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2022

The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric

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Recommended Citation

Parrott, Jill M.; Ashby, Dominic J.; and Collins, Jonathon, "The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric" (2022). *EKUOPEN: Open Textbooks*. 4.

<https://encompass.eku.edu/ekuopen/4>

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THE COMMONS:

TOOLS FOR READING, WRITING, AND RHETORIC



EDITED BY DOMINIC ASHBY, JONATHON COLLINS, AND JILL PARROTT

The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric

An Open Textbook for English 101: Reading, Writing,
and Rhetoric at Eastern Kentucky University

The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric
The First-Year Writing Program at Eastern Kentucky University

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Suggested APA citation: Eastern Kentucky University. (2022). *The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric*.

Suggested MLA citation: Eastern Kentucky University. *The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric*. 2022.

978-1-734328-2-9

Published by Eastern Kentucky University Libraries

Richmond, KY 40475

The editors would like to thank the following people for their wonderful contributions to this massive effort for our program. We definitely could not have done it without you.

–

Dominic Ashby

Jonathon Collins

Jill Parrott

For helping to develop critical reading activities, Dr. Lisa Bosley.

For providing draft feedback, Dr. Erin Presley, Dr. Clint Stivers, and Librarian Kelly Smith.

For piloting the first draft of this project in spring 2022, Adam Hisel and Chad Reece.

For contributing introductions to essays, Ashton Conley, Alisha Helton, Gill Hunter, Susan Kroeg, William McCann, Gerald Nachtwey, Fairleigh Roman, Brent Shannon, and Cui Zhang.

For publication support, Librarian Laura Edwards.

Cover Art by Katherine Collins. More art available at kcollinsfineart, and commissions available upon request.

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Introduction

We, the editors of this textbook, are excited to share this book with you. You probably have noticed right away that this is by no means a traditional textbook, and not only because it is digital; this work also differs from many of the digital textbooks you may have encountered in other courses. *The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric* is an Open Educational Resource, or OER, textbook. OER textbooks operate outside of the usual publication model of textbook production, the main difference being that the material is **open**, and it is **free to use**.

Now, if you're a student at Eastern Kentucky University, you may already receive your textbooks for free—but those texts are still paid for by the university, and in most cases, you only have access to them for the duration of the course.

That's the economic side. Another defining feature of OER is content. Essays, stories, pictures, audio files, video clips, games, movies, music, art, the photos you snap with a smartphone, the contents of a voice memo you dictate and so much more are examples of **intellectual property**, ideas that originate from and can be attributed to the person or people who create them. In the United States and other countries, intellectual property is protected by **copyright**. Copyright literally protects the right to copy and distribute a piece of intellectual property; it also protects the *ideas* behind a piece, so that others can't make a similar piece that reproduces a very similar version (also known as **plagiarism**), nor can they make changes or additions to the original without the express permission of the copyright holder (the altered piece is sometimes called a **derivative work**). There's a lot more to intellectual property and copyright than this, but that's enough to get the conversation started!

Open Educational Resources, such as this textbook, are part of a movement that works within copyright law to make resources accessible: to copy and to edit, but with specific limitations upon when and how. *The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric* does this through a **Creative Commons License**. Not all OER texts use the same license (and as you read through this text, you'll see that some of the pieces we include may use a different Open license or may be part of the **public domain**; more on that later). A Creative Commons license allows creators to share their creations with the world while also setting certain expectations for how it can be shared and used—for example, someone may share their photos with a license that says they can be used and modified freely by anyone, while an author may share their stories but only if they are given credit and if no changes are made. The content we've created for this text is

licensed under an Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International license, abbreviated as [CC BY-NC 4.0](#). This license allows users to share our work and even to make changes to it to create a new work, as long as they give us credit (attribution) and don't use the text

That can get complicated, but it's much simpler than a traditional copyright. Usually to do any of those things, a person would need to contact the copyright holder and request specific permission; often, that permission comes with a monetary cost and many, many limitations. A Creative Commons license lets content creators give out those permissions up front. The Creative Commons organization has put together an [excellent video](#) made up of Creative Commons licensed images, video, and music, including a soundtrack made by Nine Inch Nails, explaining how it all works.

So, that's a lot about how the content of an OER textbook can be used and shared— and while that's also what enables us to share this work with you for free, what is perhaps even more important is what that allows us to do in terms of content and design. As long-time teachers of First Year Writing and as Writing Program Administrators, a problem that co-editors Jill and Dom have often run into when searching for textbooks for our classes is that it is hard to find one that really fits our courses. There are many, many great for-pay textbooks out there, but none are an ideal fit for the curriculum here at ECU. Traditional textbook editors design their books to fit many different programs at many schools across the country and across the world. The downside is that those books end up having a lot of extra content that students (or the University) pay for, or there will be content that's missing that instructors need to add themselves (or students need a second book), or both!

The First Year Writing program at ECU chose to go with an OER textbook for economic reasons—to save you and the University money—and for reasons of fit: we wanted our textbook to really match our unique program and student population. To create this particular OER textbook, we searched through many already available texts—including essays, videos, blogs, book chapters, and more—to choose works that fit well with the assignments you'll be completing in your first-semester, First Year Writing course. Some of the content we kept as-is, because it was a great match for our program; others, we've added to or changed, in compliance with the work's license.

Some of the works included here are older works that are still highly relevant—these classics are now in the **public domain**, which means that their copyright has expired, and they can be used and published freely.

We have also reached out to faculty and graduate students at ECU who are experts in this field and who have experience teaching these classes and working with ECU students. We asked them to contribute additional content: the headnote to every outside text we included was written by someone at ECU. The tips and learning strategies, the **critical reading strategies**, and many other resources included in this textbook were designed and written by experienced faculty, staff, and students at ECU to help you to succeed in this course, and to prepare you to be confident, effective writers in your other courses, on the job, and in your personal writing and communication.

The content doesn't stop there! Examples of ECU students' work, along with their tips and words of encouragement for you are another key component of this OER textbook that you will rarely find in a traditional textbook. These student contributions will be added to and updated yearly, so we hope that you'll share some of your own successful work with the editors after you have completed your First Year Writing course!

While this work is coming to you for free, it was created, compiled, and edited with a lot of effort and care. This labor has been supported in many ways, including an ECU Board of Regents grant that supported the hiring of graduate student assistant editor Jonathon Collins.

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How to Use This eTextbook—for Instructors

We're excited to share this digital, open textbook with you for use in First Year Writing courses. Specifically designed to fit Eastern Kentucky University's ENG 101, 101R, and 105, *The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric* includes readings chosen to fit with the English 101 assignment sequence and the program's focus on critical reading and metacognition.

Each reading includes a headnote written by an EKU instructor or graduate student in the Master of Arts in English and Writing Professions. These headnotes are written with students in mind and include helpful information for practicing the critical reading strategy of previewing.

The Commons also includes guides for using other critical reading strategies; these strategies are linked to specific readings to use as models for practicing the strategies, but each strategy can be used productively with any of the other readings as well.

Critical Reading and Annotations

Several of the critical reading strategies involve making annotations. You may be used to asking students to mark directly on print texts for critical reading and other in-class activities. Working with a digital document presents multiple ways to handle annotation.

Most simply, you can ask students to use part of their print budget to print out copies of the readings you'll be marking. You can also make copies with your instructor print budget. In both cases, be aware that you should not ask students to print the entire book, and to be selective about which reading activities would benefit from marking a print copy. There are other cost-effective and environmentally-friendly ways to conduct annotations, and we recommend using them whenever possible. Cost and environmental considerations aside, introducing students to these tools helps them to build valuable digital literacy skills that will serve them well in their other classes and careers. Here are some that the editors suggest:

Online mark-up tools. These tools allow students to share their annotations with one another and with their instructor, making them great for both individual and group work. There are several options; at EKU, [Perusall](#), [PowerNotes](#), and [Hypothes.is](#) are popular choices, and faculty in several departments have used them with great success.

If you're interested in learning more, EKU's Instructional Design Center has sponsored a session on Perusall presented by Cindy Hawks that you can view [here](#).

PDF mark-up. PDF readers such as Adobe Reader and Foxit allow users to highlight text and leave notes on files they have downloaded. Tablet users have even more software options, which allow for touch-typing and stylus use. Students will need to save regularly (not all of these programs have a reliable autosave), but these files can then be easily shared through Blackboard or included in an ePortfolio. This is also the best approach in situations where students might not have a stable internet connection—the PDF files can be downloaded before class onto a laptop, tablet, or smartphone and then marked up in class using the app. If you want to see copies of students' annotations in Blackboard, they can upload their marked-up copies outside of class once they have internet access again.

Themes

The readings included in the textbook are tagged by theme. These themes include Appalachia, Classics, Diversity, Ecology, Gender, History, Literacy, Politics, Pop Culture, Research, and Technology. Many instructors have used the themes in the previous textbooks as a way to give students some choices in their reading selections for writing assignments, such as by allowing students to select sources for their Synthesis essay from among certain themes.

Since *The Commons* is a digital textbook, we hope that you and your students will find the themes even more dynamic than thematic arrangements in a traditional print textbook; several of the essays have been tagged to belong to multiple themes. Beyond helping to give you more flexibility as an instructor, the theme tags are also a pedagogical tool to help students see how sources can fit in multiple ways into multiple conversations or arguments—a concept that pairs well with Synthesis, and that helps students prepare for projects such as a literature review that they may complete in ENG 102 or other research-focused courses.

Seeking Contributions

As you work with *The Commons* in your class, please look for ways that you or your students can contribute to future revised editions. Thanks to the Open Access and digital nature of the text, *The Commons* can be added to and changed more regularly and in a more timely manner than is the case for traditional textbooks, something the editors and the First Year Writing program hope to take advantage of. New or revised headnotes; resources or activities for developing critical reading and writing skills and strategies; other open-access resources that fit themes of the course and the textbook: if you have created it and are willing to share it under an Open Access license, or have found it elsewhere with an OER-compatible license, please share it with the editors!

Further, please encourage students to submit writing for inclusion in the eBook. When a student's piece is selected for inclusion, the editors will work with the student to make any final revisions and to draft a headnote discussing their invention, writing, and revision processes. All contributors of original content, instructors and students, will have a by-line in the text and will be able to list their work on a resume or vita. Consider

including the possibility of submitting a work for publication as an incentive when assigning projects. Please don't limit contributions to only the major essays—outstanding low-stakes assignments have a place as well, and all contributions can be traditional alphabetic works or new media, such as audio or video projects.

Integrating the Textbook with Blackboard: Design for Access

The Commons is a digital textbook, hosted through EKU's Encompass platform, the same platform that hosts EKU graduate's Masters Theses, Doctoral Dissertations, Honors Theses, as well as a number of eBooks and digital journals, such as the proceedings of the annual Pedagogicon conference.

Although students can find the text themselves by navigating through Encompass, access is much easier if instructors include a direct link in their syllabus and on their course Blackboard sites. Consider also hosting a PDF copy in your Course Documents folder, or even embed them into assignment prompts.

Thank you for the intellectual and emotional work that you put into each of your classes. We hope this open textbook supports you and your students as you work together.

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How to Use This eTextbook—for Students

So. You're in one of your first college classes, and you've been given a link to this textbook, which probably doesn't look like any textbook you've seen before. It's completely digital. It has been completely designed with you in mind. And—best of all—it's completely free.

Of course, your instructor will give you more specifics but here's an overview of how the textbook is organized.

First, you'll find some information about the people who contributed to putting this together for you and some information about why we've chosen this kind of textbook: an Open Educational Resource. The most comprehensive definition of OER available today is provided by [UNESCO](#):

Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.

Basically, that means that this textbook

- Is completely free for you—or anybody else—to use,
- Is based on materials that are freely available without copyright, and
- Can be remixed, adapted, used, or changed.

Then, you'll find some resources to help you transition to college life, to ECU, to reading at the college level, what you'll learn in this course, and some basics on college writing. Your instructor may assign these sections as required readings and use some of them during in-class activities, or they may leave it up to you to use these sections as you need them. Either way, these resources are here to support you not just in your first year writing class, but throughout your time at ECU. You'll never lose access to this eBook—it will be available on the ECU library website and you can download it—so we hope that you'll make a lot of use of these resources.

Finally, the readings in this textbook are organized in alphabetical order by author AND by theme. We chose themes that we thought would be most relevant to your life because they're important to the EKU community. We are all people who live in this region; folks who care about the people, animals, and plants around us; and educators who care about you! We hope that reading these essays will not only give you the opportunity to become more efficient and deeper readers but also to learn more about what it means to be a person from or living in Eastern Kentucky today.

The themes we've focused on include:

Appalachia	Literacy
Classics	Politics
Diversity	Pop Culture
Ecology	Research
Gender	Sociology
History	Technology

Take a second now. What do you already know about these topics? With which ones are you most familiar? About which ones do you know only a little?

Each essay in the book is tagged with the themes relevant to it, so you can use the tags to find essays related to each theme to get multiple perspectives on the same topic. For example, #appalachia will find you all the essays about or set in Appalachia. Each link will take you to the next article fitting in the same theme. Many of the essays have introductory paragraphs to help you understand where the author is coming from. When you practice these critical reading strategies, think about how you can also apply them in your other classes—they are included here to help you read well and to read with a purpose.

In the future, we hope to get sample student essays to include in this textbook. It always helps to see a model of the kind of project you are working on, and we want to have a collection of models for future students. Perhaps the work you do this year will end up in a future version of *The Commons*. If you feel particularly proud of a piece of your work this semester, talk with your instructor about how to submit it to the textbook editors.

The creators of and contributors to this textbook have been teaching writing for a long time, so we know that some of you are excited about this class, some of you are dreading this class, and some of you just want to get it done. Whatever you are bringing to this class, we hope you find something to relate to in this open textbook and that it helps you meet your goals.

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On Campus Resources at EKU for First-Year Students

At Eastern Kentucky University, we want you to be successful, to learn, to complete your degree, and to be healthy. Here are some resources to help get you there this semester.

[Academic Affairs Syllabus Statements](#)

EKU provides standard information about our most important university policies. At this link, you'll find information about how you can get accommodations to make sure you succeed if you need support related to a medical condition, mental health, or learning disabilities. It also provides information about protections against discrimination as well as our expectations for academic integrity.

[The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity](#)

The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity provides support for students in any class that involves writing or communication. You can get one-on-one feedback on your writing in English 101 at any stage from brainstorming to organizing, drafting to revising, and learning the ropes for accepted page formatting and resource citation. Noel Studio consultants are undergraduate and graduate students trained to provide the best possible feedback and to support you as you complete your coursework. They provide consultations in person and online. You can call (859) 622-7330 or make an appointment online to make sure time is set aside for you.

In addition, your instructor might have your whole class visit the Studio for a workshop. If you're assigned to create a visual project such as a presentation, a research poster, or an infographic, Noel Studio consultants are prepared to help with that too. The Noel Studio also has spaces for meeting with study groups, for studying, or to record yourself completing a presentation so you can watch it and continue to improve.

[The Student Success Center](#)

Like the Noel Studio, the Student Success Center can provide one-on-one support for you in English 101 *and* many other disciplines, as well! You can call (859) 622-7861 or [make an appointment](#) for tutoring online.

In addition, the SSC can support your journey to successfully graduate with your degree with the [Chellgren Success Series](#). These workshops, provided throughout the semester, focus on study skills, time management, choosing a major, metacognition, and other topics that develop you as a student and a person.

[Eastern Kentucky University's Libraries](#)

The Crabbe Library, located right off University Drive across from the Ravine and just a short walk from Case, is truly the heart of campus.

EKU Libraries not only have some of the most beautiful buildings on campus but also the most helpful people. EKU Libraries are Here to Help! While the English 101 curriculum does not include research, the library still has plenty to offer you this semester:

- Popular books for reading and a beautiful space in the Grand Reading Room
- Movies for free!
- Plenty of space for studying
- Space available to reserve for small group study sessions or group meetings
- The Student Success Center and the Noel Studio spaces
- IT Geeks
- Laptop and other technology rentals
- A coffee shop
- Nursing mother's lounge
- The Noel Reading Porch
- Events and activities through the year

Follow EKU Libraries on social media



[Eastern Kentucky University's Counseling Center](#)

When you graduate with your degree from ECU, we want you to have learned everything from your classes that you possibly could but *a/so* more about yourself and the kind of person you want to be in the world. To do that, you need tools and support, and the ECU Counseling Center can provide support for you in the form of mental health workshops and individual counseling, free of charge. They work on a Rapid Access model, so you just call 859-622-1303 and usually someone can speak to you that same day. They also have online “feel better fast” workshops you can access on meditation, mindfulness, sleep, crisis management, study skills, test anxiety, and more.

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Metacognitive Critical Reading

What is metacognition? Metacognition is, very literally, “thinking about our thinking.” Sure. But what does that mean? And why does it matter?

We are metacognitive readers when we work to understand by actively summarizing content as we go along, making connections with what we already know, asking questions about what we don’t understand, making predictions about an author’s main points, and noticing and adjusting our approach to pay closer attention to the text: “As students become more skilled at using metacognitive strategies, they gain confidence and become more independent as learners” ([EAL Center](#)).

Here are some words we might associate with metacognition:

- Self-perceptive,
- Self-regulating,
- Self-understanding,
- Self-assessing, and
- Self-correcting.

METACOGNITIVE ACTIVITIES

The following table presents easy steps to metacognitive strategies to your reading and study habits in this course and beyond.

<p>Making a Plan</p>	<p>When you know when and what actually works for you when you study, you can make a plan accordingly AND that might change from class to class. What works in your English class might not be the same thing that works in History, Business, or Chemistry. Being honest with yourself when something doesn't work is a part of this, as well.</p>
<p>Checking your Understanding</p>	<p>When you pause while reading, writing, researching, or studying to check your understanding, you're being metacognitive. For example, maybe after reading a couple of paragraphs of an essay, you pause to see if you could put what you just read into your own words. If you can, then you know you've understood and you can move on. If you can't, then maybe you need to go back and try a different strategy. Either way, it's metacognitive.</p>

<p>Developing an Awareness of Distraction</p>	<p>As you develop metacognition, you may begin to notice what distracts you so you can avoid it. You can do this without judgment-- everybody gets distracted by something! If you know, then you can make choices about where and when to focus.</p>
<p>Using Prior Knowledge to Plan</p>	<p>If you've had experience with a topic, then you can bring what you already know about the topic to the reading, writing, or conversation. If you've had experience with genre, then you can bring previous strategies that have worked back to the table to work again!</p>
<p>Monitoring & Evaluating</p>	<p>Use questions to ask yourself how well you're doing and make adjustments as necessary. Once you've finished an assignment, take a moment to ask yourself evaluation questions like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What went well as I read/studied? Why? • What was difficult? Why? • What could I do differently or better next time? • What progress do I see myself making from assignment to assignment? Class to class?

Strategy: Preview Reading Assignments

Previewing reading assignments helps you think about your *purpose* for reading before you start to read. It also helps you connect new content to what you already know, making it easier to stay interested and focused on the reading.

Here's a list of questions to ask yourself before you start to read:

- Why did my professor assign this? What does she want me to get out of this?
- What do I need to do with this information after I read it?
- What's this text about?
- What do I already know about it?
- What questions do I have that this text might answer?

Strategy: Talk to the Text

You also might have heard this called “annotating,” which is just a fancy way of saying that you take notes. We encourage you to use a pen or pencil instead of a highlighter if you're marking on a hardcopy page. You can underline, place a star, write a question mark, summarize difficult ideas, or ask questions in the margins. Many PDF readers allow you to do similar work, as well. Or, you can use an online system like [Perusall](#), [Hypothesis](#), or [PowerNotes](#).

It's metacognitive because as you read you're constantly interacting with the text and checking your understanding.

Strategy: Asking Questions

Asking questions is a really important way to interact with a text. We can ask questions about a reading before we read, while we're reading, and after we read. Each has its own benefits.

Before reading, when previewing text, use questions to help you connect to prior knowledge or pique your curiosity about the text.

- What ideas here am I already familiar with?
- What doesn't seem familiar that I want to know more about?

- What do I know about this genre (newspaper article, journal article, chapter in a book, blog posting, etc.)?
- What expectations do I have about this? Why?

While reading, use questions to check your understanding of the text.

- What did that paragraph just say?
- What have I found difficult about this section, and why?
- What am I reading that's pointing me toward new information or ideas that are unfamiliar?
- What key words are repeated or stand out?
- What passages are standing out to me as important, interesting, or confusing?

After reading, consider what you still want to know or need to review.

- What am I still not understanding that I might want to come back to?
- Can I identify the thesis or main point of what I just read?
- What was the most difficult section (if any)?
- How would I summarize the text in just one word? One sentence?

Strategy: Double-Entry Notes

Double-Entry Notes allow the reader to consider a text (whether an essay, a poem, a short story, a video, a newspaper article, or whatever) from two different perspectives. One way to do this is with an E-I Notetaker, focusing on evidence and interpretation.

In the evidence column, you put facts: what quotes, data, information, ideas from the text are interesting or important?

In the interpretation column, you put your thoughts on the evidence: what is important, relevant, significant, confusing, or difficult about the text?

Evidence	Interpretation

Double-Entry Notes work *really well* when the text has an audio function to it, so podcast episodes, movies, videos, newscasts, or even lectures! Then it might look like this.

Lecture Notes	Responses, Reactions, Analysis, & Questions

For difficult texts, your instructor might have you do your double-entry notes more like this example. They might even ask you to find specific aspects of the text like when the author uses an emotional appeal or integrates their own outside sources.

Quote and Page Number	Commentary / Thoughts

The vocabulary might look a little different, but all of these double-entry notes approaches help you read more deeply and more critically and prepare you for intellectual work like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Strategy: STC Method

In the STC Method, readers use metacognitive strategies to acknowledge what they already know and then build on that to process new information. This strategy can be used as an annotation-only approach or as a combination annotation and note-taking strategy. It is deceptively simple because it is extremely easy to use but speaks to deep transactional reading activity.

Square = “This *squares* with what I already know.”

Triangle = “This points to new information.”

Circle = “I have a question about this, and I’d like to process it more before I circle back around to it.”

To use as an annotation strategy: Simply use a writing utensil of some kind to draw squares □, triangles Δ, and circles ○ in the margins as they relate to how you process what you’re reading.

To use as a note-taking strategy: Add in a table like this to reflect on the annotations.

Shape	Quote/Information	Your Thoughts
Squares		
Triangles		
Circles		

Strategy: KWL-Q

The KWL-Q method asks you to build on previous knowledge, check your understanding, and ask questions. The letters represent these questions:

What do you already **KNOW** about the topic?

What do you **WANT** to know about the topic?

What have you **LEARNED** about the topic?

What **QUESTIONS** do you still have about the topic?

The first two questions are answered before reading a text; the second two, after. The table below can be used to help students walk through and visualize the process.

K What do you already know about the topic	W What do you want to know about the topic?	L What have you learned about the topic?	Q What questions do you have about the topic?

KWL-Q is metacognitive because it requires readers to self-regulate their understanding by tracing a line from what they already know to what they still want to learn. There are no right or wrong answers, but the interactions are based on your personal interaction with the text.

As you go through this semester in this class, future semesters, and other classes, you will discover which strategies work best for you or best in which kinds of classes or for particular kinds of texts. The bottom line is that reading something so deeply that you'll remember it and be able to use it later is really difficult, but it's also absolutely essential to your success in college. As you practice more, it will feel more natural and come more easily to you.

If you'd like to know more about the science of critical reading and how to make it work for you, check out David Handel's "[How to Read Academic Content Once and Remember it Forever.](#)"

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Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric in a Nutshell

Let's be honest. Most of you are going to say that you're in this class because you have to be. We get that. It doesn't keep you from learning, from gaining intellectual habits that you can take into other courses, or from learning to communicate information in ways that will be useful for your entire life. Many factors will play into your classroom experience including your instructor, your previous experiences with English classes, your classmates, and what *you* bring to the table. Every section of the course, however, has shared goals, learning outcomes, and assignments that should be consistent for every student in English 101: Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric.

In the big picture, program goals will enable students to

- Begin to understand college-level expectations for critical reading, critical thinking, and sophisticated writing.
- Leave the course feeling more confident to tackle reading, thinking, and writing goals in other general education courses, in program courses, and leaving the university.
- Understand more clearly that every context, every audience, every situation has a different purpose for reading and writing and that they can be insightful and flexible enough to meet each situation with what is required.
- Meet some people who are new to ECU.
- Have a resource in the instructor, who can help new students negotiate the first year of college.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The university sets certain standards for what all courses should teach and expect of students. For English 101, these are the general education goals set by the university.

Students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively by applying skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening and through appropriate use of information technology.

2. Use appropriate methods of critical thinking and quantitative reasoning to examine issues and to identify solutions.
3. Integrate knowledge that will deepen their understanding of, and will inform their own choices about, issues of personal and public importance.

Those are great! But, we also have some more specific things we want to get done, as well.

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate comprehension of significant concepts in primary texts.
2. Provide analysis by recognizing the parts or aspects of texts that contribute to understanding the purposes of texts.
3. Connect and integrate concepts from texts to construct and support explanations, conclusions, or arguments through the use of paraphrase, summary, and direct quotations, appropriately cited in a standard format.
4. Evaluate texts by looking at genre, tone, audience, purpose, or other rhetorical features.
5. Organize a composition around a thesis, claims, and supporting evidence from primary texts and present effective transitions between points/paragraphs.
6. Demonstrate recognition of a rhetorical situation and audience and develop an appropriate voice for that situation through paragraphing, sentence structure, variation, rhythm, phrasing, and word choice.
7. Present writing that is clear, accurate, and precise.
8. Use punctuation, grammar, capitalization, citation format, etc. with minor or minimal errors that do not interfere with clarity.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Almost all sections of English 101, English 101R, English 101Z, or English 101RZ will follow a similar pattern of the major assignments, leading to a final portfolio.

Our standard assignments include:

- Literacy Narrative
- Analysis

- Textual Synthesis
- ePortfolio

Do “analysis” and “synthesis” sound like work you don’t know how to do? Yeah. We’ve been there. Don’t worry, though. Your instructor’s going to explain everything for you and every major assignment will be completed in steps in a process.

Literacy Narrative

Purpose: The literacy narrative is your opportunity to connect your previous experiences with reading and writing, whether in your personal life or school, and to think deeply about your goals for your continued development in college.

Task: You’ll be asked to make a statement of purpose (like a thesis) that makes a claim about your literacy experiences and then provide evidence to support that claim. You might also be asked to bring in quotes or points from one of the readings in this textbook.

Analysis

Purpose: This assignment will ask you to move beyond what you can see on the surface (comprehension) and into the potential connections and meanings beneath the surface of a text (analysis). Analysis is often more intellectually difficult than comprehension, but it is also more rewarding and more interesting.

Task: You will write an essay or create another type of text (podcast/audio essay, video, etc.) that *makes an analytical argument* about a chosen text. Your instructor will help you choose a text and may require a particular kind: a piece of art, a song, an essay from the textbook, or something else. Choose something that you find at least somewhat interesting!

Synthesis

Purpose: By this point in the semester, you’re moving into more sophisticated intellectual work. While an analysis focuses deeply and specifically on one text, a synthesis makes connections across several texts. In this assignment, you’ll learn how to use critical reading techniques to read and really understand several essays (probably 3-5) and then to create a project that says something interesting about those texts.

Task: You will write an essay or create another type of text (podcast/audio essay, video, etc.) that integrates multiple sources to make a single point, a thesis-driven argument.. Your instructor will guide you about how to choose your texts.

ePortfolio

Purpose: A portfolio gives authors the opportunity to show their audience the very best of their work and/or the ways they have improved over a period of time.

Task: This ePortfolio is required for every student in English 101, 101R, 101Z, and 101RZ, and the assignment is almost exactly the same for everyone. Follow your instructor's directions, but your ePortfolio will include these five exhibits. The portfolio will receive a holistic grade (i.e., one grade for the *whole* thing together) using the First-Year Writing Rubric.

1. Reflective Introduction
2. Polished Project Exhibit
3. Process Exhibit
4. Peer Review Exhibit
5. Wild Card

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

In order to keep us and students on task with these goals, we use what's called a rubric to give feedback on the work of the course. Here's how it works.

1. The competent-level categories directly line up with our program goals listed above, so you can clearly see what is most important.
2. As you work to achieve these goals, you can also begin the intellectual work involved to be more persuasive and then more accomplished. The accomplished terms are based on [Paul & Elder's Intellectual Standards](#), a tried-and-tested framework for deeper thinking.
3. Our rubric isn't based on any certain number of points gained or lost. It's what we call "holistic," which just means that we look at assignments and the work put into it as a whole rather than picking it apart by pieces. In other words, how does it all fit together?

4. The rubric can have many different purposes:
 - When used as a guide for you, the rubric can help you reflect on your goals for the course.
 - Used as a peer review instrument, it gives you vocabulary to discuss course work with your classmates.
 - As a grading tool, it allows your instructor to show you what you're doing well and what still needs some improvement.

5. For students who are really struggling with the competency standards, you and your instructor should have a conversation about what support we can offer you to help you achieve your goals for the course.

C = COMPETENT

A competent text meets the following standards:

Assignment Standards

- ___ Follows assignment instructions as specified by the instructor.
- ___ Is organized as the assignment requires (summary, narrative, argument, analysis, etc.).
- ___ Meets assignment requirements for length, genre, approach, or rhetorical situation.

Critical Reading & Development

- ___ Demonstrates comprehension of significant concepts in texts.
- ___ Provides analysis by recognizing the parts or aspects of texts that contribute to understanding the purpose of texts.
- ___ Connects and integrates concepts from texts to construct and support explanations, conclusions, or arguments, appropriately cited in a standard format.
- ___ Evaluates texts by looking at genre, tone, audience, purpose, or other rhetorical features.
- ___ Organizes around a thesis, claims, and supporting evidence.

Conventions of Academic Writing

- ___ Demonstrates recognition of a rhetorical situation and audience.
- ___ Presents writing that is clear and accurate.
- ___ Uses punctuation, grammar, capitalization, citation format, etc. with minor or minimal errors that do not interfere with clarity.

B = PERSUASIVE

A persuasive text meets the following standards in addition to the competency standards above:

- ___ Presents effective transitions between paragraphs and between sentences.
- ___ Develops voice through paragraphing, sentence structure, variation, rhythm, phrasing, and word choice.

___ Develops points thoroughly with specific and concrete evidence (ex: quotes, data, statistics).

___ Engages with an appropriate number and kind of reliable sources for support.

___ Integrates evidence from outside sources smoothly and with precise documentation in a relevant citation style.

A = ACCOMPLISHED

An accomplished essay distinguishes itself through one or more of the following characteristics in addition to meeting the competent and persuasive standards above:

Clarity	Accuracy	Precision	Relevance
Depth	Breadth	Logic	Significance
Fairness	Seamless Coherence	Sophistication	Recognizable Voice

D = DEVELOPING (60-69)

A text is developing and will receive a D if it attempts to establish a controlling purpose but fails to competently maintain unity throughout the composition. This text may also lack audience awareness, coherence, and/or evidence and/or have several problems with the conventions of academic writing. *You should schedule a conference with your instructor if your text earns a D.*

F = BEGINNING/INEFFECTIVE

A text that does not meet the basic standards of competency will receive an F. *In this case, you should schedule a conference with your instructor to discuss your ability to be successful in the class.*

This text does not meet competency standards because:

- it shows minor problems in all areas, or
- major problems in one or two competence areas.

The most common reasons for receiving an F include unintentional plagiarism, failure to meet assignment requirements such as length or research, or lack of a controlling purpose or thesis.

If you are found to have plagiarized intentionally, your paper will be removed from this general rubric, and we will follow guidelines for an infraction of Academic Integrity. You can see ECU's Academic Integrity policy at www.academicintegrity.ecu.edu.

These assignments have been designed with student learning in mind in this very order to help students connect previous experiences to new ones, read more deeply, create effective academic projects, and reflect on the process to prepare for success moving forward. These descriptions are an overview, so students should always follow individual instructor's instructions.

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Rhetorical Awareness in College Writing

Rhetoric is its own unique field of study, with scholarship covering genre analysis, workplace rhetoric, medical rhetoric, religious rhetoric, rhetoric of popular culture, rhetoric of games, political rhetoric, just to name a few popular areas of study. This chapter is meant as a short introduction to the basics of rhetoric. Your instructor may introduce you to additional approaches to using and analyzing rhetoric in your writing, such as Rogerian Argument, the Toulmin Model, or Listening Rhetoric, while in ENG 102 you will look more at academic genres and uses of rhetoric. Courses in your major—while they might not always use the term rhetoric—will teach you the specialized ways that rhetoric is used in your field to make arguments, build credibility, and communicate with other specialists as well as with clients and the public. Use this and the other sections in this book about rhetoric as a foundation for thinking about how language is used in very intentional ways to communicate with others—to inform, to persuade, and even, at times, to delight.

What is Rhetoric?

Rhetoric is essentially how effectively or persuasively a person is able to present ideas when speaking, writing, or communicating through various modalities. Early study of rhetoric focused on rhetoric as the study of persuasion; modern rhetoric considers all forms of communication and meaning-making, from how advertisers use words, image, and sound to make a product appealing, to how a film director presents a particular worldview, to how video games create emotional responses like fear, delight, or laughter in players. The study of rhetoric itself is wide-ranging and deep, a scholarly field in its own right just like History, Political Science, or Education. In this text, we touch on the surface, enough to help you develop effective reading and composing skills. For purposes of a first-year writing course—which this book was designed for—rhetoric is often employed in two major ways: analytically, as a way of reading; and creatively, as a tool for writers to make their work more effective.

In terms of reading comprehension and writing techniques, understanding rhetoric involves moving beyond basic level comprehension to consider not just what is being stated but how it is being presented. Rhetorically understanding a text means a reader is able to focus on what the author is saying, how information is arranged, and the

context of the information. Areas of the text that need to be considered include the author's purpose (why are they writing), audience (to whom are they writing), style, expectations (both the author's and the audience's; this may include expectations of outcome, content, and form), potential biases, the medium of the composition (such as online or print), and any other elements which contribute to its overall purpose.

Questions to consider when analyzing a text:

- Who is the author?
- What is the author's main idea?
- How does the author support their central claims?
- What is the author's main purpose?
- What is the tone and/or style of the piece?
- Does the author appeal to any logical, emotional or ethical concerns?

You may have had classes before that have used similar questions to look closely at literary texts. These questions can be applied productively to other kinds of texts as well, such as political speeches, advertisements, university announcements, health warnings, and so much more. These questions are also very important to critical thinking and critical reading. They urge readers to look more deeply at texts, not just to understand their meaning, as traditional close reading of literary or historical texts you may have done in other classes, but to look at the why and the how. Understanding the purpose behind a text can reveal a lot. Rhetorical study will help you to realize that very rarely is a text's only purpose just to inform or to entertain—texts reflect the underlying beliefs of the author or their intended audience, and even a seemingly unbiased piece of writing will often act to either support or challenge those beliefs or world views.

Reading texts rhetorically helps you to become a better critical reader and thinker. One reason to study rhetoric in a first-year college class is that it helps you to become more aware of how the creators of the media that surround us—film, television, news, advertising, literature, social media, and more—are shaping our perceptions of reality. Understanding rhetoric can help you become a more active, savvy consumer of media, one who can still enjoy those media but who also questions and draws their own conclusions.

We also study rhetoric in college classes as a way to become better communicators and content creators ourselves. Studying how others have effectively used rhetoric in their writing can help you recognize strategies that you may use in your own work. In

fact, much of learning to write in the discipline of your major or career area is a study of rhetoric: by learning to recognize the expectations or genre conventions of different disciplines and forms of writing, you learn how to communicate effectively within that field. Study of rhetoric in courses like First Year Writing or in Professional and Technical Writing helps you learn what to look for when writing in other fields and disciplines.

The Importance of Audience

At its heart, rhetoric—whether using it as an analytical tool or as a means to make your own writing and communication more effective—is all about the audience. We use the term audience to mean readers, listeners, viewers, as well as more active participants, like players of a game, users of a website, or other interactive texts or events. Content-creators (authors, directors, composers, advertisers, etc.) create with an audience in mind. Effective content-creators will shape their work to meet (and sometimes purposefully challenge) the needs and expectations of their audience. When reading another person’s text, it’s important to know who their audience is so we can look at the techniques they use to reach, move, or persuade that audience.

The rest of this chapter addresses various ways authors and other content-creators connect with audiences. We’ll start by looking at the rhetorical situation, a way of looking at the context shared by author, audience, and text. Then we’ll look at what are often called the rhetorical appeals, the three major categories of persuading or moving an audience.

What is the Rhetorical Situation?

Adapted from [Rhetorical Concepts](#), provided by Robin Jeffrey, *About Writing: A Guide*, Revised Edition

During your time as a student of writing, you may hear instructors talk about “rhetorical situations.” This is a term used for any set of circumstances in which one person is trying to change another person’s mind about something, whether through speaking or via written text (like a book, or blog post, or journal article).

These rhetorical situations can be better understood by examining the rhetorical concepts that they are built from: text, author, audience, purposes, and setting.

Text

Texts can come in all shapes and sizes, such as those listed earlier. But in this context, text is not limited to something written down. The text in a rhetorical situation could be a film, or a photograph, or a recording of a song or spoken history. The important thing to ask yourself when faced with a text, no matter what it is, is what is gained by having the text composed in this format/genre. What are the relevant characteristics of a book versus a song? What might an oral history version of a text communicate that a book version would not?

Author

Here the “author” of a text is the creator, the person utilizing communication to try to effect a change in their audience. An author doesn’t have to be a single person, or a person at all—an author could be an organization. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, examine the identity of the author and their background. Not only do you want to know what kind of experience they have in the subject, but you’ll also want to explore basic biographical information about them. Where and when did they grow up? How could that affect their perspective on the topic?

Note: You may read in other sources or hear your instructor use the term rhetor to refer to what we’re calling the author in this chapter. The term rhetor opens up a greater range of roles (such as speaker, artist, designer, etc.) and so is sometimes preferable to author. We use the more familiar author in this book for its recognizability, as well as because of our focus on texts in the course this book is designed for.

Audience

The audience is any person or group who is the intended recipient of the text, and also the person/people the text is trying to influence. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, examine who the intended audience is and what their background may be. An audience’s assumptions about the author, the context in which they are receiving the text, their own demographic information (age, gender, etc.) can all affect how the text is seeking to engage with them.

The intended or i audience often differs from the actual audience in important ways, and being aware of those differences is important when analyzing or interpreting a text. The differences are often most apparent when examining older texts, where our present-day knowledge and values may differ greatly from those of the audience an author originally wrote for. Even in contemporary pieces, texts may (and often do!) reach audiences other than those they were intended for: think of examples when

internal corporate documents are leaked to the general public. As writers, consider how your own compositions, both formal and informal, might be read and interpreted by multiple audiences, not just the ideal audience you are thinking about while writing.

Purposes (Telos)

What is the author hoping to achieve with the communication of this text? What do they want from their audience? What does the audience want from the text and what may they do once the text is communicated? Both author and audience can have purpose and it's important to understand what those might be in the rhetorical situation of the text you are examining. An author may be trying to inform, to convince, to define, to announce, or to activate, while an audience's purpose may be to receive notice, to quantify, to feel a sense of unity, to disprove, to understand, or to criticize. Any and all of these purposes determine the 'why' behind the decisions both groups make. Sometimes the author and audience might begin with different purposes, in which case the author will need to work hard to shift the purpose or telos for the audience—to bring them around to recognizing their purpose as an important one—before they are able to move on with informing or persuading the audience.

Setting (Kairos)

Nothing happens in a vacuum, and that includes the text you are trying to understand. It was written in a specific time, context, and/or place, all of which can affect the way the text communicates its message. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, examine the setting of both audience and author and ask yourself if there was a particular occasion or event that prompted the particular text at the particular time it was written.

Kairos is often translated as timeliness, which emphasizes the importance of time or timing in a rhetorical situation. Discussion of time as part of a rhetorical situation might range from the expansive to the minute: the early 21st century was a time of great technological change; 2020 was the time for virtual classrooms; the first day of class may not have been the best time for a pandemic joke.

Rhetorical Appeals

Consideration of rhetoric goes beyond the situation that shapes it; whether analyzing a piece or writing our own, we also need to consider the specific strategies that can be used to reach an audience effectively within the confines or limitations of a rhetorical situation. The classical philosopher Aristotle provides us with three major types of rhetorical strategies or approaches, known as the rhetorical appeals. They're called

appeals because they represent ways of appealing to an audience, of giving them “reasons to believe” what the author is trying to persuade them of. These appeals are often referred to by the classical terms used by Aristotle: Logos, Ethos, and Pathos.

1. Logos—Logical Reasoning: An author who employs logos presents careful structure and objective evidence to appeal to the audience.
2. Ethos—Ethical and Credible: When an author makes an ethical appeal, they mean to connect with certain values of the audience in order to offer a deeper sense of the author’s credibility. Ethos can be further broken down into intrinsic ethos and extrinsic ethos.
 - a. Intrinsic ethos refers to the ways the author creates or builds credibility within the text itself; the inclusion of source citations in a research paper is one such strategy. Another common strategy is sharing information that links the author first-hand to the topic, such as direct experience, training or expertise, or new, original research or investigation.
 - b. Extrinsic ethos refers to things outside of or external to the text, but still connected to the author, such as if the author is well known or famous for other work.
3. Pathos—Emotional: When an author relies on pathos, it means they are attempting to connect with an audience’s emotions to ultimately persuade them to understand or adopt the author’s claim. Pathos may draw upon the full range of emotions. Remember, a pathos appeal is directed towards influencing the audience’s emotions so that audience members may feel or imagine feeling a certain way—emotion does not need to be the subject of the text, nor does it always need to include the author’s emotions (although it may).

The rhetorical appeals often work together, and are not mutually exclusive: a well-crafted text will often involve all three, linking the appeals together to support one another. A logical appeal (logos) is often more effective if tied to supporting facts from relevant, reliable research by experts (ethos), while connecting the information to something emotionally impactful (pathos). For example, a detailed plan for providing after-school programs for children in poverty-stricken areas that shows the plight of those children if they do not receive those benefits, alongside research-based evidence of the health, educational, and emotional gains for children who do participate in similar programs combines the three appeals in a way that resonates with policy makers and voters on many different levels.

Types of Logos

Logos is the use of logic and reasoning to convince or persuade an audience to accept a point of view or take a course of action. Formal writing situations, such as workplace and many classroom-based assignments expect and highly value the use of logos. Logos goes beyond the mere presentation of facts and information: it does something with that information; it uses it to make a point, such as to support a formal thesis statement, or to convince the audience to act in a certain way. Logos arguments do not always have to be formal: a logical, step-by-step decision-making process of why someone who is buying a new phone should choose one brand or model over another is just as much a use of logos as is a twenty-page report addressed to stockholders explaining why they should or should not support a new business acquisition. The point is, logos (and all the appeals) scale in complexity and can be used in many diverse situations.

Logos can take many forms, but two very common forms are the use of **Deductive Reasoning** and **Inductive Reasoning** to build connections between information and an argument.

Deductive Reasoning vs. Inductive Reasoning:

- Deductive refers to making logical conclusions among connected sentences and ideas.

Example: “If Pepsi is a soda and soda has too much sugar, then Pepsi must have too much sugar.”

- Inductive refers to more general conclusions stemming from specific evidence.

Example: “I learned that students perform better in a classroom setting after observing a workshop on classroom management.”

Also, be aware of and avoid **logical fallacies** in which conclusions are drawn from a series of vaguely related ideas.

Example: “If we legalize marijuana, then people will be more likely to use heroin.” This fallacious argument is an example of a “slippery slope” argument. Be on the lookout for this and other logical fallacies, such as those listed below.

Informal Fallacies, provided by Lumen Learning

A fallacy is usually an error in reasoning often due to a misconception or a presumption. Some of the more frequent common logical fallacies are:

- Hasty generalization: argues from limited examples or a special case to a general rule. Argument: Every person I've met has ten fingers, therefore, all people have ten fingers. Problem: Those "who have been met" are not a representative subset of the entire set.
- Making the argument personal (argumentum ad hominem): attacking or discrediting the opposition's character. Argument: What do you know about the U.S.? You aren't even a citizen. Problem: personal argument against an opponent, instead of against the opponent's argument.
- Popular sentiment or bandwagon appeal (argumentum ad populum): an appeal to the majority; appeal to loyalty. Argument: Everyone is doing it. Problem: Concludes a proposition to be true because many or most people believe it.
- Red herring (Ignoratio Elenchi): intentionally or unintentionally misleading or distracting from the actual issue. Argument: I think that we should make the academic requirements stricter for students. I recommend that you support this because we are in a budget crisis and we do not want our salaries affected. Problem: Here the second sentence, though used to support the first, does not address the topic of the first sentence, instead switching the focus to the quite different topic.
- Fallacy of false cause (non sequitur): incorrectly assumes one thing is the cause of another. Non Sequitur is Latin for "It does not follow." Argument: I hear the rain falling outside my window; therefore, the sun is not shining. Problem: The conclusion is false because the sun can shine while it is raining.
- If it comes before it is the cause (post hoc ergo propter hoc): believing that temporal succession implies a causal relation. Argument: It rained just before the car died. The rain caused the car to break down. Problem: There may be no connection between the two events.
- Two events co-occurring is not causation (cum hoc ergo propter hoc): believing that correlation implies a causal relation. Argument: More cows die in the summer. More ice cream is consumed in summer months. Therefore, the consumption of ice cream in the summer is killing cows. Problem: No premise suggests the ice cream consumption is causing the deaths. The deaths and consumption could be unrelated, or something else could be causing both, such as summer heat.

- Fallacy of many questions or loaded questions (Plurium Interrogationum): groups more than one question in the form of a single question. Argument: Have you stopped beating your wife? Problem: Either a yes or no answer is an admission of guilt to beating your wife.
- Straw man: creates the illusion of having refuted a proposition by replacing it with a superficially similar proposition (the “straw man”), and refuting it, without ever actually refuting the original. Argument: Person A: Sunny days are good Person B: If all days were sunny, we’d never have rain, and without rain, we’d have famine and death. Therefore, you are wrong. Problem: B has misrepresented A’s claim by falsely suggesting that A claimed that only sunny days are good, and then B refuted the misrepresented version of the claim, rather than refuting A’s original assertion.
- The false dilemma or either-or fallacy: the listener is forced to make a choice between two things which are not really related or relevant. Argument: If you are not with us, you are against us. Problem: The presentation of a false choice often reflects a deliberate attempt to eliminate any middle ground.
- Card-stacking, or cherry picking: deliberate action is taken to bias an argument by selective use of facts with opposing evidence being buried or discredited. Argument: Learn new skills, become a leader and see the world. Problem: Only the positive benefits of military service are used to recruit, and not the hazards.

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Audience

A key area of understanding and responding to a rhetorical situation involves connecting with a specific audience. Beyond simply writing to generic readers or citizens of the world, authors use specific rhetorical strategies depending on their audience.

Before you can analyze how effectively an author engages an audience, you must first think about that audience. An audience is any collective intended recipient of the text and also the person or group the author wants to influence. Ask these questions when interpreting the rhetorical situation of a text:

- Who is the author addressing (professionals, academic community, etc.)?
- What background, interests, or values come into play when communicating to that audience?
- What context does the audience need (situational circumstances, historical context, supporting details, necessary evidence, etc.)?
- What style or voice is appropriate for the audience?
- What is the audience's perspective in terms of their likelihood to agree or disagree?
- What should your audience do with this information?

Think back to the last paper you wrote. Did you have an audience in mind for the paper? Did it feel like you were only writing to the teacher? Focusing only on the teacher as audience often leaves us fixated on the "correctness" of writing rather than devoting energy to shaping our rhetoric to reflect the values of a specific audience.

Now, consider your most recent Facebook post or Tweet. You were probably hyper-aware of your audience and how what you posted or shared might affect them or what their reaction might be. Knowing that you already have experiences with audience expectations should help you understand the "how" of writing rather than simply "what" you are writing in relation to your audience.

Types of Audiences

The Imagined Audience: You may be asked to write to an audience of your own construction or one that has broadly defined values and interests. Try to think outside

of simply writing to your teacher but consider, based on your purpose and main idea, who would benefit the most from receiving this information. What do you want them to do with this information?

Discourse Communities: This should be an audience you are more familiar with in your writing because you regularly engage in the communication unique to this community. This could be cultural languages, social languages, specific types of verbal and nonverbal communication, etc.

Organized/Intended Audience: This is a specific group of individuals who require more specific language and information based on your topic. Maybe you are writing to a group of Economists who require technical/professional dialogue and clearly defined areas of interest. Maybe you are writing to the local school board and need comprehensive research on the policies and activities of the school district.

Tone and Style for Audience

A key aspect of defining and writing to an audience is understanding how tone and style come into play. Style refers to syntactical elements such as sentence length, word choice, punctuation, etc. Whatever your overall purpose is in writing, your style should reflect that in terms of persuading or informing. Tone refers to how your audience should feel once they receive your message. Think of writing an informal letter to your grandmother versus composing a professional email to your boss.

Imagine you are writing an email to one of your instructors. Which of the following examples better utilizes tone and style?

- Dear Professor Sanchez,
I am having some trouble understanding today's assignment from class. Would you mind if we scheduled a time to meet and discuss it during your office hours this week?
- Hey,
I don't get what we're supposed to be doing in class? Help me please!

Do you notice a stark difference between the two? In the first example, the student presents a clear and concise email with appropriate language and well-formed sentences. The style and tone match the intended audience and help to present a clear

purpose. In the second example, the student's purpose is unclear. The context they present for needing help is vague, the tone is informal, and the request for help is too general to affect a desired outcome.

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Conventions of Academic Writing

Over the course of ENG 101, you will cultivate critical reading and writing skills that contribute to a more meaningful connection with the texts you read and produce. These skills are meant to be transferable, meaning the critical reading strategies, cognitive understandings, and effective communication skills you develop over the course of the semester will also apply to other coursework, majors, and professional skills. In and out of the classroom, you should be able to interpret rhetorical situations and audiences by breaking down a text to its usage of rhetorical strategies and the overall voice of the author. This rhetorical awareness includes competent syntax, stylistic choices, organization around a thesis, and various other components that make up textual competency.

A portion of these conventions do refer to the mechanical correctness of your writing, such as grammar, punctuation, and paragraphing, but just as important is your comprehension of transferable rhetorical strategies.

Mechanical Academic Conventions

- Use proper formatting and citation techniques as laid out in [MLA Formatting Basics](#).
- Avoid unsupported statements or making declarations with little to no evidence.
- Use first-person (I, me, my, our) and second-person (you, your, yours) pronouns only when necessary for clarity. In most cases, use third-person pronouns.
- Avoid slang and colloquialisms.
- Structure your writing so points are well organized and connect to one another. The overall structure of a text is dictated mostly by genre, but your ideas should always be clear and cohesive through your text's flow of information.
- Use transitions and topic sentences between paragraphs to increase cohesion.
- Make sure your diction (word choice) matches the style and tone of your writing (See [Audience](#)).
- Make sure your verb tense (past, present, etc.) is always in agreement.
 - Incorrect: During class, Alex stood up and walks out of the door in a huff.
 - Correct: During class, Alex stood up and walked out of the door in a huff.
- Make sure your subjects and verbs are always in agreement.
 - Incorrect: A class of writers were reading the textbook.
 - Correct: A class of writers was reading the textbook.

(While “writers” is plural, the noun in this sentence is actually the noun phrase “class of writers.” There is just one class, so the singular verb “was” is correct.)

- Craft sentences that express complete thoughts.

Incorrect: Speaking with an Appalachian dialect.

Correct: A person speaking with an Appalachian dialect is often stereotyped as lesser than: less smart, less educated, and less qualified.

- When discussing what an author has written in an academic-style paper for most disciplines, we refer to the quote or paraphrase in the present tense because we can, in this moment, read those words (even though the author wrote them in the past).

Incorrect: As Constance Elam said in her 2002 article “Culture, Poverty and Education in Appalachian Kentucky,” support for public education in Kentucky has historically been “delayed” (10).

Correct: As Constance Elam says in her 2002 article “Culture, Poverty and Education in Appalachian Kentucky,” support for public education in Kentucky has historically been “delayed” (10).

Rhetorical Academic Conventions

- Maintain a comprehensive understanding of rhetorical situations and audience.
- Present a clear purpose to your audience.
- Support explanations with evidence.
- Define and contextualize arguments through rhetorical functions and persuasive language.
- Critically analyze and evaluate texts beyond surface-level meanings.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, and pathos) and their applicability to audience, purpose, etc.

Rhetoric Across Disciplines

English will not be the only discipline you engage with that demands rhetorical competency in understanding and creating texts. Regardless of your major or post-graduate aspirations, you will carry critical thinking and reading skills into other disciplines through the continuous need for textual comprehension.

If you pursue social sciences, argumentation and evidence will take priority in political science, sociology, psychology, etc. If you pursue marketing, economics, or business, rhetorical competency will take the form of persuasive speech that shapes agreements and uses language to provoke a specific response from your audience. Rhetoric can even take shape in scientific and mathematical disciplines in how various collections of languages and formulas dictate ways of thinking.

A Note on Fair Use

In the same way this textbook is an example of various educational resources abiding by the language of fair use and copyright, you too should maintain a general understanding of these permissions. Fair use dictates the allowed usage of copyrighted (or the rights to authorship) materials. You will be asked to quote the works of many different authors for purposes of rhetorically analyzing and synthesizing different ideas. Fair use gives you the right to utilize **selected portions** of these works and fit them within larger conversations of your topics **as long as** you give credit to the original author(s) and properly cite all materials. For more information about fair use, see the ECU Library's [Guide to Copyright and Fair Use](#).

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Purpose

When you are asked to define your purpose in writing or to identify the purpose of a text you are reading, you are trying to understand what the author's motivations are for creating the text. What are your intentions with the text? Analyzing the purpose of a text involves discerning what the author's rhetoric is being used for and deciding what the author wants their audience to do with this information: Are they calling the audience to a specific action? Does the author wish for them to be better informed on a certain topic? Are they engaging with or contributing to a larger conversation?

Your purpose is only as limited as your intentions in a text. Various purposes for writing a paper include to:

- Inform
- Persuade
- Entertain
- Analyze
- Theorize
- Explore
- Question

In both reading and responding rhetorically to a text, interpreting the author's purpose means discerning an end goal (persuade, inform, etc.) and figuring out what evidence supports that goal in terms of the text's central claim/argument and what rhetorical appeals are used. In your own writing, you need to define your purpose through the claims made in your thesis.

Purpose and Thesis

Your thesis acts as the roadmap to your paper, introducing and highlighting the main routes your body paragraphs plan to take. In crafting a thesis, the clarity of your purpose as an author should coincide with the main ideas of the paper. The thesis statement is usually presented near the beginning of the essay. A common practice in ENG 101/102 courses is to position your thesis statement near the end of your introduction leading into your body paragraphs.

The thesis of an essay should encompass your main idea, the major point you are trying to make. A thesis should present:

- A debatable claim your paper can build off of.
- A brief introduction of the ideas and facts present in your body paragraphs.
- Specific conclusions about your topic.

Your thesis statement needs to make a clear and concise assertion about your topic and make some reference to the purpose and direction of your writing.

Good Example of an Argumentative Thesis:

“Author X effectively convinces his audience that Beagles are the cutest dogs through the use of relevant statistics and surveys paired with an emotional narrative.”

Bad Example of an Argumentative Thesis:

“In this paper, I will discuss why Author X’s writing about dogs is good.”

In the first example, an argumentative claim is made about the effectiveness of the author’s rhetoric, and specific examples are introduced that outline the rest of the paper. The purpose is clear in that, after reading this concise statement, the audience is fully aware of the writer’s intention to persuade their audience on why this author’s rhetoric is so effective.

In the second example, the author references their intention (to discuss) but fails to acknowledge any debatable argument or relevant evidence for the body paragraphs of the essay to build off of. By plainly stating, “In this paper, I will . . . ” the thesis comes across more like a purpose statement with no actual claims.

Defining Purpose

When writing an essay and crafting a thesis, your purpose will usually be defined by either the parameters of the assignment or by your own intentions with the paper. If the assignment is to write a rhetorical analysis, your purpose will revolve around persuading your audience to engage with a certain point of view regarding the rhetoric of another author. If you are asked to write a literacy narrative, you will need a thesis that informs your audience on the language and discourse communities of your chosen topic. If you are writing a position synthesis paper, you will need an argumentative thesis that states the parameters of your position and works to persuade your audience in favor of your argument.

Purpose and Audience

Another important factor in defining a purpose is understanding the specific audience you are writing to. If your audience is a vague, general collection of readers, then your purpose will be equally vague. Your purpose should be shaped by the specific audience you are writing to and the desired effect you wish to have on that audience. If your purpose is to persuade a specific audience, you must be aware of the sensibilities and values of that audience. Do they require significant context and background for your topic? What evidence would work most effectively?

Style

Style is how you choose to present your ideas; it's when the author considers audience and purpose in deciding how best to present information. It's the texture of your sentences and the words and phrases you choose to employ in your writing. Style is just as important as the actual content of your paper because the way you choose to shape and communicate your message plays an important role in its effectiveness.

The meaning of a text and the way it is presented both play a role in shaping your message, but style can also influence the way a reader interprets or generates meaning from a text based on other writing components. Elements such as tone, diction, and voice either contribute to an author's style or work in tandem with it to make a work more affecting on the reader.

- **Tone** dictates your writing's overall attitude as it relates to audience and purpose. Take into consideration if your writing should be objective, logical, emotional, humorous, serious, formal, etc.
- **Diction** is essentially word choice and vocabulary in a text. Your word choice should be shaped by the type of text you are writing. Academic papers will usually necessitate formal language, while a casual speech may pair better with informal diction.
- **Voice** is just as important as tone and diction because it is what makes the writing uniquely yours! Tone may change based on the circumstances of the text, but voice, in terms of expression and individuality, should remain consistent. Your work in English 101 should sound like you—the really smart, well-informed version of you.

All of these factors play a role in shaping one another, so when developing one of them, consider its implications on the text holistically. In deciding your tone, you must also consider the diction that contributes to your tone, the audience you are writing to, and how best to represent your voice.

Example of tone:

Consider you are writing to an academic audience to present your research findings. You likely need a formal tone with informative reasoning that should be logical and credible (logos and ethos).

“Through extensive surveys and interviews, my findings indicate that chocolate is categorically the best ice cream flavor.”

Example of diction:

If you are crafting a paper using a formal/professional tone and style, your diction must follow suit.

Formal - “Professor Riley, may I have an extension on our current essay? I have unfortunately been overwhelmed with work and school recently.”

Informal - “Hey, I haven’t done the paper. Can I turn it in next week?”

Example of voice:

Your voice is also influenced by the word choice of your diction and the tone you choose. Unique to voice, however, is the “persona” you choose to bring to your writing.

- Personal, cultural, and social language preferences can play a role in vocabulary and sentence fluency.
- Authors who have influenced your writing style can shape your voice in how you choose to emulate their style.
- Topics, audiences, and purposes can all be a result of what personally interests you as a writer.

Developing Style

No one set style exists for composition that applies to every paper. Your writing style should constantly be changing and adapting based on purpose, context, and audience. As you mold your style to fit these different rhetorical situations, be aware of how your tone, diction, and voice should also change to fit within your chosen style. Consider these tips when developing style in your writing:

1. Keep your writing clear and concise: Long-winded sentences tend to get in the way of developing a distinct style.
2. Read different authors : You might not know what writing styles interest you until you engage with different ideas and how authors present them.

3. Revise your writing: During the revision stage, look through specific elements like diction and tone to discern if they all effectively contribute to your style.
4. Read out loud: It might sound obvious, but reading your paper out loud and listening to the flow of sentences in your paper can help you catch oddly worded phrases or uneven tones. It also enables you to create more conversational, natural papers.

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MLA Formatting Basics

[The Modern Language Association \(MLA\)](#) is the style standard for all formatting requirements in terms of in-text citations (parenthetical citations), and works cited pages created for academic papers in most first-year writing and English studies programs. Using MLA style guidelines for your formatting and page layouts creates uniformity and consistency in how you present information while also giving credit to the ideas and quotes used from outside sources—such as when you write about the readings in this textbook. MLA Style primarily consists of general guidelines for how your papers should be formatted and how information needs to be presented and credited.

Formatting

The basics of MLA formatting (for Microsoft Word and Google documents) include:

1. Using 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and both sides of the page.
2. Indenting the start of each new paragraph by a half inch.
3. Recommended use of Times New Roman 12-point-font.
4. Double spacing every page.
5. Listing your name, instructor's name, course number, and date in the upper left-hand corner of the first page.
6. Providing a running header for each page using your last name and page number (Last name 1).

Works Cited

For up-to-date information and examples on current 9th edition MLA standards and other useful writing resources, refer to the [Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#), [The Purdue Owl Writing Lab](#), or the [MLA Style Lab](#).

For MLA Style papers, your works cited page (or bibliography) is a document at the end of your writing that presents all relevant sources utilized in the essay in a comprehensive list. Whether you directly quote, paraphrase, or summarize ideas, you need to offer all relevant information of the source to your readers. Works cited pages are important because they

- Offer a well-formatted list of your sources for your readers to refer to,
- Help you keep track of all of the sources you use and keep you from accidentally plagiarizing other authors, and
- Showcase credibility to your readers through the sources you use.

Each works cited entry (or reference) must include:

- Author(s)
- Title of Source (such as the title of an essay in this book)
- Title of Container (larger work the source exists in; this eBook is the container the individual chapters and readings are found in)
- Contributors (such as editors or translators)
- Version of Source
- Number
- Publisher
- Publication Date
- Location (the page numbers for print sources, or where you accessed the source for digital texts)

Also, make sure that each source is presented with a hanging indent (each line following the first is indented by a half-inch) and sources are presented in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

Examples

Last Name, First Name. "Title." *Container of Source* (Journals, Books, Larger Collection of Works, etc.), Other contributors (editors), Version or Edition, Volume Number, Publisher, Publication Date, Location (pages, paragraph, etc.). DOI or URL

Doctorow, Cory. "Writing in the Age of Distraction." *The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric*, Eastern Kentucky University, pp. 100-103. 2022.

Wong, Alia. "Why Schools are Banning Yoga." *The Atlantic*, 20 Sept 2018.

You can also review a complete model Works Cited [here](#).

As you work with sources in this textbook and elsewhere, you'll find that not every piece of information listed above will always be present, depending upon the type of source.

For example, a chapter in a book will usually not have a version and number, but a magazine article will. Sometimes you will find interesting transformations when working with online sources: when citing a blog post or something from a Twitter feed, you'll need to use the username rather than the writer's first and last name. It is important to include as much information from the list as is available, because it helps others to accurately find and identify the source. It can take a while to fully get the hang of it, so just ask your instructor or get help from the Noel Studio when you're not sure how to cite a source.

In-Text Citations

Just as important as your Works Cited is how you present other authors' ideas within the framework of your paper. The main ways you present other ideas are through directly quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

Each piece of information or idea that is not your own must be

- Introduced and properly contextualized.
 - Whose idea is it?
 - Where is it coming from?
 - How does it relate to what you have presented so far in the text?

- Either directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized.
 - Direct quotes are placed in quotation marks.
 - Paraphrased ideas are presented in your own words.
 - Summaries are also your own words but are *much shorter* than the original version.

- Explained.
 - How does it relate to your overall thesis/purpose?
 - How does it contribute to or contrast with your argument
 - How does the quote support your ideas by analyzing or evaluating it?

- Cited.
 - The piece of information that comes first in your Works Cited entry is what should come first in your citation. Usually, that's the author's name.
 - If you use a source that does not have an author, then a condensed title is acceptable in place of the author.
 - You can mention the author's name in the sentence or refer to the author in the parenthetical citation.
 - Do not skip this step.

Example 1

Original	I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.
Direct quote	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. uses an appeal to the moral and religious beliefs of his audience by saying that “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.”
Paraphrase	In his famous “I Have a Dream Speech,” Martin Luther King Jr. opens by expressing his vision for universal equality through the imagery of familiar environments becoming similar in scope. His hope is that such depictions can reflect the potential equality of man and fit in line with God’s glory.
Summary	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream Speech” presents his vision for an America that does not use race as a measurement for people’s worth.
Works Cited	Martin L., Jr. "I Have a Dream." Speech. Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D. C. 28 Aug. 1963. American Rhetoric.

*Note in this example that because the source does not have page numbers, no page numbers are included.

Example 2

Original	Emissions from burning waste worsen environmental inequalities, create financial risks for host communities and reduce incentives to adopt more sustainable waste practices.
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Direct quote	<p>Environmental researcher Ana Baptista argues that “Emissions from burning waste worsen environmental inequalities, create financial risks for host communities and reduce incentives to adopt more sustainable waste practices” (48).</p> <p>Many environmental researchers feel that the waste from burning trash not only “create financial risks for host communities” but also “reduce incentives to adopt more sustainable” strategies (Baptista 48).</p>
Paraphrase	Problems with burning waste have ramifications beyond the environment, though: economics, equity, and long-term municipal planning (Baptist 48).
Summary	Ana Baptista’s “Is Burning Trash a Good Way to Handle It? Waste Incineration in 5 Charts” presents a wide-reaching argument against the burning of waste.
Works Cited	Baptista, Ana. “Is Burning Trash a Good Way to Handle It? Waste Incineration in 5 Charts.” <i>The Commons: Tools for Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric</i> , Eastern Kentucky University, pp. 47-53. 2022.

*Note how there is no comma between the author and page number and how the punctuation always follows the parenthetical citation.

These are some simple, straightforward examples to get you started. Your instructor will provide more guidance, and you can always seek out feedback from the library, the Noel Studio, or the Student Success Center.

Here’s an important tidbit: you do not need to memorize these! Sure, you’ll start to learn some habits the more you use the system, but even experienced writers have to look this stuff up sometimes. Don’t beat yourself up if it takes some time.

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Themes for Reading

Appalachia

Since many of us are from or live in Appalachia, we actively engage in and promote Appalachian literacies, research and narratives in this text. Many of the readings found in this text represent aspects of Appalachian culture and issues ranging from ecological impact in the area to socioeconomic concerns to critical analyses of the narratives and personalities that make up the culture. Many of the values of Appalachia are present here and the distinctive regional culture plays an important role in this text in focusing ideas and themes relevant to Appalachian culture

As first-year writing students, you will be asked to develop writing processes and readerly habits that encourage the engagement of literacies and dialects that may be both similar to or different from what you've been used to. You will apply reading, writing, and rhetorical skills to unique authorial perspectives that shine a light on issues and potential solutions within the region. If you are passionate about the Appalachian region or are coming to find a deeper appreciation for the culture, then the ideas represented in these readings may help you focus on areas of importance while developing critical thinking skills and readerly and writing habits.

Classics

Classic literature refers to any works that have consistently shaped the literature and ideas of today or caused significant cultural or social changes in the world around us. The term "classic" is usually arbitrary in that it refers more to a category of widely recognized works rather than a definitive set of texts every student must read.

Exposing ourselves to the classics benefits our reading comprehension and critical thinking skills by experiencing different writing styles, historical perspectives, and rhetorical qualities that help a work endure to this day. Applying our critical reading and critical thinking skills to these texts also allows us to enter into an academic conversation that, in some cases, has persisted for centuries. When you are asked to rhetorically analyze a text like Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," you are contributing to a shared analysis that shapes how we understand the text in its own period as well as what social implications it has for us today. This is a text that has a wide body of knowledge attributed to its historical and rhetorical importance, and you are in a unique position to contribute to those conversations.

Diversity

In developing your reading, writing, and rhetorical skills, it is important to actively engage with authors who reflect a growing diversity of experiences, ideas, and literacies. Diversity of lived experiences in terms of race and ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, education, and a variety of other influencing factors make sure the writing classroom represents a wide range of people. These distinctions allow students to connect their own experiences with readings and also develop a deeper understanding of others.

In Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric and across disciplines, diversity exists as a central tenet of academic inclusivity. The texts and ideas represented in this textbook are meant to echo sentiments of evolving social perspectives that reflect the diversity of our students. The authors presented here represent diversity through specific language and dialect, theories of social change, historical perspectives of racial injustice, feminist narratives, and a variety of other perspectives mirroring the day-to-day experiences of you and your peers.

Ecology

Of the many interdisciplinary issues within this text, an interest in environmental issues remains one of the most prevalent in contemporary society. Ecology is the study of how populations of humans, plants, animals, and organisms interact. The purpose of engaging in readings focused on issues of environmental science is so we can better understand--on both a local and a global level--how our influence affects the sustainability of life.

In fitting these readings within the framework of Reading Writing, and Rhetoric, you will analyze and interpret arguments and areas of environmental research that deal with needs for environmental regulation on a global scale as well as at home in Appalachia. The Appalachian-focused texts in this section address issues such as the negative effects of prolonged coal mining, the social and economic issues of mountaintop removal, and narratives of long-standing environmental consciousness within the Appalachian community.

Gender

In this course, we will integrate varied sources to experience varied perspectives about important issues. To achieve this goal, we must seek out authors who reflect and promote issues of gender and sexuality in their writing. The impact of these issues

ranges from discussions of reinforced social roles in personal and professional lives to references of power structures and social norms associated with the lived experiences of men, women, and transgender individuals of different cultures. First-year writing demands that we not just adapt to structures of academic writing but that we engage with important ideas and genres that mirror the social hierarchies of our world. Issues and themes of gender in this collection will hopefully represent an important body of perspectives. Our hope is that you apply your rhetorical and critical thinking skills to the ideas of these texts to shape your own purpose in writing.

History

To improve our reading, writing, and rhetorical habits, we must look to the past, both in terms of authors detailing important moments in world and U.S. history and authors actually writing in those time periods. Applying ideas from the past to our current writing processes is such a broad concept that it includes everything from historical accounts of racial and gender inequality to the actual founding of the United States in the Declaration of Independence. Applying these perspectives to our own writing processes helps us better understand how we fit into the world.

For the purposes of first-year writing, we can acknowledge the rhetorical strategies of authors in the past and how they affected change so we can evolve in our own rhetorical understandings of the world today. Persuasive speech is something that has been around since the days of Aristotle, and critically evaluating how these rhetorical situations have been adapted throughout history can help us apply rhetoric today and possibly see how or if it will change in the future.

Literacy

The ability to critically read, interpret, and generate meaning from a text directly relates to developing an efficient writing process and communicating meaningful ideas to an audience. Many of the authors featured in this text express the importance of understanding the relationship between reading and writing. The literacy skills demonstrated in these readings offer important insight into how effective communication is the direct result of improved reading comprehension and meaningful textual interaction.

Literacy is not something that only applies to the learning outcomes of this course. The quality of how you communicate and interpret information affects nearly every other aspect of your academic and professional life. Disciplines that require any form of research or writing skills relate to the rhetorical competencies developed in this course. Professions that require information literacy such as finding, evaluating, and communicating information are developed in Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric. As you

read through these selections, consider the rhetorical approaches of the authors and the literacies employed in navigating a variety of ideas.

Politics

Political discourse contributes significantly to how we receive and create information in our everyday lives. The methods and conclusions we incorporate in our writing, both personally and academically, are often a direct reflection of political views shaped from varying social realities and world views. In engaging with texts from a variety of political interests, we receive a much deeper understanding of critical global trends as well as our own roles in socioeconomic structures at local and national levels. Engaging with the text and speech of political figures and opinions develops necessary social literacies, which help us interpret meaning beyond surface-level words and even gain a greater understanding of purpose and audience.

Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric is not just an exercise in “correct” writing or grammatical perfection but a way to understand and rhetorically respond to the world around us. Developing critical thinking skills and rhetorical awareness in terms of political discourse--broadly defined as any written or spoken communication--will benefit your information literacy across disciplines of Sociology, Political Science, History, and many others that rely on competence in summarizing and responding to different opinions.

Pop Culture

Popular culture acts as a social vehicle through which we can ask philosophical and scholarly questions about how our culture functions and what we value. We communicate these ideas through fandoms, consumerism, media, and a host of other communal spaces, contributing to a certain era's social commentary. In addition, many cultural artifacts like books, artwork, film, and sports have the power to influence how we think about the world.

Many of these cultural frameworks and perspectives will contain socially relevant ideas that can apply to areas of information literacy, critical thinking, argumentative analysis, and a host of other rhetorical applications. Important areas of critical studies can relate to and engage with the television shows, movies, and cultural figures that actively define what our society values. Societal aspects of community engagement and individualism are born out of the pop culture we consume and engage with. It would then make sense that we ask you to analyze and respond to texts which represent the cultural interests of the past and of today.

Research

Preparing and crafting research papers will be a much more central focus in ENG 102: Research, Writing, and Rhetoric, but you should still be aware of how the compositional and rhetorical strategies developed in this class will translate into future research work. Many of the authors presented in this text employ important research strategies which contribute to how persuasive they are, and strong academic readers and writers must first be able to recognize those strategies. Critically analyzing the research processes of different authors will help you interpret the credible and logical connections made between sources and to what effect those connections benefit the author's purpose. It also helps to engage with a number of different research perspectives in understanding how many different areas of focus can be clearly presented through carefully and clearly crafted evidence-based arguments.

Developing a well-rounded research process will not only benefit you in this course but it will also translate to nearly every other discipline or major that requires competency in crafting arguments and persuasive language based on concise evidence. Most importantly, developing skills in evaluating relevant information to engage with will translate to necessary professional skills required for communication-based jobs and pursuits in the future.

Sociology

A great deal of the readings housed in this text present themes of sociology and many social issues engrained in humanity. Sociology is the study of the make-up and structure of human society. Many of these readings focus on social behaviors among specific demographics and the social contexts making up the languages and organization of certain groups.

Sociology plays an important role in how you write and what you choose to write about. The social and cultural influences present in your life contribute to how you organize information, formulate questions, and communicate ideas. Readings such as Cory Doctorow's "Writing in the Age of Distraction" and Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," thought different in scope and genre, both come from create places of social influences. For Doctorow, it is the connections found between technology and writing processes. For Swift, it is a satirical response to social consequences of poverty by means of eating Irish children.

Technology

Technological perspectives of reading and writing concepts go beyond baseline understandings of alphabetic literacy. Applying rhetorical concepts discussed in this class to broader conversations of technological advancements, digital and social media literacy, and various fields of media and communication studies affords us opportunities to better understand how we can use these tools for persuasive language and the development of critical thinking skills. The technology referenced in these readings varies from areas of digital literacy and social media writing to innovations in astronomy and environmental science.

In applying these vast concepts to areas of reading, writing, and rhetoric, you will learn how to engage arguments and rhetorically analyze texts that represent areas of technological literacy necessary for personal and professional success. Each reading offers unique insight into how technology is used in tandem with language providing an opportunity for you to critically consider the authors' biases, assumptions, research methodologies, and persuasiveness.

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Common Texts

Beyoncé Knowles’s song “Countdown” from her 2011 album 4 was a massive success, and its accompanying video launched a massive controversy. The series of videos and articles below introduce questions that represent an important issue, especially in our technological context that allows quick and easy copy and paste: when is using someone else’s material an homage or research, and when is it plagiarism?

[#gender](#) [#literacy](#) [#popculture](#)

Countdown

Beyoncé

Here's [Beyoncé’s “Countdown”](#) video, unchanged. Do you recognize any of the references the video makes?

Now, [here’s a side-by-side, split screen comparison](#) with the references included, created by YouTube user fundifferent1. What are your initial reactions?

After viewers and critics pointed out that maybe these allusions to other works were a little *too close* to the original for comfort, people started talking—especially Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, whose choreography and influence is clear.

Here are [Beyoncé’s team’s comments](#) and [Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker’s comments](#).

After looking at *all this*—what do you think? Did Beyoncé and her team cross a line, or not? What evidence would you provide?

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Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an influential Nigerian writer whose work has had a major impact on conversations of feminism, pop culture, and diversity in literary representation. She also focuses heavily on bringing contemporary Nigerian culture into mainstream consciousness as a reflection of her own desire to fight against disempowering stereotypes in favor of diverse cultural opinions.

In “The Danger of a Single Story,” Adichie articulates issues associated with only communicating one story or point of view of a group. For her, the “single story” communicates incomplete conclusions about the lived experiences and perspectives of others, stemming from a lack of knowledge associated with limited perspectives. Adichie passionately models her own journey finding an authentic cultural voice. She started reading stories of British and American children's perspectives, which she conflated with her own, and eventually transitioned into exploring African writers like Chinua Achebe who offered a new perspective on what literary voices looked like. Adichie ultimately calls for her audience to reject the “single story” in favor of more nuanced and complete understandings of people and communities.

[#literacy](#) [#diversity](#) [#gender](#)

The Danger of a Single Story

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



["Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie"](#) by [Howard County Library System](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-N](#)

I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story." I grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to.

My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was.

And for many years afterwards, I would have a desperate desire to taste ginger beer. But that is another story.

What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books.

But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not

know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. And so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So, the year I turned eight, we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt enormous pity for Fide's family.

Then one Saturday, we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed raffia that his brother had made. I was startled. It had not occurred to me that anybody in his family could actually make something. All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them.

Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called my "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey.

She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove.

What struck me was this: She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.

I must say that before I went to the U.S., I didn't consciously identify as African. But in the U.S., whenever Africa came up, people turned to me. Never mind that I knew nothing about places like Namibia. But I did come to embrace this new identity, and in many ways I think of myself now as African. Although I still get quite irritable when

Africa is referred to as a country, the most recent example being my otherwise wonderful flight from Lagos two days ago, in which there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in "India, Africa and other countries."

So, after I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my roommate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner. I would see Africans in the same way that I, as a child, had seen Fide's family.

This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. Now, here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant called John Lok, who sailed to west Africa in 1561 and kept a fascinating account of his voyage. After referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses," he writes, "They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts."

Now, I've laughed every time I've read this. And one must admire the imagination of John Lok. But what is important about his writing is that it represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West: A tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the wonderful poet Rudyard Kipling, are "half devil, half child."

And so, I began to realize that my American roommate must have throughout her life seen and heard different versions of this single story, as had a professor, who once told me that my novel was not "authentically African." Now, I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places, but I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact, I did not know what African authenticity was. The professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars. They were not starving. Therefore they were not authentically African.

But I must quickly add that I too am just as guilty in the question of the single story. A few years ago, I visited Mexico from the U.S. The political climate in the U.S. at the time was tense, and there were debates going on about immigration. And, as often happens in America, immigration became synonymous with Mexicans. There were endless

stories of Mexicans as people who were fleecing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border, that sort of thing.

I remember walking around on my first day in Guadalajara, watching the people going to work, rolling up tortillas in the marketplace, smoking, laughing. I remember first feeling slight surprise. And then, I was overwhelmed with shame. I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject immigrant. I had bought into the single story of Mexicans and I could not have been more ashamed of myself.

So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.

It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.

I recently spoke at a university where a student told me that it was such a shame that Nigerian men were physical abusers like the father character in my novel. I told him that I had just read a novel called "American Psycho" ---- and that it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers. Now, obviously I said this in a fit of mild irritation.

But it would never have occurred to me to think that just because I had read a novel in which a character was a serial killer that he was somehow representative of all Americans. This is not because I am a better person than that student, but because of

America's cultural and economic power, I had many stories of America. I had read Tyler and Updike and Steinbeck and Gaitskill. I did not have a single story of America.

When I learned, some years ago, that writers were expected to have had really unhappy childhoods to be successful, I began to think about how I could invent horrible things my parents had done to me.

But the truth is that I had a very happy childhood, full of laughter and love, in a very close-knit family.

But I also had grandfathers who died in refugee camps. My cousin Polle died because he could not get adequate healthcare. One of my closest friends, Okoloma, died in a plane crash because our fire trucks did not have water. I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes, my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of normalized political fear invaded our lives.

All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes: There are immense ones, such as the horrific rapes in Congo and depressing ones, such as the fact that 5,000 people apply for one job vacancy in Nigeria. But there are other stories that are not about catastrophe, and it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.

So what if before my Mexican trip, I had followed the immigration debate from both sides, the U.S. and the Mexican? What if my mother had told us that Fide's family was poor and hardworking? What if we had an African television network that broadcast

diverse African stories all over the world? What the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe calls "a balance of stories."

What if my roommate knew about my Nigerian publisher, Muhtar Bakare, a remarkable man who left his job in a bank to follow his dream and start a publishing house? Now, the conventional wisdom was that Nigerians don't read literature. He disagreed. He felt that people who could read, would read, if you made literature affordable and available to them.

Shortly after he published my first novel, I went to a TV station in Lagos to do an interview, and a woman who worked there as a messenger came up to me and said, "I really liked your novel. I didn't like the ending. Now, you must write a sequel, and this is what will happen ..."

And she went on to tell me what to write in the sequel. I was not only charmed, I was very moved. Here was a woman, part of the ordinary masses of Nigerians, who were not supposed to be readers. She had not only read the book, but she had taken ownership of it and felt justified in telling me what to write in the sequel.

Now, what if my roommate knew about my friend Funmi Iyanda, a fearless woman who hosts a TV show in Lagos, and is determined to tell the stories that we prefer to forget? What if my roommate knew about the heart procedure that was performed in the Lagos hospital last week? What if my roommate knew about contemporary Nigerian music, talented people singing in English and Pidgin, and Igbo and Yoruba and Ijo, mixing influences from Jay-Z to Fela to Bob Marley to their grandfathers.

What if my roommate knew about the female lawyer who recently went to court in Nigeria to challenge a ridiculous law that required women to get their husband's consent before renewing their passports? What if my roommate knew about Nollywood, full of innovative people making films despite great technical odds, films so popular that they really are the best example of Nigerians consuming what they produce? What if my roommate knew about my wonderfully ambitious hair braider, who has just started her own business selling hair extensions? Or about the millions of other Nigerians who start businesses and sometimes fail, but continue to nurse ambition?

Every time I am home I am confronted with the usual sources of irritation for most Nigerians: our failed infrastructure, our failed government, but also by the incredible

resilience of people who thrive despite the government, rather than because of it. I teach writing workshops in Lagos every summer, and it is amazing to me how many people apply, how many people are eager to write, to tell stories.

My Nigerian publisher and I have just started a non-profit called Farafina Trust, and we have big dreams of building libraries and refurbishing libraries that already exist and providing books for state schools that don't have anything in their libraries, and also of organizing lots and lots of workshops, in reading and writing, for all the people who are eager to tell our many stories.

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her Southern relatives who had moved to the North. She introduced them to a book about the Southern life that they had left behind. "They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained."

I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.

Thank you.



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In this article, author Ana Baptista argues against burning trash through municipal waste incinerators due to increased environmental risks in addition to the industry targeting “environmental justice communities” as common locations for said incinerators. Despite public investment and support going towards the renewable energy byproducts of these practices, many still believe the harmful pollutants expelled from incinerator plants and the negative impact they pose for low-income and minority based communities necessitate alternative waste management. The author presents a series of detailed charts expressing the decreased need for municipal waste incinerators based on increased recycling trends, the average age of currently active facilities, and the major pollution issues caused by these facilities.

[#ecology](#) [#technology](#) [#politics](#) [#sociology](#)

Is Burning Trash a Good Way to Handle It? Waste Incineration in 5 Charts

Ana Baptista



["Wheelabrator Technologies' Waste-to-Energy plant in Saugus, Massachusetts." by Fletcher6](#) is licensed under [CC BY 3.0](#)

Burning trash has a long history in the United States, and municipal solid waste incinerators have sparked resistance in many places. As an environmental justice

scholar who works directly with low-income and communities of color, I see incineration as a poor waste management option.

Although these plants generate electricity from the heat created by burning trash, their primary purpose is waste disposal. Emissions from burning waste worsen environmental inequalities, create financial risks for host communities and reduce incentives to adopt more sustainable waste practices.

I recently co-authored a report that describes signs of decline in the U.S. waste incineration industry due to many factors. They include a volatile revenue model, aging plants, high operation and maintenance costs, and growing public interest in reducing waste, promoting environmental justice and combating climate change.

Nonetheless, 72 incinerators are still operating today in the U.S. Most of them – 58, or 80% – are sited in environmental justice communities, which we defined as areas where more than 25% of residents are low-income, people of color or both. Incinerators worsen cumulative impacts from multiple pollution sources on these overburdened neighborhoods.

Environmental justice flashpoints

Waste incinerators are heavily concentrated in northeast states and Florida – areas with high population densities and limited landfill space. Some of these states also provide favorable economic incentives, such as allowing incinerators to earn renewable energy credits for generating electricity.

In the past year environmental justice advocates have successfully shut down incinerators in Detroit, Michigan, and Commerce, California. The Detroit incinerator was built in the 1980s and received more than US\$1 billion in public investment borne by local taxpayers. Groups such as Breathe Free Detroit and Zero Waste Detroit rallied residents to oppose the public financing and health burdens that the facility imposed on surrounding environmental justice communities. The plant closed in March 2019.

The California plant closed in June 2018 after a yearlong campaign by two community-based organizations, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and Valley Improvement Projects, to prevent incineration from qualifying for state renewable energy subsidies. The facility ultimately closed when a 30-year power purchase agreement with the local utility expired, leaving it without a sufficient revenue stream.

Aging facilities

Incineration plants' average life expectancy is 30 years. Three-quarters of operating waste incinerators in the United States are at least 25 years old.

These facilities' revenues come primarily from tipping fees that waste haulers pay to dump trash, and secondarily from generating electricity. These revenue streams are volatile and can undermine the industry's financial stability. At least 31 incinerators have closed since 2000 due to issues such as insufficient revenue or inability to afford required upgrades.

Operations and maintenance costs typically increase as plants age and their performance decreases. Upgrades, such as installing new pollution control equipment, can cost tens of millions of dollars, and sometimes more than US\$100 million.

These large capital expenditures represent risks for host communities, which often provide public financing through bonds or tax increases. Such measures are risky because the waste service and energy contracts that generate revenue are increasingly shorter term and vulnerable to fluctuating market and regulatory conditions. As plants age, their environmental performance may also degrade over time, posing increasing risks to the environment and public health.

Construction years for MSW incinerators

Most U.S. municipal solid waste incinerators are at least 25 years old, and some have been running for more than 40 years.



Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: [Tishman Environment and Design Center, 2019](#) • [Get the data](#)

What incinerators burn

The composition of municipal solid waste has changed over the past 50 years. Synthetic materials such as plastics have increased, while biogenic, compostable materials such as paper and yard trimmings have decreased.

Plastics are particularly problematic for waste handling because they are petroleum-based, nonbiogenic materials. They are difficult to decompose and release harmful pollutants such as dioxins and heavy metals when they are incinerated.

Materials in U.S. municipal solid waste

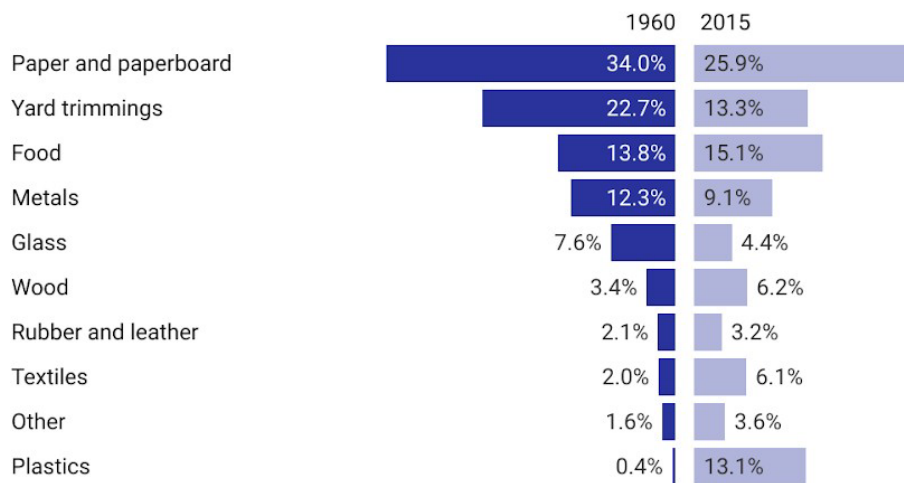


Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: EPA • [Get the data](#)

Waste management trends

Today, thanks to the evolution of waste handling options, a majority of the materials in municipal solid waste can be composted or recycled. This reduces impacts on the environment, including air, soil and water contamination and greenhouse gas emissions. As cities like New York and San Francisco adopt zero-waste policies that create incentives for diverting waste from landfills or incinerators, burning trash will increasingly become obsolete.

Many U.S. cities and states are adopting aggressive climate change and sustainability goals. Waste reduction and diversion will play a critical part in meeting these targets. The public is increasingly demanding more upstream solutions in the form of extended

producer responsibility bills, plastic bans and less-toxic product redesign. There is also a growing movement for less-consumptive lifestyles that favors zero-waste goals.

Materials in U.S. municipal solid waste recycled and composted (percentage of each type)

Wastes that are not recycled or composted typically are either burned or buried in landfills.

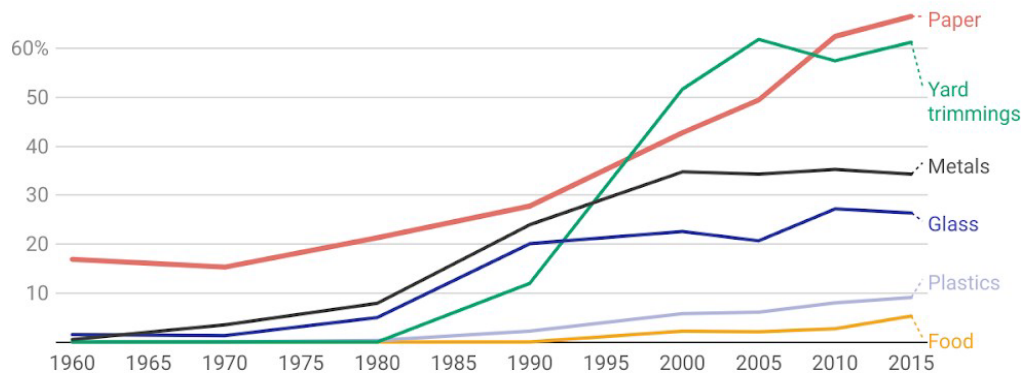


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Heavy polluters

Incinerators release many air pollutants, including nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, particulate matter, lead, mercury, dioxins and furans. These substances are known to have serious public health effects, from increased cancer risk to respiratory illness, cardiac disease and reproductive, developmental and neurological problems. According to recent figures from the waste industry, incinerator plants emit more sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide per unit of electricity generated than power plants burning natural gas.

Emission rates for "Dirtiest Dozen" municipal solid waste incinerators (pounds per ton of trash burned, 2014)

For each pollutant, at least 8 of the 12 incinerators with the highest emission rates nationwide were located in environmental justice communities

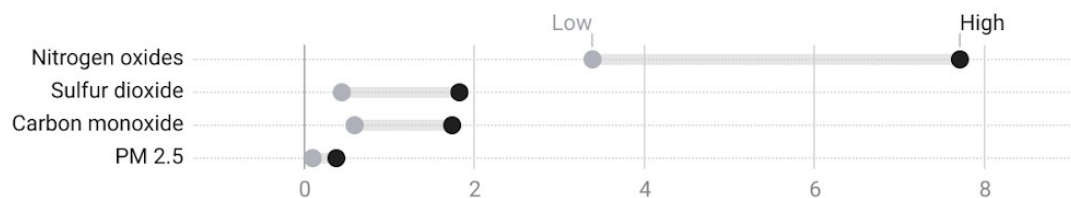


Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: Tishman Environment and Design Center, 2019 • [Get the data](#)

Research on direct health impacts of waste incineration in the United States is limited, but a handful of studies from Asia and Europe, where waste incinerators are prevalent, offer some insights. For example, a 2013 study in Italy analyzed the occurrence of miscarriages in women aged 15-49 years residing near seven incinerators in northern Italy's Emilia-Romagna region, and found that increased particulate emissions from the incinerators was associated with an increased risk of miscarriage.

A single incinerator may burn anywhere from a few hundred tons to several thousand tons of waste per day. Smaller incinerators typically have lower absolute emissions but can emit more hazardous pollutants for each ton of waste they burn. Plant emissions also can vary widely based on the heterogeneous composition of municipal waste, the age and type of emissions control equipment, and how well the plant is operated and maintained over time.



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Mike Bunn is a historian who has a passion for reading and writing. In his article entitled “How to Read Like a Writer,” he advocates for “Reading like a Writer” (or RLW). This is a form of active reading, where the student asks questions about author intent while engaging in the content of the work. When reading, Bunn says students should be questioning how the author has affected the reader. What has the author done to impact you? How have they done this? Why are you affected? Annotating for these questions, as well as underlining key passages/ phrases and noting reactions to the text can help keep the student engaged, as well as keep a record of thoughts for any future writing done about the piece.

Bunn’s RLW practice allows for students to improve their own writing through the question “Would I want to try this in my own writing?”. This type of active reading lends itself heavily to inspiration. The student will become inspired by how an author goes about explaining a particular concept, or giving a certain description, or describing a certain place, and will want to try it out for themselves. Students may be hesitant to try out these new approaches to writing, as they may feel as though they are simply copying what the author has achieved. Bunn thinks otherwise. He understands that “writing is a series of choices”, and in trying out inspiration from another author, you are likely to make slightly different choices, thus making the idea your own.

Introduction by Ashton Conley

[#literacy](#) [#research](#)

How to Read Like a Writer

Mike Bunn

In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London’s famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a three-hour performance of the musical *Les Miserables*. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

My job (in addition to wearing a red tuxedo jacket) was to sit inside the dark theater with the patrons and make sure nothing went wrong. It didn't seem to matter to my supervisor that I had no training in security and no idea where we kept the fire extinguishers. I was pretty sure that if there was any trouble I'd be running down the back stairs, leaving the patrons to fend for themselves. I had no intention of dying in a bright red tuxedo.

There was a Red Coat stationed on each of the theater's four floors, and we all passed the time by sitting quietly in the back, reading books with tiny flashlights. It's not easy trying to read in the dim light of a theatre—flashlight or no flashlight—and it's even tougher with shrieks and shouts and gunshots coming from the stage. I had to focus intently on each and every word, often rereading a single sentence several times.

Sometimes I got distracted and had to re-read entire paragraphs. As I struggled to read in this environment, I began to realize that the way I was reading—one word at a time—was exactly the same way that the author had written the text. I realized writing is a word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence process. The intense concentration required to read in the theater helped me recognize some of the interesting ways that authors string words into phrases into paragraphs into entire books.

I came to realize that all writing consists of a series of choices.

I was an English major in college, but I don't think I ever thought much about reading. I read all the time. I read for my classes and on the computer and sometimes for fun, but I never really thought about the important connections between reading and writing, and how reading in a particular way could also make me a better writer.

What Does It Mean to Read Like a Writer

When you Read Like a Writer (RLW) you work to identify some of the choices the author made so that you can better understand how such choices might arise in your own writing. The idea is to carefully examine the things you read, looking at the writerly techniques in the text in order to decide if you might want to adopt similar (or the same) techniques in your writing.

You are reading to learn about writing.

Instead of reading for content or to better understand the ideas in the writing (which you will automatically do to some degree anyway), you are trying to understand how the piece of writing was put together by the author and what you can learn about writing by reading a particular text. As you read in this way, you think about how the choices the author made and the techniques that he/she used are influencing your own responses as a reader. What is it about the way this text is written that makes you feel and respond the way you do?

The goal as you read like a writer is to locate what you believe are the most important writerly choices represented in the text—choices as large as the overall structure or as small as a single word used only once—to consider the effect of those choices on potential readers (including yourself). Then you can go one step further and imagine what different choices the author might have made instead, and what effect those different choices would have on readers.

Say you're reading an essay in class that begins with a short quote from President Barack Obama about the war in Iraq. As a writer, what do you think of this technique? Do you think it is effective to begin the essay with a quote? What if the essay began with a quote from someone else? What if it was a much longer quote from President Obama, or a quote from the President about something other than the war?

And here is where we get to the most important part: Would you want to try this technique in your own writing?

Would you want to start your own essay with a quote? Do you think it would be effective to begin your essay with a quote from President Obama? What about a quote from someone else? You could make yourself a list. What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote? What about the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from the President? How would other readers respond to this technique? Would certain readers (say Democrats or liberals) appreciate an essay that started with a quote from President Obama better than other readers (say Republicans or conservatives)? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from a *less* divisive person? What about starting with a quote from someone *more* divisive?

The goal is to carefully consider the choices the author made and the techniques that he or she used, and then decide whether you want to make those same choices or use those same techniques in your own writing. Author and professor Wendy Bishop explains how her reading process changed when she began to read like a writer:

It wasn't until I claimed the sentence as my area of desire, interest, and expertise—until I wanted to be a writer writing better—that I had to look underneath my initial readings . . . I started asking, *how—how* did the writer get me to feel, *how* did the writer say something so that it remains in my memory when many other things too easily fall out, *how* did the writer communicate his/her intentions about genre, about irony? (119– 20)

Bishop moved from simply reporting her personal reactions to the things she read to attempting to uncover *how* the author led her (and other readers) to have those reactions. This effort to uncover how authors build texts is what makes Reading Like a Writer so useful for student writers.

How Is RLW Different from “Normal” Reading

Most of the time we read for information. We read a recipe to learn how to bake lasagna. We read the sports page to see if our school won the game, Facebook to see who has commented on our status update, a history book to learn about the Vietnam War, and the syllabus to see when the next writing assignment is due. Reading Like a Writer asks for something very different.

In 1940, a famous poet and critic named Allen Tate discussed two different ways of reading:

There are many ways to read, but generally speaking there are two ways. They correspond to the two ways in which we may be interested in a piece of architecture. If the building has Corinthian columns, we can trace the origin and development of Corinthian columns; we are interested as historians. But if we are interested as architects, we may or may not know about the history of the Corinthian style; we must, however, know all about the construction of the building, down to the last nail or peg in the beams. We have got to know this if we are going to put up buildings ourselves. (506)

While I don't know anything about Corinthian columns (and doubt that I will ever *want* to know anything about Corinthian columns), Allen Tate's metaphor of reading as if you were an architect is a great way to think about RLW. When you read like a writer, you are trying to figure out how the text you are reading was constructed so that you learn how to “build” one for yourself. Author David Jauss makes a similar comparison when he writes that “reading won't help you

much unless you learn to read like a writer. You must look at a book the way a carpenter looks at a house someone else built, examining the details in order to see how it was made” (64).

Perhaps I should change the name and call this Reading Like an Architect, or Reading Like a Carpenter. In a way those names make perfect sense. You are reading to see how something was constructed so that you can construct something similar yourself.

Why Learn to Read Like a Writer

For most college students RLW is a new way to read, and it can be difficult to learn at first. Making things even more difficult is that your college writing instructor may expect you to read this way for class but never actually teach you how to do it. He or she may not even tell you that you’re supposed to read this way. This is because most writing instructors are so focused on teaching writing that they forget to show students how they want them to read.

That’s what this essay is for.

In addition to the fact that your college writing instructor may expect you to read like a writer, this kind of reading is also one of the very best ways to learn how to write well. Reading like a writer can help you understand how the process of writing is a series of making choices, and in doing so, can help you recognize important decisions you might

face and techniques you might want to use when working on your own writing. Reading this way becomes an opportunity to think and learn about writing.

Charles Moran, a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, urges us to read like writers because:

When we read like writers we understand and participate in the writing. We see the choices the writer has made, and we see how the writer has coped with the consequences of those choices . . . We “see” what the writer is doing because we read as writers; we see because we have written ourselves and know the territory, know the feel of it, know some of the moves ourselves. (61)

You are already an author, and that means you have a built-in advantage when reading like a writer. All of your previous writing experiences—inside the classroom and out—

can contribute to your success with RLW. Because you “have written” things yourself, just as Moran suggests, you are better able to “see” the choices that the author is making in the texts that you read. This in turn helps you to think about whether you want to make some of those same choices in your own writing, and what the consequences might be for your readers if you do.

What Are Some Questions to Ask Before You Start Reading

As I sat down to work on this essay, I contacted a few of my former students to ask what advice they would give to college students regarding how to read effectively in the writing classroom and also to get their thoughts on RLW. Throughout the rest of the essay I’d like to share some of their insights and suggestions; after all, who is better qualified to help you learn what you need to know about reading in college writing courses than students who recently took those courses themselves?

One of the things that several students mentioned to do first, before you even start reading, is to consider the *context* surrounding both the assignment and the text you’re reading. As one former student, Alison, states: “The reading I did in college asked me to go above and beyond, not only in breadth of subject matter, but in depth, with regards to informed analysis and background information on *context*.” Alison was asked to think about some of the factors that went into the creation of the text, as well as some of the factors influencing her own experience of reading—taken together these constitute the *context* of reading. Another former student, Jamie, suggests that students “learn about the historical context of the writings” they will read for class. Writing professor Richard Straub puts it this way: “You’re not going to just read a text. You’re going to read a text within a certain context, a set of circumstances . . . It’s one kind of writing or another, designed for one audience and purpose or another” (138).

Among the contextual factors you’ll want to consider before you even start reading are:

- Do you know the author’s purpose for this piece of writing?
- Do you know who the intended audience is for this piece of writing?

It may be that you need to start reading before you can answer these first two questions, but it’s worth trying to answer them before you start. For example, if you know at the outset that the author is trying to reach a very specific group of readers, then his or her writerly techniques may seem more or less effective than if he/she was trying to reach a more general audience. Similarly—returning to our earlier example of beginning an essay with a quote from President Obama about the war in Iraq—if you know that the author’s purpose is to address some of the dangers and drawbacks of

warfare, this may be a very effective opening. If the purpose is to encourage Americans to wear sunscreen while at the beach this opening makes no sense at all. One former student, Lola, explained that most of her reading assignments in college writing classes were designed “to provoke analysis and criticisms into the style, structure, and purpose of the writing itself.”

In What Genre Is This Written

Another important thing to consider before reading is the genre of the text. Genre means a few different things in college English classes, but it’s most often used to indicate the *type* of writing: a poem, a newspaper article, an essay, a short story, a novel, a legal brief, an instruction manual, etc. Because the conventions for each genre can be very different (who ever heard of a 900-page newspaper article?), techniques that are effective for one genre may not work well in another. Many readers expect poems and pop songs to rhyme, for example, but might react negatively to a legal brief or instruction manual that did so. Another former student, Mike, comments on how important the genre of the text can be for reading:

I think a lot of the way I read, of course, depends on the type of text I’m reading. If I’m reading philosophy, I always look for signaling words (however, therefore, furthermore, despite) indicating the direction of the argument . . . when I read fiction or creative nonfiction, I look for how the author inserts dialogue or character sketches within narration or environmental observation. After reading *To the Lighthouse* [sic] last semester, I have noticed how much more attentive I’ve become to the types of narration (omniscient, impersonal, psychological, realistic, etc.), and how these different approaches are utilized to achieve an author’s overall effect.

Although Mike specifically mentions what he looked for while reading a published novel, one of the great things about RLW is that it can be used equally well with either published or student-produced writing.

Is This a Published or a Student-Produced Piece of Writing?

As you read both kinds of texts you can locate the choices the author made and imagine the different decisions that he/she might have made. While it might seem a little weird at first to imagine how published texts could be written differently—after all, they were good enough to be published—remember that all writing can be improved. Scholar Nancy Walker believes that it’s important for students to read published work using RLW because “the work ceases to be a mere artifact, a stone tablet, and becomes instead a living utterance with immediacy and texture. It could have been

better or worse than it is had the author made different choices” (36). As Walker suggests, it’s worth thinking about how the published text would be different—maybe even better—if the author had made different choices in the writing because you may be faced with similar choices in your own work.

Is This the Kind of Writing You Will Be Assigned to Write Yourself

Knowing ahead of time what kind of writing assignments you will be asked to complete can really help you to read like a writer. It’s probably impossible (and definitely too time consuming) to identify all of the choices the author made and all techniques an author used, so it’s important to prioritize while reading. Knowing what you’ll be writing yourself can help you prioritize. It may be the case that your instructor has assigned the text you’re reading to serve as model for the kind of writing you’ll be doing later. Jessie, a former student, writes, “In college writing classes, we knew we were reading for a purpose—to influence or inspire our own work. The reading that I have done in college writing courses has always been really specific to a certain type of writing, and it allows me to focus and experiment on that specific style in depth and without distraction.”

If the text you’re reading is a model of a particular style of writing—for example, highly-emotional or humorous—RLW is particularly helpful because you can look at a piece you’re reading and think about whether you want to adopt a similar style in your own writing. You might realize that the author is trying to arouse sympathy in readers and examine what techniques he/she uses to do this; then you can decide whether these techniques might work well in your own writing. You might notice that the author keeps including jokes or funny stories and think about whether you want to include them in your writing—what would the impact be on your potential readers?

What Are Questions to Ask As You Are Reading

It is helpful to continue to ask yourself questions as you read like a writer. As you’re first learning to read in this new way, you may want to have a set of questions written or typed out in front of you that you can refer to while reading. Eventually—after plenty of practice—you will start to ask certain questions and locate certain things in the text almost automatically. Remember, for most students this is a new way of reading, and you’ll have to train yourself to do it well. Also keep in mind that you’re reading to understand how the text was written—how the house was built—more than you’re trying to determine the meaning of the things you read or assess whether the texts are good or bad.

First, return to two of the same questions I suggested that you consider before reading:

- What is the author’s purpose for this piece of writing?
- Who is the intended audience?

Think about these two questions again as you read. It may be that you couldn’t really answer them before, or that your ideas will change while reading. Knowing why the piece was written and who it’s for can help explain why the author might have made certain choices or used particular techniques in the writing, and you can assess those choices and techniques based in part on how effective they are in fulfilling that purpose and/or reaching the intended audience.

Beyond these initial two questions, there is an almost endless list of questions you might ask regarding writing choices and techniques. Here are some of the questions that one former student, Clare, asks herself:

When reading I tend to be asking myself a million questions. If I were writing this, where would I go with the story? If the author goes in a different direction (as they so often do) from what I am thinking, I will ask myself, why did they do this? What are they telling me?

Clare tries to figure out why the author might have made a move in the writing that she hadn’t anticipated, but even more importantly, she asks herself what *she* would do if she were the author. Reading the text becomes an opportunity for Clare to think about her own role as an author.

Here are some additional examples of the kinds of questions you might ask yourself as you read:

- How effective is the language the author uses? Is it too formal? Too informal? Perfectly appropriate?

Depending on the subject matter and the intended audience, it may make sense to be more or less formal in terms of language. As you begin reading, you can ask yourself whether the word choice and tone/ language of the writing seem appropriate.

What kinds of evidence does the author use to support his/her claims? Does he/ she use statistics? Quotes from famous people? Personal anecdotes or personal stories? Does he/she cite books or articles?

- How appropriate or effective is this evidence? Would a different type of evidence, or some combination of evidence, be more effective?

To some extent the kinds of questions you ask should be determined by the genre of writing you are reading. For example, it's probably worth examining the evidence that the author uses to support his/ her claims if you're reading an opinion column, but less important if you're reading a short story. An opinion column is often intended to convince readers of something, so the kinds of evidence used are often very important. A short story may be intended to convince readers of something, sometimes, but probably not in the same way. A short story rarely includes claims or evidence in the way that we usually think about them.

- Are there places in the writing that you find confusing? What about the writing in those places makes it unclear or confusing?

It's pretty normal to get confused in places while reading, especially while reading for class, so it can be helpful to look closely at the writing to try and get a sense of exactly what tripped you up. This way you can learn to avoid those same problems in your own writing.

- How does the author move from one idea to another in the writing? Are the transitions between the ideas effective? How else might he/she have transitioned between ideas instead?

Notice that in these questions I am encouraging you to question whether aspects of the writing are *appropriate* and *effective* in addition to deciding whether you liked or disliked them. You want to imagine how other readers might respond to the writing and the techniques you've identified. Deciding whether you liked or disliked something is only about you; considering whether a technique is appropriate or effective lets you contemplate what the author might have been trying to do and to decide whether a majority of readers would find the move successful. This is important because it's the same thing you should be thinking about while you are writing: how will readers respond to this technique I am using, to this sentence, to this word? As you read, ask yourself what the author is doing at each step of the way, and then consider whether the same choice or technique might work in your own writing.

What Should You Be Writing As You Are Reading

The most common suggestion made by former students—mentioned by every single one of them—was to mark up the text, make comments in the margins, and write yourself notes and summaries both during and after reading. Often the notes students took while reading became ideas or material for the students to use in their own papers. It's important to read with a pen or highlighter in your hand so that you can mark—right on the text—all those spots where you identify an interesting choice the author has made or a writerly technique you might want to use. One thing that I like to do is to highlight and underline the passage in the text itself, and then try to answer the following three questions on my notepad:

- What is the technique the author is using here?
- Is this technique effective?
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages if I tried this same technique in my writing?

By utilizing this same process of highlighting and note taking, you'll end up with a useful list of specific techniques to have at your disposal when it comes time to begin your own writing.

What Does RLW Look Like in Action

Let's go back to the opening paragraph of this essay and spend some time reading like writers as a way to get more comfortable with the process:

In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London's famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a three-hour performance of the musical *Les Miserables*. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

Let's begin with those questions I encouraged you to try to answer *before* you start reading. (I realize we're cheating a little bit in this case since you've already read most of this essay, but this is just practice. When doing this on your own, you should attempt to answer these questions before reading, and then return to them as you read to further develop your answers.)

- Do you know the author’s purpose for this piece of writing? I hope the purpose is clear by now; if it isn’t, I’m doing a pretty lousy job of explaining how and why you might read like a writer.
- Do you know who the intended audience is? Again, I hope that you know this one by now.
- What about the genre? Is this an essay? An article? What would you call it?
- You know that it’s published and not student writing. How does this influence your expectations for what you will read?
- Are you going to be asked to write something like this yourself? Probably not in your college writing class, but you can still use RLW to learn about writerly techniques that you might want to use in whatever you do end up writing.

Now ask yourself questions as you read.

In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London’s famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a three-hour performance of the musical *Les Miserables*. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

Since this paragraph is the very first one, it makes sense to think about how it introduces readers to the essay. What technique(s) does the author use to begin the text? This is a personal story about his time working in London. What else do you notice as you read over this passage? Is the passage vague or specific about where he worked? You know that the author worked in a famous part of London in a beautiful theater owned by a well-known composer. Are these details important? How different would this opening be if instead I had written:

This is certainly shorter, and some of you may prefer this version. It’s quick. To the point. But what (if anything) is lost by eliminating so much of the detail? I chose to include each of the details that the revised sentence omits, so it’s worth considering why. Why did I mention where the theater was located? Why did I explain that I was living in London right after finishing college? Does it matter that it was after college? What effect might I have hoped the inclusion of these details would have on readers? Is this reference to college an attempt to connect with my audience of college students?

Am I trying to establish my credibility as an author by announcing that I went to college?

Why might I want the readers to know that this was a theater owned by Andrew Lloyd Weber? Do you think I am just trying to mention a famous name that readers will recognize? Will Andrew Lloyd Weber figure prominently in the rest of the essay?

These are all reasonable questions to ask. They are not necessarily the right questions to ask because there are no right questions. They certainly aren't the only questions you could ask, either. The goal is to train yourself to formulate questions as you read based on whatever you notice in the text. Your own reactions to what you're reading will help determine the kinds of questions to ask.

Now take a broader perspective. I begin this essay—an essay about *reading*—by talking about my job in a theater in London. Why? Doesn't this seem like an odd way to begin an essay about reading? If you read on a little further (feel free to scan back up at the top of this essay) you learn in the third full paragraph what the connection is between working in the theater and reading like a writer, but why include this information at all? What does this story add to the essay? Is it worth the space it takes up?

Think about what effect presenting this personal information might have on readers. Does it make it feel like a real person, some "ordinary guy," is talking to you? Does it draw you into the essay and make you want to keep reading?

What about the language I use? Is it formal or more informal? This is a time when you can really narrow your focus and look at particular words:

Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

What is the effect of using the word "antiquated" to describe the fire safety laws? It certainly projects a negative impression; if the laws are described as antiquated it means I view them as old-fashioned or obsolete. This is a fairly uncommon word, so it stands out, drawing attention to my choice in using it. The word also sounds quite formal. Am I formal in the rest of this sentence?

I use the word “performance” when I just as easily could have written “show.” For that matter, I could have written “old” instead of “antiquated.” You can proceed like this throughout the sentence, thinking about alternative choices I could have made and what the effect would be. Instead of “staff members” I could have written “employees” or just “workers.” Notice the difference if the sentence had been written:

Because of old fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of workers inside watching the show in case of an emergency.

Which version is more likely to appeal to readers? You can try to answer this question by thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of using formal language. When would you want to use formal language in your writing and when would it make more sense to be more conversational?

As you can see from discussing just this one paragraph, you could ask questions about the text forever. Luckily, you don’t have to. As you continue reading like a writer, you’ll learn to notice techniques that seem new and pay less attention to the ones you’ve thought about before. The more you practice the quicker the process becomes until you’re reading like a writer almost automatically.

I want to end this essay by sharing one more set of comments by my former student, Lola, this time about what it means to her to read like a writer:

Reading as a writer would compel me to question what might have brought the author to make these decisions, and then decide what worked and what didn’t. What could have made that chapter better or easier to understand? How can I make sure I include some of the good attributes of this writing style into my own? How can I take aspects that I feel the writer failed at and make sure not to make the same mistakes in my writing?

Questioning why the author made certain decisions. Considering what techniques could have made the text better. Deciding how to include the best attributes of what you read in your own writing. This is what Reading Like a Writer is all about.

Are you ready to start reading?

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What we do not know about ourselves and the world around us greatly influences our decision-making processes. In this digital age, when bots and biases ramble across our social media fields of vision and interaction many, probably all, of us like to think of ourselves as being fair and honest. In turn, though we want to believe that other people are fair and honest with us, we are often distrustful of what we read and hear on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media outlets.

This article deals with why we are distrustful of what we read and hear. Specifically, it explains how we may not detect the bad information we see because of our own built in and unacknowledged biases, or of the biases built into our society and into the social media algorithms of the online sources we rely on. Indeed, this article discusses just those factors-- personal, social, and social media biases--that we see but often do not recognize in what we see when read, listen to, or view in our increasingly digital world.

After reading this article you may wish to take one of Harvard University's Implicit Association Tests. Taking one or more of these tests may help you better understand your own unconscious desires, motivations, and understandings that influence how you make decisions: <https://www.glaxdiversitycouncil.com/resources/harvard-implicit-association-test-iat/>

Introduction by Bill McCann

[#literacy](#) [#politics](#) [#popculture](#) [#technology](#)

Misinformation and Biases Infect Social Media, Both Intentionally and Accidentally

Giovanni Luca Ciampaglia and Filippo Menczer



["Social Media"](#) by [mgysler](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Social media are among the primary sources of news in the U.S. and across the world. Yet users are exposed to content of questionable accuracy, including conspiracy theories, clickbait, hyperpartisan content, pseudo QXFAAAAEV and even fabricated "fake news" reports.

It's not surprising that there's so much disinformation published: Spam and online fraud are lucrative for criminals, and government and political propaganda yield [both partisan](#) and financial benefits. But the fact that low-credibility content spreads so quickly and [easily](#) suggests that people and the algorithms behind social media platforms are vulnerable to manipulation.

Explaining the tools developed at the Observatory on Social Media.

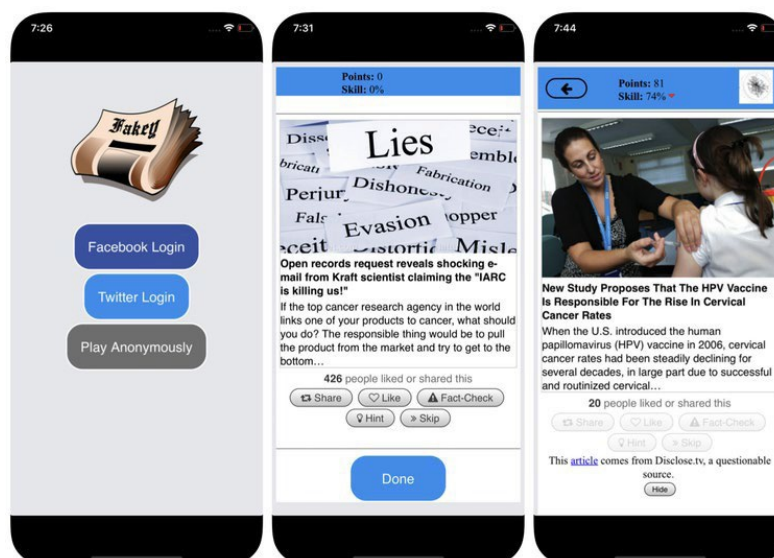
Our research has identified three types of bias that make the social media ecosystem vulnerable to both intentional and accidental misinformation. That is why our Observatory on Social Media at Indiana University is building tools to help people become aware of these biases and protect themselves from outside influences designed to exploit them.

Bias in the brain

Cognitive biases originate in the way the brain processes the information that every person encounters every day. The brain can deal with only a finite amount of information, and too many incoming stimuli can cause information overload. That in itself has serious implications for the quality of information on social media. We have found that steep competition for users' limited attention means that [some ideas go viral](#) despite their low quality – even when people prefer to share high-quality content.

To avoid getting overwhelmed, the brain uses a number of tricks. These methods are usually effective, but may also become biases when applied in the wrong contexts.

One cognitive shortcut happens when a person is deciding whether to share a story that appears on their social media feed. People are very affected by the emotional connotations of a headline, even though that's not a good indicator of an article's accuracy. Much more important is who wrote the piece.



Screenshots of the Fakey game. Mihai Avram and Filippo Menczer

To counter this bias, and help people pay more attention to the source of a claim before sharing it, we developed Fakey, a mobile news literacy game (free on Android and iOS) simulating a typical social media news feed, with a mix of news articles from mainstream and low-credibility sources. Players get more points for sharing news from reliable sources and flagging suspicious content for fact-checking. In the process, they learn to recognize signals of source credibility, such as hyperpartisan claims and emotionally charged headlines.

Bias in society

Another source of bias comes from society. When people connect directly with their peers, the social biases that guide their selection of friends come to influence the information they see.

In fact, in our research we have found that it is possible to [determine the political leanings of a Twitter user](#) by simply looking at the partisan preferences of their friends. Our analysis of the structure of these [partisan communication networks](#) found social networks are particularly efficient at disseminating information – accurate or not – when [they are closely tied together and disconnected from other parts of society](#).

The tendency to evaluate information more favorably if it comes from within their own social circles creates “echo chambers” that are ripe for manipulation, either consciously or unintentionally. This helps explain why so many online conversations devolve into “[us](#) versus them” confrontations.

To study how the structure of online social networks makes users vulnerable to disinformation, we built Hoaxy, a system that tracks and visualizes the spread of content from low-credibility sources, and how it competes with fact-checking content. Our analysis of the data collected by Hoaxy during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections shows that Twitter accounts that shared misinformation were almost completely cut off from the corrections made by the fact-checkers.

When we drilled down on the misinformation-spreading accounts, we found a very dense core group of accounts retweeting each other almost exclusively – including several bots. The only times that fact-checking organizations were ever quoted or mentioned by the users in the misinformed group were when questioning their legitimacy or claiming the opposite of what they wrote.

Bias in the machine

The third group of biases arises directly from the algorithms used to determine what people see online. Both social media platforms and search engines employ them. These personalization technologies are designed to select only the most engaging and relevant content for each individual user. But in doing so, it may end up reinforcing the cognitive and social biases of users, thus making them even more vulnerable to manipulation.

For instance, the detailed advertising tools built into many social media platforms let disinformation campaigners exploit confirmation bias by tailoring messages to people who are already inclined to believe them.

Also, if a user often clicks on Facebook links from a particular news source, Facebook will tend to show that person more of that site's content. This so-called "[filter bubble](#)" effect may isolate people from diverse perspectives, strengthening confirmation bias.

Our own research shows that social media platforms expose users to a less diverse set of sources than do non-social media sites like Wikipedia. Because this is at the level of a whole platform, not of a single user, we call this the homogeneity bias.

Another important ingredient of social media is information that is trending on the platform, according to what is getting the most clicks. We call this popularity bias, because we have found that an algorithm designed to promote popular content may negatively affect the overall quality of information on the platform. This also feeds into existing cognitive bias, reinforcing what appears to be popular irrespective of its quality.

All these algorithmic biases can be manipulated by social bots, computer programs that interact with humans through social media accounts. Most social bots, like Twitter's [Big Ben](#), are harmless. However, some conceal their real nature and are used for malicious intents, such as boosting disinformation or falsely creating the appearance of a [grassroots movement](#), also called "astroturfing." We found evidence of this type of [manipulation](#) in the run-up to the 2010 U.S. midterm election.

To study these manipulation strategies, we developed a tool to detect social bots called Botometer. Botometer uses machine learning to detect bot accounts, by inspecting thousands of different features of Twitter accounts, like the times of its

posts, how often it tweets, and the accounts it follows and retweets. It is not perfect, but it has revealed that as many as 15 percent of Twitter accounts show signs of being bots.

Using Botometer in conjunction with Hoaxy, we analyzed the core of the misinformation network during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. We found many bots exploiting both the cognitive, confirmation and popularity biases of their victims and Twitter's algorithmic biases.

These bots are able to construct filter bubbles around vulnerable users, feeding them false claims and misinformation. First, they can attract the attention of human users who support a particular candidate by tweeting that candidate's hashtags or by mentioning and retweeting the person. Then the bots can

amplify false claims smearing opponents by retweeting articles from low-credibility sources that match certain keywords. This activity also makes the algorithm highlight for other users false stories that are being shared widely.

Understanding complex vulnerabilities

Even as our research, and others', shows how individuals, institutions and even entire societies can be manipulated on social media, there are [many questions](#) left to answer. It's especially important to discover how these different biases interact with each other, potentially creating more complex vulnerabilities.

Tools like ours offer internet users more information about disinformation, and therefore some degree of protection from its harms. The solutions will be only technological, though there will probably be some technical aspects to them. But they must take into account the cognitive and social aspects of the problem.



[Misinformation and Biases Infect Social Media, Both Intentionally and Accidentally](#) by Giovanni Luca Ciampaglia and Filippo Menczer is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

In this essay, author Neta Crawford addresses ecological issues of global warming and fossil fuel consumption from a sociopolitical perspective. She details the hypocrisy between governmental positions on climate change and the astronomical contributions made by the U.S. Department of Defense to greenhouse gas emissions. The carbon footprint left by military installations and operations alone rivals that of many smaller countries and Crawford argues that massive amounts of funding toward protections against potential human advisories neglects the very immediate threat of climate change. The ecological realities presented in this text offer an important perspective on the environmental realities of our world. The certain catastrophes of climate change, and even the political uprising resulting from said catastrophes, necessitates immediate attention on the part of world governments and individuals like you.

[#ecology](#) [#technology](#) [#politics](#)

The Defense Department Is Worried about Climate Change and Also a Huge Carbon Emitter

Neta Crawford



["An F/A 18 Super Hornet, assigned to the "Blacklions" of Strike Fighter Squadron \(VFA\) 213, flies over the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt \(CVN 71\) during flight operations."](#) by Lt. Cmdr. Johnnie Caldwell, [U.S. Navy](#) is in the [Public Domain](#)

Scientists and security analysts have warned for more than a decade that global warming is a potential national security concern. They project that the consequences of global warming – rising seas, powerful storms, famine and diminished access to fresh water – may make regions of the world politically unstable and prompt mass migration and refugee crises.

Some worry that wars may follow.

Yet with few exceptions, the U.S. military's significant contribution to climate change has received little attention. Although the Defense Department has significantly reduced its fossil fuel consumption since the early 2000s, it remains the world's single largest consumer of oil – and as a result, one of the world's top greenhouse gas emitters.

A broad carbon footprint

I have studied war and peace for four decades. But I only focused on the scale of U.S. military greenhouse gas emissions when I began co-teaching a course on climate change and focused on the Pentagon's response to global warming. Yet, the Department of Defense is the U.S. government's largest fossil fuel consumer, accounting for between 77% and 80% of all federal government energy consumption since 2001.

In a newly released study published by Brown University's Costs of War Project, I calculated U.S. military greenhouse gas emissions in tons of carbon dioxide equivalent from 1975 through 2017.

Today China is the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, followed by the United States. In 2017 the Pentagon's greenhouse gas emissions totaled over 59 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. If it were a country, it would have been the world's 55th largest greenhouse gas emitter, with emissions larger than Portugal, Sweden or Denmark.

The largest sources of military greenhouse gas emissions are buildings and fuel. The Defense Department maintains over 560,000 buildings at approximately 500 domestic and overseas military installations, which account for about 40% of its greenhouse gas emissions.

The rest comes from operations. In fiscal year 2016, for instance, the Defense Department consumed about [86 million barrels](#) of fuel for operational purposes.

Why do the armed forces use so much fuel?

Military weapons and equipment use so much fuel that the relevant measure for defense planners is frequently gallons per mile.

Aircraft are particularly thirsty. For example, the B-2 stealth bomber, which holds more than 25,600 gallons of jet fuel, burns 4.28 gallons per mile and emits more than 250 metric tons of greenhouse gas over a 6,000 nautical mile range. The KC-135R aerial refueling tanker consumes about 4.9 gallons per mile.

A single mission consumes enormous quantities of fuel. In January 2017, two B-2B bombers and 15 aerial refueling tankers traveled more than 12,000 miles from Whiteman Air Force Base to [bomb ISIS targets in Libya](#), killing [about 80 suspected ISIS militants](#). Not counting the tankers' emissions, the B-2s emitted about 1,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases.

Quantifying military emissions

Calculating the Defense Department's greenhouse gas emissions isn't easy. The Defense Logistics Agency tracks [fuel purchases](#), but the Pentagon [does not consistently report](#) DOD fossil fuel consumption to Congress in its annual budget requests.

The Department of Energy publishes data on DOD energy production and fuel consumption, including for [vehicles and equipment](#). Using fuel consumption data, I estimate that from 2001 through 2017, the DOD, including all service branches, emitted 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases. That is the [rough equivalent](#) of driving of 255 million passenger vehicles over a year.

Of that total, I estimated that war-related emissions between 2001 and 2017, including “overseas contingency operations” in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Syria, generated over 400 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent – roughly equivalent to the greenhouse emissions of almost 85 million cars in one year.

Real and present dangers?

The Pentagon’s core mission is to prepare for potential attacks by human adversaries. Analysts argue about the likelihood of war and the level of military preparation necessary to prevent it, but in my view, none of the United States’ adversaries – Russia,

Estimated Department of Defense greenhouse gas emissions, 2001-2017

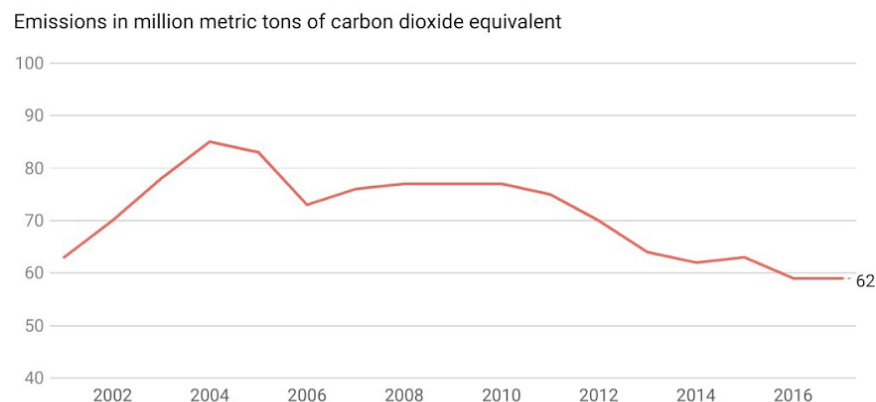


Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: [Neta C. Crawford](#) • [Get the data](#)

Iran, China and North Korea – are certain to attack the United States.

Nor is a large standing military the only way to reduce the threats these adversaries pose. Arms control and [diplomacy](#) can often de-escalate tensions and reduce threats. Economic [sanctions](#) can diminish the capacity of states and nonstate actors to threaten the security interests of the U.S. and its allies.

In contrast, climate change is not a potential risk. It has begun, with real [consequences](#) to the United States. Failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will make the nightmare scenarios strategists warn against – perhaps even “climate wars” – more likely.

A case for decarbonizing the military

Over the past last decade the Defense Department has [reduced its fossil fuel consumption](#) through actions that include using renewable energy, weatherizing buildings and [reducing aircraft idling time on runways](#).

The DOD's total annual emissions declined from a peak of 85 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2004 to 59 million metric tons in 2017. The goal, as then-General James Mattis put it, is to be "unleashed from the tether of fuel" by decreasing military dependence on oil and oil convoys that are vulnerable to attack in war zones.

Since 1979, the United States has placed a high priority on protecting access to the Persian Gulf. About one-fourth of military operational fuel use is for the U.S. Central Command, which covers the Persian Gulf region.



As [national security scholars have argued](#), with dramatic [growth in renewable energy](#) and [diminishing U.S. dependence on foreign oil](#), it is possible for Congress and the president to rethink our nation's military missions and reduce the amount of energy the armed forces use to protect access to Middle East oil.

I agree with the military and national security experts who contend that [climate change should be front and center](#) in U.S. national security debates. Cutting Pentagon

greenhouse gas emissions will help [save lives in the United States](#), and could diminish the risk of climate conflict.



[The Defense Department Is Worried about Climate Change – and Also a Huge Carbon Emitter](#) by [Neta C. Crawford](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).

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Herman Daly is an American ecological economist that, in “Sustaining Our Commonwealth of Nature and Knowledge,” advocates for the “commonwealth of nature [to be] enclosed as property” and the commonwealth of knowledge [to] be “freed from enclosure of property” and treated as a good for all to consume freely. He defines a “commonwealth” as “wealth that no one has made, or the wealth that practically everyone has made. So it’s either nature – nobody made it, we all inherited it – or knowledge – everybody contributed to making it, but everyone’s contribution is small in relation to the total and depends on the contributions of others.” He dives into economic terms, such as rival and non-rival goods, and excludable and non-excludable goods to conclude that nature should be protected economically and knowledge should be separate from the economy.

Daly cites Thomas Jefferson in his argument about his belief of the freedom of knowledge. Jefferson states, “knowledge is the common property of mankind.” No one should have to pay for the access to available knowledge, and no one should have to pay to express the knowledge they have discovered themselves. Knowledge, and thus, the knowledge of composition and writing, is a good that everyone should have access to. Education should not be privatized (think of how much college costs, and how not everyone can afford to attend). Writing development is an ongoing process, like all learning, and according to Daly, students should have access to the resources that help in the development of writing for the entirety of their lives.

Introduction by Ashton Conley

[#ecology](#) [#research](#)

Sustaining Our Commonwealth of Nature and Knowledge

Herman Daly

Let’s start with this phrase: “sustaining our commonwealth.” By sustaining, I don’t mean preserving inviolate; I mean using, without using up. Using with maintenance and replenishment is an important idea in economics. It’s the very basis of the concept of

income, because income is the maximum that you can consume today and still be able to produce and consume the same amount tomorrow – that is, maximum consumption without depleting capital in the broad sense of future productive capacity. By commonwealth, I mean the wealth that no one has made, or the wealth that practically everyone has made. So it's either nature – nobody made it, we all inherited it – or knowledge – everybody contributed to making it, but everyone's contribution is small in relation to the total and depends on the contributions of others. In managing the commonwealth of nature, our big problem is that we tend to treat the truly scarce as if it were non-scarce. The opposite problem arises with the commonwealth of knowledge, in which we tend to treat what is truly not scarce as if it were.

Clarifying Scarcity

There are two sets of important distinctions about goods, and they make four cross-classifications (see figure below). Goods can be either rival or non-rival, and they can be either excludable or non-excludable. My shirt, for example, is a rival good because if I'm wearing it, you can't wear it at the same time. The warmth of the sun is non-rival because I can enjoy the warmth of the sun, and everyone else can enjoy it at the same time. Rivalness is a physical property that precludes the simultaneous use of goods by more than one person. Goods are also excludable or non-excludable. That's not a physical concept, that's a legal concept, a question of property. For example, you could wear my shirt tomorrow if I let you, but that's up to me because it's my property. My shirt is both rival and excludable, and that's the case with most market goods.

Meanwhile, the warmth of the sun is both non-rival and also non-excludable. We cannot buy and sell solar warmth; we cannot bottle it and charge for it. Goods that are rival and excludable are market goods. Goods that are non-rival and non-excludable are public goods. That leaves two other categories. Fish in the ocean are an example of goods that are rival and non-excludable. They are rival, because if I catch the fish, you can't catch it. But they are also non-excludable, because I can't stop you from fishing in the open seas. The management of goods that are rival and non-excludable gives rise to the famous tragedy of the commons – or the tragedy of open-access resources, as it's more accurately called. Now, the other problematic category consists of goods that are non-rival and excludable. If I use the Pythagorean Theorem, I don't prevent you from using it at the same time. Knowledge is non-rival, but it often is made excludable through intellectual property and patent rights. So those are two difficult categories that create problems. One is the tragedy of the commons, and the other we could call the tragedy of artificial scarcity.

The Commonwealth of Nature

Fish in the ocean are an example of the commonwealth of nature. I'll argue that natural goods and services that are rival and have so far remained non-excludable should be enclosed in the market in order to avoid unsustainable use. Excludability can take the form of individual property rights or social property rights – what needs to be avoided is open access. For dealing with the broad class of rival but, up to now, non-excludable goods, the so-called cap-auction-trade system is a market-based institution that merits consideration.

In addition to its practical value, the cap-auction-trade system also sheds light on a fundamental issue of economic theory: the logically separate issues of scale, distribution, and allocation. Neoclassical economics deals mainly with the question of allocation. Allocation is the apportionment of resources among competing uses: how many resources go to produce beans, how many to cars, how many to haircuts.

Properly functioning markets allocate resources efficiently, more or less. Yet the concept of efficient allocation presupposes a given distribution. Distribution is the apportionment of goods and resources among different people: how many resources go to you, how many to somebody else. A good distribution is one that is fair or just – not efficient, but fair. The third issue is scale: the physical size of the economy relative to the ecosystem that sustains it. How many of us are there and how large are the associated matter-energy flows from producing all our stuff, relative to natural cycles and the maintenance of the biosphere. In neoclassical economics, the issue of scale is completely off the radar screen.

The cap-auction-trade system works like this. Some environmental assets, say fishing rights or the rights to emit sulfur dioxide, have been treated as non-excludable free goods. As economic growth increases the scale of the economy relative to that of the biosphere, it becomes recognized that these goods are in fact physically rival. The first step is to put a cap – a maximum – on the scale of use of that resource, at a level which is deemed to be environmentally sustainable. Setting that cap – deciding what it should be – is not a market decision, but a social and ecological decision. Then, the right to extract that resource or emit that waste, up to the cap, becomes a scarce asset. It was a free good. Now it has a price. We've created a new valuable asset, so the question is: Who owns it? This also has to be decided politically, outside the market. Ownership of this new asset should be auctioned to the highest bidder, with the proceeds entering the public treasury. Sometimes rights are simply given to the historical private users – a bad idea, I think, but frequently done under the misleading label of “grandfathering.”

The cap-auction-trade system is not, as often called, “free-market environmentalism.” It is really socially constrained, market environmentalism. Someone must own the assets before they can be traded in the market, and that is an issue of distribution. Only after the scale question is answered, and then the distribution question, can we have market exchange to answer the question of allocation.

Another good policy for managing the commonwealth of nature is ecological tax reform. This means shifting the tax base away from income earned by labor and capital and onto the resource flow from nature. Taxing what we want less of, depletion and pollution, seems to be a better idea than taxing what we want more of, namely income. Unlike the cap-auction-trade system, ecological tax reform would exert only a very indirect and uncertain limit on the scale of the economy relative to the biosphere. Yet, it would go a long way toward improving allocation and distribution.

The Commonwealth of Knowledge

If you stand in front of the McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland, you’ll see a quotation from Thomas Jefferson carved on one of the stones: “Knowledge is the common property of mankind.” Well, I think Mr. Jefferson was right. Once knowledge exists, it is non-rival, which means it has a zero opportunity cost. As we know from studying price theory, price is supposed to measure opportunity cost, and if opportunity cost is zero, then price should be zero. Certainly, new knowledge, even though it should be allocated freely, does have a cost of production. Sometimes that cost of production is substantial, as with the space program’s discovery that there’s no life on Mars. On the other hand, a new insight could occur to you while you’re lying in bed staring at the ceiling and cost absolutely nothing, as was the case with Renee Descartes’ invention of analytic geometry. Many new discoveries are accidental. Others are motivated by the joy and excitement of research, independent of any material motivation. Yet the dominant view is that unless knowledge is kept scarce enough to have a significant price, nobody in the market will have an incentive to produce it. Patent monopolies and intellectual property rights are urged as the way to provide an extrinsic reward for knowledge production. Even within that restricted vision, keeping knowledge scarce still makes very little sense, because the main input to the production of new knowledge is existing knowledge. If you keep existing knowledge expensive, that’s surely going to slow down the production of new knowledge.

Does use by one person physically preclude use by others?

		Yes Rival	No Non-rival
Do laws prohibit access to these goods?	Yes Excludable	Market Goods (e.g., automobiles and fishing reels) <i>Let the market allocate these goods.</i>	Tragedy of Artificial Scarcity (e.g., patented meds and knowledge in heads) <i>Reduce patent monopolies and intellectual property rights—share these goods.</i>
	No Non-excludable	Tragedy of the Commons (e.g., old growth trees and fish in the seas) <i>Designate property rights and use cap-auction-trade to allocate these goods.</i>	Public Goods (e.g., national security and roads that are free) <i>Collect depletion and pollution taxes so that government can provide these goods.</i>

Different types of goods and policies to achieve a sustainable, fair, and efficient economy.

In Summary

Managing the commonwealth of nature and knowledge presents us two rather opposite problems and solutions. I've argued that the commonwealth of nature should be enclosed as property, as much as possible as public property, and administered so as to capture scarcity rents for public revenue. Examples of natural commons include: mining, logging, grazing rights, the electromagnetic spectrum, the absorptive capacity of the atmosphere, and the orbital locations of satellites. The commonwealth of knowledge, on the other hand, should be freed from enclosure as property and treated as the non-rival good that it is. Abolishing all intellectual property rights tomorrow is draconian, but I do think we could grant patent monopolies for fewer "inventions" and for shorter time periods.



[Sustaining Our Commonwealth of Nature and Knowledge](#) by Herman Daly is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives](#)

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In this essay, Louis DeSipio details the political activism of American Latino groups in the last two centuries and how their actions led to important civil and voting rights. The struggle for inclusivity and representation still exists for these groups, and the need for a collective political voice for the community remains a constant struggle dating back generations. Regarding the perspective of pan-ethnic Latino minorities as well as transnational Latino immigrants, DeSipio details past efforts to gain electoral voting power and political inclusion leading into the current era of Latino national groups continuing to struggle for their voices to be heard.

[#diversity](#) [#politics](#) [#sociology](#) [#history](#)

Demanding Equal Political Voice...And Accepting Nothing Less: The Quest for Latino Political Inclusion

Louis DeSipio

Over the past century and a half, diverse Latino communities have mobilized to demand civic and political inclusion, a process that has also facilitated the formation of a pan-ethnic political identity. Although there have been continuous gains, the quest for full and equal inclusion remains. The fact that the Latino population continues to grow in numbers and needs, and that this growth is often seen as a challenge to the majority population, ensures that Latinos will remain politically engaged in the pursuit of a full political voice in the upcoming decades.

Contemporary Latino politics is founded on generations of prior struggles for inclusion. These struggles have been organized around a consistent set of demands – ones that make the ongoing Latino struggle for civic and political inclusion a very American one – for equal protection of the law and the ability to participate equally in American society regardless of race or ethnicity. At the same time, like other racial/ethnic communities who are largely built on immigration, Latinos, particularly Latino immigrants, have sought to maintain transnational ties to their communities and countries of origin. This ongoing transnationalism among some immigrants has not diminished Latino efforts for inclusion in United States politics. Rather, transnational

engagement often provides skills and networks that add to the resources for demanding inclusion in the U.S.

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Prior to the contemporary era, collective efforts primarily took the form of community-based, civic, and trade union organizing. In the current era (the period after the civil rights revolution of the 1960s), electoral politics and voting added to the palette of collective political activities...

Colonial and Immigrant Roots of Latino Demands for Political Inclusion

Latino collective organizing to achieve a civic and political voice is a largely 20th and 21st-century phenomenon. While the Latino presence in the U.S. pre-dates these 20th-century accomplishments, prior to the current era, Latino communities lacked the group resources, leadership, and organizations to demand equal rights in U.S. society. Consequently, demands were primarily individual rather than collective.

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Despite the fact that there was little collective action to demand civic inclusion in Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities in the late 19th century, there were efforts by individuals to highlight inequalities and obstacles. Mexican Americans in the Southwest, for instance, used the federal and state courts to assert their citizenship rights. Issues before the courts included the right of Mexican immigrants to naturalize (In re Ricardo Rodríguez [1897]), to hold public office (People v. de la Guerra [1870]), and to serve on juries or to be tried by juries that included Mexican Americans (George Carter v. Territory of New Mexico [1859]). The courts were also the locus of Mexican American demands for the enforcement of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo's protections of the property rights of Mexican Americans who had owned land in the Southwest before the U.S.-Mexican War.

During this period, local political machines also courted Latino voters. This form of organization existed in New Mexico and South Texas; the New York Democratic machine intermittently sought the votes of Puerto Ricans in some elections and excluded them in others as late as the 1950s. For the most part, however, these machines engaged Latino communities to serve the ends of the political parties and Latinos had little influence on the people their votes elected. In the early period of Mexican American presence in the Southwest, some unions organized Latino workers, particularly the mining unions and the anarchists. This union outreach was the

exception rather than the rule, however, and did not add to the community's public leadership...

Organized Latino Voices for Civic Inclusion in the Early 20th Century: Initial Steps

At the turn of the 20th century, Latinos started to organize more broadly to meet their collective needs, including the creation of insurance pools to meet end-of-life financial needs, but these efforts were largely apolitical. Early Latino civic organizing took on a more explicitly political dimension in the late 1920s and 1930s. This era saw the formation of the first regional Mexican American civic organizations as well as labor organizing that included the first “national” Latino political movement. It was these efforts that laid the foundation for post-World War II civic and political gains...

[The League of United Latin American Citizens,] LULAC was established in 1929.[6] Its founders included the small Mexican American middle class – largely small business owners – that had emerged over the previous 20 years in small towns in Texas. The goals of the organization were both revolutionary and assimilationist. Their leadership sought to challenge and reverse the discrimination that had characterized the treatment of Mexican Americans in the Southwest since 1848. They used the tools available to them as U.S. citizens, particularly the courts, to challenge the largely unquestioned position of whites and the long-dominant policy of anti-Mexican discrimination. Their core claim was equal protection as U.S. citizens under the law.

LULAC members did distinguish themselves, however, from recent immigrants of Mexican ancestry by limiting membership to U.S. citizens and conducting meetings in English. The organization offered assistance to Mexican immigrants seeking to naturalize, but did not believe there was a political or civic equality between non-naturalized immigrants and U.S. citizens. In the 1930s, LULAC conducted voter registration drives, encouraged members to support candidates who spoke to Mexican American concerns, organized to end the poll tax, and used the courts to challenge discrimination, particularly educational discrimination. Soon after its formation, LULAC sought to organize Mexican American women. In the early 1930s, several chapters formed Ladies' Auxiliaries. In 1938, the LULAC President established the position of National Organizer for Women, which was later changed to the National Vice President of the organization.

Despite their somewhat narrow focus and the middle-class status of the early members, LULAC chapters quickly emerged throughout the Southwest making it the first regional Latino organization. Moreover, LULAC's leaders developed a political

alliance with Lyndon Johnson who was beginning his national rise in this period.[7] This alliance represented the first steps in building a Latino voice in national politics.

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Latino Civic and Political Organizing in the Civil Rights Era

The 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s saw a rapid expansion in Latino demand making and the formation of diverse paths to political organizing. It also saw the foundation of Latino electoral influence. As was the case in the African American community and its civil rights movement in part of this period, leadership emerged from new segments of the population, including returning World War II and Korean War veterans and college educated young adults.[10] Contesting social inequality and continuing the fight against discrimination became central to the nascent Latino political identity of this era... In each case, anger over state-sanctioned discrimination and denial of rights was at the core of their mobilization efforts... [T]hese movements appeared in all parts of the country with concentrated Latino populations. Although they did not form a national Latino movement as we understand it today, their recognition of the shared experiences of Latinos nationwide laid the foundation for the pan-ethnic Latino politics that emerged in the post-civil rights era.

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Latino youth, primarily U.S.-born young people, were among the most active. Their activism reflected Latino-specific concerns over discrimination and disparate outcomes, but also the anger of young adults in general in this era over the war in Vietnam.[12] Resentment over discriminatory public education spurred a series of walkouts... in Los Angeles high schools. These spontaneous movements coalesced in organizing to reform the delivery of education and in anti-war mobilization under the auspices of the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO).[13] Similar efforts appeared in other areas of Latino concentration in the Southwest. The Crusade for Justice, formed in Denver, focused its energies on youth more broadly including young adults in schools and in (and out of) the workplace.[14] At its 1969 conference, the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán was presented publicly for the first time. The Plan is the founding document of the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanos de Aztlán (MEChA) and called for Chicano self-determination and ethnic pride. MEChA is the only national Latino student organization on college and university campuses during this period still active today.

Young adults also led new movements to challenge white-dominated political institutions. They sought election to local offices in rural Texas, demonstrated that Mexican Americans could be mobilized, and use their numbers to challenge electoral discrimination...[15]

Young Latino adults also mobilized in Puerto Rican communities, which had grown dramatically after World War II.[17] Because of the Jones Act, which provided U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans, and the increased demand of cheap labor after the war, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans made their way to New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Chicago, and other cities. Puerto Rican migrants who seized this opportunity tended to be unskilled laborers and, later, rural migrants pushed off the land as Puerto Rican agriculture industrialized. Like the Mexican residents of the Southwest in the years after the U.S.-Mexican War, early 20th-century Puerto Rican migrants had few economic resources and were the targets of racial and ethnic discrimination.

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The frequently confrontational style of these newly emerging organizations in this era – and their new generation of leaders – should not obscure the core of their demands. They sought full inclusion in U.S. society as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and saw, as the primary strategy to achieve that goal, the opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice to office. Although their rhetoric sometimes focused on the distinct experiences of Latinos and separateness, their demands and goals focused on the equal ability to compete in the civic and political world. In this, their pluralist demands were similar to those of other excluded groups in U.S. society seeking an equal voice.

The new opportunities for Latino civic organizing in the civil rights era were also not limited to challenging existing political structures from the outside. This era also saw the foundation of Latino voices within the major political parties and social institutions as well as the formation of Latino-led institutions to research, document, and articulate the Latino condition.

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The national Latino civil rights organizations that formed in this period reflected a new position of Latinos in U.S. society that would not have been possible had the more activist organizations not challenged local and state power structures that had denied Latinos equal protection of the laws. The national organizations were more explicitly pluralist in their rhetoric and operations, but they and the more activist organizations shared a vision of Latino empowerment by challenging barriers and expanding the Latino electoral and economic voice. Occasional activist rhetoric aside, the demands of the civil rights era focused on ensuring that the language of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution became the practice as well as the law of the land. The new national organizations ensured a new and permanent institutional resource to articulate the demand for Latino civic and political inclusion.

The Continuing Struggle for Latino Civic Inclusion in the Contemporary United States

Despite the breakthroughs of the civil rights period, struggles for Latino inclusion continued in the post-civil rights era... The major legislative legacies of the civil rights era were federal commitments to enforce the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing equal protection of the laws and equal access to the ballot box. Civil rights and voting rights legislation created a new playing field for Latino demands for civic inclusion; the advocacy organizations that were established in the civil rights era and the steadily growing number of Latino elected and appointed officeholders ensured that Latino voices would be heard on issues of importance to the community.

The demography of the community also changed. Changes to national immigration law as well as higher than average birth rates ensured that the Latino population grew more rapidly than other groups. By 2012, Latinos numbered more than 50 million and made up more than 16 percent of the national population (compared to approximately 6 million in 1960 who made up over just 3 percent of the U.S. population)...

The Latino fight for civic inclusion thus continues... What are new, however, are the high share of non-naturalized immigrants in the Latino (and Asian American) population and the growing share of immigrants made up of unauthorized immigrants who do not have a path to naturalization. It is, of course, difficult to present precise estimates of the unauthorized immigrant population. Yet, the best estimates suggest that of the approximately 11.5 million unauthorized immigrants resident in the U.S. in 2011, 8.9 million were Latino.[29] Whereas in the past, unauthorized migrants have been able to regularize their status over time, partisan polarization in Congress has prevented a compromise that would allow for a widespread legalization. This policy intransigence has spurred a new form of Latino civic activism among young adult undocumented migrants who migrated with their parents as young children. They have banded together as “Dreamers” tapping the nomenclature of the DREAM Act, which would offer a path to legal status to young adult unauthorized migrants who attended college or joined the U.S. military.

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At the same time, the contemporary struggle for Latino civic and political inclusion is not simply a battle for immigrant rights.[36] U.S. citizen Latinos continue to face barriers to participation, some of which pre-date civil rights era reforms. Voter registration requirements, for example, were originally implemented to dampen the political power of turn-of-the-twentieth-century European immigrants.[37] They were effective then and continue to have a disproportionate and negative impact on young,

poor, and less educated adults in U.S. society. Latinos are more likely to have high shares of the population in each of these categories. The colonial legacy of Puerto Rico denies the vote to the nearly four million residents of the Island...

New and arguably more subtle forms of discrimination have emerged in the post-civil rights era. At present, the most insidious of these is voter identification requirements that many states are imposing. Latinos otherwise eligible to vote are less likely to have the required forms of identification and, consequently, will be less likely to vote...

The organizational infrastructure that emerged in the post-civil rights era continues to advocate, litigate, and organize to address these issues and to expand the Latino political voice. Latino representation at all levels of elective office has increased steadily over the past 30 years. It has also become more diverse.[38] Latinas make up a higher share of Latino officeholders than do white women of white officeholders. Latino officeholders increasingly also include Latinos who trace their ancestry to the countries of Latin America that began to send large numbers of migrants to the U.S. after 1960... The “Latino vote” is now routinely sought in national and many state-level races. A new generation of Latino campaign professionals has emerged to ensure that any candidate who wants to seek Latino votes can reach Latino voters... Latino organizations also more continually offer support for Latinos seeking to naturalize. Voter registration efforts routinely expand prior to national elections... Increasingly, Latino organizations and leaders are also able to use coalitional politics to achieve collective goals. These coalitions often include non-Latinos and non-Latino organizations around areas of common concern, such as immigrant rights with Asian American and Jewish organizations, civil rights and affirmative action with African American organizations, and pocketbook issues such as access to health care with unions and progressive Democrats. The size and growing political savvy of Latino communities ensures that these coalitions can be both effective at securing policy outcomes that benefit Latinos and providing the foundation for Latinos to develop leadership skills and seek elective office.

Conclusions

Despite changes in the structure of U.S. politics and the opportunities for Latino civic and political voice in the post-civil rights era, it is important to observe what has remained the same. The philosophy motivating mainstream Latino demands continues to be one of equal access to political rights and responsibilities. Latinos continue to need to challenge barriers to make their demands on political institutions. In 2006, in response to legislation passed in the U.S. House of Representatives making unauthorized immigrant status a crime, as many as five million people, most of whom were Latino, peacefully protested nationwide. The marchers included immigrant and

native Latinos. The legacy of these marches included policy outcomes – criminalization was rejected by the Senate – and political gains. The rate of growth of the Latino electorate increased in 2008, at least in part in response to post-march drives to translate protest into votes. The Latino community was able to respond so quickly and, arguably, so effectively because institutions and organizations existed to channel anger and frustration into [a] collective political voice. With growing numbers and increasingly sophisticated organization, Latinos continue to engage with old and new challenges, and in the process contribute to the renewing of democracy in the U.S.

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In "Writing in the Age of Distraction," author Cory Doctorow discusses the dangerous distractions that come with writing in the digital age as well as the numerous benefits that make a relationship between the internet and our writing processes necessary. Obtaining a balance between the two becomes a matter of co-opting techniques that help us shape our writing to fit more holistically in the digital age. Doctorow's techniques range from setting an appropriate work schedule that maximizes productivity and consistency to eliminating the distractions of instant communication.

Texts like this one offer important insight into what challenges you face as a new generation of writers who have grown up with the internet. You should be aware of the many, many potential distractions that come with digital writing and researching, but you should also work to cultivate a symbiotic relationship between your writing process and the internet. Social media, blog posts, and research databases are all tools readily available to you that can either hinder your writing or help it flourish.

[#literacy](#) [#technology](#) [#sociology](#)

Writing in the Age of Distraction

Cory Doctorow



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We know that our readers are distracted and sometimes even overwhelmed by the myriad distractions that lie one click away on the Internet, but of course writers face the same glorious problem: the delirious world of information and communication and community that lurks behind your screen, one alt-tab away from your word-processor.

The single worst piece of writing advice I ever got was to stay away from the Internet because it would only waste my time and wouldn't help my writing. This advice was wrong creatively, professionally, artistically, and personally, but I know where the writer who doled it out was coming from. Every now and again, when I see a new website, game, or service, I sense the tug of an attention black hole: a time-sink that is just waiting to fill my every discretionary moment with distraction. As a co-parenting new father who writes at least a book per year, half-a-dozen columns a month, ten or more blog posts a day, plus assorted novellas and stories and speeches, I know just how short time can be and how dangerous distraction is.

But the Internet has been very good to me. It's informed my creativity and aesthetics, it's benefited me professionally and personally, and for every moment it steals, it gives back a hundred delights. I'd no sooner give it up than I'd give up fiction or any other pleasurable vice.

I think I've managed to balance things out through a few simple techniques that I've been refining for years. I still sometimes feel frazzled and info-whelmed, but that's rare. Most of the time, I'm on top of my workload and my muse. Here's how I do it:

Short, regular work schedule

When I'm working on a story or novel, I set a modest daily goal – usually a page or two – and then I meet it every day, doing nothing else while I'm working on it. It's not plausible or desirable to try to get the world to go away for hours at a time, but it's entirely possible to make it all shut up for 20 minutes. Writing a page every day gets me more than a novel per year – do the math – and there's always 20 minutes to be found in a day, no matter what else is going on. Twenty minutes is a short enough interval that it can be claimed from a sleep or meal-break (though this shouldn't become a habit). The secret is to do it every day, weekends included, to keep the momentum going, and to allow your thoughts to wander to your next day's page between sessions. Try to find one or two vivid sensory details to work into the next page, or a bon mot, so that you've already got some material when you sit down at the keyboard.

Leave yourself a rough edge

When you hit your daily word-goal, stop. Stop even if you're in the middle of a sentence. Especially if you're in the middle of a sentence. That way, when you sit down at the keyboard the next day, your first five or ten words are already ordained, so that you get a little push before you begin your work. Knitters leave a bit of yarn sticking out of the day's knitting so they know where to pick up the next day — they call it the "hint." Potters leave a rough edge on the wet clay before they wrap it in plastic for the night — it's hard to build on a smooth edge.

Don't research

Researching isn't writing and vice-versa. When you come to a factual matter that you could google in a matter of seconds, don't. Don't give in and look up the length of the Brooklyn Bridge, the population of Rhode Island, or the distance to the Sun. That way lies distraction — an endless click-trance that will turn your 20 minutes of composing into a half-day's idyll through the web. Instead, do what journalists do: type "TK" where your fact should go, as in "The Brooklyn bridge, all TK feet of it, sailed into the air like a kite." "TK" appears in very few English words (the one I get tripped up on is "Atkins") so a quick search through your document for "TK" will tell you whether you have any fact-checking to do afterwards. And your editor and copyeditor will recognize it if you miss it and bring it to your attention.

Don't be ceremonious

Forget advice about finding the right atmosphere to coax your muse into the room. Forget candles, music, silence, a good chair, a cigarette, or putting the kids to sleep. It's nice to have all your physical needs met before you write, but if you convince yourself that you can only write in a perfect world, you compound the problem of finding 20 free minutes with the problem of finding the right environment at the same time. When the time is available, just put fingers to keyboard and write. You can put up with noise/silence/kids/discomfort/hunger for 20 minutes.

Kill your word-processor

Word, Google Office and OpenOffice all come with a bewildering array of typesetting and automation settings that you can play with forever. Forget it. All that stuff is distraction, and the last thing you want is your tool second-guessing you, "correcting" your spelling, criticizing your sentence structure, and so on. The programmers who wrote your word processor type all day long, every day, and they have the power to buy or acquire any tool they can imagine for entering text into a computer. They don't write

their software with Word. They use a text-editor, like vi, Emacs, TextPad, BBEdit, Gedit, or any of a host of editors. These are some of the most venerable, reliable, powerful tools in the history of software (since they're at the core of all other software) and they have almost no distracting features – but they do have powerful search-and-replace functions. Best of all, the humble .txt file can be read by practically every application on your computer, can be pasted directly into an email, and can't transmit a virus.

Real-time communications tools are deadly

The biggest impediment to concentration is your computer's ecosystem of interruption technologies: IM, email alerts, RSS alerts, Skype rings, etc. Anything that requires you to wait for a response, even subconsciously, occupies your attention. Anything that leaps up on your screen to announce something new, occupies your attention. The more you can train your friends and family to use email, message boards, and similar technologies that allow you to save up your conversation for planned sessions instead of demanding your attention right now helps you carve out your 20 minutes. By all means, schedule a chat – voice, text, or video – when it's needed, but leaving your IM running is like sitting down to work after hanging a giant "DISTRACT ME" sign over your desk, one that shines brightly enough to be seen by the entire world.

I don't claim to have invented these techniques, but they're the ones that have made the 21st century a good one for me.



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R.G. Dunlop’s article introduces at least two ideas writers need to know. First, journalists say that all engaging writing is about people. Even when a story seems to be about something else, it’s still about people. “The Elk, the Tourists, and the Missing Coal Country Jobs” seems to be about a place, or even a plan for a business, but people are on all sides of the story too. As you read, look for whose story Dunlop tells and why those stories matter. The developers have a story. They work hard to promote the story they want the public to hear. The people who live in the community, from families that have lived there for generations, have stories too. And those stories help make up the history of the Appalachian region of Kentucky. The question is, whose stories will define the future and what kind of story will that be?

As Dunlop developed his story on the Appalachian Wildlife Center, now called Boone’s Ridge, he gathered information in a variety of ways. You’ve learned about how important it is to get evidence and document sources. The second idea to pay attention to in Dunlop’s article is not just what he does with his research, but what he says about the ways some people he profiles handle evidence and support for their ideas. As you read, note those places where documentation can be expected but is missing. While you may get frustrated with your professor because forgetting to document a source impacts your grade, Dunlop is investigating the use of millions of dollars. He suggests that there’s a lack of oversight. He never states what he thinks might explain that, but he leaves it to the reader to fill in the blanks. Clearly, though, his questions must make some people he writes about uncomfortable. As you read, think about the writer’s role and responsibility in telling a compelling story and telling the truth. That perspective will shape your opinion of this story and will inform the writing you do, too.

Introduction by Gill Hunter

[#appalachia](#) [#ecology](#) [#politics](#) [#sociology](#) [#research](#)

The Elk, the Tourists, and the Missing Coal Country Jobs

R.G. Dunlop

Standing at the site of a long-abandoned, multimillion dollar industrial park in November 2016, U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers urged residents in southeastern Kentucky's Bell County to envision the tourism potential for miles of open land.

Joined by Matt Bevin, then Kentucky's governor, and local politicians, Rogers pointed to the expanse of forestlands and mountaintops in the distance as he unveiled a \$12.5 million federal grant for the Appalachian Wildlife Center. Rogers, a Republican who represents the state's Appalachian region, had helped secure the money through the Abandoned Mine Land Pilot Program, a federal initiative designed to foster economic development around former coal mine sites in Kentucky and other states.

The proposed state-of-the-art facility would include a museum and local artisan market where visitors could learn about nature. The center's biggest attraction: the elk that roam the area.

Nearly four years after the announcement, and three years after the wildlife center was first supposed to be completed, the land is still largely untouched except for a few pens to hold elk and some water utility construction. The projected infusion of hundreds of thousands of tourists has not materialized. And Bell County residents, a third of whom live in poverty and fewer than 1 in 10 of whom have a college degree, are still waiting for an influx of jobs from yet another effort promising to help the area recover from the decline of the coal industry.

The AML Pilot Program, created in 2015, is among the latest efforts that pledged to change the fate of eastern Kentucky. State and federal leaders have directed hundreds of millions of dollars to the region over the past 50 years as part of multiple economic revitalization efforts.



Downtown Pineville, Kentucky, a small town in Bell County near the future site of the Appalachian Wildlife Center - By Stacy Kranitz special to ProPublica is licensed under [Creative Commons License \(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

Those investments have resulted in some improvements, including new hospitals and other health care facilities, job-training programs, and some businesses that have come and stayed. But many projects haven't lived up to expectations, leaving residents waiting for an economic lifeboat that never seems to arrive.

Since its inception, the AML Pilot Program has awarded \$105 million to 43 projects in the state with little vetting. Some projects like the wildlife center have taken far longer to complete than promised, with no consequences. And lofty projections for job creation, visitation and tourism revenue made by the wildlife center and other projects went largely unchallenged by the state, the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting and ProPublica found.

An industrial park in Martin County was awarded \$3.37 million in September 2019 even after a consultant warned that the project had "fatal flaws," including its location near a federal prison. Two other industrial parks that received funding have already lost, or are at risk of losing, major businesses after pledging large numbers of jobs and related economic growth.

And a \$2.5 million grant to Harlan Wood Products LLC in 2016 was tabled after the company was unable to obtain additional private funding. The Harlan County business, which is now dissolved according to the Kentucky secretary of state's office, had planned to produce wood pellets for biomass fuel, employ up to 35 people and create about 60 indirect jobs.

For the wildlife center, pledges of economic turnaround soared even as the projected opening date was repeatedly delayed. The center is now expected to open in June

2022, according to the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation, the nonprofit organization that is responsible for its construction.

"We're actually building it. Nobody's ever done anything for tourism like we're doing," said David Ledford, president and CEO of the nonprofit foundation. He said project delays have been primarily due to construction challenges on the reclaimed mine site

and a request by federal authorities for an additional environmental assessment. The coronavirus pandemic also has pushed back construction, according to recent reports submitted to the state by the foundation.

The federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, which oversees the distribution of AML Pilot Program funding to states, did not respond to a request for details about its application review process. But three officials familiar with the process, who aren't authorized to speak publicly, told KyCIR and ProPublica that the agency does no independent scrutiny of grant applicants' claims.

State officials also could not provide KyCIR and ProPublica with records showing that they verified the tourism and job projections. In fact, a committee appointed by the state Energy and Environment Cabinet secretary has helped to dole out millions in taxpayer dollars without maintaining any records of discussions or votes, as required for public bodies, KyCIR and ProPublica found.

The committee, which helps determine how the program's federal tax dollars are spent, is not required to comply with state transparency laws, according to state officials who argue that it is not a public agency because it serves in an advisory capacity to the cabinet secretary.

State and local programs across the country that offer incentives for economic development repeatedly come under scrutiny for failing to achieve job creation and revenue benchmarks.

The AML Pilot Program falls within a gray area that sometimes escapes deeper examination.

The federal government has gradually given states more decision-making authority over grant distribution and oversight, said Brett Theodos, a senior fellow and director of the community economic development hub at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C.

But the AML Pilot Program stands out because the federal agency responsible for distributing the funds does not appear to have provided clear parameters and measurements for success, he said.

“The lack of expert decision-making, public meetings or outcome tracking makes (the AML Pilot Program) open for abuse,” Theodos said.

Disney-like Experience

The announcement on building the wildlife center came nearly two decades after the failure of an industrial park project on the same site.

The state spent more than \$10 million to buy the land, build a bridge over the Cumberland River and run a three-lane, paved road up to the mountaintop, where the industrial park would be located.

But no industry came. The park sat empty for more than a decade.



This sign is all that remains of a proposed industrial park. Nearly two decades later, the Appalachian Wildlife Center would choose to build on the same site - By Stacy Kranitz special to ProPublica is licensed under [Creative Commons License \(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

Then, in 2014, Ledford announced plans to construct the Appalachian Wildlife Center. At the time, Ledford said he was considering five counties as potential locations for the center, which would be funded solely through private donations. The following year, Ledford chose Bell County.

Ledford said in 2015 that the project, which would encompass 12,000 adjoining acres, would draw 580,000 visitors and generate more than \$113 million for the region in its fifth year in operation. “We will not seek any government funding for the project. It will

be funded thru private donations,” Ledford said in a news release that projected a 2017 completion date.

After three years of operating at a net loss, the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation sought to bolster funds for the center by seeking an AML Pilot Program grant.

In an application filed in 2016 by the county, the foundation offered more ambitious tourism numbers than it had a year earlier. Not only would the center draw 638,000 visitors in its fifth year in operation, it would spur the creation of more than 2,000 jobs in the region.

By the time Rogers announced the AML Pilot Program funding later that year, the foundation was projecting that the center would be complete in 2019.

Ledford did not respond to a request to explain why he sought government funding after vowing not to do so. He has said that the state and federal governments vetted the economic projections.

But hundreds of pages of federal and state documents related to the Appalachian Wildlife Center project show no indication of any independent assessment or critical vetting by the state or the federal government of the tourism and job creation projections. At least three federal documents, including a 2019 report, repeat almost verbatim the project application’s claims for visitation, job creation and revenue generation.

In 2019, foundation leaders estimated that the center would open in June 2021. By its third year, it would make \$8.5 million after operating expenses, they said. The projection was based on new estimates of 850,000 visitors annually, starting in its third year, and average per visitor spending of \$44 on admission fees, food and gift shop items.

“We’re going to build a first-class tourism destination and we’re going to deliver a Disney-like experience,” Frank Allen, a foundation board member, said during a presentation last year. “I know it sounds ambitious and it is but, bear with me, at one point so was Disney World. Ultimately, all you need is a great plan and a lot of money. We’ve got the plan and most of the money.”

The Appalachian Wildlife Foundation's tourism projections exceeded by nearly 300,000 the number of visitors last year to western Kentucky's Mammoth Cave National Park, one of the region's leading tourist attractions and home to the longest-known cave system in the world.

Ledford said the projections stem in part from his belief that the wildlife center will generate more visitors and revenue than the Keystone Elk Country Alliance in northwest Pennsylvania, which was created in 2009. The facility attracts more than 481,000 people annually, according to its website.

The wildlife center hopes to capitalize on tourists traveling to other destinations, including resorts such as Pigeon Forge, a mountain town two hours away in eastern Tennessee that is home to Dollywood, and Hilton Head Island in South Carolina, which is a seven-hour drive from Bell County. About 94% of the center's visitors would be from outside the state, according to the foundation's estimates.

"Our visitors are not going to spend three or four days here," Ledford said in an interview. "It's not the end destination. It's a stop on the way to someplace."

Jeffrey Larkin, an Indiana University of Pennsylvania professor who teaches ecology and conservation, is skeptical that the wildlife center will be able to live up to its projections.

"I would say that the challenges that lie before the Kentucky facility would be, 'If you build it, would they come?'" said Larkin, who received his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Kentucky and who once conducted fall elk tours in the Appalachian area of the state. "It's in a part of Kentucky that's not often visited by a lot of people."

A New Program, Another Promise

Nestled in the southeastern corner of the state at the juncture with Virginia and Tennessee, the land that would become Bell and Harlan counties was cemented in the region's history when frontiersman Daniel Boone blazed a trail through the Cumberland Gap in 1775.

The counties also reflect in many ways the Appalachian region of which they are a part: They are breathtakingly beautiful, largely rural, overwhelmingly white and significantly poor.

The remote counties, among 38 deemed economically distressed in eastern Kentucky, have long wrestled with high poverty and unemployment rates. But a struggling coal industry hastened economic contractions for rural communities in Appalachia.

In the past decade, coal production in the state's Appalachian region dropped from 67 million tons to 13.6 million, forcing the elimination of most mining-related jobs, which plummeted from 13,000 in 2010 to 3,400 in 2019.

"Coal's hold over eastern Kentucky has long dampened creativity, long-term planning, alternative economic development, the ability to think in terms of the public good rather than personal gain and adequate taxes with which to support public infrastructure and services," said Ronald D. Eller, former director of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky and a retired history professor.

Rogers, the politician who earned the nickname "Prince of Pork" because of his success earmarking funding for his district, has been at the center of many of the infusions of federal dollars for the region he represents. In June 2015, he chaired the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, which pushed for the AML Pilot Program as part of the U.S. Department of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill.

Lawmakers created a new pot of money, setting aside \$90 million in 2016 to create new job opportunities and stimulate the economies of Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia by developing reclaimed mine sites. The program later expanded to include three additional states and three Native American tribes.

The federal government distributes the money but allows state officials to develop their own criteria for selecting the projects and monitoring their progress.

"This is a thoughtful alternative to help hard-hit communities reinvigorate their economies by using abandoned mine land to develop hospitals, community centers and much more," Rogers said in a June 2015 news release after his committee's approval.

Rogers has since promoted the program as a key economic driver in Appalachia. In a 2018 news release, he called it “one of the most successful job creation and tourism initiatives that we’ve ever had in Eastern Kentucky.” At the time, none of the projects had been completed.

Rogers defended the money spent on various projects that have drawn limited results.

“There isn’t a silver bullet that can lift our region out of generational poverty, and none of our local officials who have applied for an AML grant believes that one project in an industrial park or an exciting new tourism project will lift their county out of poverty,” Rogers said in an email.

Kentucky officials acknowledge that the state’s oversight of the projects focuses on planning and construction, not on expectations for economic development. Once construction is complete, state oversight largely ends, leaving no consistent accountability system for measuring whether the investments drew promised economic changes to the area.

John Mura, a spokesman for the state Energy and Environment Cabinet, said the administration of Gov. Andy Beshear is committed to helping to improve the economy in coal communities and considers the AML Pilot Program an effective tool.

While agreements with grantees do not clearly articulate oversight responsibilities once projects are completed, Mura said the cabinet “may require that the grantee continue to submit an annual report on various metrics such as job creation.”

“This program has brought a good measure of economic vitality to eastern Kentucky in the past four years and there is every expectation that under the Beshear administration, it will continue to produce new jobs and new economic vitality in this part of the state,” Mura said in an email. He did not respond to questions about which circumstances might trigger the request for annual reports.

Mura pointed to two projects that he said have led to an additional 44 jobs in eastern Kentucky.

Dajcor Aluminum, a business operating in the Coal Fields Regional Industrial Park in Perry County, has hired 31 employees since the county received a \$6.5 million AML

Pilot Program grant in 2018 to buy equipment for the company. SilverLiner, a tanker truck manufacturing company, also has hired 13 employees, Mura said. The company is located in Pike County, in the Kentucky Enterprise Industrial Park, which received a \$5 million AML Pilot Program grant in 2016.



A coal miner's flag hangs in the front yard of a home in Middlesboro, Kentucky - By Stacy Kranitz special to ProPublica is licensed under [Creative Commons License \(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

James P. Ziliak, an economics professor at the University of Kentucky, said the eastern part of the state could be in worse shape without government investments such as the AML Pilot Program. But he worries about the lack of a broader strategy.

"It's kind of a failure of economic development policy," Ziliak said. "A lot has been spent, but has it been spent in the right places? And there have been a lot of empty promises over the years."

Banking on Tourism

The Appalachian Wildlife Center is not the only tourism project in eastern Kentucky banking on big promises to uplift the region.

A Letcher County nonprofit, the EKY Heritage Foundation Inc., was awarded two AML Pilot Program grants totaling nearly \$3.5 million in 2018 and 2019 after promising to transform more than 100 acres of "stagnant land" into Thunder Mountain, a "world-

class” sport-shooting and archery resort park. The park would draw an estimated 40,000 annual visitors, according to the nonprofit’s application.

The completed project would employ 40 to 50 people and include shooting ranges, campgrounds with cabins, an amphitheater and a training site for law enforcement and the military.

The application offers no supporting evidence that Thunder Mountain could attract the number of tourists it projects. And while the application asserts that Thunder Mountain would be a “valuable resource” for personnel at a federal prison to be built in Letcher County, plans for construction of the prison were shelved last year.

Missy Matthews, president of Childers Oil Co. and of Double Kwik, a chain of more than 40 convenience stores and gas stations in the southeastern Kentucky region, formed the nonprofit that proposed the project. She did not respond to interview requests.

State Rep. Angie Hatton of Whitesburg, an EKY Heritage Foundation board member, declined to discuss claims for the project in detail. She provided a statement that she attributed to Sally Oakes, a Childers Oil Co. employee who served as the foundation’s grant writer.

“The estimates in the grant application are based on various sources of information including reports, journals and magazines as well as communications with other owners/operators of shooting ranges,” the statement said. Oakes could not be reached for comment.

About 130 miles northeast of the proposed site for Thunder Mountain, another tourism- related project, in eastern Kentucky’s Boyd County, received a \$4 million AML Pilot Program grant after pledging to double the number of visitors for an existing off-road park.

The grant, awarded in 2017 to Boyd County government, would assist with water, sewer and road improvements intended to primarily benefit Rush Off-Road, a for-profit business owned by E.B. Lowman III, who also is president of a real estate company in eastern Kentucky.

In its application, Boyd County government officials said the improvements would help the park increase to 100,000 the number of visitors. It did not provide a timetable for the increase and offered no evidence or documentation to support the claim.

Project documents cite, but do not include, a market research study by Marshall University in West Virginia, which Lowman said found that the park had a \$5 million-plus economic impact on the county in 2017. Lowman declined to provide KyCIR and

ProPublica with a copy of the study, and university officials said they were unable to find one.

Boyd County officials did not respond to repeated requests from KyCIR and ProPublica to discuss the project. Federal and state officials did not reply to specific questions about the project.

Shawna McCown said she struggles to understand how the four-wheelers roaring by her house in Rush, Kentucky, will help her or her neighbors.

“They’re saying it’s going to help the community, but we don’t see any benefit for us at all,” McCown, a schoolteacher, said of the project. “How does that help me? I want a community center, a library.”

Residents Left Waiting

By now, the Appalachian Wildlife Center, which has rebranded itself as Boone’s Ridge, was supposed to be pumping millions of dollars into Bell County. It was expected to have created more than 1,000 direct and indirect jobs in the region, as many as the county’s two largest employers combined: Smithfield Foods, which produces a variety of hams and smoked meats with 500 workers, and the Bell County school system, which has about 430 employees.

Instead, a countdown clock on the project’s website winds down to the most recent opening date: 593 days away.

Meanwhile, Rome Meade, a 26-year-old who lives in the area, has for six months hunted for a full-time job without success.

“I believe it’s gonna turn around,” Meade said. “At least I hope so.”

He’s better off than some. He draws a salary as pastor of the Winchester Avenue Church of God in Middlesboro. And he, his wife and their two young children live rent-free in the church parsonage.

Meade makes too much money to qualify for food stamps or most other government benefits, except for health care.

“I want a job. I’ve always worked, but I can’t get no help,” Meade said.

Meade wishes the government would focus more on helping create well-paying positions that will allow him to stay in the area and not “on things that don’t matter, like an industrial park.”

“All of the tax dollars are going for things that people see no benefit to,” Meade said. “They’re getting frustrated. People are bustin’ their tails, trying to make a living for their families.”



[The Elk, the Tourists and the Missing Coal Country Jobs](#) by R.G. Dunlop is licensed under a [Creative Commons License \(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0\)](#)

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In I. Franco's review of Johnson's "Superheroes in Crisis" we find an examination of the characterization of two of the most consistently popular superheroes in American popular culture: Batman and Superman. In Franco's review of Johnson's text, we see a clear delineation of the often interpersonally combative characters. As Franco notes, "Superman [represents] (mostly) the moral standards of the conservative side of American society, and Batman [explores] (mostly) the darker, subterranean side, both equally sustaining and fundamental to the American social fabric". Indeed, while Superman is known for his adherence to "Truth, Justice, and the American Way", Batman is often portrayed as a vigilante working outside the confines of the (often corrupt) forces of Law and Order.

In "Are Batman and Superman the Barometer of Our Times?", readers are given a succinct chronological exploration of the changes both characters undergo to fit in with the ever-shifting requirements of the cultural zeitgeist. While more modern retellings have their own divergent interpretations of the motivations behind The Dark Knight and The Man of Steel (particularly in recent films à la Nolan and Snyder), Franco shows us that this is nothing new. In fact, it is a demand of the continued endurance of these characters that they must serve as a reflection of the changes in our own society and its constantly mutating requirements of what, if anything, really makes a hero a superhero.

Introduction by Fairleigh Roman

[#popculture](#) [#gender](#) [#sociology](#) [#history](#)

Are Batman and Superman the Barometer of Our Times? A Review of Superheroes in Crisis

Ira Erika Franco

The idea that superhero comic books are part of a modern American mythology is probably not a surprise to anyone. However, Jeffrey Johnson refocuses this concept in his monograph *Superheroes in Crisis* ([RIT Press, 2014](#)): after going into detail of the myriad of changes Superman and Batman have gone to stay relevant, he suggests we should narrow our assumptions of what constitutes a true comic book myth, given that the character stays true to what the present society demands. 'American culture is littered with faint remembrances of characters who flourished for a season and then became inconsequential and vanished' (Johnson 2014: 104). The author mentions The Yellow Kid and Captain Marvel as those characters who were once über famous and popular and now are but receding memories in people's minds. Avid comic readers can surely think of many other examples of great modern characters who, for some reason, just didn't make it. Batman and Superman, however, remain 'two heroes who have survived, and often thrived, for over seventy years because they are important to current Americans and speak to modern social problems and contemporary cultural necessities' ([Johnson 2014: 104](#)).

A noted World War II historian, Johnson points out that the characters have endured the trials of time mainly because of their abilities to bend so as not to break. Even if most of us modern readers assume fixed traits for both The Dark Knight and The Man of Steel, Johnson carefully demonstrates there's no such thing: Superman couldn't even fly in his earliest adventures, and through the period of the TV series in the mid-sixties, Batman, the so-called Dark Knight, was a goofy, campy character with not a bit of darkness in his soul. Through Johnson's account it is evident, though, that Batman and his creators have done a better job than Superman's in adjusting to radical changes in American society (such as the US's disillusionment after JFK's assassination or the introduction of TV and its immediate popularity). This might also be the reason for Batman's smoother translation to modern cinema: since the release of the first movie —Batman ([Burton, 1989](#))— has always kept the public interest with strong sales figures, —The Dark Knight ([Nolan, 2008](#)) being the most popular to date, having made 533 million dollars in revenue for its creators in the US alone —. Not even the bad Batman movies have flopped in opening weekends: people always want to see The Dark Knight's new metamorphosis, as if they wanted to understand what they've turned into.

In the four chapters of the book, Johnson provides the reader with the rare pleasure of being told old stories, gems actually: instead of just sociological analysis and high ideas, Johnson provides the actual plot of the comic issue he chooses in order to support his commentary. We might remember that Superman was created during the Great Depression (1938), and it's fairly easy to assume that the caped hero was to provide a temporary escape for impoverished and desperate Americans, but unless we have an infinite (and expensive) golden age collection, it would probably never occur to

us that during his first few years, Superman was actually a savior of the oppressed, almost in a Marxist fashion. One example is Action Comics #3, where Superman disguises himself as a coal miner to trap the mine owner and his socialite friends underground in order to show them the importance of safety regulations and working men. In Action Comics #8, Superman befriends a gang of delinquents and decides to burn down the slums they live in, just to prove that the government is partly responsible for their delinquency. In the end, Superman becomes a true hero: he forces the government to build new apartments providing these hooligans the dignity they deserve. Throughout the book, Johnson provides such examples in effective ways to prove the Historic turmoil to which our heroes reacted.

One compelling topic that defines both characters concerns their enemies. At first, being created as depression-era social avengers, they fight the common criminal: shoplifters, wife-beaters and even politicians. 'These often colorful foes provided action and adventure while also creating a binary narrative of good and evil' ([Johnson 2014, XIV](#)). But this narrative changes greatly throughout time, constituting probably the most important transformation in the stories of these two heroes: the evolution of their foes. At some point, the duality of pure good and evil stops being good enough. It stops explaining what is wrong with the world. At the end of the sixties, for example, Superman's petty villains become so unimportant that, for a while, his love interest Lois Lane impersonates a new kind of foe. In a way, Lois updates better than Superman as she wakes up to her newfound power, akin to the zeitgeist of her era. In Lois Lane #85 (she even gets her own title for a little while) the one-time docile girlfriend decides she no longer wants to marry Superman and refuses his once longed-for offer. In a kind of confused, first approach feminism, she is seen doing things such as lifting heavy stuff like men. 'Superman represents the older generations and is pressing to protect the status quo, while Lois is a change-minded baby boomer' ([Johnson 2014: 43](#)).



Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane Vol 1 #80 by Curt Swan, Leo Dorfman, DC Comics licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Batman's enemies are, without a doubt, the most exciting ones. First of all, he gets one in the real world: he is accused of promoting homosexuality by the psychologist Frederic Werthan, in his book *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954), for which Americans changed the regulation code of the comic book industry. Later, in the early sixties, the character is handed to writer and editor Julius Schwartz and the stories become enriched with a focus on Batman's detective skills. The Riddler, Mr. Freeze and the Joker all demand The Caped Crusader's brainpower to discover complex *noir* plots, creating a three-dimensional world within the comic's pages: 'Perhaps most interesting is Detective Comics#332 (October 1964) in which Batman fights Joker for the first time under the new creative regime. In this story the Clown Prince of Crime creates a potent dust that causes anyone it comes in contact with to laugh uncontrollably. After encountering the drug, Batman researches possible cures and learns that a simple antihistamine will stop the uncontrollable laughter. The Caped Crusader soon thwarts the villain's evil plans and protects society from the psychopathic clown. This version of Batman is portrayed as being clearly more intelligent and cunning than his arch-nemesis, but The Joker is also more nefarious and crafty than he had been in recent appearances'. (Johnson 2014, 36). It is only natural to think that Batman's foes evolve in complexity over time, the greatest example being a villain like Ra's al Ghul, who, defying normal stereotyping, commits awful crimes believing it is best for the planet.

In this constant reshaping of the characters, one thing remains constant from the beginning: the foes are more metaphorical than the heroes for the darkest fears of American society in the way they reflect the heroes' moral codes. In the first chapter, for example, that covers the early years (from 1938 to 1959), most evildoers evoke the desperate need of common people to keep America's status quo. Superman fights against gamblers taking control over football games and 'declares war on reckless drivers'. Superman deals with them using the moral code of an entire society: he enjoys humiliating, beating and sometimes even killing them. 'These first superheroes were violent champions for a hardened people who demanded they act in such a way. The original versions of Superman and Batman did not conform to the rules against killing, maiming, battling authority figures and law enforcement' ([Johnson 2014: XVII](#)). Johnson thinks these initial times can be seen, especially in Superman, as a kind of an adolescence because of his disregard for any point of view except his own. More a bully than a hero, Superman reflects the state of millions of Americans, adult men out of work 'who had descended into hopelessness and Superman served as a bright spot in this bleak depressing age' ([Johnson 2014: 2](#)).

Just three years later, with the entry of the US to World War II, the nature of both criminals and heroes changed radically: both Batman and Superman had to support governmental and military mandates, slowly becoming in the years to come guardians of the conventional values that were established with the prosperity and the sense of social unity that came after the victory over the Axis armies. What happened to our heroes in the sixties reflected a harsh division in the American people: while Superman becomes almost infected with paranoia and self-righteousness that characterized the conservatives in the post war era —having nightmares of being exposed to red kryptonite, splitting into evil Superman and good Clark Kent, turning into a space monster, among other adventures—, Batman goes through some nice years of *detectivesque* narrative, preparing for the blossoming of sexual liberation and anti-war movements that would become popular among youngsters a few years later. 'The Dark Knight was now focusing more on his detective skills and was no longer fighting aliens or magical beings as he had in previous years...Batman was attempting to recreate himself from an evolving society, but it was unclear if a return to his detective roots combined with pop art influences was what readers demanded' ([Johnson 2014: 35](#)).

One last thing is to note of this book: the detailed attention Johnson pays to the creative minds that shaped these heroes. Bob Kane may have designed Batman to be a 'hardcore vigilante', but it was Julius Schwartz in 1964 who invented some of his most engaging traits as a resourceful hard-boiled detective with no other tools to fight crime but his mind. Writers and artists like Frank Robbins, Bob Brown and Dick Giordano are mentioned as inventive, but Johnson points out a very short but fertile period in the

seventies that would prepare the dark and gothic traits of Batman we have come to love, under the hands of writer Denny O’Neal and artist Neal Adams. In this period Batman first gets his many layers as a character, his neurosis and most subtle psychological features that Frank Miller would use in his ground-breaking *The Dark Knight Returns* (1986), later revamped for Christopher Nolan’s Dark Knight’s Trilogy.

Above all, the great journey this book offers is discovering how our beloved heroes appear to be two ends of the same rope, because, paradoxically, even when they change, they stay the same: Superman representing (mostly) the moral standards of the conservative side of American society, and Batman exploring (mostly) the darker, subterranean side, both equally sustaining and fundamental to the American social fabric.

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In this brief but important piece, author Linda González offers her personal narrative participating in Día de los Muertos or The Day of the Dead. González writes a unique first-hand account of taking the cultural steps to honor departed family members. She simultaneously recounts what this celebration can look like from year to year while ingraining personal reflections on spirituality, life and death, and the relationship between cultural heritage and tradition.

[#diversity](#) [#sociology](#)

How I Celebrate Life on the Day of the Dead

Linda González



["Día de Los Muertos Celebration"](#) by [greeleygov](#) is licensed under [CC PDM 1.0](#)

Every year as November 1 approaches, I do the math to remember how long ago my father passed away on Día de los Muertos. This year, I dutifully pulled up my calculator and subtracted 1996 from 2017. Twenty-one years. And then the obvious hits me. I can always know how long it has been since he passed on to his next life by subtracting one year from my twins' age. They are 22 and were just a year old when their *abuelo*

died. I remember carrying Gina down the aisle behind the casket, her and Teo's new life blooming while that same year Tot's had faded.

I set up my altar this week, pulling out the pictures of my dearly departed and adding new ones from this year. The first step is always laying out the cross-stitched mantle with years of stains and a dark mark from when a candle burned too hot. I tape *papel picado* above the altar, remembering this ritual is not a dirge; it is an opening of the veil to celebrate the lives that touched me and my *comunidades*. It is a time to think about why I miss them and ponder how to keep them alive in the present moment.

I imagine my dad's disappointed spirit hovering over the Dodgers as they lost in the World Series. I invoke my mom's stovetop magic as I figure out what to do with a bag of zucchini that must be cooked tonight. I remember the mothers who grieve their sons' vibrant spirits every day, and I take a moment to send Snapchats to my beloved *cuates*.

Día de los Muertos is so ingrained in my being that I am startled to see people in costume; my mind wonders for a second, "What's that all about?" This is amazing because I was so involved in Halloween while my children were growing up—making costumes, figuring out the healthiest candy to hand out, trading my children's candy for money so they were not overloaded with sugar (and I could store their loot for the next Halloween).

In years past, I have hosted gatherings to decorate sugar skulls, loving this tradition of blending death with creativity. I treasured giving my children and their friends the chance to be playful and imaginative with something that so many people fear. As a writer, I live in that crevice of light and shadow, writing drafts only to end their existence for another version and then another and then yet another.

I love the transparency of life and death, the calaveras that dance and meditate and watch TV. Each skeleton could be anyone of us, and one day we will know what our *antepasados* experienced after their last out-breath. One day we will see there is no separation between any of us, alive and dead.

The first and only altar in my parents' home was the one we created on a cake after my dad's funeral, laying out the *detallitos* of his life that he allowed to be visible. The secrets were still within him, wisps of energy that over the years encircled us with *cariño* or strangled our voices or tripped us as we ran.

As I set up my altar year after year, I breathe in the musty smell of the newspapers I have carried from home to home. These crinkled *papelitos* wrap and unwrap memories and give space for those I loved and lost to whisper *consejos* in the stillness. I unbind my heart wounds and apply the salve gained from another year of living—that little bit more of perspective and wisdom nestled in my *corazón* that wraps around me like a soft, colorful *rebozo*.



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Thomas Jefferson's grave marker reads simply (and briefly): "here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom and a father of the University of Virginia, Born April 2, 1743." Of course, much more can be said. He was president of the United States and governor of Virginia. He was a visionary who sent Lewis and Clark off to explore and report back to him about people and lands west of the Mississippi River. He could envision education and religious and political freedoms for many, yet he could not imagine freedom for the enslaved peoples residing on his plantations or of freedom for enslaved people across many of the American colonies. He could find political compromises, one of which was to count the enslaved as three-fifths of a person. And still it is the soaring rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence which has inspired many freedom loving peoples around the world—then and now.

Introduction by Bill McCann

[#politics](#) [#history](#) [#classics](#)

The Declaration of Independence

Thomas Jefferson

In Congress, July 4th, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall

seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Georgia

Button Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
George Walton

North Carolina

William Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

South Carolina

Edward Rutledge
Thomas Heyward,
Jr.
Thomas Lynch,
Jr.
Arthur Middleton

Massachusetts

John Hancock

Maryland

Samuel Chase
William Paca
Thomas Stone
Charles Carroll of
Carrollton

Virginia

George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Thomas
Jefferson
Benjamin
Harrison
Thomas Nelson,
Jr.
Francis Lightfoot
Lee
Carter Braxton

Pennsylvania

Robert Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benjamin Franklin
John Morton
George Clymer
James Smith
George Taylor
James Wilson
George Ross

Delaware

Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thomas McKean

New York

William Floyd
Philip Livingston
Francis Lewis
Lewis Morris

New Jersey

Richard Stockton
John Witherspoon
Francis
Hopkinson
John Hart
Abraham Clark

New Hampshire

Josiah Bartlett
William Whipple

Massachusetts

Samuel Adams
John Adams
Robert Treat
Paine
Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island

Stephen Hopkins
William Ellery

Connecticut

Roger Sherman
Samuel
Huntington
William Williams
Oliver Wolcott

New Hampshire

Matthew
Thornton

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Helen Keller (1880–1968) lost both her sight and hearing due to a disease at the young age of eighteen months. Because of this, she spent the early years of her childhood with a limited means of communication with others. When she was seven years old, her family hired Anne Sullivan, a teacher, to help her learn new ways that she might be able to communicate with others more effectively. With Anne Sullivan’s help, Helen Keller learned how to read, write, and speak English. For the first time in her life, Keller was able to have something she had never experienced before: language. In “The Day Language Came into My Life,” Keller explains what it was like to navigate the world without the ability to utilize language and how important learning to do so was for her.

It is language that answered Keller’s “wordless cry” for something more. Her unique experience helps teach us that our perceptions of the world are influenced by the language we use in which to navigate it. Without language, we might also live in Keller’s “still, dark world” that she was forced to explore “without [a] compass”. Her discussion in her essay teaches us that continuing our own exploration of language and communication is something that will continuously alter the way in which we understand our world. Consistently improving our reading, writing, and comprehension skills is an integral part of mastering “new thought”, which may change the way we perceive our experiences for the rest of our lives—in much the same manner that Keller identifies with her essay.

Introduction by Alisha Helton

[#gender](#) [#literacy](#) [#history](#) [#classics](#)

The Day Language Came Into My Life

Helen Keller

The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the immeasurable contrast between the two lives which it connects. It was the third of March 1887, three months before I was seven years old.

On the afternoon of that eventful day, I stood on the porch, dumb, expectant. I guessed vaguely from my mother’s signs and from the hurrying to and fro in the house that

something unusual was about to happen, so I went to the door and waited on the steps. The afternoon sun penetrated the mass of honeysuckle that covered the porch and fell on my upturned face. My fingers lingered almost unconsciously on the familiar leaves and blossoms which had just come forth to greet the sweet southern spring. I did not know what the future held of marvel or surprise for me. Anger and bitterness had preyed upon me continually for weeks and a deep languor had succeeded this passionate struggle.

Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line and had no way of knowing how near the harbor was. "Light! Give me light!" was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.

I felt approaching footsteps. I stretched out my hand as I supposed to my mother. Someone took it, and I was caught up and held close in the arms of her who had come to reveal all things to me, and, more than all things else, to love me.

The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this until afterward. When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word "d-o-l-l." I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I finally succeeded in making the letters correctly, I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for doll. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkeylike imitation. In the days that followed I learned to spell in this uncomprehending way a great many words, among them pin, hat, cup and few verbs like sit, stand and walk. But my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name.

One day, while I was playing with my new doll, Miss Sullivan put my big rag doll into my lap also, spelled "d-o-l-l" applied to both. Earlier in the day we had had a tussle over the words "m-u-g" and "w-a-t-e-r." Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that "m-u-g" is mug and that "w-a-t-e-r" is water, but I persisted in confounding the two. In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it at the first opportunity. I became impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor. I was keenly delighted when I felt the fragments of the broken doll at my feet. Neither sorrow nor regret followed my passionate outburst. I had not

loved the doll. In the still, dark world in which I lived there was no strong sentiment or tenderness. I felt my teacher sweep the fragments to one side of the hearth, and I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed. She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the sunshine. This thought, if a wordless sensation may be called a thought, made me hop and skip with pleasure.

We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As a cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought, and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. The living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away.

I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house every object which I touched seemed to quiver with life. That was because I saw everything with the strange, new sight that had come to me. On entering the door I remembered the doll I had broken. I felt my way to the hearth and picked up the pieces. I tried vainly to put them together. Then my eyes filled with tears; for I realized what I had done, and for the first time I felt repentance and sorrow.

I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what they all were; but I do know that mother, father, sister, teacher were among them—words that were to make the world blossom for me, “like Aaron’s rod, with flowers.” It would have been difficult to find a happier child than I was as I lay in my crib at the close of that eventful day and lived over the joys it had brought me, for the first time longed for a new day to come.

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This archive video footage from 1928 features one of the only recorded exchanges existing between teacher Anne Sullivan and author Helen Keller. Sullivan recounts Keller's experiences as a blind, deaf, and mute child and the limited modes of communication available at the beginning of their relationship. Keller eventually developed new ways of communicating ideas and emotions through Sullivan's practices of allowing Keller to touch her face and "feel the vibrations of the spoken word." This was Helen Keller's first step towards becoming one of the most important American authors of the 20th century and an important figure in the education of those with disabilities.

[#gender](#) [#literacy](#) [#history](#) [#classics](#)

How Helen Keller Learned To Talk

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In this video, John F. Kennedy Jr. takes the oath of office to become the 35th president of the United States. President Kennedy's inauguration speech marks both a milestone in American politics both in terms of televised speeches bringing about a new revolution of political rhetoric and Kennedy's speech itself being remembered as one of the most important speeches of the 20th century. Possibly most well-known among Kennedy's rhetoric are his closing remarks declaring, "ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."

[#politics](#) [#history](#) [#classics](#)

John F. Kennedy Inauguration Speech

John F. Kennedy

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In this article, educator and scholar Fred Mednick provides an overview of the concept of “multiple intelligences” that is best summed up by his shift from the question “Is s/he smart?” to “How is s/he smart?” Mednick begins by drawing on the foundational work of developmental psychologist Howard Gardner, who originally hypothesized a list of seven different types of intelligence (a list you can find printed twice in the article). As Mednick suggests, Gardner’s key insight was that, in the United States, our traditional education system has long valued only the first two kinds of intelligence—Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical—while ignoring or marginalizing the rest. Because of this, a student might, for example, be extremely gifted at imagining spatial relationships between objects, while another student might be a genius at empathizing with other people; but if either student did not also have Linguistic or Logical-Mathematical aptitudes, they would run the risk of being labeled “remedial” or “problem” students. Moreover, Mednick points out, subsequent studies have proposed many more kinds of intelligence beyond Gardner’s original seven, suggesting the ongoing need for educators and employers to recognize the full range of diverse talents that individuals might have.

Mednick’s article is a great example of an informative essay written in the style of an overview. He starts with one authoritative source—Gardner’s *Frames of Mind*—and then talks about the implications and potential problems with that source. He then goes on to cite more recent studies—including those by Daniel Goleman and the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs—and to integrate their assertions into the earlier work by Gardner. Throughout the article, Mednick uses a combination of straightforward language and formatting techniques like tables, bulleted lists, and subheadings in order to make his subject accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

Introduction by Gerald Nachtwey

[#literacy](#) [#sociology](#) [#research](#)

Multiple Intelligences

Fred Mednick

Is intelligence innate? Genetic? Fixed?

Generally, this is how intelligence has been viewed – as a quantity. Recently, new views have emerged with enormous implications for education. This new perspective asserts that intelligence can be measured in different ways, that it grows, and it is more quality than quantity. It used to be that the question was asked: “Is s/he smart?” New questions now ask: “**How** is s/he smart?” The emphasis is on the various ways in which we demonstrate multiple intelligences, rather than a single intelligence. The readings and assignments that follow discuss multiple intelligences, provide an opportunity for you to apply them, and a way of determining how to assess students.

Howard Gardner created a list of seven intelligences. The first two are ones that have been typically valued in schools; the next three are usually associated with the arts; and the final two are what Howard Gardner called “personal intelligences.”

Linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically, and language as a means to remembering information. Writers, poets, lawyers, and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

Logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner’s words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

Musical intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Howard Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related.

Spatial intelligence involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

Interpersonal intelligence is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counselors all need a well-developed interpersonal intelligence.

Intrapersonal intelligence entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations. In Howard Gardner's view it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives.

In *Frames of Mind* Howard Gardner treated the personal intelligences "as a piece." Because of their close association in most cultures, they are often linked together. However, he still argues that it makes sense to think of two forms of personal intelligence. Gardner claimed that the seven intelligences rarely operate independently. They are used at the same time and tend to complement each other as people develop skills or solve problems.

In essence, Howard Gardner argues that he was making two essential claims about multiple intelligences:

The theory is an account of human cognition in its fullness. The intelligences provided "a new definition of human nature, cognitively speaking" (Gardner 1999: 44). Human beings are organisms who possess a basic set of intelligences.

People have a unique blend of intelligences. Gardner argues that the big challenge facing the deployment of human resources "is how to best take advantage of the uniqueness conferred on us as a species exhibiting several intelligences."

Also, these intelligences, according to Howard Gardner, are amoral – they can be put to constructive or destructive use.

The Appeal of Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences has not been readily accepted within academic psychology. However, it has met with a strong positive response from many educators. It has been embraced by a range of educational theorists, and, significantly, applied by teachers and policymakers to the challenges of schooling. A number of schools have looked to structure curricula according to the intelligences, and to design classrooms and even whole schools to reflect the understandings that Howard Gardner develops. The theory can also be found in use within pre-school, higher, vocational, and adult-education initiatives.

This appeal was not, at first, obvious.

At first, this diagnosis would appear to sound a “death knell” for formal education. It is hard to teach one intelligence; what if there are seven? It is hard to enough to teach even when anything can be taught; what to do if there are distinct limits and strong constraints on human cognition and learning?

Howard Gardner responds to these questions by first making the point that psychology does not directly dictate education, “It merely helps one to understand the conditions within which education takes place.” Even more: Seven kinds of intelligence would allow seven ways to teach, rather than one. In addition, paradoxically, constraints can be suggestive and ultimately freeing.

Mindy L. Kornhaber, a researcher at Harvard University, has identified a number of reasons why teachers and policymakers have responded positively to Howard Gardner’s presentation of multiple intelligences. Among these are the fact that the theory validates educators’ everyday experience: students think and learn in many different ways. It also provides educators with a conceptual framework for organizing and reflecting on curriculum assessment and pedagogical practices. In turn, this reflection has led many educators to develop new approaches that might better meet the needs of the range of learners in their classrooms.

Some issues and problems

As with all theories in education, multiple intelligences theory has its critics. Some maintain that longitudinal studies still bear out the power of genetics and intelligence as a fixed quantity. They argue that this theory apologizes for lack of intellectual achievement. Others argue that the ability to measure or test for such intelligences undermines its core assertions. In short, such critics claim: “If you can’t test it, it’s not valid.”

Dr. Gardner contests such claims of validity by arguing for a different view of standardized testing that is not biased in favor of only one kind of intelligence at the expense of others. He also notes the achievements of students in non-academic settings and the tragedy of exclusion that results when whole segments of the population are not served because their intelligences do not have the opportunity for expression.

Implications of Multiple Intelligences for Schools

In terms of Culture it means support for diverse learners and hard work; acting on a value system that maintains that diverse students can learn and succeed; that learning is exciting; and that hard work by teachers is necessary.

In terms of Readiness it means awareness-building for implementing multiple intelligences. Building staff awareness of multiple intelligences and of the different ways that students learn.

Rather than using the theory as an end in and of itself, multiple intelligences can be used as a Tool to promote high-quality student work

It can foster Collaboration – informal and formal exchanges – sharing ideas and constructive suggestions by the staff.

It allows for Choice – meaningful curriculum and assessment options; embedding curriculum and assessment in activities that are valued both by students and the wider culture.

It employs the Arts to develop children’s skills and understanding within and across disciplines.

Inventory of Your Intelligences

Below you will see a list of intelligences as defined on [Lessons for Hope](#):

Multiple Intelligences	Overview
<p>Verbal-Linguistic – The capacity to learn through words and grammatical logic</p>	<p>Learns from the spoken and written word, in many forms; reads, comprehends, and summarizes effectively</p>
<p>Logical-Mathematical – The capacity for inductive and deductive thinking and reasoning, as well as the use of numbers and the recognition of abstract patterns</p>	<p>Learns through using objects and moving them about, quantity, time, cause and effect; solves problems logically; understands patterns and relationships and makes educated guesses; can handle diverse skills such as advanced math, and represent them in graphic form; works with models; gathers evidence; builds strong arguments.</p>
<p>Visual-Spatial – The ability to visualize objects and spatial dimensions, and create internal images and pictures</p>	<p>Learns by seeing and observing – shapes, faces, colors; uses detail in visual images; learns through visual media; enjoys doodling, drawing; makes three-dimensional objects and moves them around; sees forms where others do not; enjoys abstractions and subtle patterns.</p>

<p>Body-Kinesthetic – The wisdom of the body and the ability to control physical motion</p>	<p>Learns through touching and moving; developed coordination and timing; participation and involvement; role plays. Engages in games, assembles objects; acts. Sensitive to physical environment; dexterity and balance; creates new forms that move.</p>
<p>Musical-Rhythmic – The ability to recognize tonal patterns and sounds, as well as a sensitivity to rhythms and beats</p>	<p>Learns through sound; eager to discuss music and its meaning; sings and plays an instrument; improvises and interprets</p>
<p>Interpersonal – The capacity for person-to-person communications and relationships</p>	<p>Learns through interactions, social relationships; perceives feelings, thoughts, motivations of others; collaborates; influences opinions; understands in verbal and non-verbal ways; takes in diverse points of view; mediates, organizes, develops new social processes and methods.</p>
<p>Intrapersonal – The spiritual, inner states of being, self-reflection, and awareness</p>	<p>Learns through range of personal emotions; finds outlets for feelings; identifies and pursues personal goals; curious about big questions; manages to learn through on-going attempts at gathering in ideas; insightful; empowers others.</p>

Additional Intelligences

Since Howard Gardner's original listing of the intelligences in **Frames of Mind** (1983) there has been a great deal of discussion as to other possible candidates for inclusion – **naturalistic intelligence** (the ability of people to draw upon the resources and features of the environment to solve problems); **spiritual intelligence** (the ability of people to both access and use, practically, the resources available in somewhat less tangible, but nonetheless powerful lessons of the spirit); **moral intelligence** (the ability to access and use certain truths).

Emotional Intelligence

In a 1994 report on the current state of emotional literacy in the U.S., author Daniel Goleman stated:

“...in navigating our lives, it is our fears and envies, our rages and depressions, our worries and anxieties that steer us day to day. Even the most academically brilliant among us are vulnerable to being undone by unruly emotions. The price we pay for emotional literacy is in failed marriages and troubled families, in stunted social and work lives, in deteriorating physical health and mental anguish and, as a society, in tragedies such as killings...”

Goleman attests that the best remedy for battling our emotional shortcomings is preventive medicine. In other words, we need to place as much importance on teaching our children the essential skills of Emotional Intelligence as we do on more traditional measures like IQ and GPA (Grade Point Average).

Exactly what is Emotional Intelligence? The term encompasses the following 5 five characteristics and abilities:

- Self-awareness – knowing your emotions, recognizing feelings as they occur, and discriminating between them.
- Mood management – handling feelings so they're relevant to the current situation and you react appropriately.
- Self-motivation – “gathering up” your feelings and directing yourself towards a goal, despite self-doubt, inertia, and impulsiveness.
- Empathy – recognizing feelings in others and tuning into their verbal and nonverbal cues.

- Managing relationships – handling interpersonal interaction, conflict resolution, and negotiations.

Why We Need Emotional Intelligence

Research in brain-based learning suggests that emotional health is fundamental to effective learning. According to a report from the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, the most critical element for a student's success in school is an understanding of how to learn. (*Emotional Intelligence*, p. 193.) The key ingredients for this understanding are:

- Confidence
- Curiosity
- Intentionality
- Self-control
- Relatedness
- Capacity to communicate
- Ability to cooperate

These traits are all aspects of Emotional Intelligence. Basically, a student who learns to learn is much more apt to succeed. Emotional Intelligence has proven a better predictor of future success than traditional methods like the GPA, IQ, and standardized test scores.

Hence, the great interest in Emotional Intelligence on the part of corporations, universities, and schools nationwide. The idea of Emotional Intelligence has inspired research and curriculum development. Researchers have concluded that people who manage their own feelings well and deal effectively with others are more likely to live content lives. Plus, happy people are more apt to retain information and do so more effectively than dissatisfied people.

Building one's Emotional Intelligence has a lifelong impact. Many parents and educators, alarmed by increasing levels of conflict in young schoolchildren – from low self-esteem to early drug and alcohol use to depression – are rushing to teach students the skills necessary for Emotional Intelligence. Also, in corporations, the inclusion of Emotional Intelligence in training programs has helped employees cooperate better and be more motivated, thereby increasing productivity and profits.

“Emotional Intelligence is a master aptitude, a capacity that profoundly affects all other abilities, either facilitating or interfering with them.” (Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, p. 80.)



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“K-Pop—What’s in a Name?” is an interactive, multimedia roundtable conversation presented by the Rhizomatic Revolution Review. The six roundtable participants were all chosen because of their interest in “K-Pop” and are reacting to the (apparently) controversial statement “BTS isn’t K-Pop.”

Whether you’re a K-Pop fan or not, this born-digital text is a contemporary exploration of an “argument of definition,” a style of persuasion where the author first defines a concept (in this case, K-Pop) and then attempts to show that a specific example does or does not meet the broader definition. Another example might be the much more serious topic of sex trafficking: is it a form of slavery? To answer that question, we would first have to define slavery and then see if sex trafficking meets that definition.

As the reader, you can choose how to experience the text. You can listen to it or read it. You can follow the pattern of the conversation altogether—all of Round I, then Round II, and Round III. Or, you can read all the answers by each participant one person at a time. You could also mix and match. You will have to click through and make choices, though. As you participate in the text, consider why you want to experience the text the way you do.

[#diversity](#) [#literacy](#) [#popculture](#) [#technology](#)

K-pop – What’s in a Name?

Candace Epps-Robertson & Katie Hulme, Eds.

View the text [K-pop - What's in a Name?](#)

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In this video, beloved children’s entertainer and television personality Fred Rogers speaks before the Senate Subcommittee on Communications in 1969 regarding funding for PBS programming. Rogers specifically addresses Senator John Pastore, the impatient chairman of the subcommittee who had previously dismissed the arguments of each speaker preceding Mr. Rogers. The exchange here presents a successful rhetorical argument on Roger's part as he creates a strong emotional connection with his audience, Pastore, and sways the opinion of the senator through use of emotional and ethical appeals.

[#literacy](#) [#popculture](#) [#politics](#)

Fred Rogers testifies before the Senate Subcommittee on Communications, 1969

Fred Rogers

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Zitkala-Ša (Red Bird / Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) was a member of the Yankton Dakota Sioux, a Native American tribe in South Dakota. She was born in 1876 on the Yankton Indian Reservation and was raised by her mother. At eight years old, she left the reservation to attend the White's Indiana Manual Labor Institute, a boarding school in Indiana, where she learned to read and write in English. After studying at the boarding school for three years, she returned to the reservation to live with her mother, but eventually went back to the institute to further her education and attended Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. She was an activist for Native American rights. She worked as the secretary of the Society of American Indians and later co-founded the National Council of American Indians with her husband in 1926. She served as president, fundraiser, and speaker of the organization until her death in 1938.

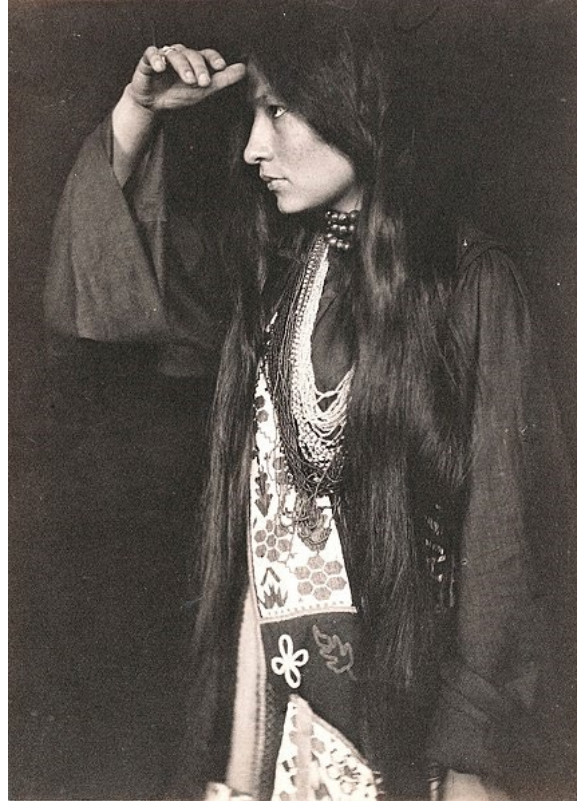
Zitkala-Ša was also a writer; she collected and published Native American stories, *Old Indian Legends*, and collaborated on the *Sun Dance Opera* with William F. Hanson, a professor at Brigham Young University. She was also the editor for *American Indian Magazine* from 1918 to 1919. In her autobiography *The School Days of an Indian Girl*, Zitkala-Ša wrote about her experience attending boarding school. She described the culture shock she experienced, her struggles to learn English and adjust to a different life, her homesickness, and how the children were treated without sympathy, among other topics.

Introduction by Cui Zhang

[#gender](#) [#literacy](#) [#diversity](#) [#history](#)

The School Days of an Indian Girl

Zitkala-Sa



[“Zitkala Sa, Sioux Indian and activist”](#) by [Gertrude Käsebier](#) licensed under [Public Domain: No Known Copyright](#)

I. THE LAND OF RED APPLES.

There were eight in our party of bronzed children who were going East with the missionaries. Among us were three young braves, two tall girls, and we three little ones, Judéwin, Thowin, and I. We had been very impatient to start on our journey to the Red Apple Country, which, we were told, lay a little beyond the great circular horizon of the Western prairie. Under a sky of rosy apples we dreamt of roaming as freely and happily as we had chased the cloud shadows on the Dakota plains. We had anticipated much pleasure from a ride on the iron horse, but the throngs of staring palefaces disturbed and troubled us. On the train, fair women, with tottering babies on each arm, stopped their haste and scrutinized the children of absent mothers. Large men, with heavy bundles in their hands, halted near by, and riveted their glassy blue eyes upon us. I sank deep into the corner of my seat, for I resented being watched. Directly in front of

me, children who were no larger than I hung themselves upon the backs of their seats, with their bold white faces toward me. Sometimes they took their forefingers out of their mouths and pointed at my moccasined feet. Their mothers, instead of reproofing such rude curiosity, looked closely at me, and attracted their children's further notice to my blanket. This embarrassed me, and kept me constantly on the verge of tears.

I sat perfectly still, with my eyes downcast, daring only now and then to shoot long glances around me. Chancing to turn to the window at my side, I was quite breathless upon seeing one familiar object. It was the telegraph pole which strode by at short paces. Very near my mother's dwelling, along the edge of a road thickly bordered with wild sunflowers, some poles like these had been planted by white men. Often I had stopped, on my way down the road, to hold my ear against the pole, and, hearing its low moaning, I used to wonder what the paleface had done to hurt it. Now I sat watching for each pole that glided by to be the last one.

In this way I had forgotten my uncomfortable surroundings, when I heard one of my comrades call out my name. I saw the missionary standing very near, tossing candies and gums into our midst. This amused us all, and we tried to see who could catch the most of the sweetmeats.

Though we rode several days inside of the iron horse, I do not recall a single thing about our luncheons.

It was night when we reached the school grounds. The lights from the windows of the large buildings fell upon some of the icicled trees that stood beneath them. We were led toward an open door, where the brightness of the lights within flooded out over the heads of the excited palefaces who blocked our way. My body trembled more from fear than from the snow I trod upon.

Entering the house, I stood close against the wall. The strong glaring light in the large whitewashed room dazzled my eyes. The noisy hurrying of hard shoes upon a bare wooden floor increased the whirring in my ears. My only safety seemed to be in keeping next to the wall. As I was wondering in which direction to escape from all this confusion, two warm hands grasped me firmly, and in the same moment I was tossed high in midair. A rosy-cheeked paleface woman caught me in her arms. I was both frightened and insulted by such trifling. I stared into her eyes, wishing her to let me stand on my own feet, but she jumped me up and down with increasing enthusiasm. My mother had never made a plaything of her wee daughter. Remembering this I began to cry aloud.

They misunderstood the cause of my tears, and placed me at a white table loaded with food. There our party were united again. As I did not hush my crying, one of the older ones whispered to me, "Wait until you are alone in the night."

It was very little I could swallow besides my sobs, that evening.

"Oh, I want my mother and my brother Dawée! I want to go to my aunt!" I pleaded; but the ears of the palefaces could not hear me.

From the table we were taken along an upward incline of wooden boxes, which I learned afterward to call a stairway. At the top was a quiet hall, dimly lighted. Many narrow beds were in one straight line down the entire length of the wall. In them lay sleeping brown faces, which peeped just out of the coverings. I was tucked into bed with one of the tall girls, because she talked to me in my mother tongue and seemed to soothe me.

I had arrived in the wonderful land of rosy skies, but I was not happy, as I had thought I should be. My long travel and the bewildering sights had exhausted me. I fell asleep, heaving deep, tired sobs. My tears were left to dry themselves in streaks, because neither my aunt nor my mother was near to wipe them away.

II. THE CUTTING OF MY LONG HAIR.

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman, with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls, in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and shingled hair. As I walked noiselessly in my soft moccasins, I felt like sinking to the floor, for my blanket had been stripped from my shoulders. I looked hard at the Indian girls, who seemed not to care that they were even more immodestly dressed than I, in their tightly fitting clothes. While we marched in, the boys entered at an opposite door. I watched for the

three young braves who came in our party. I spied them in the rear ranks, looking as uncomfortable as I felt. A small bell was tapped, and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing this act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine and at once slipped into it from one side. But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. I heard a man's voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me. Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more.

But this eating by formula was not the hardest trial in that first day. Late in the morning, my friend Judéwin gave me a terrible warning. Judéwin knew a few words of English; and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judéwin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong," I rebelled.

"No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!" I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed, I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes,—my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and cuddled myself in the dark corner.

From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judéwin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer.

Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

III. THE SNOW EPISODE.

A short time after our arrival we three Dakotas were playing in the snowdrift. We were all still deaf to the English language, excepting Judéwin, who always heard such puzzling things. One morning we learned through her ears that we were forbidden to fall lengthwise in the snow, as we had been doing, to see our own impressions. However, before many hours we had forgotten the order, and were having great sport in the snow, when a shrill voice called us. Looking up, we saw an imperative hand beckoning us into the house. We shook the snow off ourselves, and started toward the woman as slowly as we dared.

Judéwin said: "Now the paleface is angry with us. She is going to punish us for falling into the snow. If she looks straight into your eyes and talks loudly, you must wait until she stops. Then, after a tiny pause, say, 'No.'" The rest of the way we practiced upon the little word "no."

As it happened, Thowin was summoned to judgment first. The door shut behind her with a click.

Judéwin and I stood silently listening at the keyhole. The paleface woman talked in very severe tones. Her words fell from her lips like crackling embers, and her inflection ran up like the small end of a switch. I understood her voice better than the things she was saying. I was certain we had made her very impatient with us. Judéwin heard enough of the words to realize all too late that she had taught us the wrong reply.

"Oh, poor Thowin!" she gasped, as she put both hands over her ears.

Just then I heard Thowin's tremulous answer, "No."

With an angry exclamation, the woman gave her a hard spanking. Then she stopped to say something.

Judéwin said it was this: "Are you going to obey my word the next time?"

Thowin answered again with the only word at her command, "No."

This time the woman meant her blows to smart, for the poor frightened girl shrieked at the top of her voice. In the midst of the whipping the blows ceased abruptly, and the woman asked another question: "Are you going to fall in the snow again?"

Thowin gave her bad password another trial. We heard her say feebly, "No! No!"

With this the woman hid away her half-worn slipper, and led the child out, stroking her black shorn head. Perhaps it occurred to her that brute force is not the solution for such a problem. She did nothing to Judéwin nor to me. She only returned to us our unhappy comrade, and left us alone in the room.

During the first two or three seasons misunderstandings as ridiculous as this one of the snow episode frequently took place, bringing unjustifiable frights and punishments into our little lives.

Within a year I was able to express myself somewhat in broken English. As soon as I comprehended a part of what was said and done, a mischievous spirit of revenge possessed me. One day I was called in from my play for some misconduct. I had disregarded a rule which seemed to me very needlessly binding. I was sent into the kitchen to mash the turnips for dinner. It was noon, and steaming dishes were hastily carried into the dining-room. I hated turnips, and their odor which came from the brown jar was offensive to me.

With fire in my heart, I took the wooden tool that the paleface woman held out to me. I stood upon a step, and, grasping the handle with both hands, I bent in hot rage over the turnips. I worked my vengeance upon them. All were so busily occupied that no one noticed me. I saw that the turnips were in a pulp, and that further beating could not improve them; but the order was, "Mash these turnips," and mash them I would! I renewed my energy; and as I sent the masher into the bottom of the jar, I felt a satisfying sensation that the weight of my body had gone into it.

Just here a paleface woman came up to my table. As she looked into the jar, she shoved my hands roughly aside. I stood fearless and angry. She placed her red hands upon the rim of the jar. Then she gave one lift and stride away from the table. But lo! the pulpy contents fell through the crumbled bottom to the floor! She spared me no scolding phrases that I had earned. I did not heed them. I felt triumphant in my revenge, though deep within me I was a wee bit sorry to have broken the jar.

As I sat eating my dinner, and saw that no turnips were served, I whooped in my heart for having once asserted the rebellion within me.

IV. THE DEVIL.

Among the legends the old warriors used to tell me were many stories of evil spirits. But I was taught to fear them no more than those who stalked about in material guise. I never knew there was an insolent chieftain among the bad spirits, who dared to array his forces against the Great Spirit, until I heard this white man's legend from a paleface woman.

Out of a large book she showed me a picture of the white man's devil. I looked in horror upon the strong claws that grew out of his fur-covered fingers. His feet were like his hands. Trailing at his heels was a scaly tail tipped with a serpent's open jaws. His face was a patchwork: he had bearded cheeks, like some I had seen palefaces wear; his nose was an eagle's bill, and his sharp-pointed ears were pricked up like those of a sly fox. Above them a pair of cow's horns curved upward. I trembled with awe, and my heart throbbed in my throat, as I looked at the king of evil spirits. Then I heard the paleface woman say that this terrible creature roamed loose in the world, and that little girls who disobeyed school regulations were to be tortured by him.

That night I dreamt about this evil divinity. Once again I seemed to be in my mother's cottage. An Indian woman had come to visit my mother. On opposite sides of the kitchen stove, which stood in the center of the small house, my mother and her guest were seated in straight-backed chairs. I played with a train of empty spools hitched together on a string. It was night, and the wick burned feebly. Suddenly I heard some one turn our door-knob from without. My mother and the woman hushed their talk, and both looked toward the door. It opened gradually. I waited behind the stove. The hinges squeaked as the door was slowly, very slowly pushed inward.

Then in rushed the devil! He was tall! He looked exactly like the picture I had seen of him in the white man's papers. He did not speak to my mother, because he did not know the Indian language, but his glittering yellow eyes were fastened upon me. He

took long strides around the stove, passing behind the woman's chair. I threw down my spools, and ran to my mother. He did not fear her, but followed closely after me. Then I ran round and round the stove, crying aloud for help. But my mother and the woman seemed not to know my danger. They sat still, looking quietly upon the devil's chase after me. At last I grew dizzy. My head revolved as on a hidden pivot. My knees became numb, and doubled under my weight like a pair of knife blades without a spring. Beside my mother's chair I fell in a heap. Just as the devil stooped over me with outstretched claws my mother awoke from her quiet indifference, and lifted me on her lap. Whereupon the devil vanished, and I was awake.

On the following morning I took my revenge upon the devil. Stealing into the room where a wall of shelves was filled with books, I drew forth *The Stories of the Bible*. With a broken slate pencil I carried in my apron pocket, I began by scratching out his wicked eyes. A few moments later, when I was ready to leave the room, there was a ragged hole in the page where the picture of the devil had once been.

V. IRON ROUTINE

A loud-clamoring bell awakened us at half-past six in the cold winter mornings. From happy dreams of Western rolling lands and unlassoed freedom we tumbled out upon chilly bare floors back again into a paleface day. We had short time to jump into our shoes and clothes, and wet our eyes with icy water, before a small hand bell was vigorously rung for roll call.

There were too many drowsy children and too numerous orders for the day to waste a moment in any apology to nature for giving her children such a shock in the early morning. We rushed downstairs, bounding over two high steps at a time, to land in the assembly room.

A paleface woman, with a yellow-covered roll book open on her arm and a gnawed pencil in her hand, appeared at the door. Her small, tired face was coldly lighted with a pair of large gray eyes.

She stood still in a halo of authority, while over the rim of her spectacles her eyes pried nervously about the room. Having glanced at her long list of names and called out the first one, she tossed up her chin and peered through the crystals of her spectacles to make sure of the answer "Here."

Relentlessly her pencil black-marked our daily records if we were not present to respond to our names, and no chum of ours had done it successfully for us. No matter if a dull headache or the painful cough of slow consumption had delayed the absentee, there was only time enough to mark the tardiness. It was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day's buzzing; and as it was inbred in me to suffer in silence rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain, I have many times trudged in the day's harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute.

Once I lost a dear classmate. I remember well how she used to mope along at my side, until one morning she could not raise her head from her pillow. At her deathbed I stood weeping, as the paleface woman sat near her moistening the dry lips. Among the folds of the bedclothes I saw the open pages of the white man's Bible. The dying Indian girl talked disconnectedly of Jesus the Christ and the paleface who was cooling her swollen hands and feet.

I grew bitter, and censured the woman for cruel neglect of our physical ills. I despised the pencils that moved automatically, and the one teaspoon which dealt out, from a large bottle, healing to a row of variously ailing Indian children. I blamed the hard-working, well-meaning, ignorant woman who was inculcating in our hearts her superstitious ideas. Though I was sullen in all my little troubles, as soon as I felt better I was ready again to smile upon the cruel woman. Within a week I was again actively testing the chains which tightly bound my individuality like a mummy for burial.

The melancholy of those black days has left so long a shadow that it darkens the path of years that have since gone by. These sad memories rise above those of smoothly grinding school days. Perhaps my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs them now for their present record. But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it.

VI. FOUR STRANGE SUMMERS.

After my first three years of school, I roamed again in the Western country through four strange summers.

During this time I seemed to hang in the heart of chaos, beyond the touch or voice of human aid. My brother, being almost ten years my senior, did not quite understand my feelings. My mother had never gone inside of a schoolhouse, and so she was not

capable of comforting her daughter who could read and write. Even nature seemed to have no place for me. I was neither a wee girl nor a tall one; neither a wild Indian nor a tame one. This deplorable situation was the effect of my brief course in the East, and the unsatisfactory “teenth” in a girl’s years.

It was under these trying conditions that, one bright afternoon, as I sat restless and unhappy in my mother’s cabin, I caught the sound of the spirited step of my brother’s pony on the road which passed by our dwelling. Soon I heard the wheels of a light buckboard, and Dawée’s familiar “Ho!” to his pony. He alighted upon the bare ground in front of our house. Tying his pony to one of the projecting corner logs of the low-roofed cottage, he stepped upon the wooden doorstep.

I met him there with a hurried greeting, and, as I passed by, he looked a quiet “What?” into my eyes.

When he began talking with my mother, I slipped the rope from the pony’s bridle. Seizing the reins and bracing my feet against the dashboard, I wheeled around in an instant. The pony was ever ready to try his speed. Looking backward, I saw Dawée waving his hand to me. I turned with the curve in the road and disappeared. I followed the winding road which crawled upward between the bases of little hillocks. Deep water-worn ditches ran parallel on either side. A strong wind blew against my cheeks and fluttered my sleeves. The pony reached the top of the highest hill, and began an even race on the level lands. There was nothing moving within that great circular horizon of the Dakota prairies save the tall grasses, over which the wind blew and rolled off in long, shadowy waves.

Within this vast wigwam of blue and green I rode reckless and insignificant. It satisfied my small consciousness to see the white foam fly from the pony’s mouth.

Suddenly, out of the earth a coyote came forth at a swinging trot that was taking the cunning thief toward the hills and the village beyond. Upon the moment’s impulse, I gave him a long chase and a wholesome fright. As I turned away to go back to the village, the wolf sank down upon his haunches for rest, for it was a hot summer day; and as I drove slowly homeward, I saw his sharp nose still pointed at me, until I vanished below the margin of the hilltops.

In a little while I came in sight of my mother’s house. Dawée stood in the yard, laughing at an old warrior who was pointing his forefinger, and again waving his whole hand,

toward the hills. With his blanket drawn over one shoulder, he talked and motioned excitedly. Dawée turned the old man by the shoulder and pointed me out to him.

“Oh, han!” (Oh, yes) the warrior muttered, and went his way. He had climbed the top of his favorite barren hill to survey the surrounding prairies, when he spied my chase after the coyote. His keen eyes recognized the pony and driver. At once uneasy for my safety, he had come running to my mother’s cabin to give her warning. I did not appreciate his kindly interest, for there was an unrest gnawing at my heart.

As soon as he went away, I asked Dawée about something else. “No, my baby sister, I cannot take you with me to the party tonight,” he replied. Though I was not far from fifteen, and I felt that before long I should enjoy all the privileges of my tall cousin, Dawée persisted in calling me his baby sister.

That moonlight night, I cried in my mother’s presence when I heard the jolly young people pass by our cottage. They were no more young braves in blankets and eagle plumes, nor Indian maids with prettily painted cheeks. They had gone three years to school in the East, and had become civilized. The young men wore the white man’s coat and trousers, with bright neckties. The girls wore tight muslin dresses, with ribbons at neck and waist. At these gatherings they talked English. I could speak English almost as well as my brother, but I was not properly dressed to be taken along. I had no hat, no ribbons, and no close-fitting gown. Since my return from school I had thrown away my shoes, and wore again the soft moccasins.

While Dawée was busily preparing to go I controlled my tears. But when I heard him bounding away on his pony, I buried my face in my arms and cried hot tears.

My mother was troubled by my unhappiness. Coming to my side, she offered me the only printed matter we had in our home. It was an Indian Bible, given her some years ago by a missionary. She tried to console me. “Here, my child, are the white man’s papers. Read a little from them,” she said most piously.

I took it from her hand, for her sake; but my enraged spirit felt more like burning the book, which afforded me no help, and was a perfect delusion to my mother. I did not read it, but laid it unopened on the floor, where I sat on my feet. The dim yellow light of the braided muslin burning in a small vessel of oil flickered and sizzled in the awful silent storm which followed my rejection of the Bible.

Now my wrath against the fates consumed my tears before they reached my eyes. I sat stony, with a bowed head. My mother threw a shawl over her head and shoulders, and stepped out into the night.

After an uncertain solitude, I was suddenly aroused by a loud cry piercing the night. It was my mother's voice wailing among the barren hills which held the bones of buried warriors. She called aloud for her brothers' spirits to support her in her helpless misery. My fingers Grey icy cold, as I realized that my unrestrained tears had betrayed my suffering to her, and she was grieving for me.

Before she returned, though I knew she was on her way, for she had ceased her weeping, I extinguished the light, and leaned my head on the window sill.

Many schemes of running away from my surroundings hovered about in my mind. A few more moons of such a turmoil drove me away to the eastern school. I rode on the white man's iron steed, thinking it would bring me back to my mother in a few winters, when I should be grown tall, and there would be congenial friends awaiting me.

VII. INCURRING MY MOTHER'S DISPLEASURE.

In the second journey to the East I had not come without some precautions. I had a secret interview with one of our best medicine men, and when I left his wigwam I carried securely in my sleeve a tiny bunch of magic roots. This possession assured me of friends wherever I should go. So absolutely did I believe in its charms that I wore it through all the school routine for more than a year. Then, before I lost my faith in the dead roots, I lost the little buckskin bag containing all my good luck.

At the close of this second term of three years I was the proud owner of my first diploma. The following autumn I ventured upon a college career against my mother's will.

I had written for her approval, but in her reply I found no encouragement. She called my notice to her neighbors' children, who had completed their education in three years. They had returned to their homes, and were then talking English with the frontier settlers. Her few words hinted that I had better give up my slow attempt to learn the white man's ways, and be content to roam over the prairies and find my living upon wild roots. I silenced her by deliberate disobedience.

Thus, homeless and heavy-hearted, I began anew my life among strangers.

As I hid myself in my little room in the college dormitory, away from the scornful and yet curious eyes of the students, I pined for sympathy. Often I wept in secret, wishing I had gone West, to be nourished by my mother's love, instead of remaining among a cold race whose hearts were frozen hard with prejudice.

During the fall and winter seasons I scarcely had a real friend, though by that time several of my classmates were courteous to me at a safe distance.

My mother had not yet forgiven my rudeness to her, and I had no moment for letter-writing. By daylight and lamplight, I spun with reeds and thistles, until my hands were tired from their weaving, the magic design which promised me the white man's respect.

At length, in the spring term, I entered an oratorical contest among the various classes. As the day of competition approached, it did not seem possible that the event was so near at hand, but it came. In the chapel the classes assembled together, with their invited guests. The high platform was carpeted, and gaily festooned with college colors. A bright white light illumined the room, and outlined clearly the great polished beams that arched the domed ceiling. The assembled crowds filled the air with pulsating murmurs. When the hour for speaking arrived all were hushed. But on the wall the old clock which pointed out the trying moment ticked calmly on.

One after another I saw and heard the orators. Still, I could not realize that they longed for the favorable decision of the judges as much as I did. Each contestant received a loud burst of applause, and some were cheered heartily. Too soon my turn came, and I paused a moment behind the curtains for a deep breath. After my concluding words, I heard the same applause that the others had called out.

Upon my retreating steps, I was astounded to receive from my fellow-students a large bouquet of roses tied with flowing ribbons. With the lovely flowers I fled from the stage. This friendly token was a rebuke to me for the hard feelings I had borne them.

Later, the decision of the judges awarded me the first place. Then there was a mad uproar in the hall, where my classmates sang and shouted my name at the top of their lungs; and the disappointed students howled and brayed in fearfully dissonant tin trumpets. In this excitement, happy students rushed forward to offer their congratulations. And I could not conceal a smile when they wished to escort me in a procession to the students' parlor, where all were going to calm themselves. Thanking

them for the kind spirit which prompted them to make such a proposition, I walked alone with the night to my own little room.

A few weeks afterward, I appeared as the college representative in another contest. This time the competition was among orators from different colleges in our State. It was held at the State capital, in one of the largest opera houses.

Here again was a strong prejudice against my people. In the evening, as the great audience filled the house, the student bodies began warring among themselves. Fortunately, I was spared witnessing any of the noisy wrangling before the contest began. The slurs against the Indian that stained the lips of our opponents were already burning like a dry fever within my breast.

But after the orations were delivered a deeper burn awaited me. There, before that vast ocean of eyes, some college rowdies threw out a large white flag, with a drawing of a most forlorn Indian girl on it. Under this they had printed in bold black letters words that ridiculed the college which was represented by a "squaw." Such worse than barbarian rudeness embittered me. While we waited for the verdict of the judges, I gleamed fiercely upon the throngs of palefaces. My teeth were hard set, as I saw the white flag still floating insolently in the air.

Then anxiously we watched the man carry toward the stage the envelope containing the final decision.

There were two prizes given, that night, and one of them was mine!

The evil spirit laughed within me when the white flag dropped out of sight, and the hands which hurled it hung limp in defeat.

Leaving the crowd as quickly as possible, I was soon in my room. The rest of the night I sat in an armchair and gazed into the crackling fire. I laughed no more in triumph when thus alone. The little taste of victory did not satisfy a hunger in my heart. In my mind I saw my mother far away on the Western plains, and she was holding a charge against me.

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The Dude Map is a visual and interactive text that challenges that idea that word usage or slang is “right” or “wrong.” Instead, the words we use are often bound in

- time (Would you call a friend “Daddy-O”?),
- space (Do you stand “in line” or “on line”?), or
- situation (What would your professor do if you stood up and yelled “Defense!” in the middle of class?)

[#literacy](#) [#sociology](#) [#technology](#)

The Dude Map

Nikhil Sonnad

View [The Dude Map](#) and ask yourself how you could remake this map with different words like Coke, soda, and pop.

What times, spaces, or situations (i.e. contexts) affect the words *you* use?

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In “A Feminist’s Guide to Rom-Coms,” Aya Sutriasa addresses an important question to everyone who consumes popular culture: can we ethically enjoy movies, music, books, and shows that don’t align with our individual values, and if so, how? Her essay explains the problems some feminists have with romantic comedies (and the romance genre in general) and offers strategies to those who still want to watch and enjoy rom-coms. Other fans and scholars of rom-coms argue that romance is feminist because it centers women’s experiences and pleasure. Do you agree with Sutriasa’s claim that “rom-coms can be problematic, particularly by today’s standards of feminism”? Do her criticisms and suggestions apply equally to other types of popular culture, including those primarily directed at men (for example, action movies)?

A 2016 graduate of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, Aya Sutriasa is currently Digital Editor at YES! Media, an independent, non-profit publisher of online journalism focused on social issues and solutions, based in Seattle, Washington. Her other published essays address issues related to body image, particularly for women of color.

Introduction by Susan Kroeg

[#gender](#) [#popculture](#) [#politics](#) [#sociology](#)

A Feminist's Guide to Rom-Coms and How to Watch Them

Ayu Sutriasa



["Love's Messenger"](#) by [Marie Spartali Stillman](#), [Delaware Art Museum](#) is in the [Public Domain](#)

Valentine's Day is right around the corner, which means lots of chocolate, teddy bears, and single ladies being made to feel especially inadequate. Some might celebrate [Galentine's Day](#) instead, some might skip on acknowledging the holiday at all, and some, myself included, will be holed up watching romantic comedies.

The internet is filled with lists of which [rom-coms will "get you through" Valentine's Day](#)—the assumption seems to be that, otherwise, we singles would be festering alone in our living rooms, drinking vodka and singing "All By Myself" [à la Bridget Jones](#). I enjoy the genre, but as a feminist I have some qualms.

Romantic comedies, particularly “the classics” of the genre, can be [problematic](#) by today’s standards of feminism. Movies like *Pretty Woman* and *Princess Bride* tend to perpetuate [harmful gender stereotypes](#) and romanticize men’s predatory behavior. Not to mention they are usually limited to depicting heterosexual relationships between an attractive cis man and an equally, perhaps even more, attractive cis woman. (LGBTQ folks: Here’s [a list of rom-coms](#) that drown out the heteronormative noise.) Lastly, if rom-coms are marketed to single women, then why are they mostly [written and directed by men?](#) (That’s a rhetorical question.)

Despite all this, rom-coms are stunningly popular. How do you reconcile your love of rom-coms with your staunch feminism?

Monique Jones, a pop culture critic and entertainment journalist, says that it’s OK if you like problematic rom-coms. “That doesn’t make us any less of an activist, it doesn’t make us any less down for the cause. It’s just being a human—and being part of a culture that has indoctrinated us to believe certain things, whether or not they’re true,” she says.

However, as feminists we do have to hold ourselves accountable, Jones says. Here are three tips on how to be a responsible rom-com consumer.

1. Be aware of how you’re internalizing the underlying messages

One of the biggest problems with the genre is that it tends to reinforce problematic ideas of romance. Contrary to rom-com plots, it’s actually not an outrageous notion for a man to love you “just as you are” (*Bridget Jones’s Diary*, *Trainwreck*, *Pretty Woman*, *Grease*), but it actually is outrageous for a man to consistently ignore your rejections and relentlessly pursue you (*The Notebook*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, *50 First Dates*, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*).

“There are a lot of patriarchal things in society that we’ve grown up with that we’ve just assumed are normal. And those same ideals get stuck in these movies. That’s why so many of them don’t get called out as being problematic, even though they are indicative of larger problems in society,” Jones says.

Once you’re aware of the patriarchal underpinnings of these movies, you can more objectively decide what you believe is romantic. For example, maybe you don’t think it’s romantic to pretend to be someone’s fiancée while they are in a coma and have no idea who you are. It’s creepy, Sandra Bullock.

2. Be conscious of what/who you are supporting

This takes some research, but it's worth it ([IMDB](#) will be your new best friend). Jones suggests learning what you can about the movie: Who's the director? Who wrote it? Who acts in it? What's the premise? "If you don't feel offended, then I think it's fine to watch," Jones says.

And for the movies we don't feel good about—like anything involving Woody Allen—consider skipping it. "I can't justify having my head in the sand just to support somebody like Woody Allen," Jones says. She skips anything with his name attached to it.

"I never liked his movies anyway. They don't speak to me, first of all, as a woman, and second of all, as an African-American woman," she says. "I know all the film critics and film students that I have been in contact with say that Woody Allen is a master at doing this and that. But I don't align with anything that he does or is. And that's how I go about it. If what the person does doesn't align with my core values, then I just can't do it."

There are funnier, more romantic movies than *Annie Hall*, anyway.

3. Opt for rom-coms with fewer or zero problems

I know the classics are, well, classics, but why not watch a movie that takes a healthier approach to romance? "There are always movies that are smaller productions, and they might not have the big box-office dollars, but they're still well-crafted, well-made movies," Jones says.

Here's a [list](#) of five from Thought Catalog to get you started: *Warm Bodies*, *She's Out of My League*, *Celeste and Jesse Forever*, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, and *Kate and Leopold* (sarcasm).

So, my fellow feminist rom-comphiles, don't be discouraged.

There are still a lot of things people can enjoy about romantic comedies, Jones says. "With as much choice as there is out there, a person doesn't have to give up their romantic comedy love altogether."



[A Feminist's Guide to Rom-Coms and How to Watch Them](#) by Ayu Sutriasa is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).

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Having first invaded Ireland in 1169, Great Britain occupied its island neighbor for centuries, exploiting its resources and subjugating its inhabitants. To justify their mistreatment of a people who closely resembled themselves – that is, white, European, and Christian – the British insisted that the Irish were morally and intellectually inferior. Due to their distinctly Celtic culture, Gaelic tongue, and deep Catholic faith, the Irish were regarded as a foreign threat by the Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, mostly Protestant British. To the British, the Irish were poor, criminal, alcoholic, and lazy. Irish writer Jonathan Swift’s 1729 essay “A Modest Proposal” addresses the British government’s concern over Ireland’s mounting poverty and high birth rate. Britain’s leaders feared both the enormous economic burden of feeding Ireland’s poor population and the growing number of Irish Catholics who posed a potential threat to the British Protestant crown.

Swift sets up “A Modest Proposal” as a classically designed logical argument. He presents a problem, demonstrates its magnitude and consequences, and asserts that a solution must be found that is simple, practical, and inexpensive. The “modest” solution that Swift proposes will likely shock first-time readers. However, Swift is employing satire, a form of comedy in which shortcomings, vices, and abuses are ridiculed to shame an individual, group, or society with the intent of inspiring change or reform. Today, social and political satire can be seen regularly on popular television shows like *The Daily Show* with Trevor Noah, *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert, and perhaps most famously on *Saturday Night Live*. By proposing his alarmingly unconventional solution to the problem of Irish poverty, Swift isn’t merely trolling – that is, posting provocative messages online for the purpose of causing confusion or harm. Rather, by exaggerating Britain’s dehumanizing mistreatment of the Irish to its logical extreme, Swift employs satire to invite his readers to question their own attitude and behavior toward those whom they regard as inferior.

Introduction by Brent Shannon

[#politics](#) [#sociology](#) [#history](#) [#classics](#)

A Modest Proposal

Jonathan Swift

It is a melancholy object to those, who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars: it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropt from its dam, may be supported by her milk, for a solar year, with little other nourishment: at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expence than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple, whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children, (although I apprehend there cannot be so many under the present distresses of the kingdom) but this being granted, there will remain a hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain a hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; they neither build houses, (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old; except where they are of towardly parts, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers; as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl, before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriments and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasee, or a ragoust.

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, increaseth to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolifick dyet, there are more children born in Roman Catholick countries about nine months after Lent, than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish infants, is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants, the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our City of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every county being now ready to starve for want of work and service: and these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our schoolboys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission, be a loss to the publick, because they soon would become breeders themselves: and besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanaazor, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty; and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at a playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken, to ease the nation of so grievous an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country, than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to a distress, and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintainance of a hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among our selves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection; and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the publick, to their annual profit instead of expence. We should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sows when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrel'd beef: the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well grown, fat yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor's feast, or any other publick entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city, would be constant customers for infants flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither clothes, nor household furniture, except what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: Of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence and temperance:

Of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: Of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at least some glimpse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into practice.

But, as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expence and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, and flesh being of too tender a consistence, to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion, as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, As things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, There being a round million of creatures in humane figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock, would leave them in debt two million of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor

clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of intailing the like, or greater miseries, upon their breed forever.

I profess in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the publick good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children, by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

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Samuel Langhorne Clemens (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), better known by his pen name **Mark Twain**, was an American writer, entrepreneur, publisher and lecturer. Among his novels are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), the latter often called “The Great American Novel.”

Twain was raised in Hannibal, Missouri, which later provided the setting for *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. After an apprenticeship with a printer, Twain worked as a typesetter and contributed articles to the newspaper of his older brother, Orion Clemens. He later became a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River before heading west to join Orion in Nevada. He referred humorously to his lack of success at mining, turning to journalism for the Virginia City Territorial Enterprise. In 1865, his humorous story “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” was published, based on a story he heard at Angels Hotel in Angels Camp, California, where he had spent some time as a miner. The short story brought international attention, and was even translated into classic Greek. His wit and satire, in prose and in speech, earned praise from critics and peers, and he was a friend to presidents, artists, industrialists, and European royalty.

Twain describes his boyhood in *Life on the Mississippi*, stating that "there was but one permanent ambition" among his comrades: to be a steamboatman. "Pilot was the grandest position of all. The pilot, even in those days of trivial wages, had a princely salary – from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and no board to pay." As Twain described it, the pilot's prestige exceeded that of the captain. The pilot had to "get up a warm personal acquaintanceship with every old snag and one-limbed cottonwood and every obscure wood pile that ornaments the banks of this river for twelve hundred miles; and more than that, must... actually know where these things are in the dark". Steamboat pilot Horace E. Bixby took Twain on as a cub pilot to teach him the river between New Orleans and St. Louis for \$500 (equivalent to \$16,000 in 2021), payable out of Twain's first wages after graduating. It was more than two years before he received his pilot's license. Piloting also gave him his pen name from "mark twain", the leadsman's cry for a measured river depth of two fathoms (12 feet), which was safe water for a steamboat.

Biography of Mark Twain. Provided by: Wikipedia. Located at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Twain. License: [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)

“Two Ways of Seeing a River” is an often-anthologized excerpt from *Life on the Mississippi* (1883). The excerpt shows how experience changed Twain’s perspective about the river; the final paragraph compares Twain’s experience with that of a

physician and invites readers to consider how experience, education, and familiarity can permanently change how each of us views the world around us. As you read the excerpt, apply his closing question to your own life—what is gained and what is lost?

[#literacy](#) [#history](#) [#classics](#)

Two Ways of Seeing A River

Mark Twain

The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book—a book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger, but which told its mind to me without reserve, delivering its most cherished secrets as clearly as if it uttered them with a voice. And it was not a book to be read once and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell every day. Throughout the long twelve hundred miles there was never a page that was void of interest, never one that you could leave unread without loss, never one that you would want to skip, thinking you could find higher enjoyment in some other thing. There never was so wonderful a book written by man; never one whose interest was so absorbing, so unflagging, so sparkingly renewed with every reperusal. The passenger who could not read it was charmed with a peculiar sort of faint dimple on its surface (on the rare occasions when he did not overlook it altogether); but to the pilot that was an italicized passage; indeed, it was more than that, it was a legend of the largest capitals, with a string of shouting exclamation points at the end of it; for it meant that a wreck or a rock was buried there that could tear the life out of the strongest vessel that ever floated. It is the faintest and simplest expression the water ever makes, and the most hideous to a pilot's eye. In truth, the passenger who could not read this book saw nothing but all manner of pretty pictures in it painted by the sun and shaded by the clouds, whereas to the trained eye these were not pictures at all, but the grimmest and most dead-earnest of reading-matter.

Now when I had mastered the language of this water and had come to know every trifling feature that bordered the great river as familiarly as I knew the letters of the alphabet, I had made a valuable acquisition. But I had lost something, too. I had lost something which could never be restored to me while I lived. All the grace, the beauty, the poetry had gone out of the majestic river! I still keep in mind a certain wonderful sunset which I witnessed when steamboating was new to me. A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary log came floating, black and conspicuous; in one place a long,

slanting mark lay sparkling upon the water; in another the surface was broken by boiling, tumbling rings, that were as many-tinted as an opal; where the ruddy flush was faintest, was a smooth spot that was covered with graceful circles and radiating lines, ever so delicately traced; the shore on our left was densely wooded, and the somber shadow that fell from this forest was broken in one place by a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver; and high above the forest wall a clean-stemmed dead tree waved a single leafy bough that glowed like a flame in the unobstructed splendor that was flowing from the sun. There were graceful curves, reflected images, woody heights, soft distances; and over the whole scene, far and near, the dissolving lights drifted steadily, enriching it, every passing moment, with new marvels of coloring.

I stood like one bewitched. I drank it in, in a speechless rapture. The world was new to me, and I had never seen anything like this at home. But as I have said, a day came when I began to cease from noting the glories and the charms which the moon and the sun and the twilight wrought upon the river's face; another day came when I ceased altogether to note them. Then, if that sunset scene had been repeated, I should have looked upon it without rapture, and should have commented upon it, inwardly, after this fashion: This sun means that we are going to have wind to-morrow; that floating log means that the river is rising, small thanks to it; that slanting mark on the water refers to a bluff reef which is going to kill somebody's steamboat one of these nights, if it keeps on stretching out like that; those tumbling 'boils' show a dissolving bar and a changing channel there; the lines and circles in the slick water over yonder are a warning that that troublesome place is shoaling up dangerously; that silver streak in the shadow of the forest is the 'break' from a new snag, and he has located himself in the very best place he could have found to fish for steamboats; that tall dead tree, with a single living branch, is not going to last long, and then how is a body ever going to get through this blind place at night without the friendly old landmark.

No, the romance and the beauty were all gone from the river. All the value any feature of it had for me now was the amount of usefulness it could furnish toward compassing the safe piloting of a steamboat. Since those days, I have pitied doctors from my heart. What does the lovely flush in a beauty's cheek mean to a doctor but a 'break' that ripples above some deadly disease. Are not all her visible charms sown thick with what are to him the signs and symbols of hidden decay? Does he ever see her beauty at all, or doesn't he simply view her professionally, and comment upon her unwholesome condition all to himself? And doesn't he sometimes wonder whether he has gained most or lost most by learning his trade?

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Born in Africa (probably in Senegal or Gambia), Phillis Wheatley was enslaved at the age of seven or eight, when she was bought by John Wheatley (1703–1778) of Boston to serve as his wife Susannah’s companion. Susannah fostered Wheatley’s intellectual avidity by having her daughter Mary oversee Wheatley’s education. Wheatley became well-read in the Bible; classical literature, including some of the classics in their original Latin; and English literature, responding especially to the works of Alexander Pope (1688–1744), master of the heroic couplet, and John Milton. She also converted to Christianity, becoming a member of the Old South Congregational Church.

Touted as a prodigy, Wheatley traveled to London for the publication of her *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773). There she became a minor celebrity, meeting the lord mayor of London, Benjamin Franklin, and William Legge, the 2nd Earl of Dartmouth (1731–1801). The same year that her Poems were published, Wheatley was freed from slavery.

In the past, her poetry was deemed unoriginal, as giving little sense of Africa, her race, or her life as a slave. This reading attests to Wheatley’s strategic success in opposing prevalent views of women, blacks, and slaves during her era. Her poems are now recognized for their strong assertion of equality among all humankind and their strong-minded expression of self to contemporary readers who denied that selfhood.

Source: [Becoming America](#), Wendy Kurant, ed., CC-BY-SA

[#gender](#) [#diversity](#) [#history](#) [#classics](#)

Phyllis Wheatley

“On Being Brought from Africa to America”

(1773)

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,

"Their colour is a diabolic die."

Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

"To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth"

(1773)

HAIL, happy day, when, smiling like the morn,
Fair Freedom rose New-England to adorn:
The northern clime beneath her genial ray,
Dartmouth, congratulates thy blissful sway:
Elate with hope her race no longer mourns,
Each soul expands, each grateful bosom burns,
While in thine hand with pleasure we behold
The silken reins, and Freedom's charms unfold.
Long lost to realms beneath the northern skies
She shines supreme, while hated faction dies:
Soon as appear'd the Goddess long desir'd,
Sick at the view, she languish'd and expir'd;
Thus from the splendors of the morning light
The owl in sadness seeks the caves of night.

No more, America, in mournful strain
Of wrongs, and grievance unredress'd complain,
No longer shalt thou dread the iron chain,
Which wanton Tyranny with lawless hand
Had made, and with it meant t' enslave the land.

Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,

By feeling hearts alone best understood,
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy seat:
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
Steel'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
That from a father seiz'd his babe belov'd:
Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway?

For favours past, great Sir, our thanks are due,
And thee we ask thy favours to renew,
Since in thy pow'r, as in thy will before,

To sooth the griefs, which thou did'st once deplore.
May heav'nly grace the sacred sanction give
To all thy works, and thou for ever live
Not only on the wings of fleeting Fame,
Though praise immortal crowns the patriot's name,
But to conduct to heav'ns refulgent fane,
May fiery coursers sweep th' ethereal plain,
And bear thee upwards to that blest abode,
Where, like the prophet, thou shalt find thy God.

“On the Death of Rev. Mr. George Whitefield. 1770.”

(1771, 1773)

HAIL, happy saint, on thine immortal throne,
Possess of glory, life, and bliss unknown;
We hear no more the music of thy tongue,
Thy wonted auditories cease to throng.

Thy sermons in unequal'd accents flow'd,
And ev'ry bosom with devotion glow'd;
Thou didst in strains of eloquence refin'd
Inflame the heart, and captivate the mind.
Unhappy we the setting sun deplore,
So glorious once, but ah! it shines no more.

Behold the prophet in his tow'ring flight!
He leaves the earth for heav'n's unmeasur'd height,
And worlds unknown receive him from our sight.
There Whitefield wings with rapid course his way,
And sails to Zion through vast seas of day.
Thy pray'rs, great saint, and thine incessant cries
Have pierc'd the bosom of thy native skies.
Thou moon hast seen, and all the stars of light,
How he has wrestled with his God by night.
He pray'd that grace in ev'ry heart might dwell,
He long'd to see America excell;
He charg'd its youth that ev'ry grace divine
Should with full lustre in their conduct shine;
That Saviour, which his soul did first receive,
The greatest gift that ev'n a God can give,
He freely offer'd to the num'rous throng,
That on his lips with list'ning pleasure hung.

"Take him, ye wretched, for your only good,
"Take him ye starving sinners, for your food;
"Ye thirsty, come to this life-giving stream,
"Ye preachers, take him for your joyful theme;
"Take him my dear Americans, he said,
"Be your complaints on his kind bosom laid:

“Take him, ye Africans, he longs for you,
“Impartial Saviour is his title due:
“Wash’d in the fountain of redeeming blood,
“You shall be sons, and kings, and priests to God.”

Great Countess,* we Americans revere
Thy name, and mingle in thy grief sincere;
New England deeply feels, the Orphans mourn,
Their more than father will no more return.

But, though arrested by the hand of death,
Whitefield no more exerts his lab’ring breath,
Yet let us view him in th’ eternal skies,
Let ev’ry heart to this bright vision rise;
While the tomb safe retains its sacred trust,
Till life divine re-animates his dust.

*The Countess of Huntingdon, to whom Mr. Whitefield was Chaplain.

“To S. M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing his Works”

(1773)

To show the lab'ring bosom's deep intent,
And thought in living characters to paint,
When first thy pencil did those beauties give,
And breathing figures learnt from thee to live,
How did those prospects give my soul delight,
A new creation rushing on my sight?
Still, wond'rous youth! each noble path pursue;
On deathless glories fix thine ardent view:
Still may the painter's and the poet's fire,

To aid thy pencil and thy verse conspire!
And may the charms of each seraphic theme
Conduct thy footsteps to immortal fame!
High to the blissful wonders of the skies
Elate thy soul, and raise thy wishful eyes.
Thrice happy, when exalted to survey
That splendid city, crown'd with endless day,
Whose twice six gates on radiant hinges ring:
Celestial Salem blooms in endless spring.

Calm and serene thy moments glide along,
And may the muse inspire each future song!
Still, with the sweets of contemplation bless'd,
May peace with balmy wings your soul invest!
But when these shades of time are chas'd away,
And darkness ends in everlasting day,
On what seraphic pinions shall we move,
And view the landscapes in the realms above?
There shall thy tongue in heav'nly murmurs flow,
And there my muse with heav'nly transport glow;
No more to tell of Damon's tender sighs,
Or rising radiance of Aurora's eyes;
For nobler themes demand a nobler strain,
And purer language on th' ethereal plain.
Cease, gentle Muse! the solemn gloom of night
Now seals the fair creation from my sight.

“Letter to Rev. Samson Occom”

(1773)

The Connecticut Gazette, March 11, 1774

Rev’d and honor’d Sir,

I have this Day received your obliging kind Epistle, and am greatly satisfied with your Reasons respecting the Negroes, and think highly reasonable what you offer in Vindication of their natural Rights: Those that invade them cannot be insensible that the divine Light is chasing away the thick Darkness which broods over the Land of Africa; and the Chaos which has reign’d so long, is converting into beautiful Order, and [r]eveals more and more clearly, the glorious Dispensation of civil and religious Liberty, which are so inseparably Limited, that there is little or no Enjoyment of one Without the other: Otherwise, perhaps, the Israelites had been less solicitous for their Freedom from Egyptian slavery; I do not say they would have been contented without it, by no means, for in every human Breast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance; and by the Leave of our modern Egyptians I will assert, that the same Principle lives in us. God grant Deliverance in his own Way and Time, and get him honour upon all those whose Avarice impels them to countenance and help forward tile Calamities of their fellow Creatures. This I desire not for their Hurt, but to convince them of the strange Absurdity of their Conduct whose Words and Actions are so diametrically, opposite. How well the Cry for Liberty, and the reverse Disposition for the exercise of oppressive Power over others agree,—I humbly think it does not require the Penetration of a Philosopher to determine.—



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Increasingly, K-12 schools across America are offering yoga, meditation, and mindfulness practices as part of their curriculum. While the benefits of these practices are widely documented by medical and mental wellness research (everything from better cardiovascular health to decreased anxiety), some parents and communities are concerned about connections to religion and appropriateness in public schools. From one perspective, Christian, Muslim, and other religious practices not permitted in schools are similar to yoga's ancient roots in Hinduism. Others counter that a person can easily sit for a meditation or move in a yoga flow without any religious overtones and that the health benefits outweigh any concerns.

Alia Wong's 2018 article "Why Schools are Banning Yoga" from *The Atlantic* provides a brief, objective overview of this conversation. In her piece, readers can see various ways of collecting evidence and presenting multiple perspectives on a controversial issue. As you read, see if you can identify the different kinds of sources Wong has used as a researcher and journalist (for example, personal interviews) and the strategies she uses to present multiple sides fairly (for example, statistics). Click the title to be taken to the article.

[#politics](#) [#sociology](#)

Why Schools Are Banning Yoga

Alia Wong

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