirt to school. What would you say about the other four points in the pentad? Which ratios would you emphasize in taking an inventory of what the author, Joel Caris, did in the piece? Then think of the act as Mike Cameron’s suspension from Greenbrier High School, and answer the same questions. Finally, consider the act as the prize money awarded by the Coca-Cola Bottling Company.

A somewhat disturbing event occurred in Evans, Georgia. Greenbrier High School suspended a 19 year old student, Mike Cameron, for wearing a Pepsi shirt. The shirt did not have a marijuana leaf on it, did not promote alcohol or tobacco, and implied nothing sexual. It was simply a shirt with a Pepsi logo on it. Most schools do not consider wearing a Pepsi shirt a punishable offense. Greenbrier, however, did consider it a punishable offense—at least for one day.

It was Coke Day at the high school. Coca-Cola executives were visiting the school, which was competing for a \$500 prize in a contest set up by the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Augusta. Greenbrier High School was also competing nationally for a much more substantial prize of \$10,000. The disturbing part of this story is not that a high school hoped to receive a little monetary assistance from a local company. The disturbing part is the implications that come with the awarding of corporate money to public schools and what that high school did in an effort to win the money.

Coke Day activities included the baking of Coke cakes in home economic classes. In science classes, experiments were conducted to determine the sugar content of Coke and the day's finale was a school picture of the high school students spelling out "Coke."

When Cameron and fellow classmate Dan Moxley decided to express their soft drink preference by proudly displaying Pepsi shirts during the school picture, they were both suspended for a day. Apparently, Greenbrier High School was quite upset at the boys' use of self-expression at such an inopportune time. Cameron was scolded by administration and told he might have cost the school \$10,000.

What is frightening about this story is the school's reaction when faced with the possibility of free money. This was a public high school, supported by taxpayer money, blatantly pandering to a big corporation. So eager was Greenbrier to cash in on the contest that they condemned a teenager for professing a personal choice and forced their students to participate in classroom activities that resembled Coke commercials more than they did educational lessons.

Public schools should not be partaking in corporate sponsorship. By allowing such things to take place, we are hurting our education system—a system that has suffered too many blows as it is. Considering the funding crisis many schools are experiencing, it is understandable that they would be eager to come across a little extra cash. However, public schools can not be compromising their objectivity and true purpose—education—to appease corporations with deep pockets and a burst of generosity in the face of free advertising.

—Joel Caris, "Corporate Sponsorship of Our Schools"

Activity

Choose one of the following:

1. Use the five points of Burke's pentad and several ratios to take an inventory of what you might write in an editorial for your local or school newspaper about one of the following topics: homelessness in America, college scholarship funding, young voters' interest in politics, the cult of celebrity, or another situation of interest.

Purpose-act: Wearing the shirt was Mike's way of practicing self-expression (his right to choose his brand of cola) and not supporting his school's corporate sponsorship.

Act: Mike Cameron is suspended from Greenbrier High School.

Scene-act: It happened during a Coke Day pep rally.

Agent-act: The school suspends him.

Agency-act: The school thought he should not have worn a Pepsi shirt.

Purpose-act: They felt he jeopardized the school's chance at winning money from Coca-Cola.

Act: Coca-Cola Bottling Company will award prize money.

Scene-act: Coca-Cola offered a contest and sent representatives to Greenbrier High School.

Agent-act: Greenbrier High School entered competition to win the \$500 and \$10,000 prizes by sponsoring "Coke Day" at the school.

Agency-act: The school organized a Coke Day to show preference for the company and win the money.

Purpose-act: Coca-Cola wants free advertisement through the school, and the school wants the money.

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY

Burke's pentad for inventory on the topic homelessness in America:

Act: A homeless man freezes to death in the winter.

Scene: Chicago, Lower Wacker Drive, January 2001.

Agent: The homeless man dies because a police officer wouldn't let him rest by the ventilation shafts of local establishments.

Agency: Police ordered the homeless man to be moved somewhere like Lower Wacker.

Purpose: To remove the eyesore of homelessness from the general public; to clean up the look of the city.

2. Use the five points of Burke's pentad and several ratios to decide how you might research one of these historical events: the Edict of Milan in 313, the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, the Cherokee Trail of Tears Removal of 1838–1839, the Women's Rights Convention in 1849, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, or a relevant event that you've studied in one of your courses.

Systematic Invention Strategy III: The Enthymeme

When you are taking inventory of how a writer has assembled material in order to make a point, or when you are planning your own writing, you need to keep in mind an important maxim about rhetoric. The maxim (paraphrased from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*) is this: People usually write about issues, problems, and subjects that admit to at least two possible viewpoints that are open to challenge or rethinking. In other words, nearly everything people write represents an **argument**, a carefully constructed and well-supported representation of the way writers see an issue, problem, or subject.

An editorial calling for more flexible attendance policies for students who work full-time would clearly be an argument. So would a petition seeking stronger governmental action against real-estate development near protected forest preserves. But you don't need a controversial, public issue in order to write an argument. Many, if not most, of the papers you might write for classes are arguments. A paper for European history about railroads in eighteenth-century England would not be simply an overview of the rail system; it would instead be a carefully reasoned, well-crafted argument about the influence of the railroads on, say, commerce, urbanization, or warfare. A paper for astronomy about the United States' lunar exploration missions in the 1960s and 1970s would probably not be simply a summary of all the flights to the moon; instead, it would be a well-planned, well-supported argument about the ultimate success of the Apollo program, or about future prospects for lunar colonization. A paper for English class calling for a comparative analysis of the styles of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald would not contain a bald listing of features of one and then the other author; instead, it would be a thoughtfully constructed, well-documented argument about the similarities and differences between the two writers' styles and about their contributions to creating influential American literature in the early twentieth century. Another way of putting all this is to say that when a writer decides on a topic, he or she has a reason to choose it. That reason—interest in rail systems, hope for space exploration, opinions about Fitzgerald—determines how and how much the writer will say to an audience.

Part of the invention of ideas involves the rhetorical concept of the **enthymeme** (pronounced EN-thuh-meem). When writers invent, they work through premises for the arguments they advance and write to guide readers in considering logical relationships among ideas as well as to accede to

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The biggest difference between a syllogism and an enthymeme is that the for-

the beliefs that underlie them. This kind of logical reasoning from beliefs and statements Aristotle called the **sylllogism** (SIH-luh-jih-zəm), and the enthymeme is itself a kind of syllogistic reasoning. The pattern of the syllogism is in three parts: **a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.** The major premise is always some irrefutable **generalization** about the world, the minor premise is always some particular statement that falls under the general category, and the conclusion is always the statement that follows from the major premise and the minor premise. Here is a classic syllogism, taught in logic courses for centuries:

Major premise: All humans are mortal. (irrefutable generalization)

Minor premise: Socrates is a human. (particular instance of the generalization)

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal. (idea that logically follows)

And here is a syllogism about a more current topic.

Major premise: All U.S. citizens who are single, under 65 years old, and earn more than \$7,200 a year must file a federal income tax return.

Minor premise: Jody McGillicutty is a single U.S. citizen under 65 who earned \$7,300 last year.

Conclusion: Therefore, Jody McGillicutty must file a federal income tax return.

Notice that the progression from premise to conclusion in the syllogism is airtight. You can't argue with the conclusion of a syllogism structured correctly—that is, when the major premise is an irrefutable general truth and when the minor premise is a particular instance of that general truth.

Major premise: Women are wise.

Minor premise: Kate is a woman.

Conclusion: Therefore, Kate is wise.

But if the major premise is arguable—perhaps all women are not wise—the syllogism breaks down.

An enthymeme resembles a syllogism in the movement of its own logic, but it differs from a syllogism in two important ways. Instead of having an irrefutable general truth for a major premise, an enthymeme has as its starting point an assumption, a statement, or a proposition that the writer *presumes* the audience accepts and that the writer can build an argument upon. And, because the writer presumes, or wants to presume, that the audience believes and accepts the assumption that holds the major-premise slot, that part of the argument frequently goes unstated. In most arguments, the writer provides the

mer undoubtedly arises in the context of studying logical fallacies. Much fallacious reasoning has been documented by the paradoxical use of syllogisms. For example, if a major or minor premise is not true (as is the case with the example on page 15 about wise women), then the syllogism is fallacious. But what is important to recognize is that the syllogism, though fallacious, still seems logical. Logic itself is a system that can use reason to its own advantage. Students may be surprised to discover that logic does not equal truth or reality.

An enthymeme, on the other hand, is the more subtle argument, and in many ways, all writing exemplifies enthymemes because all writing has unstated premises.

READING CONNECTION

Enthymeme is at work in Caris's essay on page 41. Caris's major premise is unstated: the effects of corporate influence on public schools outweigh any monetary donations that a corporation might provide. Also,

notice the following syllogism at work in the penultimate paragraph:

Premise 1: The public high school was “pandering” to the corporation.

Premise 2: The school “condemned” a teenager for “professing a personal choice.”

Conclusion: The school values money above educational integrity.

What is important to recognize is that syllogisms, usually, are too vague. We do not, in this case, know what the \$10,000 funded, and the money’s allocation may be a reasonable justification for someone forming an opinion about this example.

Jonathan Swift’s essay “A Modest Proposal” is strikingly paradoxical; students can see the overdevelopment of logical arguments in the enthymemes underlying Swift’s reasoning.

other parts of the enthymeme and assumes that the audience is going to complete for itself the unspoken major premise.

Unstated premise: [Women are wise.]

Minor premise: Kate’s a woman.

Conclusion: Of course, she gave me good advice.

Consider an enthymeme that might sit at the center of the petition, briefly described above, that calls for stronger governmental action against excessive real-estate development near forest preserves. Let’s say that the central argument in the petition is this: Because the construction of large housing developments that adjoin forest preserves upsets the ecosystem and drives wild animals out of their natural habitats, governments should limit the number and size of houses built in such developments. The enthymeme as presented here contains only a minor premise—that is, one or more observations about the situation at hand—and a conclusion.

Major premise: [Unstated]

Minor premise: The construction of large housing developments that adjoin forest preserves upsets the ecosystem and drives animals such as deer, raccoons, and skunks out of their natural habitats. (two particular observations about the situation at hand)

Conclusion: Therefore, city, county, and state governments should limit the number and size of houses built in such developments.

What is the unspoken major premise here? What does the writer of this petition assume—or want to assume—that the audience already feels, thinks, believes, or knows about the situation at hand? It is this: As creatures of the earth, animals deserve a habitat, just as humans do.

A petition like this one would probably offer substantial documentation for its minor premise, providing statistics about the number of animals hit by automobiles in developing areas and about the possible spread of disease and destruction caused by animals being driven out of their natural habitats. The petition might also provide some details of a plan, hinted at in the enthymeme’s conclusion, for governments to limit developments next to forest preserves. But the petition would never actually have to state its major premise explicitly. Would it be stronger and more effective if it did? Maybe the petition is stronger *because* the readers have to do the work of filling in the major premise themselves.

What happens when a writer makes an enthymeme that an audience might *not* accept? When you analyze an argument or plan one of your own, you should consider this possibility and look for it. As a case in point, let’s look at the enthymeme we’ve just been working with, now presented in its fully stated form.

Major premise: Animals such as deer, raccoons, and skunks, as creatures of the earth, deserve a stable ecological habitat in which to live, as do humans.

Minor premise: The construction of large housing developments that adjoin forest preserves upsets the ecosystem and drives animals such as deer, raccoons, and skunks out of their natural habitats.

Conclusion: Therefore, city, county, and state governments should limit the number and size of houses built in such developments.

What if a reader responded to the argument by saying, “Animal rights are fine, but humans are more important than animals, and humans have a right to alter ecological habitats to suit their own needs”? If a reader responded this way to the argument, whether the major premise was explicitly stated or left tacit, then the writer would be up against an instance of what ancient rhetoricians called *petitio principii*, or **begging of the question**. When readers respond in this way to an argument, the writer must attempt to change the audience’s minds. What had been the unspoken major premise, the tacit starting point, of the central enthymeme becomes the conclusion of a new enthymeme. The writer thinks about what unspoken assumption this new enthymeme rests upon and considers a new major, unstated assumption. Here, for example, is how one might argue to change the minds of anyone who initially begged the question of the first enthymeme.

[Major premise:] [unstated: All creatures of the earth play a natural role in maintaining the ecological stability of an area.]

Minor premise: Animals such as deer, raccoons, and skunks contribute to the ecological stability of an area near rural property by feeding on vegetation and smaller animals.

Conclusion: Animals such as deer, raccoons, and skunks, as creatures of the earth, deserve a stable ecological habitat in which to live, as do humans.

Readers who begged the first question have objections answered by the writer’s new enthymeme.

When writers chart out an enthymeme, they focus on just the skeleton—the structure, or the shape—of an argument. As the argument gets fleshed out in writing, writers would likely provide specific details to support the premises or the conclusion, and they might draw on stylistic and organizational resources to help make the case. These might include, of course, an appeal to the credibility and character of the writer (an appeal to *ethos*) or to the emotions and interest of the audience (an appeal to *pathos*) as well as to the audience’s logical ability to reason through examples and proofs toward a conclusion (an appeal to *logos*).

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY**Major premise:**

(unstated) People should not drive SUVs, or companies should not make SUVs.

Minor premise: SUVs

emit 7.5 times more air pollution, use more gas, and “slide over cars’ bumpers and sturdy door sills, slamming into passenger compartments” of smaller vehicles.

Conclusion: SUVs are

“the world’s most dangerous vehicle.”

READING CONNECTION

The expression *topics of invention* comes from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, which is widely available. A useful, hyperlinked chart of Aristotle’s topics is available at [humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Canons/Invention/TOPICS%20OF%20INVENTION/ TOPICS.HTM](http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Canons/Invention/TOPICS%20OF%20INVENTION/TOPICS.HTM).

TEACHING RHETORIC

As you navigate *basic topics*, students can generate their own examples to correspond to each topic.

For example, for *possible and impossible*, students can identify a past human achievement in order to speculate on the possibility of a new human achievement. Conversely, they can

Activities

1. In his book *High and Mighty*, Keith Bradsher labels the sports utility vehicle (SUV) “the world’s most dangerous vehicle.” He points out that the Ford Explorer gets 14 miles to a gallon of gas, less than half what the average new automobile in Japan gets. He notes that the Chevy Suburban emits 7.5 times more air pollution than the average automobile. He reports how in traffic accidents, “SUVs . . . slide over cars’ bumpers and sturdy door sills, slamming into passenger compartments” of smaller vehicles. Describe Bradsher’s argument as an enthymeme. Explain the unspoken assumption that forms the major premise.
2. Find a short piece of writing from class reading or from the newspaper. Create an enthymeme from the argument it makes.

Systematic Invention Strategy IV: The Topics

One of the most thorough devices for examining and analyzing the substance of something you read and for taking an inventory of what you yourself might write is the set of **topics** of invention drawn from Aristotle’s works. It’s easy for a modern student to be confused by the term *topics* because the people they know often use the term to mean the subject matter a writer might write about. But the topics as Aristotle described them refer not to the subjects of compositions but to the *places* a writer might go to discover methods for proof and strategies for presenting ideas. The word *topos* means “place,” in fact, in Greek. The writer might find special places to reference—the public good for a paper on political issues, for example. But the most important use of the topics for invention is in the types of reasoning a writer might engage in to create an argument. As you’ll see, each of the four basic topics and each of the common topics represent a place where writers can use particular patterns of reasoning to generate ideas and supporting material that audiences will probably accept as valid and legitimate.

The Basic Topics

According to Aristotle, there are four **basic topics** a writer can use to find material for writing on any subject. These four topics are such ordinary patterns of reasoning that Aristotle calls them the **konnoi topoi**—literally, the “**people’s topics**.” Here are the topics and examples of how they can be used to generate material for oral and written discussion.

- **Possible and impossible:** Using this topic for invention, you look for material that allows you to argue that if X is possible, then so is Y, or that if X is impossible, then so is Y.

EXAMPLE Suppose you are writing a letter to your congressional representatives asking that they support increased funding for cancer research. Arguing the possible, you might say that since the scientific community came up with cures for typhoid fever, diphtheria, polio, and a range of other diseases, it's possible for them to find a cure for cancer provided there is sufficient funding for research. Or say you are writing about life-supporting conditions on planets other than Earth. Arguing the impossible, you might reason that since the polar ice caps on Earth can't support much life, it's certainly impossible for life as we know it to survive on planets largely covered by ice.

- **Past fact:** This topic allows you to consider ideas suggesting that, given all the known conditions, X probably happened in the past.

EXAMPLE You are writing about Babe Ruth for a history of sports course, examining whether he really did “call the shot” on his famous home run at Wrigley Field. You read the inconclusive accounts of the event and, based on what you've read about Ruth's bold personality and showmanship, you argue that he did indeed point with his bat to the very place in the stands where he intended to hit the home run—just before he hit it right to that spot. Or suppose you are writing a paper about President Harry Truman's decision to order the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. You might argue, given all the historical facts and interpretations surrounding those events, that the United States was, as Truman maintained, simply trying to end the war more quickly than it could have without the bomb.

- **Future fact:** Using this topic, you can find ideas that allow you to argue that X will probably happen in the future.

EXAMPLE You are writing a paper analyzing the proposals to build a Star Wars defense system—a system of satellites that would shoot down incoming missiles and protect the United States from attack. You argue that, given the history of defense systems built ostensibly for defensive purposes being used instead to attack other countries, in all probability any Star Wars system would be used offensively rather than defensively.

- **Greater and less:** This topic allows you to argue that since X happened, so will Greater-Than-X, or if Y happened, so will Less-Than-Y.

EXAMPLE Imagine you are writing an analysis of whether increased standardized testing will lead to higher achievement in public schools. Arguing the greater, you could claim that if the state of Texas can show gains in student performance as a result of a rigorous program of testing in the schools, so can all the states if they simply follow the Texas model. Or suppose you are writing a paper for an education class about vertical teams, groups of teachers at different grade levels who try to sequence instruction so that one grade leads carefully to the next. Arguing the less, you could claim that if large corporations can improve their product by creating vertical teams across levels of management and labor, so can small schools.

identify a past failure in human achievement to argue about the futility/impossibility of a new human achievement.

For *greater and less*, students can speculate on refinements and progress as well as on deterioration in our culture.

Regardless of the topic, students will begin to see how carefully they need to consider and reconsider the invention process.

TEACHING RHETORIC

As you work through *common topics*, acknowledge their overlap with what are generally referred to as *rhetorical modes*. The most important thing for the students to understand is that within a given text many different rhetorical modes can be used, and rarely does a sole mode reign. However, an overarching mode is usually apparent. A writer does not usually sit down and decide to write in a certain mode; instead, the mode develops as appropriate as the writer negotiates with the audience. The common topics are straightforward yet, when mixed appropriately, can generate subtle and powerful arguments.

The Common Topics

A second set of topics useful for taking an inventory of the substance of a text you might analyze or for generating material for your own compositions has its origin in Aristotle's philosophical treatise called, simply, the *Topics*. This second set, which includes the previously mentioned four basic topics as a single topic called *circumstances*, is referred to simply as the **common topics**. Again, let's look at them and examples of using them for taking an inventory of what you might write in a composition.

- **Definition:** Using this topic for invention, you generate material by defining key terms, providing for each term its genus, or the class of things it belongs to, and species, the features that distinguish the thing being defined from all other items in its class.

EXAMPLE Think about writing a paper arguing that students with learning disabilities ought to be exempted from taking standardized tests. You would need to demonstrate clearly what you mean by the term *learning disability* by describing as fully as possible what you mean generally by disability and then clarifying which disabilities specifically influence a person's learning.

- **Division:** Using this topic for invention, you divide some or all of your subject matter into parts.

EXAMPLE You are writing a paper on how to successfully perform a major role in a play. You might divide this whole topic initially into two parts: how to rehearse and how to perform. And then you might divide the rehearsal part into three additional sections: how to prepare for rehearsal, how to act during the rehearsal, and how to debrief yourself with your fellow cast members after each rehearsal.

- **Comparison and contrast:** Using this topic for invention, you generate similarities (comparisons) or differences (contrasts) about aspects of your subject matter.

EXAMPLE Imagine that you are writing a brochure about the best colleges for a person who is interested in community service. After consulting the catalogues and Web sites of a half dozen or so colleges with community service programs, you might show how the colleges are similar and different on these dimensions: relation of community service to students' majors, relation of community service to general education, range of community needs served by the programs, and proximity and accessibility of the community service programs to the college campus.

- **Relationships:** Using this topic for invention, you can generate material that shows different kinds of relationships between aspects of your subject matter.

EXAMPLE Suppose you are writing an analysis of whether increasing the number of lanes on a congested highway will actually eliminate most of the traffic jams. Arguing a **causal relationship**, or a cause-and-effect relationship, you could point out that increasing the number of lanes will actually make traffic worse because, with greater accessibility along the highway,

more homes and businesses will be built, thus attracting even more cars. Or suppose you are writing a paper about the growth of women's sports in high schools and colleges. Arguing an **antecedent-consequence relationship**, you could make a case that when women's sports become as important to a school as men's, then women's teams will need the same kinds of institutional support in terms of locker rooms, travel arrangements, uniforms, cheerleaders, and so on. Or, to take another example, suppose that you are writing a paper about how slowly a bill providing funding for social programs moves through Congress. Arguing the relationship known as **contradictions**, or contraries, you could claim that since the complicated layers of governmental bureaucracy keep such programs in constant need of funding, a more streamlined procedure in Congress would keep a regular source of funds flowing to social programs.

- **Circumstances:** These topics include the (1) possible and the impossible, (2) past fact, and (3) future fact, all covered within the four basic topics outlined in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and described above.
- **Testimony:** Using this topic of invention, you can generate material by investigating what authorities or people with extensive experience with your subject say about it. In addition, you can generate material by consulting any documents, laws, or precedents pertaining to your subject.

EXAMPLE Imagine, again, that you are writing a paper about the growth of women's sports in high schools and colleges. You could collect testimony by interviewing the athletic directors of several schools, and asking about their experiences with the growth of female participation in sports. You could read primary material from the federal government about Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the law that helps to foster equal funding for men and women in all educational activities including sports, and secondary material—books, articles, and chapters about the sharp growth in women's participation in athletics.

Activity

Read the following editorial column, "The ABC's of Home Schooling," by Julia Morse. With the members of a small group, analyze how Morse uses the following topics to generate material for her column: (1) the greater, (2) the possible, (3) division, (4) cause-and-effect relationship, and (5) comparison. Once you have finished analyzing Morse's invention, make up a paragraph with your group on Morse's issue. Use at least one of the following topics: (1) definition, (2) future fact, and/or (3) testimony.

THE ABC'S OF HOME SCHOOLING

Julia Morse

As a blissfully unattached single devoid of responsibility for anything (except my rent) and anyone (save my bevy of blissfully unattached friends), I've always found nothing more frightening than the prospect of having kids of my own to feed and

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY

GREATER

- If other parents who home school have such a great number of resources, she too may home school successfully.
- If an estimated 2 million kids from different economic classes are home schooled, she thinks it may be possible for her.
- If so many people are home schooling their children, maybe it is the right thing to do. Maybe it will

be the most common way to school in the future.

- If home schooling can produce smarter children, so can she, and so can the rest of the world.

POSSIBLE

- If all of these other parents can home school their children, I must be able to.

DIVISION

- She divides the material into parts: her initial fears and misconceptions of home schooling, the event and level of involvement at the home-schooling exhibition, her interests at the event and popular seminars at the event, and her conclusion that maybe home schooling is possible for her.

CAUSE/EFFECT

- Since going to the exhibition, she feels home schooling is not as hard as she had thought.

COMPARISON

- She compares her stereotype (that home-schooled kids are extremely intelligent) with the actuality of the event.

TEST PREP: CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS

See page 267 for multiple-choice questions based on the Morse passage.

shelter. Recently, though, I've been dwelling on something far scarier: educating them—myself. With an estimated two million kids from all economic classes now schooled at home, this isn't just idle worrying on my part. And considering I will surely never make enough money to pay for private schools—and fancy myself always living in hip urban centers with shoddy public schools—somewhere down the line home schooling might actually prove the most attractive option. After all, I do write articles every week on how to fix the nation's schools. How hard would it be to actually do it?

My actual knowledge of home schooling was rather limited, mainly to those geeky kids who year after year win the national spelling bee with words I can't even pronounce. To find out more I spent last weekend at a home schooling exhibition at a Denver Holiday Inn, a 5000-strong confab of parents, children and education experts who got together to purchase curriculum, take seminars and talk shop. My first lesson: these people rise with the sun. When I arrived at 7:30 am on Saturday morning, a swarm of parents had already staked out the still-shuttered exhibition hall. When they finally opened the gates and I scanned the panoply of products now geared for home schoolers, I realized why they allowed the extra time. You name it, you could buy it: day-by-day lessons from kindergarten through high school, \$600 state-of-the-art microscopes, fiddle lessons, membership in home schooling bowling and sewing leagues, natural oils meant to purify young minds. "Mom, look, they have owl pellets," one boy squealed over the crowd. I followed to find a biological supply booth ready to outfit those parents who'd delved into dissection. Also on sale: preserved sharks, sheep brains and frogs.

As much as I love formaldehyde, I was more drawn to the informational seminars. They promised to enlighten home school parents on, well, the very topics just about every parent everywhere obsesses over. What to do if your kid has ADD? How to discern your child's learning style and resolve conflicts? What kinds of foods help children concentrate—and keep them from bouncing off the walls? Unsurprisingly, the "Designing a College Preparatory High School Program" was bursting at the seams with parents. They probably made a beeline there from the vendor doing brisk business selling Princeton Review and Kaplan SAT prep software.

With support systems like this in place, home schooling certainly wasn't the lonely endeavor I'd imagined it—long days chained to the kitchen table with a couple of library books and low-tech science experiments of my own making. And after an exhausting day in Denver, I'm at least willing to admit home schooling to the realm of the possible—even the doable—provided I can ditch the lesson about the sheep's brain.

—*Time.com*, June 29, 2001

Intuitive Invention Strategies: A Preview

The systematic invention strategies are helpful for analyzing the strategies writers use and for planning your own writing. But in addition to the systematic strategies, writers can employ a number of more intuitive techniques to generate ideas, information, and perspectives. Chapter 3 presents case studies of writers using several of these strategies to plan their compositions. As a preview, here are thumbnail descriptions of these techniques.

- **Freewriting:** When you freewrite, you simply try to write, nonstop, for a set period of time—perhaps five to ten minutes—about whatever comes to mind when you think about your subject matter. Freewriting is sometimes difficult because it requires that you turn off your internal editor, that little voice inside your head that says what you *shouldn't write* because it might not be correct. Freewriting allows you to get as much writing accomplished as possible without concerning yourself with clarity, organization, or usage. The assumption is that you will shape, revise, amplify, and correct your prose as you proceed to work on a composition. Because writers often fear error overmuch at the beginning of a writing process, freewriting can allow good ideas and interesting perceptions to emerge and not get suppressed by the pressure to be right.
- **Keeping a journal:** Many writers keep a **journal** where they record their observations, their thoughts, and their responses to their reading. They may respond to prompts from their teachers or write self-generated questions and concerns. A person who writes in a journal for 20 minutes three times a week will generate a substantial amount of material that, like freewriting, can serve to encourage the flow of ideas. Journal writing can often become the basis for more formal writing.
- **Conversations:** Just talking, either with one friend or classmate or a group, can be a productive way to generate material for a composition. The better you know your conversational partners, the more you and they can ask probing questions, offer competing or complementary insights, and suggest new avenues that you should pursue in a writing project. Listening well and speaking up are ways to nurture what a writer knows and to suggest what a writer needs to know. Good talk may be your most effective strategy for invention.

TEACHING RHETORIC

Students may find teacher-supplied graphic organizers helpful during invention. However, students at this level must shortly see the organizers in their own minds' eyes so that they do not spend too much time on invention per se when writing essay responses on exams.

MEDIA CONNECTION

Show the students a scene from the movie *Finding Forrester*, starring Sean Connery. When Jamal Wallace, the young protagonist, visits William Forrester's apartment to begin writing instruction, Forrester explains the way the invention process must work. The scene, accompanied by jazz, is well done.

Arrangement

Once a writer invents—comes up with topics, decides on a focus, plans an argumentative strategy, considers proof, and maybe writes a draft or a beginning of one—the writer begins to consider how and where to place ideas, facts, and examples to make them most effective. The second canon of rhetoric is arrangement. Just as the concepts underlying the first canon, invention, help you both to analyze the texts written by someone else and to plan your own compositions, so too can the principles of arrangement help you as both reader and writer.

The principles of arrangement help a writer plan to (1) order and structure the parts of a piece of writing and (2) support the different parts. Clearly, the principles of invention and arrangement work hand in hand. As a writer, your goal in invention is to discover ideas and to take inventory of everything you might say to make your position clear and compelling. Your goal in arrangement is to select the best and most appropriate ideas, examples, and propositions from that inventory and to decide how to order the parts of the composition most effectively to help you achieve your purpose.

Genres

An important principle that helps govern arrangement is genre, the type of composition writers produce. As you recall from Chapter 1, a writer decides which genre to produce based on the context at hand and the aim he or she wants to accomplish in that context. Genres usually have their own rules for arrangement. At the beginning of this book, we noted how a script writer would make decisions about the scene based on the kind of film the scene was a part of, its genre. To take another example, scholarship applications require different formats—openings, details, endings—than science reports, in which you’d include an abstract, an explanation of the research question, a description of methods and materials, a report on findings, a discussion of results, and a list of published works you referenced. And a sonnet you might write to a sweetheart would be arranged in fourteen lines of iambic pentameter, perhaps divided according to traditional Shakespearean form into quatrains, with a final two lines, or couplet. All these guidelines about how to write a sonnet, a lab report, or an application letter revolve around genre and conventions of arrangement.

Since most of the genres a writer must produce have their own rules of arrangement, it doesn’t do you much good to look for one pattern of arrangement that works for all genres. To put it simply, there is no single pattern, no particular format, that will work in every writing situation. To be sure, though, almost every composition you write and every text you analyze have a beginning, a middle, and an end. In general terms, we can talk about the function of those sections.

- The beginning of a composition usually sets out the central question the paper will answer or the argument the paper will develop and hints at how the development will proceed.
- The middle of a paper usually offers points in support of the answer to the central question or the argument and substantiates or explores those points with examples, illustrations, details, and reasons.
- The end of a paper usually draws together the material developed in the middle and addresses the question “So what?” That is, the end tells readers what they might consider or act upon.

TEACHING RHETORIC

Ask students to consider whether or not we can ever produce a piece of writing that does not have a beginning, middle, and end. Allow their conversations to develop into semantic debates. Here, they will be debating the same issues as the classical philosophers.

This basic pattern of beginning, middle, and end, in addition to making intuitive sense, also has historical roots in the literature of ancient rhetorical theory. Aristotle, for example, wrote in his *Rhetoric* that a composition needs to have only what some people might consider the middle section: a statement of the argument, including its central and supporting points, and a proof of those points. Introductions and conclusions, according to Aristotle, are optional and should be added in situations where the audience needs to have the argument introduced in the beginning and drawn together, or synthesized, at the end. Aristotle’s teacher, Plato, on the other hand, wrote that a composition should be like a body—it needs to have a head, a torso, and feet.

As rhetorical theory developed in the 500-odd years following Aristotle's death in 322 B.C.E., teachers of rhetoric described in increasingly formal terms the principles of arrangement that then guided the construction of persuasive compositions. Most teachers of rhetoric in ancient Rome, for example, taught their students to produce a six-part speech, consisting of **exordium**, or introduction; narration; partition; confirmation; refutation; and peroration, or conclusion.

- In the **exordium**, literally the *web* that draws listeners into the speech, the speaker would introduce the subject at hand and include material that would make the audience both attentive and receptive to the argument.
- The **narration** would offer background material on the case at hand.
- The **partition** would divide the case and make clear which part or parts the speaker was going to address, which parts the speaker would not take up, and what order would be followed in the development.
- The **confirmation** would offer points to substantiate the argument and provide reasons, details, illustrations, and examples in support of those points.
- The **refutation** would consider possible objections to the argument or its supporting points and try to counter these objections.
- The **peroration** would draw together the entire argument and include material designed to compel the audience to think or act in a way consonant with the central argument.

The six-part oration was never intended to be a general format, a plan of arrangement for all arguments. It was a format for a specific genre—the courtroom declamation, in which an orator would speak on behalf of himself or a client he was called upon to represent. Now, the six-part oration is a strategic resource for readers to use in examining the many arrangement options in writing they read and for writers to use in planning moves of their own.

Functional Parts

What are these moves? What should you look for when you analyze arrangement? First of all, you can look at the entire text you are analyzing and try to divide it into some **functional parts**, remembering while you do so that not all texts are going to have all parts. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Is there some section that clearly lets the reader know what subject the composition is about and what the writer's purpose is? If so, where does this section begin and end? In this section, can you find an answer to the central question that the text has been written in response to, or can you find an indication of the text's central argument?
2. Is there a part that explains any background information that the reader needs to know in order to be able to understand the answer to

Another difference between Socrates (recorded by Plato) and Aristotle is this: Socrates famously quipped that one must “know thyself” to gain truth and wisdom. Aristotle, as the rhetorical triangle shows, understood that one must know more than “thyself” and must consider the audience.

- the central question or argument that the composition offers? If so, where does this section begin and end?
3. Is there some sentence or paragraph that focuses the readers' attention on some particular issue, aspect, or **theme** that the paper will examine in contrast to others that it might?
 4. Is there some section that purposefully sets out material in support of the paper's answer to the central question or its argument? If so, where does this section begin and end?
 5. Is there a part that examines possible objections to the answer, argument, or supporting material? If so, where does this section begin and end?
 6. Is there a sentence or section where the writer specifically answers the "So what?" question? In other words, is there a section where the writer hints at what he or she hopes readers will think and do on the basis of what they have read in the text?

By answering these questions, you can get a sense, at least provisionally, of how the parts of the text work.

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY

1. The title and the first paragraph explain the subject and the purpose. The title, "Corporate Sponsorship of Our Schools," suggests the central argument. The first paragraph begins to describe the subject.
2. The second and third paragraphs explain why the school was having Coke Day and what that entailed. It talks about the money the school was trying to win and the activities that made up Coke Day.
3. The second paragraph says, "The disturbing part of this story is not that a high school hoped to receive a little monetary assistance from a local company. The disturbing part is

Activity

Return to the column by Joel Caris, "Corporate Sponsorship of Our Schools," on page 41. Ask the six questions above about the editorial, and discuss your answers with the members of a small group.

Questions About the Parts

Now you can turn your attention to analyzing the effectiveness of the way the writer works within the parts. If you can find a part that lets the reader know the subject of the composition and the writer's purpose, you might ask yourself questions like these:

- Are the subject and purpose directly stated or implied? How does the *degree* to which these elements are revealed or concealed strike you as a reader?
- Is some angle consciously foregrounded and other material downplayed? What is the effect of this foregrounding versus backgrounding in the opening section?
- Is there a statement that suggests to the reader the course that the remainder of the paper will take? How does the presence (or absence) of such a statement affect your reading?

If you can identify a part that explains any background information necessary for the reader to know in order to understand the paper’s position, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there a statement about the direction that this part of the paper will take—any terms or phrases at the beginning of paragraphs or passages that help you move through the material, or words like “first,” “second,” or “last”? What effect do these words have on you as a reader?
- Does the writer follow any discernable order in providing this background information? Is the order chronological (arranged by time)? spatial (arranged by location)? incremental (arranged by order of importance)? What effect does the ordering of the material have on you as a reader?
- Does the writer provide transitional words or phrases that connect the sentences or paragraphs of this part? Do these words or phrases suggest that the writer is *continuing* and *adding on* to the material already presented, relating a *result* to what came earlier, or *contrasting* what comes later with what appeared earlier?

If you can identify a sentence or paragraph that focuses the readers’ attention on some particular issue, aspect, or theme that the paper examines, in contrast to others that it might, ask yourself questions like these:

- What does the writer do that *brings to the forefront* some material and consciously *puts in the background* other material? What is the effect of this foregrounding versus backgrounding in this section?
- Is there a sentence that suggests the course that the remainder of the paper will take? What effect does this mapping have on you as a reader?

If you can find a part that concentrates on support of the paper’s central question or its argument, ask yourself these questions:

- Are there words or sentences that map out the direction a part of the paper will take—words like “first,” “second,” or “last,” for example? What effect do these devices have on you as a reader?
- Do you detect any of the following methods of development in this section: relating anecdotes or longer stories, describing scenes and evoking sensory images, defining terms and concepts, dividing the whole into parts, classifying the parts according to some principle, or providing cause-and-effect reasoning? What effect on you as a reader do any of these methods of development have?

If you can identify a part that examines possible objections to the answer, argument, or supporting material, ask yourself questions like these:

the implications that come with the awarding of corporate money to public schools and what that high school did in an effort to win the money.” The piece is not going to talk about how schools are in need of money. It is going to talk about the problems that arise when corporations award money to public schools and lose sight of what is most important, the students’ education.

4. The fourth and fifth paragraphs spell out why Mike Cameron should not have been suspended for wearing his Pepsi shirt to school. It explains how out of line the school was.
5. The final paragraph offers this sentence to examine the possible objection to the argument: Considering the “funding crisis” many schools are experiencing, it is understandable that they would be eager to come across a little extra cash.
6. The final paragraph answers the “So what?” question by discussing why corporate sponsorship is hurting the education system. It acknowledges that schools need money but claims, “Public schools can not be compromising their objectivity and true purpose—education—to appease corporations with deep

pockets and a burst of generosity in the face of free advertising.”

- Is there language that suggests the writer wants to *counter* the objections? What is this language? What effect does it have on you as a reader?
- Does some language suggest that the writer wants to *concede* the objections? What is this language, and what is its effect on you?

Finally, if you can identify a part where the writer specifically addresses the question “So what?” ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there a direct charge to readers to think or act in a new way after reading the piece, or does the writer imply new ways of thinking and acting? How does the *degree* to which these elements are revealed (or perhaps concealed) persuade you?
- What does the writer do with the words, phrases, and sentences in this part to give the composition a *sound* of finality? What effect does this language have on you as a reader?

If you can generate good answers to these questions by referring to places in the text, you will have done a thorough analysis of its arrangement. In addition, you will have given yourself ideas to ponder when you follow conventions to arrange the genre that is appropriate for your own writing situation.

IMPLEMENTING THE ACTIVITY

Before assigning the activity, consider having the whole class work together with you to find the parts in the Thoreau essay included on pages 209–225. Here is one such analysis.

Exordium: Thoreau immediately draws listeners into the essay by stating in the first sentence that he accepts the motto—“That government is best which governs least” and that he “should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically.”

Narration: Thoreau makes several references to both the American government and to government in general as he enumerates his thoughts about the current

Activity

In a small group or by yourself, take a careful look at one of two kinds of texts, perhaps a paper you have recently written for one of your classes and a column on the op-ed page (that is, the page opposite the editorial page) of a major daily newspaper. Use the six groups of questions on pages 53–54 to identify the functional parts of the text. Then use the questions on pages 54–55 to analyze the effectiveness of the arrangement within each part.

Style

Simply put, style, the third canon of rhetoric, consists of the choices a writer makes regarding words, phrases, and sentences. To begin thinking about style, consider this hypothetical situation (or perhaps the situation is not completely hypothetical for you): Two people you know show up in class generally looking very different. One wears bright-colored clothes, with lots of flowing scarves and elaborate accessories—pins, bracelets, and necklaces. The other dresses completely in black—top, pants, socks, and shoes—and wears no accessories. Underneath, are both people alike, or does style reflect personality? Is style governed by occasion and appropriateness? Do you think these people make conscious choices about their style?

These questions provide a good entry point for thinking about style in writing. Each of the people described above has a style of dress, and every writer and piece of writing have a style. People choose styles to reflect themselves in their writing as well as in what they wear, and the style they choose expresses meaning. A particular clothing style or writing style can be appropriate in some situations and not in others. And, for all these reasons, stylistic choice in clothes and writing is, or can be, conscious. Conscious choice about stylistic decisions in writing can help writers reflect themselves, communicate meaning, and influence readers.

Style and Situation

If you are the kind of person who likes definite answers, style can be a baffling subject. Whether you are analyzing the style of a piece of writing or planning your own composition, the answer to nearly every question you might pose about whether particular words, sentences, or figures of speech is a *good* choice is almost always the same: “It depends.”

“What does it depend on?” you might ask (or “Upon what does it depend?” if you want to vary your style!). It depends on the concept of *situational appropriateness*. Remember that all writing emerges from a situation—a convergence of a need to write, a writer, an audience, a subject matter, a purpose, a genre, and a time and place. The question of whether a particular word, sentence, or figure of speech is right is a question of whether it is right *for the particular writing situation*.

Consider, for example, the situation when you are required to write an analytical paper for a history class.

1. The need to write comes from the inquiry you are engaged in. The study of history involves many documents and incidents that are open to interpretation, and people write about history in order to close gaps in knowledge and to offer a possible reading of the past that makes good sense to other people interested in the same historical period.
2. You, the historian, are the writer. As a historian, you are expected to come across as a person who is genuinely interested in history, uses the terminology that historians use, employs their methods for interpreting texts and events, and generates the kind of reasoned, supported points in your writing that they admire.
3. You may think the audience for your paper is only your history teacher, but it’s wise to think about the teacher as a member of a larger intellectual community of historians, who expect you to behave like one of them when you are writing a paper for their deliberation.
4. The subject matter is likely an aspect of the particular period of history you are studying—an economic, cultural, military, or social aspect—which might have some special terminology associated with it that you could be expected to use in your composition.

government in the United States on pages 210–225.

Partition: In the final paragraph on page 213, beginning “Practically speaking . . .” Thoreau makes clear that the direction of his argument is humanitarian. By bringing this to the foreground, the author seems to suggest that he will dismiss possible economic reasoning, for instance.

Confirmation: The moral stance that Thoreau takes is further confirmed by his examples of Christ and of Confucius on pages 218–219.

Refutation: By stating, on page 222, that “he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour,” Thoreau refutes any appeals to popular opinion or to historical precedents.

Peroration: In the final sentences of his essay, Thoreau appeals to the goodwill of all men by sharing his contention that the “State” can continue to improve toward perfection and glory. There, we see the deepest purpose of his essay, an attempt to further humanity.

TEACHING RHETORIC

Analyzing style is an overarching way to discuss a text. Everything that the writer does contributes to his or her style. In this way, other rhetorical devices, like tone and voice, are subsidiary. For example, in Thoreau’s essay, his “haughty tone” contributes to his overall style.

5. The purpose of your composition is to show you understand the history you write about enough to explain the particular piece of it you examine. Your goal is to present a clear, unified analysis of some historical material; to organize your analysis around a strong, salient thesis; and to support your thesis with a documented summary and with paraphrases, and quotations of material from primary and secondary historical texts.
6. The genre is the academic analytic paper, a composition that introduces the subject; states a thesis; provides ample points in support of the thesis; backs each point up with examples, reasons, illustrations, and details; and then offers a conclusion that reinforces the thesis for an audience of other historians.
7. The time and place for such a project are generally an academic term in a high school, college, or university, and all varieties of academic prose follow a rich array of stylistic choices.

Each of these individual elements in the writing situation, as well as the situation as a whole, can influence the choices you make involving words, sentences, and **figurative language**. Considering these situational elements carefully can help you decide, for example, whether to employ special terminology, to use first-person singular pronouns (*I, me, my, mine*) or to refer to the reader in the second person (*you, your, yours*), to use **contractions**, and to choose active or passive voice.

TEACHING RHETORIC

In discussing *jargon*, introduce the term *nomenclature*, which has a more positive connotation. Then have students browse the “Glossary of Rhetorical Terms” in the back of their textbook.

Explain that students are learning a new set of words, which, while seemingly complicated, are actually specific tools that we use to discuss rhetoric just as a mechanic or a surgeon needs a specific jargon or nomenclature.

Have students look through different sections of a newspaper. In the sports section, they should find sports jargon. In the business section, they should identify business jargon.

Style and Jargon

Many writing communities—academic disciplines, professional organizations, and so on—demonstrate an ambivalent attitude toward the use of specialized terminology. Admonitions such as “write for the general reader” or “avoid 20-dollar words” appear regularly in professional guides to effective writing. These cautionary statements are wise—to a certain extent. Good writers usually want to develop a style that the well-educated, diligent reader will find accessible. Moreover, writers who choose to use elaborate, complicated words *for no good reason in the writing situation* can often produce baffling, even comic effects. (A true story: One of the authors had a student who wrote the following sentence in a paper for a junior English course: “When my cat expired, I waxed lachrymose.” When asked what she meant, the student said, “When my cat died, I started crying.” The instructor urged her to use the simpler words.)

Such guiding statements as these, however, tend to oversimplify the actual word choice practices of communities of readers and writers. It’s a plain fact that many communities have specialized vocabularies that readers expect to encounter in the community’s documents and that writers new to the community are expected to know and use. Outsiders to the community often refer disparagingly to these sets of terms as **jargon**, but jargon is not necessarily bad. The use of specialized, complicated terms becomes a problem only when a writer (1) does not understand what the terms mean or (2) uses the terms in a

composition that will have an audience beyond the community of readers and writers who know the terminology. The latter case becomes even more troubling when writers use jargon, either purposefully or subconsciously, to establish their insider status in a community, knowing that their readers are not part of it.

Are You and I Okay?

Young writers in nearly all intellectual communities often feel confused about whether they may use first-person and second-person pronouns and whether they may use contractions in their compositions. Once again, the answer depends on the situation. For most academic papers, like the analytical paper for history described above, the use of first-person pronouns is not appropriate because the focus in this kind of writing is on the subject rather than on the person writing about the subject. Further, in such papers, it is not appropriate for writers to refer directly to their readers as *you*. On the other hand, if the situation calls on writers to offer a personal response to a piece of literature or a historical event, then it would be inappropriate for someone to tackle this task *without* writing in the first person. Similarly, if the situation calls for an open letter on a controversial issue to congressional representatives working on legislation to address it, then it would be nearly impossible for the writer to produce a successful letter that did not refer to the representatives directly as *you*.

Style and Contractions

The use of contractions is also governed by the notion of appropriateness. In most formal, academic papers, and in business-oriented letters and reports, writers generally avoid contractions like *it's*, *can't*, *wouldn't*, and *doesn't*. In informal papers and personal letters, writers should feel free to use the same kinds of words, including contractions, they would speak to their audience if they encountered them face to face. To contract or not to contract depends on the writer's intention, in terms of relationship with the reader and with the subject matter at hand.

Style and the Passive Voice

Guides to effective writing in many fields often urge writers to “write in the active voice” and “avoid the passive voice.” That's good advice but limited in its applicability. Remember the difference between sentences in the active voice and those in the passive voice. An active voice sentence follows this pattern:

DOER → ACTION → RECEIVER
The lab technician filtered the solution.

A passive voice sentence follows this pattern:

RECEIVER → ACTION (BY DOER)
The solution was filtered.
The solution was filtered by the lab technician.

TEACHING RHETORIC

Explain to the students that the use of the word *I* is not inappropriate—in fact, it can add power to an argument—but that, like anything else, the word should not be overused or used without an effect. The same should be said for *you*.

TEACHING RHETORIC

As for contractions, mention their colloquial effect. In other words, they sound so conversational that the audience usually assumes that the contractions denote conversation.

TEACHING RHETORIC

While the text explains that writing in the active voice is “good advice but limited in its applicability,” most students will benefit from combating their tendency to write in the passive voice. Not only will students make their biggest immediate improvement in writing—gaining concision and strength—by eliminating passive sentences, but they will also begin to eliminate sentences beginning “It is understood that”—a passive virus.

Notice three differences between the active and the passive. First, since the active voice emphasizes who did what, many readers think active sentences are stronger and more forceful. Second, since a passive-voice verb always consists of a helping verb and a main verb, sentences in the passive voice are often wordier than sentences in the active voice. Third, the doer of the action in a passive-voice sentence is expressed in a prepositional phrase following the verb, and passive-voice sentences are grammatically complete without this phrase—as “The solution was filtered” demonstrates. Therefore, some readers maintain that the passive voice is potentially irresponsible—that passive-voice sentences can conceal the doer of the action when the reader has a right to know who does what. Readers, teachers, and editors who make these claims are right. Active-voice sentences generally do sound stronger and more authoritative. Passive-voice sentences are often more difficult to process, and they do frequently conceal the doer of the action.

But a writer can rarely avoid using the passive voice altogether. It can’t be done. (Notice the passive-voice sentence.) Once again, situational appropriateness needs to be your guide when you are analyzing or planning style. Passive-voice sentences occur frequently in scientific and technical writing, where writers are trying to emphasize not who did what but what was done. Writers also use the passive voice, consciously or subconsciously, to shift material around in a sentence. As any editor will explain, the most emphatic position in any sentence is usually at or near the end, and employing the passive voice is one of several ways a writer can emphasize a subject by moving it from beginning to end of the sentence.

TEACHING RHETORIC

The adage “Function grows out of form” is important for students to appreciate. Too often, students look at their language as arbitrary: they think writing consists of putting down words that lead to sentences that form the tone of their writing. They should see their writing—and, therefore, their tone—as something they can control by controlling form.

Have students look at paragraphs from American Renaissance writers (such as Thoreau) to see how much longer, in general, their sentences are when compared with sentences written today. Have students

Dimensions of the Study of Style: Sentences, Words, and Figures

Three broad categories of style help writers to analyze the style of a text and to make their own stylistic choices. Every choice we analyze or make in these categories potentially affects the meaning of a composition, the reader’s perceptions of the credibility of the writer, and the willingness of the reader to accept the text’s argument or exploration. These categories are

- **Sentences:** grammatical type, placement of details, variety
- **Words:** level of elaborateness and formality, difficulty, technicality
- **Figures:** schemes and tropes (terms defined below), figurative language

Sentences

Sentences can be classified in many ways, and it’s helpful to consider the potential effect a particular type of sentence might have on a reader in a certain situation. One of the most basic ways of classifying sentences is according to the number and type of clauses in them.

- A **simple sentence** has a single independent clause.

Abraham Lincoln struggled to save the Union.

Within its single clause, a simple sentence can have a **compound subject**, a compound verb, or both.

Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson struggled to save the Union.

Abraham Lincoln struggled to save the Union and persevered.

Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson struggled to save the Union and persevered.

- A **compound sentence** has two clauses, each of which could exist as a simple sentence if you removed the conjunction connecting them.

Abraham Lincoln struggled to save the Union, and Andrew Johnson assisted him.

Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson struggled to save the Union and persevered, but the leaders of the Confederacy insisted that the rights of the states were more important than the maintenance of the Union.

- A **complex sentence** has two clauses, one independent and at least one subordinate to the main clause.

When the leaders of the Confederacy insisted that the rights of the states were more important than the maintenance of the Union, Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson struggled to save the Union and persevered.

- A **compound-complex sentence** has the defining features of both a compound sentence and a complex sentence.

When the leaders of the Confederacy insisted that the rights of the states were more important than the maintenance of the Union, Abraham Lincoln struggled to save the Union and persevered, and Andrew Johnson assisted him.

Why should you be concerned with whether a sentence is simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex when you are analyzing someone else's writing or planning your own? The answer is that function grows out of form. When you need to make a succinct point, often a short, simple sentence will do so effectively. A short, simple sentence can suggest to a reader that you are in control, that you *want* to make a strong point. If you're trying to show how ideas are balanced and related in terms of equal importance, a compound sentence can convey that to the reader. A single compound sentence or a series of them in a composition can suggest to your reader that you are the kind of person who takes a balanced view of challenging issues, that you want to give equal weight to more than one side of an issue. If you want to show more complicated relationships between ideas, then complex and compound-complex sentences can communicate the intricacies of your thinking. A single complex

speculate on the changes in sentence length over the centuries.

Students should also realize that, above all, their prose must not be boring. Repetition, for instance, is a literary figure used for a specific effect. Students need to learn when to repeat and when to vary sentence structure.

READING CONNECTION

Some say that contemporary strategies among British and American writers of English stem from the emergence of journalistic and informational writing, both of which require brevity. At this point, you may want to highlight some excellent examples of the style of writing that is taught in composition courses today.

- George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" approaches language pragmatically and arrives at a list of rules that can be applied to students' writing at this point.
- The famous *Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White, offers a concentrated list of practical writing guidelines and has been a staple in composition courses for many years. Students may enjoy the interesting anecdote about the book's germination, which is explained in the introduction. *Elements of Style* is a short work, but covering only the first two chapters is a viable option.

- Another useful reading that illustrates the practical points made in this chapter and uses Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" as a model is "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." King's variety in clause structure, variety on the loose-period continuum, and effective use of parallelism are all impressive.

or compound-complex sentence or a series of them can cue a reader that yours is a mind that willingly takes up complicated issues and tries to make sense of them, both for yourself and for your readers.

A second method of analyzing sentences looks at them in terms of another important structural distinction—as **loose sentences** or **periodic sentences**. Just as writers can vary the number and type of clauses in a sentence according to the subject they are treating and the effect they are trying to have on readers, so can writers vary sentences along the loose-periodic continuum to achieve similar goals.

Sentences vary along the loose-periodic continuum according to how they incorporate extra details in relation to basic sentence elements. As you know, the basic elements of every sentence in English are subjects, verbs, and complements. Here is a sentence with just two basic elements:

Abraham Lincoln wept.

A loose sentence is a basic sentence with details added *immediately at the end* of the basic sentence elements:

Abraham Lincoln wept, fearing that the Union would not survive if the southern states seceded.

A periodic sentence is a sentence in which additional details are placed in one of two positions, either *before* the basic sentence elements or *in the middle of them*. Here is a periodic sentence that results from putting additional details before the basic sentence elements:

Alone in his study, lost in somber thoughts about his beloved country, dejected but not broken in spirit, Abraham Lincoln wept.

And here is a periodic sentence that results from placing additional material in the middle of the basic sentence elements:

Abraham Lincoln, alone in his study, lost in somber thoughts about his beloved country, dejected but not broken in spirit, wept.

Understanding the concepts of loose and periodic, you can achieve sentence variety by writing sentences that move along a loose-periodic continuum. The next sentence tends more toward loose than periodic:

Abraham Lincoln considered the Union an inviolable, almost eternally inspired, concept.

And the next one tends more toward periodic than loose:

Abraham Lincoln, a self-taught philosopher, a political scientist even before there was such a field, considered the Union an inviolable, almost eternally inspired, concept.

You can hear the differences in these sentences—in what is emphasized, as well as in how quickly a reader reads them. Writers use these types of sentences to effect

changes in meaning. Readers use them to understand meaning more clearly. Since, as we just mentioned, the most emphatic position in a sentence is often at or near the end, and since the second most emphatic location is the beginning, recognizing and creating loose and periodic sentences enable the reader and the writer to make wise decisions about varying sentence structure for emphasis. Even more importantly, the structure of a sentence affects the pacing of a text. A loose sentence moves quickly, and a succession of loose sentences can make a piece of prose fairly gallop along. A periodic sentence works with delay—it postpones completing the sentence until after it has provided the details. In passages where a writer wants to sound crisp, businesslike, and efficient, the loose sentence will serve the writer well. In passages where a writer wants to sound balanced, deliberate, and thoughtful, a periodic sentence will be a useful tool.

Good writers make informed decisions about sentence structure. They know their sentences not only carry meaning but also affect readers, causing them, often subconsciously, to evaluate the ethos of the writer and empathize with the writer's position. Sentence structure says much about the writer and his or her purpose, credibility, and goals.

Activities

1. Do you think the following sentence from Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* is loose or periodic?

In order to defend and protect the women and children who were left on the plantation when the white males went to war, the slaves would lay down their lives.

Rewrite the sentence in a couple of ways, experimenting with making it more loose and more periodic. In a small group, discuss how changes affect tone, purpose, and the ethos of the speaker.

2. Change the first sentence of an essay you are working on to make it more periodic or more loose. What difference does the change make in your piece or in your voice?

Parallel Structure

One particular feature of style that good writers know how to use and careful readers frequently notice is **parallelism**, or parallel structure. The basic principle of parallel structure is quite simple: When a passage, a paragraph, or a sentence contains two or more ideas that are fulfilling a similar function, a writer who wants to sound measured, deliberate, and balanced will express those ideas in the same grammatical form—words balance words, phrases balance phrases, clauses balance clauses, and sentences balance sentences.

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITIES

The given sentence is periodic. It can be rewritten and still be periodic: "The slaves, in order to defend and protect the women and children left on the plantation when the white males went to war, would lay down their lives." A loose version of the sentence follows: "The slaves would lay down their lives in order to protect the women and children who were left on the plantation when the white males went to war."

One way to learn about parallel structure is to recognize passages or sentences that violate it. Consider, for example, the following sentence from a student's paper about a short story by Larry Kramer:

In these moments, Rivka discovers the bitter truth about her husband's hidden life, her son's death, and that Herman was not sending her the letters all along.

This sentence, as you can see, contains three elements, all serving the same function—they are all the things that Rivka “discovers the bitter truth about.” The sentence doesn't work stylistically, though, because not all three elements are in the same grammatical form. The first two are noun phrases—a noun preceded by modifiers—while the third is a clause, a group of words with a subject and verb. There are two ways to revise the sentence to achieve parallel structure, both of which make the writer sound more careful, deliberate, and in control:

In these moments, Rivka discovers the bitter truth about her husband's hidden life, her son's death, and Herman's deceit about the letters. [a revision making all three elements noun phrases]

In these moments, Rivka discovers the bitter truth about how her husband had lived, her son had died, and Herman had deceived her about the letters. [a revision making all three elements clauses]

In these moments, Rivka discovers the bitter truth that her husband had led a hidden life, her son had died, and Herman had not sent her the letters all along. [an alternative revision with three clauses]

Here's another example of a breakdown in parallel structure, this one from a published magazine article:

What happens to a leading writer after he gets a MacArthur genius grant, a Getty fellowship, and his new book hits number one on the nonfiction best-seller list?

Notice the three elements serving the same function in this sentence—three things that happen to this “leading writer.” The sentence is a stylistic clunker, though—the writer sounds less deliberate and balanced than she might—because the three elements are not in the same grammatical form. Look at how the sentence might be revised:

What happens to a leading writer after he gets a MacArthur genius grant, wins a Getty fellowship, and has a book in the number-one position on the nonfiction bestseller list? [three elements as verbs followed by direct objects and modifiers]

What happens to a leading writer after he gets a MacArthur genius grant, a Getty fellowship, and a number-one ranking on the nonfiction bestseller list? [three elements as noun phrases serving as objects of *gets*]

With practice, you'll learn to notice parallel structure in sentences you read, to change nonparallel elements as you read, and to create parallel structures in your own compositions. (Notice the parallel structure in that sen-

tence? Three things fulfilling the same function, all signaled by the infinitive *to*.) An even greater challenge than working with parallel structure at the sentence level, however, is to analyze it in longer passages you might read and to create such a passage in your own writing. Abraham Lincoln was a master at the parallel construction. His most famous work, the brief but eloquent Gettysburg Address, ends with a paragraph that is a tour-de-force of parallel structure.

But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work, which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Notice the sense of measured balance in this paragraph created by the repeated parallel structures. In the first sentence, Lincoln creates a strong triplet of clauses, all with the same direct object:

we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground

In the third sentence, he balances two verbs, each modified by an adverb:

The world will little note nor long remember

The final sentence brings the speech to a powerful conclusion with two sets of parallel structures: a set of three clauses beginning with *that*

that we here highly resolve, that this nation under God shall have, and that the government of the people

plus the triad of three of the most famous prepositional phrases in the English language

government of the people, by the people, and for the people

Activities

1. Consider the following passage by Patricia Williams, a prominent lawyer and legal theorist. In a small group, point out Williams's use of parallel structure, and discuss how it appeals to readers.

Money buys self-esteem. If you're poor, you can't be happy because you're the object of revulsion and ridicule; if you're poor, you can't accept it as fate because poverty is your fault; and if you're poor, you have to resent the

RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITIES

1. The second sentence shows a great deal of parallelism. Williams begins the sentence with "If you're poor," and repeats this construction twice. In each

case of “If you’re poor,” Williams follows with a main (or independent) clause that contains a subject plus an auxiliary verb (also called a modal and a helping verb). Each main clause that follows “If you’re poor” is itself followed by a subordinate (or dependent) clause beginning with “because.” This sentence with so much parallelism appeals to readers because after the second “If you’re poor,” the reader can almost anticipate hearing that clause again; readers enjoy predicting what will come next.

2. Example for first sentence for “Summer Vacation”: I spent my summer vacation sleeping late, tanning on the beach, and swimming in the ocean.

upper classes because competition—or economic revenge—is the name of the game, the only way out.

2. Using parallel construction, write the first sentence for one of these stereotypical first-day-of-class assignments:

My Favorite Hobbies

Summer Vacation

When I’m Fifty

Words

When skillful writers make decisions about style and when perceptive readers analyze the style of a document they read, they pay careful attention to diction, or the choice of words. *Diction* strikes some people as an odd term to refer to word choice—to many people, diction means “pronunciation.” The word *diction* comes from Latin *dictio*, which means “style of speech.” In ancient Greece and Rome, when rhetoricians were more concerned with speaking than writing, *dictio* meant “choice of words,” and *pronunciatio* referred to the actual speaking of them. When this book uses *diction*, it reflects the classical meaning.

As with sentences, a study of diction depends on situation and genre. In other words, when you are writing a paper and you wonder about using a certain word in a sentence, you need to ask yourself first of all, “What is my purpose, who is my audience, and what kind of text am I writing?” Then ask, “Is it *appropriate* to use the word?” A word that might work perfectly well in one situation and in one type of writing could be completely out of place in another situation and genre.

To make these considerations more real, think about three different types of compositions you might be called upon to produce about the same subject. We’ll carry this hypothetical set of writing tasks through the chapter to give some illustrations of the terms we bring up. Imagine you are writing about recreational sports at your school—not organized or competitive sports but activities such as intramural sports teams, recreation nights for the community, and clubs. Think about the kind of document you’d produce in three different settings, or contexts.

- In a public-health class where research is important, you’d produce a researched, documented position paper about the benefits of recreational sports.
- For a Web site sponsored by a real-estate company, you’d write informative pages about the types of recreational sports the schools offer to students and to citizens who live in the community,

- In a letter to a friend, you'd write about your own participation in recreational sports.

Imagine that in each case you'll have a section in the document to explain the advantages of participating in recreational sports—improved physical health, improved mental health, improved coordination, and social benefits. In each piece, you'd vary your word choice to describe those advantages.

Activity

Write the first sentence of your imaginary piece on recreational sports in each of the three settings.

General Versus Specific Words

The famous twentieth-century language expert S. I. Hayakawa in his book *Language in Thought and Action* described a phenomenon he called “the ladder of abstraction.” At the top of the ladder were general, often quite abstract terms, like *transportation* and *justice*; near the middle rungs were slightly more specific terms, like *automobiles* and *juvenile court*; and near the bottom of the ladder were specific, concrete terms like *my 2001 green Subaru Forester* and *the offender's five-year probation sentence for shoplifting*. A good writer, Hayakawa claimed, is able to move up and down the ladder of abstraction like a monkey in a tree.

Notice how you could use the ladder of abstraction to vary the key terms in your explanation of the benefits of participating in recreational sports. Just considering one of the four benefits at the abstract, general level, you could refer to *physical health benefits*. Slightly more specifically, you could refer to the same thing as *cardiovascular health benefits*. Slightly more specifically, you could write about *benefits to the heart*. Near the bottom of the ladder of abstraction, you could concentrate on *the benefits to the small blood vessels around your heart*. But why, you might wonder, would any writer want to vary his or her diction in this way? The answer lies in the situation and the genre. A community of scholars in public health might look in a research paper, like the hypothetical one you're writing, for information about *cardiovascular health benefits*. Readers of a Web site about schools might simply want to see that your school's recreational sports program emphasizes general *physical health benefits*. Your distant friend, to whom you have written an e-mail about participating in your school's intramural sports program, might be most interested to know that a strenuous game of volleyball can strengthen and create *small blood vessels around your heart*. You vary the generality or specificity of your diction in order to address your readers in terms most useful to them.

Formal Versus Informal Words

Varying your diction on this dimension is like going to a dance. For an informal occasion at someone's house or a local club, the dress is casual—jeans, T-shirts, and so on. But for a formal dance like a prom, the dress is formal—tuxedos and gowns. Your writing situations can be seen as occasions that require an understanding of the level of formality, and your diction ought to suit the occasion.

What are some of the ways in which diction varies in formality? Some of the ways to make your diction more formal will be considered in the following sections, which take up Latinate or Anglo-Saxon words and slang or colloquialisms. For now, let's consider just two areas that raise formal-versus-informal concerns: contractions and pronoun reference.

A research paper for an academic class, such as the hypothetical one you're writing for your public health class, represents a formal writing occasion, and in such a paper, you should probably prefer *have not* to *haven't*, *would have* to *would've*, and *is not* to *isn't*. Your contribution to the Web site about the recreational sports program at your school is a slightly less formal writing occasion than the research paper; nonetheless, you might prefer the full words instead of the contractions. The e-mail to your friend, however, would be informal, so contractions would be more appropriate. (Notice that we, the two authors, consider this book to be somewhere in the middle of this formal-to-informal continuum, so we feel free to use contractions.)

Is it appropriate to use first-person references (*I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours*) in a paper? Like most other stylistic decisions, situation and genre determine appropriateness. Most teachers and editors prefer that writers do not write in the first person in formal writing situations such as the one calling for the research paper. The Web site might effectively use first-person pronouns if you were describing your personal involvement in the recreational activities. And, of course, a friend would worry if you didn't use first person when you e-mailed.

The question of pronoun use in formal and informal papers raises two additional issues. The first is the use of the impersonal *we* in formal papers. Consider three sentences that might go into your hypothetical research paper:

I develop multiple intelligences by participating in recreational sports.

We develop multiple intelligences by participating in recreational sports.

Participating in recreational sports helps develop multiple intelligences.

The first would probably not be appropriate since the aim of research is to investigate the subject rather than the writer. The second sentence also seems inappropriate since the *we* is unspecified. The impersonal *we* is used most frequently in newspaper editorials or in documents where the writer can actually be sure he or she is writing on behalf of a collective body—such as the editorial board of the newspaper, the governing board of the corporation, or the leaders of the political party. Although there are exceptions, in some science research, for example, you're probably on safest ground using the third sentence in formal research essays, the one with no pronoun reference at all.

The second issue involving pronoun reference is the grammatical concern of pronoun-antecedent agreement. In formal grammar, a pronoun is supposed to agree in number and gender with the word it refers to, its antecedent, and the phrase *a person* is a singular construction. If you were to write

A person learns to take advantage of a different part of their intelligence than they normally use

your pronoun and antecedent won't agree. How could you write the same sentence and stay within the boundaries of the rule? You have several options. One is to use singular pronouns:

A person learns to take advantage of a different part of his intelligence than he normally uses

OR

A person learns to take advantage of a different part of her intelligence than she normally uses.

If you choose to follow this option, you should make an effort to *alternate* the use of the singular pronouns, sometimes using the masculine and sometimes the feminine.

A second option is to use *he or she*, or *him or her*. Alternatively, you may use a hyphenated or slashed phrase that includes both the masculine and the feminine in your reference:

A person learns to take advantage of a different part of his/her intelligence than he/she normally uses.

This option takes care of pronoun-antecedent agreement and includes both the masculine and feminine reference but is stylistically awkward and reads poorly. A third option pluralizes the antecedent, allowing you to make your pronoun and antecedent agree:

People learn to take advantage of a different part of their intelligence than they normally use.

Latinate Versus Anglo-Saxon Words

Historically, English is something of a mongrel language. The ancestor of the English we speak and write today was called Old English, which was a Germanic language. The Old English spoken in the British Isles from around the fourth century to the eleventh century C.E. has been labeled Anglo-Saxon English because the two tribes of people who spoke it were the Angles and the Saxons. But around 1100 C.E., the language began to change. In 1066 C.E., England was invaded—and the English king overthrown—by a French king, William of Normandy. The Norman Invasion opened the door to a substantial infusion into English of words and phrases from the languages spoken in western Europe,

MEDIA CONNECTION

On any given day, students can collect examples of newscasters using a plural pronoun—*them*, *they*, or *their*—to refer to a singular antecedent (for example, *a person*, *someone*, or *everyone*). Encourage a class discussion on whether students should follow or ignore conventional pronoun-antecedent agreement when they write on exams and college-application essays.

MEDIA CONNECTION

Students may instinctively understand the different effects of longer and shorter words. However, push them to speculate on and articulate how the difference affects tone. End by celebrating the fact that English, containing both Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words, is one of the richest languages in the world with more than twice as many words as a typical Romance language.

notably France, Spain, and Italy. French, Spanish, and Italian are historically **romance languages**, so called because of their common roots in Latin, the language spoken in ancient Rome. After the Norman Invasion, and throughout the Renaissance, English came to acquire more and more words and phrases that had their origins in Latin. And because the people who helped bring this Latinate influence into the language tended to be the powerful nobility, the use of what is called **Latinate diction** has come to be associated with writing in more formal situations, while the use of what is called **Anglo-Saxon diction** has come to be linked with writing in more informal situations.

In general, you can recognize Latinate words by their multisyllabic construction in contrast to monosyllabic Anglo-Saxon words. A Latinate word usually consists of a root, derived from Latin, plus a prefix that qualifies the meaning of the root, a suffix that designates what part of speech the word is, or both. Consider, for example, the word *magnanimous*. The root is *anim*, which means “soul” or “spirit.” The prefix is *magn*, which means “large.” The suffix is *ous*, which indicates that the word is an adjective. Thus, *magnanimous* is an English word, with Latinate word parts, meaning “kind, noble, or honorable.” Notice that the brief, Anglo-Saxon word *kind* is simpler and seems more direct, and in many writing situations, you might use *kind* instead of *magnanimous*. In others, you’d choose the longer word for its appropriateness to the situation and genre or for the subtle difference in meaning between the two words.

How might the Latinate versus Anglo-Saxon distinction affect your writing of your three pieces about recreational sports? You could refer to the activity as *participating* (a Latinate word) in recreational sports or *playing* (an Anglo-Saxon word) recreational sports. You could claim that “participating in recreational sports employs multiple intelligences” (several Latinate words), or you could say that “playing recreational sports uses different parts of your mind” (several Anglo-Saxon words). You could assert that “participating in recreational sports facilitates social interaction” (several Latinate words), or you could write that “playing recreational sports helps you make friends” (several Anglo-Saxon words). The Latinate constructions seem more formal and might be more appropriate in the research paper than on the Web site or in the e-mail to your friend.

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY

facilitate versus *help*: *Facilitate* would be used in a more formal document, perhaps in a letter from a company to a customer explaining how the company will try to facilitate future merchandise returns. The word *help* can be used in any informal context. It can

Activity

Consider several pairs of terms that illustrate both Latinate diction and Anglo-Saxon diction in English:

- **Facilitate (Latinate) versus help (Anglo-Saxon):** both words mean “to make easier.”
- **Manufacture (Latinate) versus make (Anglo-Saxon):** the roots of *manufacture* suggest that it means “to make by hand,” but over the centuries, it has come simply to mean “to make.”

- **Interrogate (Latinate) versus ask (Anglo-Saxon):** *interrogate* derives from both the Latin for “to ask,” *rogare*, and the prefix *inter*, meaning “between or among.”
- **Maximize and minimize (Latinate) versus grow and shrink (Anglo-Saxon).**

In a small group, talk in specific terms about what kinds of writing situations would call for the more Latinate diction and what kinds of writing situations would call for the more Anglo-Saxon diction. Explain the difference in meaning and effect between the two words in each pair.

Common Terms Versus Slang or Jargon

Slang and jargon generally get a bad rap. Just look at how a popular online reference source, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, defines these two terms. **Slang** is either “language peculiar to a particular group” or “an informal, non-standard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech.” If you were to encounter the following sentence in a novel, you would probably recognize it as slang from the 1920s, known in America as the Jazz Age:

I’d say let’s ankle to the joint, but I got a gimp. Other than that, everything’s Jake.

What the character is saying is,

I’d say let’s walk to the restaurant, but I’m limping. Other than that, everything’s fine.

Jargon is “confused, unintelligible language”; “a strange, outlandish, or barbarous language or **dialect**”; “a hybrid language or dialect simplified in vocabulary and grammar and used for communication between peoples of different speech”; “the technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group”; or “obscure and often pretentious language marked by circumlocutions and long words.” If you were to use the terms *drop-down menu* and *DKDC*, you would be using jargon common to online writing among Internet aficionados. A more common way to refer to these terms would be “a screen menu that drops down from a term when you point the cursor toward the term” and “don’t know don’t care.”

Should you use slang or jargon in any of the hypothetical papers you are writing about recreational sports? A sentence such as the following would be out of place in the researched paper or the informative Web site:

While some folks think playing volleyball is way old skool, others know it’s a way to meet some phat friends and escape the rents for a couple hours.

That sentence might work in the e-mail to the friend, assuming the friend understands the slang terms. A sentence like this might work in your research paper:

appear in an e-mail or a letter to a friend. *Help* seems more friendly and less businesslike than *facilitate*. *Help* seems more versatile—many people and things can *help* someone or something—while *facilitate* seems to be limited to a human action.

manufacture versus make: *Manufacture* has more of a business connotation than *make*. *Manufacture* would appear in an article about the production of a mass-produced product. *Make* can appear in a piece of writing as simple as a note from a mom to a child—“Make yourself something to eat.” *Make* also can describe what someone or something does, as in “It *makes* me happy.” *Manufacture* seems to work only in the context of machines.

interrogate versus ask: *Interrogate* might appear in a court document, an article explaining a judicial situation, or a police report. *Ask* is too informal to be in a document of that nature. It would show up in a note to oneself—“Ask Mary to lend me money”—or in a letter to a friend.

For some people, *interrogate* implies that the person being questioned has done something wrong or is suspected of something.

A person can ask someone for help, for an answer, or for truth. That is, *ask* does not imply that the person being questioned has done anything wrong.

Maximize and minimize versus grow and shrink:

Grow and *shrink* could appear in a children's book or cartoon, in an e-mail or letter to a friend. *Maximize* and *minimize* would be more appropriate for a paper, business statement, or report.

To some, *grow* and *shrink* might imply that a live object is expanding and contracting, while *maximize* and *minimize* might imply that an inanimate object is increasing or decreasing in size.

Some critics of intramural recreation programs find fault with their social hegemonic nature

while readers of the Web site or your friend might be confused or put off by the social-science jargon.

Both slang and jargon seem like dangerous territory for a writer because both employ language that might obscure a writer's message rather than clarify and simplify it. To a certain extent, that is true, and savvy writers ought to be aware of the simpler, more direct, more common words they could use. But, as with all questions involving style, a writer's decision about whether to use slang or jargon depends on the situation in which he or she is writing. As always, the question is this: "Given this subject matter, this purpose, this audience, and this type of writing, would slang or jargon be *appropriate*?" Sometimes the answer is yes. The use of slang or jargon can signal to your readers that you are a member of their group, that you are in solidarity with them, and that you have done your homework about a particularly complicated topic that is important to the community.

Denotation Versus Connotation

Intuitively, we all know that words can be loaded. A careful reader always notes how a text capitalizes on the multiple meanings of words, and a careful writer chooses and arranges words so that the reader catches subtle, suggested meanings.

Consider these two simple sentences:

Wilbert Newton is a perfect example of a statesman.

Wilbert Newton is a perfect example of a politician.

This Newton fellow would probably be pleased if someone said the first sentence about him. *Statesman* suggests responsibility, intelligence, and high-mindedness. But he might be unhappy if someone said the second sentence about him, since *politician* often these days suggests self-serving or unprincipled behavior. The differences in meaning in these two sentences illustrate what scholars of language refer to as **denotation** and **connotation**. Denotation refers to a literal meaning of a word, while connotation refers to an association, emotional or otherwise, that the word evokes. Both sentences above use words that might have the same denotative meaning—elected official—but carry quite different connotations.

Figures of Rhetoric: Schemes and Tropes

One of the most time-honored methods of elaborating one's style is to employ **figures of rhetoric** in a piece of writing. A critical reader will learn to recognize when a writer is using one or more of the figures, just as a good writer will learn how to incorporate them effectively in a composition.

MEDIA CONNECTION

The University of Kentucky offers a Web site, www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/rhetoric.html, with clear definitions and examples of schemes, tropes, and other rhetorical issues.

A Web site that includes audio clips from literature to

People have been teaching and learning about the figures since ancient Greece and Rome, when rhetoric began to be studied as an organized subject. In general, the classical rhetoricians divided the figures into two broad categories: schemes and tropes.

- A **scheme** is any artful variation from the typical arrangement of words in a sentence.
- A **trope** is any artful variation from the typical or expected way a word or idea is expressed.

In ancient Rome, and later in the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, scholars developed substantial lists of figures, categorizing them under these two general labels, and schoolchildren had to learn the definitions and find examples of the figures in literary works and public discourse. It would not have been unusual, for example, for a grammar school student in Renaissance England to be given a list of 300 or so names of schemes and tropes and to be required to memorize the definitions and produce an example of any one of them on demand. Students undertook this task not simply to learn how to vary their words, phrases, and sentences. They did so because their teachers believed that a different way of *saying* something about the world was also a different way of *seeing* something about the world. In other words, they taught that using figurative language to express ideas helped to clarify and sharpen a person's thinking—not a bad lesson for students even today.

You don't have to memorize 300 definitions to use figures. (You can consult any number of excellent handbooks and Internet sites. One particularly helpful resource is Professor Gideon Burton's Web site at Brigham Young University called *Silva Rhetoricae*, literally "the forest of rhetoric" at <http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm>.) But you can learn to recognize schemes and tropes by their functions and understand their effect on readers.

Schemes Involving Balance

The most common scheme involving balance is parallelism, which uses the same grammatical structure for similar items (see pages 63–66). Readers understand the equivalency of items in parallel construction and exercise the logical, systematic thinking abilities. In your sports paper, you might write parallel sentences like the following:

- **Parallelism of words:** Exercise physiologists argue that body-pump aerobics sessions benefit a person's heart and lungs, muscles and nerves, and joints and cartilage.
- **Parallelism of phrases:** Exercise physiologists argue that body-pump aerobics sessions help a person breathe more effectively, move with less discomfort, and avoid injury.

pop culture for many of the schemes and tropes in the chapter is www.americanrhetoric.com/rhetoricaldevicesinsound.htm, put together by Michael E. Eidenmuller of the University of Texas at Tyler.

WWW.APCENTRAL.COLLEGEBOARD.COM

The Web site provides a section on classical rhetoric.

TEACHING RHETORIC

Here are a few additional examples of rhetorical devices used by British and American writers and orators.

Parallelism: At the beginning of "Civil Disobedience," Thoreau says, ". . . But most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient."

Antithesis: Abraham Lincoln said, "It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have few virtues."

Antimetabole: Jesse Jackson said, “I, too, was born in the slum. But just because you’re born in the slum does not mean the slum is born in you, and you can rise above it.”

Parentheses: “Polonius in *Hamlet* says:

What might you think
When I had seen this hot
love on the wing—
As I perceived it (I must
tell you that)
Before my daughter told
me—what might you,
Or my dear majesty your
queen here, think...?

Anaphora: Winston Churchill said, “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills.”

- **Parallelism of clauses:** Exercise physiologists argue that body-pump aerobics is the most efficient exercise class, that body-pump participants show greater gains in stamina than participants in comparable exercise programs, and that body-pump aerobics is less expensive in terms of equipment and training needed to lead or take classes.

Coincidentally, each of these three parallel schemes is also called a **zeugma**, a figure in which more than one item in a sentence is governed by a single word, usually a verb. Each of the three examples of parallelism involves a single verb, *argue*, that introduces a list of three words, phrases, or clauses.

A related scheme involving balance is **antithesis**, in which parallelism is used to juxtapose words, phrases, or clauses that contrast. With an antithesis, a writer tries to point out to the reader differences between two juxtaposed ideas rather than similarities. Here are three antitheses (note how to spell the plural) that might be appropriate in your sports research paper:

- **Antithesis of words:** When distance runners reach the state they call the zone, they find themselves mentally *engaged yet detached*.
- **Antithesis of phrases:** When distance runners reach the state they call the zone, they find themselves mentally *engaged with their physical surroundings yet detached from moment-to-moment concerns about their conditioning*.
- **Antithesis of clauses:** When distance runners reach the state they call the zone, they find *that they are empirically engaged with their physical surroundings, yet they are also completely detached from moment-to-moment concerns about their conditioning*.

A famous example of antithesis in clauses is “To err is human; to forgive, divine.”

Another scheme that looks a great deal like antithesis is an **antimetabole** (anti-muh-TI-boh-lee), in which words are repeated in different grammatical forms. Well-known examples of antimetabole are “When the going gets tough, the tough get going” (adjective becomes noun; noun becomes verb); “You can take the kid out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the kid”; and the famous line from President John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

Schemes Involving Interruption

Sometimes, a writer needs to interrupt the flow of a passage in order to provide necessary, on-the-spot information or ideas to readers. Two schemes are especially useful for this purpose. The first goes by the name of **parenthesis** (the same word as the singular of parentheses, the punctuation marks). Here is a

parenthesis embedded in a sentence from your hypothetical letter to your friend:

Sports night at the school always brings out the would-be jocks—who would expect any different?—ready to show that they’re potentially as good as the varsity players.

Notice that this parenthesis is set off by dashes, the punctuation marks most commonly used to set off an interruptive word, phrase, or clause. When you use dashes to set off an interruption, be sure to include them at the beginning and the end of the interruption. A parenthesis, however, can also be set off from the remainder of the sentences with parentheses:

Sports night at the school always brings out the would-be jocks (who would expect any different?) ready to show that they’re potentially as good as the varsity players.

Notice that a parenthesis in the form of a question, as in the example above, needs to be punctuated with a question mark. The same would hold true for an exclamatory word, phrase, or clause

When sports night is canceled—oh, sorrowful day!—all the would-be jocks get a case of show-off withdrawal

but not for a simple declaratory sentence:

Sports night supervisors have to stop people from trying to slam dunk—this is the ultimate showboat move—for fear that one of the would-be jocks might hurt himself.

A second scheme useful for setting off additional material is an **appositive**. An appositive is a construction in which two coordinating elements are set side by side, and the second explains or modifies the first:

Joe Weider, *a pioneer in personal weight training*, would marvel at the facilities open to today’s student athletes.

Schemes Involving Omission

A writer occasionally needs to omit material from a sentence so that its rhythm is heightened and often accelerated and so that the readers will pay close attention to the potentially dramatic effect of the prose. Two schemes useful for this purpose are ellipsis and asyndeton (uh-**SIN**-duh-ton). An **ellipsis** is any omission of words, the meaning of which is provided by the overall context of the passage:

In a hockey power play, if you pass the puck to the wing, and he to you, then you can close in on the goal.

The phrase *and he to you* omits the words *passes it*, but a reader can clearly infer the meaning. An **asyndeton** is an omission of conjunctions between related clauses:

I skated, I shot, I scored, I cheered—what a glorious moment of sport!

Schemes Involving Repetition

Beginning writers are often warned not to be repetitive. That's good advice, as far as it goes; but it actually should be "Don't be repetitive, but use repetition." Several schemes involving repeating sounds or words can actually lead the reader to pay closer attention to the prose and to see the writer as a purposeful, forceful, even artistic writer. Some of these schemes will be familiar to you from studying literature.

- **Alliteration:** repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning or in the middle of two or more adjacent words:

Intramural hockey is a strenuous, stimulating, satisfying sport.

- **Assonance:** repetition of vowel sounds in the stressed syllables of two or more adjacent words:

A workout partner is finally a kind, reliable, right-minded helper.

- **Anaphora** (uh-NA-fuh-ruh): repetition of the same group of words at the beginning of successive clauses:

Exercise builds stamina in young children; exercise builds stamina in teenagers and young adults; exercise builds stamina in older adults and senior citizens.

- **Epistrophe** (e-PIS-truh-fee): repetition of the same group of words at the end of successive clauses:

To become a top-notch player, I thought like an athlete, I trained like an athlete, I ate like an athlete.

- **Anadiplosis** (a-nuh-duh-PLOH-suhs): repetition of the last word of one clause at the beginning of the following clause:

Mental preparation leads to training; training builds muscle tone and coordination; muscle tone and coordination, combined with focused thinking, produce athletic excellence.

- **Climax:** repetition of words, phrases, or clauses in order of increasing number or importance:

Excellent athletes need to be respectful of themselves, their teammates, their schools, and their communities.

Anadiplosis and climax are closely enough related that some teachers of the figures refer to the two schemes together as **climbing the ladder**.

Activity

Reread carefully a paper you are working on. Identify a passage where you can consciously use one or more of the schemes that affect balance, and add them.

Tropes Involving Comparisons

The most important trope in this category, the one upon which all the others in this group are based, is metaphor, an implied comparison between two things that, on the surface, seem dissimilar but that, upon further examination, share common characteristics:

Many an athletic contest is lost when the player's mind is an idling engine.

Clearly, an athlete's mind and an automobile engine are dissimilar. Yet the metaphor here suggests that, to be successful, an athlete must put his or her mind to purposeful work, just as a driver puts an automobile engine in gear to drive the car. A **simile** resembles a metaphor except that with a simile, the comparison between the two things is made explicit with the use of the word *like* or *as*, rather than remaining implicit, as it does in a metaphor:

An athlete's mind must be like a well-tuned engine, in gear and responding to the twists and curves of the contest.

Notice that this sentence, which begins with a simile, ends with an **implied metaphor**—the athletic contest is compared to a twisting, curving road.

Other tropes involving comparison include the following:

- **Synecdoche** (suh-NEK-duh-kee): A part of something is used to refer to the whole.

We decided we could rearrange the gym equipment if everyone would lend a hand.

(Obviously, everyone needed to use hands, arms, legs, shoulders, and so on, but *hand* stands for them all.)

- **Metonymy** (muh-TAH-nuh-mee): An entity is referred to by one of its attributes.

The central office announced today new regulations for sports night.

(The central office can't speak, of course, but the noun is an attribute of the person or an association with the person who works in the central office.)

- **Personification**: Inanimate objects are given human characteristics.

After almost three periods of searching, the puck finally found the goal.

- **Periphrasis** (puh-RI-frah-suhs): A descriptive word or phrase is used to refer to a proper name.

The New York Rangers and the New York Islanders vie to be the best hockey team in the Big Apple.

Tropes Involving Word Play

Some writers like to entertain (and enlighten) their readers simply by playing with the sounds and meanings of words. The most common trope for doing so is the **pun**, a word that suggests two of its meanings or the meaning of a homonym. Puns have a bad reputation—and it's often well deserved. But sometimes a good pun can really attract a reader's attention:

The tipped-but-caught third strike, ending a bases-loaded rally, was a foul most foul.

Two additional wordplay tropes are:

- **Anthimeria** (an-thuh-MEER-ee-uh): One part of speech, usually a verb, substitutes for another, usually a noun.

When the Little Leaguers lost the championship, they needed just to have a good cry before they could feel okay about their season.

- **Onomatopoeia**: Sounds of the words used are related to their meaning.

The puck whizzed and zipped over the ice, then clattered into the goal.

Tropes Involving Overstatement or Understatement

A writer, ironically, can help readers see an idea or point clearly by overstating it or understating it. The trope of **overstatement** is called **hyperbole** (hye-PUHR-boh-lee):

He couldn't make that shot again if he tried a million times

while the trope for **understatement** is called **litotes** (LYE-tuh-tees):

Shutting out the opponents for three straight games is no small feat for a goal-tender.

Tropes Involving the Management of Meaning

Some tropes can be seen as techniques that simply allow a writer to play with the meaning and development of ideas in strategic ways.

- **Irony**: Words are meant to convey the opposite of their literal meaning.

Their center is over seven feet tall—where do they come up with these little pip-squeaks?

When irony has a particularly biting or bitter tone, it is called **sarcasm**.

- **Oxymoron:** Words that have apparently contradictory meanings are placed near each other.

When you have to face your best friend in competition, whoever wins feels an aching pleasure.

- **Rhetorical question:** A question is designed not to secure an answer but to move the development of an idea forward and suggest a point.

Hasn't the state of intercollegiate athletics reached the point where the line between professionalism and amateurism is blurred?

Activity

Turn again to a paper you are currently working on. Find a section into which you can incorporate one or more of the tropes described above. Do so, and then discuss in a small group whether your rewritten version is appropriate for the audience and purpose of your paper.

Memory

Today, most of the important work that advances the collective knowledge of the world's communities is done in writing. Scholars write books and articles; journalists write columns; government workers write white papers; and specialists in many fields write reports, case studies, feasibility analyses, and project plans. Our culture places great emphasis on getting things in writing.

In ancient Greece and Rome, when citizens were often asked to speak for themselves in public forums and writing was not so widespread in the culture, teachers included memory as one of the canons of rhetoric. Would-be public speakers were taught various techniques (called **mnemonic devices**, derived from the Greek word for memory, *mnēsis*) to memorize their speeches so that they could deliver them without notes or a script. The most commonly taught mnemonic device was the **house analogy**. Speakers were taught to associate different parts of their speech with specific locations in their houses—for example, the introduction of their speech was like the entrance way, the developmental sections of their speech became like various rooms that they could move into one after the other, until they reached the conclusion and exited from the back door of the house. In a primarily oral culture, it was as important for an effective communicator to learn the art of memory as it was to learn about the strategies of invention, arrangement, and style.

In our writing culture, the significance of memory in a person's rhetorical abilities—indeed, the way memory is actually defined in rhetoric—has shifted. Memory in contemporary thinking about rhetoric has to do in part with how

much knowledge, information, and data a writer can access electronically or otherwise and then use judiciously. Memory also has to do with the cultural memory of a writer; that is, what the writer knows about history, art, science, and literature. Both contemporary meanings of memory suggest that successful writers and speakers tap into the memory sources available on computers, in books, and in the culture at large. Memory today also refers to the reader-writer connection. To use a phrase, **allusion**, or topical event highlights the role of memory for both reader and writer.

MEDIA CONNECTION

To enliven the discussion of delivery, show students three film versions of Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" speech: Lawrence Olivier's 1948 *Hamlet*; Mel Gibson's 1991 *Hamlet*, and Kenneth Branagh's 1997 *Hamlet*. Students may want to work on their own version of the speech.

Delivery

As was the case with memory, delivery, the fifth of the traditional canons, assumed its place in the rhetoric curriculum because ancient Greece and Rome were primarily oral cultures. Speakers who wanted to excel in politics and public affairs needed to learn how to use their voices effectively, how to enunciate clearly, and how to use their bodies to gesture appropriately while they were giving a speech. One of the most famous stories in the lore of rhetoric, indeed, involves Demosthenes, a celebrated orator in fourth-century B.C.E. Athens. As a youth, Demosthenes had a speech impediment, so to perfect his craft, he practiced enunciation with his mouth full of pebbles, he recited speeches while he was running, and he declaimed at the seashore, strengthening his voice by speaking over the roar of the waves. When asked which was the most important of the five canons, Demosthenes is reputed to have answered, "Delivery, delivery, and delivery."

In our culture, where written documents tend to do more knowledge work than speeches, delivery has taken on new meanings. Delivery now refers to how the written text is, well, delivered. Among the many questions a contemporary student can ask now in analyzing delivery, or in planning his or her own, are these:

- Does the writer choose an electronic or print format?
- If the former, does the writer choose to include any hypertextual links? How effective are they?
- Does the writer use any photographs or other kinds of images to accompany the written text?
- Does the writer choose to put a cover of any kind on a printed text?
- How does the writer use such features as font sizes and styles, bullets or numbered lists, and white space?

Delivery may also include stylistic choices that let readers hear some words more loudly than others—setting off words in a paragraph, for example, with hyphens or ellipsis marks, or capitalizing words or making all lowercase.

Re-creating dialect in spelling or word choice is another decision that affects delivery. Delivery has to do with how a text looks, but it also has to do with how it's heard. All of these features, and others that involve the delivery of the text, affect how clearly the writer conveys the central ideas of a piece and what kind of credible, trustworthy person the readers perceive the writer to be.

Activity

Write the paragraph above or another one of your choice in slang or dialect, using punctuation, typeface, paragraphing, or other format changes to highlight how the paragraph sounds or how it would be spoken.

RESPONSES TO ACTIVITY

Students should finish this activity realizing that if they pay attention to matters such as punctuation, typeface, paragraphing, and other formatting issues, the reader will be more able to determine what the writer wants to emphasize.

